



Food Safety Program

PROGRAM GUIDE 2026/27



The Food Safety Program (FSP) seeks to increase adoption of new or improve existing food safety practices and systems by BC on-farm and BC post-farm businesses to enable the BC agrifood sector to meet existing and new national and international food safety regulatory requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	2
PROGRAM DETAILS	3
APPLICANTS	4
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & COSTS.....	5
APPLICATIONS	11
NOTIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS	14

Funding for this program has been provided by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The program is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF).



If there is a discrepancy between the information found in this document and the information found at www.iafbc.ca/food-safety, the webpage(s) take precedence.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Background

The Food Safety Program (FSP) is a five-year, up to \$6.7 million program funded by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The program is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF).

FSP seeks to increase the adoption of new or improved food safety practices and systems by BC on-farm and BC post-farm businesses to enable the BC agrifood sector to meet existing and new national and international food safety regulatory requirements.

Program Objective & Goals

The Food Safety Program seeks to build public confidence in foods and beverages that are processed or handled for consumption and trade by BC businesses along the agrifood value chain. The objective of FSP is to increase the adoption of food safety systems by BC on-farm and post-farm businesses.

To achieve this, cost-shared funding will be provided to increase the number of eligible BC on-farm and post-farm businesses that will:

1. Identify and document risks through food safety assessments.
2. Proactively mitigate the risks identified in those assessments through the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), Preventive Control Plans (PCPs), or Best Practices (BPs).
3. Achieve third-party certification of On-Farm Food Safety (OFFS) or Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) based systems through recognized national and international food safety accreditation bodies.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Program Structure

Food Safety is a **first-come, first-served program**. Applications will be received, reviewed, and adjudicated on a first-come, first-served basis until available funds are fully committed.

Applying is not a guarantee of funding. **Demand for the Food Safety Program is anticipated to be high**, and funding is likely to be oversubscribed. IAF recommends submitting a complete application(s) as soon as possible to increase your funding chances, and that applications are clear and specific about the food safety results projects will achieve.

Program Streams

Two funding streams are available: On-Farm and Post-Farm. **One application form is used for both On-Farm and Post-Farm. If you would like to apply to both, two unique applications are required.**

Stream 1: On-Farm for growers, packers, and ranchers.

Stream 2: Post-Farm for processing, packaging, warehousing, transporting, distributing, and importing operations.

Cost-shared funding is available for eligible activities under three categories. Each eligible participant may apply for and receive up to a total funding limit of \$25,000 during the program term beginning November 28, 2023, and ending March 31, 2028.

CATEGORIES	COST-SHARED RATIO	CATEGORY FUNDING LIMITS	MAXIMUM FUNDING (per participant, during program term)
Category 1: Food Safety Assessments	70%	\$25,000	\$25,000
Category 2: Food Safety Improvements	70%	Equipment/facility upgrade for regulatory compliance: \$20,000 All other Food Safety improvements, including consulting or training: \$25,000	
Category 3: Food Safety Certifications	70%	\$25,000	



APPLICANTS

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must:

- Have an active nine-digit business registration number (BN) from the Canada Revenue Agency or have an active GST number and file business or farm income taxes in BC.
- Be based and operating in BC.
- Be a society, not-for-profit corporation, corporation, cooperative association, or an individual.
- For post-farm applicants, be provincially and federally licensed, as required, to operate their businesses in BC.
- For on-farm applicants, provide a copy of BC Assessment showing farm status¹.
- Operate an agrifood business that produces / processes / handles food, commodities, or beverages for human alimentary consumption.
- Be following all requirements of the law and agree to remain in compliance for the term of the Sustainable CAP Initiative if the application is approved.
- Be registered with the BC Premises Identification Program if they raise “animals” as defined in the Premises Identification Regulation made under the Animal Health Act, S.B.C. 2014, c. 16.

Eligible Applicants for Stream 1: On-Farm include:

- Farmers/growers producing crops for human consumption.
- Producers/ranchers raising animals for human consumption.
- Packers or co-packers that handle food for human consumption.

