



B.C. AGRICULTURE SECTOR AS AN ECONOMIC STABILIZER AFTER COVID-19

Triggered by a pandemic, people are thinking about agriculture and our food system in ways they haven't been for years.

ABBOTSFORD, BC – October 23, 2020: Today, BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) and Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF) announced the completion of a B.C. agriculture economic impact study that illustrates how agriculture is a significant economic contributor and an important piece of B.C.'s identity. Not only is the sector a core component of the province's economy, it can play a major role in helping the province weather and recover from the pandemic-induced economic downturn, particularly in rural communities.

In March 2020, the two organizations embarked on a project called "Cultivating Prosperity in British Columbia" to lay the foundation for the development of a new vision for B.C.'s agriculture sector. In support of the project's objectives, BCAC and IAF engaged with MNP LLP to conduct a study. The purpose of the study was to demonstrate agriculture's current and potential contributions to the many challenges facing our society and provide baseline data and qualitative information to help guide future consultations with industry stakeholders for the identification and development of a long-term vision. The next phase of the project will include further engagement with industry and government as the sector's vision begins to take shape.

"I believe that this report is an important step in developing an overall vision and strategy for the agriculture, seafood and processing sectors in B.C.," says James Donaldson, CEO of BC Food and Beverage. "Ensuring our industries long-term competitiveness – both domestically and globally – is critical."

Triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns about food supply and the environment appears to be on the minds of many British Columbians. The findings in the report magnified the potential for agriculture to not only be the backbone of B.C.'s regional food security, but also, contribute to economic recovery. Typically, the sector is more stable during times of economic instability compared to other sectors. This is because the demand for food is less impacted as it is considered a necessity. The report contains multiple case studies that describe some of the solutions that the agriculture sector provides to some key public issues which readers can find [here](#).

"Both the Federal and Provincial Governments have recently signaled, through the Barton Report and the Food Security Task Force, the tremendous opportunities that are possible across the agriculture and agri-foods sectors in Canada and British Columbia," says IAF Executive Director, Michelle Koski. "The *Cultivating Prosperity in BC* project will guide and shape the B.C. agriculture and agri-food sectors response and vision to these challenges and opportunities."

"The *Cultivating Prosperity in BC*" project and impact study creates a significant opportunity for the sector to re-brand ourselves and create a new vision for agriculture in B.C., one that offers new ideas and a shift in perspective, positioning agriculture as part of the solution during a time of economic recovery.", says BCAC President, Stan Vander Waal.

The full economic impact study can be viewed online by visiting either [BCAC's website](#) or [IAF's website](#).

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BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) is a provincial-wide general farm organization representing the farmers and ranchers of British Columbia. BCAC proudly serves nearly 30 commodity associations who in turn generate 96% of the farm gate sales in B.C.

The B.C. Investment Agriculture Foundation is an industry-led not-for-profit that delivers government funded programs to the agriculture and agri-food sector of British Columbia. For more information on IAF and the programs it delivers, visit www.iafbc.ca