

**Ministry of
Agriculture, Food
and Fisheries**

**2021/22 – 2023/24
SERVICE PLAN**

April 2021



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 2021/22 – 2023/24 Service Plan* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lana Popham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
April 6, 2021

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (the Ministry) is responsible for the production, marketing, processing and merchandising of agriculture and seafood products; the institution and carrying out of advisory, research, promotional, sustainability and adaptation, food safety and plant and animal health programs, projects and undertakings relating to agriculture and seafood; developing strategies for recovery of wild salmon and the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture and seafood.

The Ministry is a key contributor to economic development and diversification across the Province and is a main contributor to rural economic development and province-wide job creation, particularly for small businesses. The agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sector creates economic and social benefits for Indigenous groups and other underrepresented groups, has the potential to attract provincial investment, and contributes to workforce development and skills training.

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 30 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the Ministry. A [complete list of legislation for which the Ministry is responsible](#) is available online.

While the Grow BC, Feed BC, Buy BC framework remains a priority, the Ministry is expanding the framework to address the various provincial government commitments and the issues that have risen from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategic Direction

In 2021/22 British Columbians continue to face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of British Columbia is continually evolving to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Government has identified five foundational principles that will inform each ministry's work and contribute to COVID recovery: putting people first, lasting and meaningful reconciliation, equity and anti-racism, a better future through fighting climate change and meeting our greenhouse gas reduction commitments, and a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced economic activity in B.C. in 2020. The ongoing evolution and economic cost of the pandemic on B.C. and its trading partners remains highly uncertain. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates a 5.1 per cent decline in B.C. real GDP in 2020 and expects growth of 4.9 per cent in 2021 and 4.3 per cent in 2022. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC projects national real GDP growth of 4.7 per cent in 2021 and 4.2 per cent in 2022, following an estimated decline of 5.4 per cent in 2020. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to outperform Canada's in the coming years. The pandemic has increased risks to B.C.'s economic outlook, such as the timing of the global vaccination rollout, extended travel restrictions, a weaker global recovery, and the continued impact of a slower recovery in some sectors of the B.C. economy. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies and lower commodity prices.

This 2021/22 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries will support the government’s priorities, including selected action items identified in the November 2020, [Minister’s Mandate Letter](#).

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Strengthen provincial food systems and B.C.’s food security

Strengthening the provincial food system remains a provincial priority as it contributes to a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

Objective 1.1: Improve living and working conditions for farm workers

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of having a stable and healthy workforce to ensure food security for British Columbians. The Ministry will work towards ensuring and enforcing safe, healthy and comfortable living standards (particularly for inter-provincial and international workers residing in on-farm accommodations or workcamps) and ensure improved working conditions for all agricultural workers.

Key Strategies

- Propose the development of a labour strategy to address substandard living and working conditions for agricultural workers.
- Maintain COVID-19 specific supports including facilitating the 14-day quarantine period at provincially managed accommodations hotels for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and improvements to on-farm accommodations to ensure worker health and safety (supplies, equipment and inspections).

Performance Measures	2019/2020 Baseline	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
1.1 TBC	N/A	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Linking Performance Measures to Objective

The Ministry is proposing the development of a labour strategy to ensure labour issues are addressed in alignment with other ministries. Cross ministry work is needed prior to setting performance measures for this objective.

Discussion

Performance measures and targets will be developed and confirmed by May 2021.

Objective 1.2: Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods

Enhancing the Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programming will drive economic recovery, grow jobs across the sector and beyond, increase the safety and availability of local food, and build the sustainability and reliability of the provincial food system. Integrated programs

targeting improvement will be delivered via various methods including agreements and partnerships with other government bodies, industry associations, expert program delivery agents, local governments, post-secondary intuitions, public health and education institutions. Some programs will be administered fully by Ministry staff.

Key Strategies

- Enhance the Grow BC, Feed BC, Buy BC programming.
- Increase awareness of the Buy BC brand and the variety and availability of B.C. food and beverages by B.C. citizens, retailers, restaurants, and distributors to grow more economic development opportunities for the sector and regional economies.
- Build demand in B.C. government facilities for more B.C. food.

Performance Meassess	2019/2020 Baseline	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
1.2 Number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food expenditures within total annual food expenditures	103	112 ¹	145	168	195

¹ Reflects smaller increase in numbers of partners due to 2020 COVID-19 impacts on foodservice operations.

Linking Performance Measures to Objective

Increasing the number of government or other FeedBC partner facilities that have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food expenditure within their total annual food expenditures indicates that the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods. By addressing barriers that government institutions (e.g. hospitals, residential care facilities, public post-secondary institutions, and other government-supported facilities) have experienced in getting B.C. food products into their institutions, the ministry advances the availability of B.C. food products for British Columbians in such places.