Eligible Applicants for Stream 2: Post-Farm include:

- Processors, transporters, warehouses, distributors, packers, and importers that process or handle processed food and beverages for human consumption.
- Processing facilities (beyond basic washing, grading, and packaging) located on or off a farm premise and not covered by a certified on-farm food safety program.
- Food hubs, which are shared-use food and beverage processing facilities that offer food and agriculture businesses access to commercial processing space, equipment, expertise, and resources to support business development and growth.

¹ FSP will consider a microgreen producer eligible for funding, even when they do not qualify for “farm status” due to the BC Assessment requirements for the amount of land in production, if they meet all other FSP eligibility requirements and employ a controlled environment structure, as defined [on the FSP program webpage](#).

Ineligible Applicants

- Operations that grow, process, or handle health or nutrition supplements (sold or represented as a supplement to a diet that may be inadequate in energy and essential nutrients).
- Operations producing pet food or food not intended for human consumption.
- Retail, restaurants, or other foodservice operations.
- Unlicensed, unregistered, or uninspected operations where licensing, registration, or inspection is required by law.
- Aquaculture and seafood production, processing, or handling businesses.
- Any other business deemed ineligible by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.



ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & COSTS

Cost-shared funding is available for a range of eligible activities under three distinct categories.

Category 1: Food Safety Assessments

Activities under this category focus on obtaining a food safety assessment highlighting the food safety risks, deficiencies, and traceability capacity of a business, resulting in a food safety work plan that outlines steps to address the identified gaps.

Food safety assessments are also called gap assessments. Eligible applicants' food safety assessments must be completed by an approved Qualified Food Safety Professional (QFSP) or Certifying Body (CB), which are qualified professionals in good standing with the appropriate regulator(s). Please note:

- Eligible applicants will be required to obtain a quote for a food safety assessment from an approved QFSP or CB. If applicants pass IAF's initial eligibility review, they may obtain this quote prior to their initial workplan call with the program's Technical Advisor.

[A reference list of Qualified Food Safety Professionals \(QFSP\) for the program may be found here.](#)

[A reference list of Certifying Bodies \(CB\) may be found here.](#)

Assessments **must include**:

- Deficiencies in existing food safety practices & infrastructure against a recognized food safety standard. A list of certifications recognized by FSP may be found under [Category 3](#), and in the [FAQ on the program's webpage](#).
- Recommendations in order of priority to mitigate key food safety risks identified.
- If a facility or equipment upgrade is recommended, provide additional rationale for how the proposed recommendations mitigate or improve the identified risks.

Applicants may also choose to include identified business needs or opportunities in the assessment.

Category 2: Food Safety Improvements

This category focuses on **implementing the improvements outlined in a previously completed food safety assessment**. This assessment does not have to be completed through Category 1 of FSP, but must have been completed by a Qualified Food Safety Professional (QFSP) or Certifying Body (CB) as defined by the program [here](#), and must include:

- Deficiencies in existing food safety practices & infrastructure against a recognized food safety standard. A list of standards/certifications recognized by FSP may be found under [Category 3](#), and in the [FAQ on the program webpage](#).
- Recommendations in order of priority to mitigate key food safety risks identified.

Applicants may also seek Category 2 funding without a food safety assessment if they are registered/certified under third-party audited programs like HACCP compliance, GFSI schemes (BRC, SQF, CanadaGAP), Federal Dairy/Meat Inspections, etc.

Activities under this category focus on creating traceability plans, developing and implementing written food safety programs, making facility upgrades for regulatory compliance, and conducting laboratory testing required to reduce food safety risks. High-quality activities demonstrate the largest impact on reducing food safety risk.

The applicant must have buildings, equipment, and relevant infrastructure as a starting point; funding will be provided for further food safety improvement. As an exception, approval for full equipment purchase may be considered if equipment upgrades required for food safety are more costly than buying new equipment, or if the equipment has significant linkages to food safety risks. This will be assessed by IAF on a case-by-case basis. The purchase of land or buildings is not eligible.

