



## Press Release: Agriculture Leaders from Across the Country Address the Growing Pressures on Canada's Farmland

**Abbotsford, BC** – Today, BC Agriculture Council is hosting an urgent and timely panel discussion with industry leaders from across the country, *"The Loss of Agricultural Land and the Ever-Growing Pressures – What Will Be Left for Ag Production?"* This critical conversation will take place during BC Young Farmers' event, [Farm Fest 2024](#).

In British Columbia (B.C.), the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) was created in 1973 to protect the small portion of land suitable for farming—just 5% of the province's land base. However, farmland, which is the foundation of food security, is under unprecedented pressure from urban sprawl, rising land prices, industrial development, alternative energy projects, and real estate investment. With B.C.'s population expected to grow from 5.7 million to nearly 8 million by 2050, the demand for agricultural products will increase, as will the need for robust protections for agricultural land.

*"Farmland is irreplaceable,"* says Jennifer Woike, President of BC Agriculture Council (BCAC). *"It provides the food we eat, supports our economy, and acts as a natural partner in addressing climate change. Together - industry, government and all food system stakeholders have an important role to play to ensure this scarce resource is available for the future generations of farmers."*

The panel brings together agricultural leaders from across Canada to address the unprecedented threats facing farmland. It explores what's at risk if we fail to protect our agricultural lands—jeopardizing the future of our food and agricultural security, economic resilience, and environmental stability. Panelists will discuss the challenges farmers face and present practical solutions to sustain Canada's capacity for local food production amidst these growing pressures.

The discussion is moderated by Kim Grout, CEO of the [Provincial Agricultural Land Commission](#), and includes panelists representing diverse agricultural communities across Canada:

- Ian Boxall – President, [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan](#)
- Allan Melvin – President, [Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture](#)
- Charles-Félix Ross – Directeur Général, [L'Union des Producteurs Agricoles](#)
- Rebecca Senicar – Director, [BC Agriculture Council](#) & Chair, [BC Young Farmers Committee](#)
- Drew Spoelstra – President, [Ontario Federation of Agriculture](#)

This conversation brings fresh insights and actionable ideas at a time when protecting our farmland has never been more essential.