Goal 2: Position B.C. as a leader in regenerative agriculture practices and agri-tech

Drawing on the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, the ministry will take steps to make B.C. a leader in the emerging agri-tech sector. By bringing together natural systems of production through regenerative agriculture and supporting agri-tech, the Ministry will help to increase employment opportunities, improve food security and advance progress in achieving climate change goals. This is a new goal reflecting the new commitment in the Ministry’s mandate letter to support regenerative agriculture and agri-tech.

Objective 2.1: Support the development of the agri-tech sector and promote regenerative agriculture practices

Take steps to support regenerative agriculture practices and the emerging agri-tech sector that is bringing innovation to agriculture and seafood. Regenerative agriculture includes conservation practices that promote healthy soils (including carbon sequestration) and water cycling, while enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem health. Development of the agri-tech sector will support the creation of high-tech jobs, introduce new farm technologies, reduce reliance on TFWs and increase the productivity and bottom-line of farming businesses.

Key Strategies

- Stimulate growth and development of new technologies that will enhance agriculture and food processing sectors.
- Support the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices and agri-tech.
- Develop partnerships with private industry, academic, non-government organizations, and other levels of government to explore new ways to support increases in food production and processing through regenerative agriculture and agri-tech.
- Support agri-tech businesses to expand and grow, while ensuring British Columbians' world-class sustainability, quality and safety standards continue.

Performance Measures	2019/20 Baseline	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
2.1a Number of BC-based agri-tech company growth opportunities supported through Ministry programming	33	29	35	40	45
2.1b Number of Beneficial Management Practice projects completed by farmers, supporting regenerative agriculture practices and technologies ¹	225	350	250	260	270

Data source: B.C. Agricultural Research and Development Corporation

¹ The baseline is the three-year average (2018/19 to 2020/21) associated with the baseline funding of the program. The forecast in 2020/21 is high relative to other years because the On-Farm Innovation Top-Up program added \$1.6M in funding to the BMP program in 2020/21.

Linking Performance Measures to Objective

Through the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) program, farmers may receive cost-share funding from the Ministry after they complete on-farm conservation projects, many of which promote regenerative agriculture practices and technologies. An increased number of such projects indicate the ministry's success at supporting the development of the agri-tech sector and promoting regenerative agriculture practices. Furthermore, the ministry hopes to increase the number of B.C. based agri-tech company growth opportunities supported through ministry programming. An increased number of such opportunities further shows the ministry's success in supporting the agri-tech sector.

Discussion

Through the BMP, the Ministry is tracking adoption of regenerative agriculture practices and technologies or services that promote regenerative agriculture practices (build soil health, conserve water, and implement biodiversity and ecological principles into farming). Through current funding opportunities for agri-tech companies, the Ministry is tracking new opportunities to grow the agri-tech sector. As the Ministry’s strategy for implementing new mandate commitments for the Regenerative Agriculture Network proceed, this measure will be updated with new targets.

Goal 3: Reinvigorate and protect provincial fisheries, seafood and aquaculture sectors

This new goal addresses the Ministry’s role in revitalizing and growing the marine fisheries, aquaculture and seafood sectors as part of the broader goals on economic recovery, rural and coastal community growth, and food security. Supporting these efforts requires investing in conservation and restoration of species and their habitat, infrastructure, and programs all essential to supporting sustainable fish populations and harvest opportunities. This includes mandate commitments to lead work with the Federal Government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.’s wild salmon populations, including exploring ways to enhance the investment in the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), building on past successes and supporting innovation in fish hatcheries, and ensuring B.C. processing of B.C.-caught fish.

Objective 3.1: Address fish species declines

Reinvigorate provincial fisheries and seafood programs that address salmon and other fish species declines and coastal fisheries economies. Investments will align with recommendations from B.C.’s Wild Salmon Advisory Council, consider other fisheries reviews, and support salmon restoration, environmental and economic gains for fisheries and aquaculture, and secure benefits for communities in B.C.

Key Strategies

- Working with the Federal Government and First Nations leadership, to create a made-in-B.C. wild salmon strategy.
- Explore ways to enhance investment in the BCSRIF.
- Establish standing B.C. priorities of salmon and their habitat for the BCSRIF.
- Explore policies to prioritize wild salmon recovery in provincial natural resource programs and permitting processes

Performance Measure(s)	2019/20 Baseline	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
3.1 TBC	N/A	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Linking Performance Measures to Objective

Addressing fish species declines is a new goal for the ministry. The Ministry is in the process of determining appropriate performance measures and targets.

Discussion

The Ministry has not established a baseline; however, in 2021, the Ministry will begin planning the development of a fisheries, seafood and salmon strategy. Planning will be focused on building a framework for B.C.'s salmon strategy and other initiatives aimed at supporting the Ministry's objectives in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood. The strategy is expected to be completed in 2022/23.