Eligible Activities within this category include:

Equipment purchases and/or facility modifications to meet regulatory compliance or that have a strong impact on food safety

Please note this category is capped at \$20,000 per participant for the program term.

- **Incremental Premises upgrade:**
 - Wall, doors, ceilings, and overhead structure repairs to prevent accumulation of contaminants, improve the ability to clean, and prevent entry of pests.
 - Floor repairs to improve the ability to clean and enable the removal of water to drains.
 - Drain repairs allowing rapid removal of wastewater and equipped with traps and backflow prevention.
 - Building upgrade to enable proper segregation of material storage (ingredients /packaging), waste material, and waste material handling equipment.
 - Providing for change/lunch/washrooms that do not open into processing or packaging areas.
 - Equipment sanitizing stations.
 - Shatterproof lighting and windows.
 - Ventilation upgrade to prevent dust and condensation build-up.
 - Ventilation to maintain positive air pressure.

- Hand washing stations, soap and paper towel dispensers, hand sanitizing stations, footbaths, and related signage.
- Facility modifications so food handling areas do not open directly outside.
- Installing self-closing doors.
- Water recirculation & treatment methods (e.g., ultraviolet, ozonation, filtering systems)
- Personnel hygiene-dedicated lunchroom and storage facilities for personal items.
- **Incremental Storage upgrade:**
 - Addition/upgrading cold storage/reefers, chillers, freezers.
 - Temperature monitoring devices, data loggers.
 - Storage for non-food chemicals, sanitizers, and chemical agents.
- **Incremental Equipment upgrade:**
 - Equipment linked to control of significant food safety risks (e.g., hazards controlled at CCPs).
 - Equipment upgrades to food safety materials (non-toxic, smooth, and non-absorbent).
 - Initial setup and calibration of new equipment with direct impact on food safety.
 - Stainless steel worktables, food-grade containers.
 - Instruments to monitor process parameters at CCPs (e.g., temperature monitoring devices, data loggers, pH meters, water activity meters).
 - Equipment/tools for testing chemical levels in water (e.g., chlorometer, ORP meter/automated chemical dispensing system).
 - Designated utensils (e.g., scoops, pails, containers, brushes, brooms, shovels, bins, totes).
- **Incremental Sanitation and pest control:**
 - One-time undertaking of the pest control survey and establishing pest control program (routine inspections not included).
 - Cleaning equipment (e.g., hoses, nozzles, bin washers, floor cleaners).
 - Cleaning utensils to support the development of a utensil/allergen control system (e.g., color-coded brushes, squeegees).
 - Cleaning and sanitizing verification (e.g., ATP luminometer, micro and allergen test kits).
- **Containers** suitable for chemical application/use, pre-mixing unit/automated chemical dispenser, foam systems:
 - Re-usable protective clothing (e.g., aprons, boots).
- **Foreign body detection:**
 - Metal detectors, magnets, parts.

Other food safety improvements to meet regulatory compliance or have a strong impact on food safety.

- Incremental third-party Consultation/ Advisory costs to:
 - Develop or improve written food safety program components (e.g., food safety policies, procedures, schedules, and records) for prerequisite programs, HACCP/PCP/OFFS, and CCP validation.
 - Develop or improve traceability and recall plans. Conducting a “mock recall” is only eligible if not applying to the [Traceability Adoption Program \(TAP\)](#) under Sustainable CAP.

- Incremental third-party accredited Staff Training, either online or in-person. [A list of industry training courses may be found here.](#)
 - One-time training of staff on newly developed or updated procedures, policies, or practices related to food safety.
 - Food Safety Skills Development – Formal education or training course by a third-party accredited organization; includes manual/materials and training.
- Validation of food safety process (outlined in HACCP plans/CCPs) control measures.
- Baseline or incremental laboratory analysis:
 - One-time cost to establish or improve an environmental monitoring program, testing performed by an accredited third-party laboratory to obtain validation results.
 - Conduct shelf-life validation studies.

Please note, regarding traceability implementation: The development or improvement of traceability or recall plans, including training, are eligible activities under this category. However, funding for the purchase, installation, and use of dedicated equipment, hardware, or software required to specifically improve traceability capacity can only be accessed through the [Traceability Adoption Program \(TAP\)](#). Mock recall activities may be funded under FSP or TAP.

Category 3: Food Safety Certifications

Activities under this category focus on completing final audits, which lead to successful certification or registration in nationally or internationally recognized food safety programs. Participants are eligible for multiple OFFS/HACCP Plans if they are incremental or new to the product being certified by the applicant. Annual recertifications are not eligible.

Final audit and certification costs by a third-party, which lead to a certification in the following accredited, national, and internally recognized food safety certification programs are eligible. The following list contains certifications recognized under FSP. Please note that this list is not exclusive. Other certifications may be accepted but require preapproval by the Ministry.

Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) Schemes:

- British Retail Consortium (BRC)
- Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000
- Global Red Meat Standards (GRMS)
- International Food Safety Standard (IFS version 6)
- PrimusGFS
- Canada G.A.P.
- Safe Quality Food (SQF 2000)
- Global GAP

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Recognized Food Safety Plans:

- Preventive Control Plans (PCPs) as per Safe Food for Canadians Act (SFCA)
- Food Safety Enhancement Program (CFIA's FSEP)
- Canada Grains Council
- Canadian Cattlemen's Association Verified Beef Production

- Canadian Cervid Alliance
- Canadian Hatching Egg Producers: Canadian Hatching Egg Quality
- Canadian Herbs, Spice, and Natural Health Products Coalition
- Canadian Honey Council
- Canadian National Goat Federation: On-Farm Food Safety Program
- Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Working Group
- Canadian Pork Council: Canadian Quality Assurance Program
- Canadian Sheep Federation: Food Safety Farm Practices: Canadian Verified Sheep Program
- Canadian Trucking Alliance
- Responsible Distribution Canada
- Chicken Farmers of Canada: On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program
- Dairy Farmers of Canada: Canadian Quality Milk
- Egg Farmers of Canada: Start Clean-Stay Clean
- Ontario Veal Association: Veal Quality Assurance Program
- Turkey Farmers of Canada: On-Farm Food Safety Program

Ineligible Activities & Costs

- Process equipment for running the business (or enhancing productivity), as well as normal day-to-day operating costs associated with regular business
- Facility or equipment upgrade to primarily enhance operational performance, and where food safety improvement is incidental.
- Activities that are peripheral or not directly connected to food safety, including, but not limited to:
 - Dead-stock disposal and removal or general waste removal from the premises, such as garbage, compost, or recycling removal.
 - Activities that support food quality only, rather than food safety.
 - Activities that support adapting to the requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic that are unrelated to food safety.
 - In-house (non-recognized) HACCP systems.
 - First aid-related training (or training kits).
- Traceability equipment.
- Security cameras, padlocks, fencing, gravel, or repairs external to the facility.
- Any cost not specifically required for the execution of a project.
- Non-food safety day-to-day operating costs; activities associated with carrying out a business, such as salaries and benefits of non-contract staff (e.g., full-time and part-time staff), office space, leasing and ongoing rental of facilities, equipment, and machinery, utilities, phone, internet connection, and data usage, materials, labor, board, committee, and annual meetings.
- Costs associated with food safety that are inherent in the day-to-day operations of the business or for the ongoing maintenance of a food safety program (e.g., ongoing expenses for employee salaries, consumables (cleaners, sanitizers), disposable gloves, hairnets, ingredients, packaging material, ongoing pest control services, laundry services, hiring of external sanitation crews; ongoing calibration).
- Mentoring and coaching in-house.
- Sponsorship of conferences and learning events or initiatives.