Objective 3.2: Promote innovation in fish hatcheries and sustainable aquaculture

Innovation in marine commercial and recreational fisheries is an area to increase economic potential. Better coordination and dedication of provincial efforts to unlock stranded habitat through fish passage work, support for mark selective fisheries (MSF) and training for community hatchery volunteers would contribute to increasing wild salmon sustainability while providing certainty to the recreational fishery sector which contributed \$1.1B to B.C.'s economy in 2016.

Key Strategies:

- Explore ways to enhance investment in the BCSRIF.
- Purchasing and operating two mass-marking machines for marking and tagging hatchery fish in partnership with the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Salmonid Enhancement Program.
- Explore options for unlocking under-utilised salmon habitat rendered impassable by natural or human causes.
- Ensuring a priority for BCSRIF to invest in and to support hatcheries and ensure access to consistent, innovative practices throughout the Province.
- Increasing B.C.'s involvement in the operation of community-based hatcheries through logistical assistance, supporting regulatory compliance, and training from provincial Animal Health Lab Fish Pathologists.

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
3.2 TBC	N/A	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Linking Performance Measures to Objective

BCSRIF supports protection and restoration activities for priority wild fish stocks, including salmon, as well as projects that will ensure the fish and seafood sector in BC is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

Discussion

Promoting innovation in fish hatcheries and sustainable aquaculture is a new objective for the Ministry. We do not currently have a baseline value but 2021 will be a planning year for fisheries, seafood and the salmon strategy. Planning will be focused on building a framework for B.C.'s salmon strategy and other initiatives aimed at supporting the Ministry's objectives in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood. The strategy is expected to be completed in 2022/23.

Objective 3.3: Support B.C. seafood processing capacity

To support increasing B.C.'s fish processing sector and seafood economies, the Ministry will explore developing economic programs using a dedicated funding package to support processing infrastructure and other cost-shared programs.

Key Strategies

- Supporting shellfish and seaweed businesses to expand and operate in a sustainable way.
- Developing a processing working group with local industry members to gain insight to the current capacity, needs, gaps and opportunities for processing B.C.-caught fish within B.C.
- Researching the markets for various fisheries products while connecting seafood more deeply through existing provincial programs (e.g. Buy BC and the Food Hub Network) to enhance domestic and international marketing.

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
3.3 TBC	N/A	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Linking Performance Measures to Objective

As the Ministry's strategy for implementing new mandate commitments proceeds, this measure will be updated with new targets.

Discussion

This is a new objective in the Ministry's report reflecting the new commitment in the Ministry's mandate letter to lead work with the federal government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon populations, including exploring ways to enhance investment in BCSRIF, building on past successes and supporting innovation in fish hatcheries, and ensuring B.C. processing of B.C.-caught fish. 2021 will be a planning year for fisheries, seafood and the salmon strategy. Planning will be focused on building a framework for B.C.'s salmon strategy and other initiatives aimed at supporting the Ministry's objectives in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood.

Financial Summary

Core Business Area	2020/21 Restated Estimates ¹	2021/22 Estimates	2022/23 Plan	2023/24 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Science, Policy and Inspection ²	16,634	17,250	17,250	17,250
Agriculture Resources ³	52,593	56,135	56,135	56,135
BC Farm Industry Review Board	1,364	1,378	1,378	1,378
Executive and Support Services	6,670	6,873	6,883	6,894
Agricultural Land Commission	4,943	5,001	5,001	5,001
Production Insurance Account	13,200	13,200	13,200	13,200
Total	95,404	99,837	99,847	99,858
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	691	755	728	728
Total	691	755	728	728

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2020/21 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the *2021/22 Estimates*.

² Previously referred to as Agriculture, Science and Policy

³ Previously referred to as Business Development

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible and accountable for the following:

Agricultural Land Commission

The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is the independent administrative tribunal dedicated to preserving agricultural land and encouraging farming in BC. The ALC is responsible for administering the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a provincial land use zone where agriculture is the primary land use taking place on the limited agricultural land base.

British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board

The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board (the Board) is an independent administrative tribunal that operates at arm's-length from government. As the regulatory tribunal responsible for the general supervision of BC regulated marketing boards and commissions, the Board provides oversight, policy direction and decisions to ensure orderly marketing and to protect the public interest. In its adjudicative capacities, the Board provides a less formal system than the court for resolving disputes in a timely and cost-effective way.

The Marketing Boards and Commissions include:

[BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission](#)

[BC Chicken Marketing Board](#)

[BC Cranberry Marketing Commission](#)

[BC Egg Marketing Board](#)

[BC Farm Industry Review Board](#)

[BC Hog Marketing Commission](#)

[BC Milk Marketing Board](#)

[BC Turkey Marketing Board](#)

[BC Vegetable Marketing Commission](#)