- Any travel costs.
- Purchase of vehicles (including reefer trucks, trailers for portable washrooms, etc.), furnishings, land, building, and facilities.
- Lease of land, buildings, and facilities for the purpose of starting up a new business or as part of normal operations.
- Financing charges, loan interest payments, bank fees, and charges.
- GST tax
- Gifts and incentives.
- Permits and approvals.
- Legal fees.
- Expenses incurred for the same activities that are also funded under other approved Provincial programs.
- Costs incurred before the approval of the Eligible Activities in a Funding Agreement, or after the activity's completion date identified in the Funding Agreement between a Participant and the Recipient.
- Costs claimed by Eligible Participants after the end of the Term, or after the expiry of the time for making a claim included in a Funding Agreement, whichever occurs first.
- Costs related to activities that promote British Columbia products explicitly over those of another province or territory; and
- Costs related to activities that directly influence or lobby any level of government.

CONTACT IAF

Have a question? IAF staff are available to answer questions regarding eligible activities, costs, the application process, and more.

Please email the team at foodsafety@iafbc.ca or call us: 250-940-6150

Have a more detailed question – you can book a call with an IAF Staff member!

Starting on January 20, 2026, you can book a 10-minute phone consultation with an IAF staff member to discuss your BMP application.

Prior to booking an appointment, you must start your draft application and provide the ID number (FSP-202425-0####). This gives you and the IAF staff member a specific application to reference and support during the 10-minute phone call.

Applicants are limited to one phone call appointment. Visit iafbc.ca/food-safety to book.

APPLICATIONS

Important Program Dates

- Applications Open:** January 20, 2026
- Applications Close:** Closure announced when funding is fully subscribed – sign up for the FSP newsletter online at iafbc.ca/food-safety/
- Projects Start:** On or after April 1, 2026
- Project Completion:** Within 5 months² of approval or by January 30, 2027, whichever is first

Application Process

Applicants can apply through the [IAF Client Portal](#). The application process will generally consist of:

Creating an Account and Organization Registration

You only need to do this once! If you've applied for IAF-delivered programs recently you're all set. If not, do not wait to start this process – it can take up to two business days to validate your organization!

Creating an account and registering your organization is simple:

[Go to IAF's Client Portal](#)

- Create a personal profile (name and email)
- Provide organization information, including:
 - Name
 - Contact details
 - Type of organization
 - BC ID number / CRA registration number
 - Primary contact

IAF will validate your account, then you will receive an email confirming your access to the portal.

Applying to FSP

Select 'Opportunities' in the grey side menu. Select the Food Safety Program and provide:

- Stream Selection (On-Farm or Post-Farm)
- Applicant type
- Project start & end dates
- Alignment with program priorities
- Description of key activities, who will oversee/undertake work, and project timeline.
- Demonstrate how all technical, environmental, and regulatory standards and/or requirements (as applicable) are met.

² If you are unable to complete your project within 5 months, please let the IAF staff know. Provided the additional time is reasonable and your project can be completed prior to February 28, 2026, extensions are eligible.

- Copies of relevant documents (e.g., a letter of commitment from their Senior Management team to confirm their commitment to the improvement of their food safety system; a provincial or federal operating license, if one is required for the business; a letter from financial institution confirming the applicant's ability to provide its share of the shared costs for, and to complete, the Eligible Activities; and documents supporting other requirements for eligibility that may be set by the Province.)
- Performance measurement information
- Funding request/project budget
- Performance measurement information
- Funding request/project budget

Category 1: Food Safety Assessment

To complete an assessment, clients must:

- Select a QFSP and request a quotation. Please note that IAF has a list of pre-approved QFSPs that are listed in the program resources section online. This may be obtained before your initial call with the program's Technical Advisor.
- Share the quote with the Program's Technical Advisor, who will prepare the initial work plan.
- Once your work plan is complete and approved, you will receive a project approval letter and will be able to complete your food safety assessment (gap assessment). Please note: All project work and payments must take place after you have received project approval.

Category 2: Food Safety Improvement

If you have not completed a food safety assessment through Category 1 of the Food Safety Program or another route, you will first need to complete one. You can also seek Category 2 funding without a food safety assessment if you are registered/certified under third-party audited programs like HACCP compliance, GFSI schemes (BRC, SQF, CanadaGAP), Federal Dairy/Meat Inspections, etc.

When completing the application, provide:

- A comprehensive list of activities aligned with the food safety assessment or other report, including close cost estimates derived from quotes obtained from your vendors.
- For each activity, include a written explanation addressing:
 - The current operational processes and associated food safety risks.
 - How the proposed activity aims to mitigate and reduce the identified food safety risks.

Applicants will be required to provide supplementary materials in support of their application. These documents can be uploaded through the IAF Client Portal as attachments to the application.

Applicants are encouraged to include only activities they are confident will be completed on time and within budget limits.

Demographic Information

As this program is funded under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, you are required to provide additional demographic information. The demographic information is collected by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and must be collected before submitting your application. To provide your demographic information:

- Start drafting your application in the IAF Client Portal.
- Copy your application ID (it will be provided to you at the Demographic data section of the application, or see the top of your application form). You will need to put this ID into the Ministry's form.
- Visit the Ministry's webpage through the link on the application and complete the form. (Note: this will open a new browser tab.)
- Once the form is complete, copy the Ministry's confirmation number and enter it in the application form. It should look something like this AB123456

Note: Demographic information will not be used to assess eligibility for the program.

Application Review & Adjudication

The FSP is a first-come, first-served program; therefore, applicants must be clear and specific about the food safety results their projects will achieve. Prior to funding decisions being made, project applications are screened and reviewed by IAF. This review involves:

- Ensuring application completeness.
- Organization/applicant eligibility check.
- Project alignment and eligibility check.

IAF may contact applicants for additional information or clarification to assess their application.

If an application is eligible, IAF will reach out to the applicant within **10 to 15 business days** of submission to invite the applicant to co-create a work plan for the project with the program's Technical Advisor. Please note that during periods of high volume, such as following an application closure, this timeline may be extended. If the project is subsequently approved, IAF will inform the applicant of the decision details and any associated terms and conditions by email within **four weeks** of a complete and submitted work plan.

Neither applying nor completing a work plan is a guarantee of funding; projects are funded on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are fully committed. Project costs that are incurred before receiving a project approval letter **will not be reimbursed**.

All decisions regarding application status are final. All applicants will receive a funding decision email from IAF via the IAF Client Portal.



NOTIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

Funding Notifications and Contracts

If the project is approved, IAF will inform the applicant of the details of the decision and any associated terms and conditions by email within four weeks of the plan. To speed up the process, IAF will do our best to provide your details as quickly as possible, generally within 10 business days.

Funding is application and project-specific and must be used for the approved project and related expenses. Funds are non-transferable. Retroactive costs will not be considered.

All activities for projects funded 2026/27 fiscal year must begin after you have received a project approval letter, but no earlier than April 1, 2026, and be completed within 5 months of approval or by **January 30, 2027**, whichever is first. If you are unable to complete your project within 5 months, please let IAF staff know. Provided the additional time is reasonable and your project can be completed before February 28, 2027, extensions are eligible.

Funding Acknowledgements

This program is funded by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. As such, acknowledgement of funding is required when publicly communicating about a project and/or funding. To ensure appropriate acknowledgement, all communications and marketing materials, including public announcements or social media posts, must be pre-approved by the IAF Communications Team. Details on correctly acknowledging funding can be found on the [project resource hub](#). Materials can be submitted via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants must complete a final report before receiving funds from the program. This report must be filled out and submitted to IAF along with all invoices for the project to be considered for funding reimbursement. The final report must be submitted on time and with all required information. Expenses will be reimbursed based on the submitted receipts, the approved project budget, and the corresponding cost-share ratio. All reporting will be completed via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Changes to Contracted Projects

If you are not able to complete your project according to the approved work plan, please inform the IAF Team as soon as possible using the [IAF Client Portal](#).

December 2025

© 2025 – Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. All rights reserved. No part of this guide may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the BC Investment Agriculture Foundation. The Investment Agriculture Foundation does not endorse, recommend, or assume any liability for any of the operations or organizations referenced in this document.