



# New Entrant Strategy

**Growing B.C.'s  
next generation of  
agricultural leaders**



AgriServiceBC

# New Entrants to B.C. Agriculture

New entrants to agriculture face significant barriers to entry. The rising cost of agriculture land and inputs makes it increasingly difficult to start-up a farm. From 2011 to 2016, the total number of B.C. producers fell from approximately 29,000 to 26,000 and the average age rose to 56 years. Despite these trends, the number of B.C. producers under the age of 35 increased by 205 to 1,825. New entrants, from diverse backgrounds, are entering the agricultural and agrifood sector across the province, bringing new ideas, skills, and capital that are helping to invigorate and promote growth in the sector. Access to land, knowledge, and capital are needed to establish and grow B.C. agricultural or agrifood businesses.



## Land

*Help new entrants to access land*



## Knowledge

*Increase business and production knowledge*



## Capital

*Support new entrants to access capital*

## Grow BC: Build a sustainable agrifoods sector and help B.C. producers expand local food production

One key strategy under Grow BC is to help new farmers to access land and provide supports and services to grow the next generation of agricultural leaders. The Ministry of Agriculture's New Entrant Strategy is built on three pillars to address the key barriers facing new entrants to the sector.

Each pillar provides an overview of the activities the Ministry of Agriculture is undertaking to address a specific barrier to new entrants establishing and growing their businesses. These activities include supporting land matching services, delivering succession planning workshops, developing leaders and supporting mentorship, and facilitating farm start-up through training and events. Through AgriService BC, the Ministry's New Entrant Agrologist is a primary point of contact and helps to path find new entrants to programs and services. Ongoing research and consultation will evaluate the ongoing needs of new entrants and the effectiveness of the strategy.





# Access to Land

## Grow BC will help new entrants to access land

### B.C. Land Matching Program

*The Program provides land matching services and business supports to new farmers. Land matchers will be located in the Lower Mainland/Southwest, Vancouver Island, Okanagan, and Kootenay regions with an online portal to view land listings.*

- Provide land matching and business support services to new entrants and land owners through the B.C. Land Matching Program
- Deliver land linking workshops to new entrants and land owners on leasing
- Deliver transition planning workshops and provide cost-share funding through the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program to support succession planning and farm transitions
- Support and facilitate pathways to alternative forms of tenure through the Guide to Leasing Agreements, Co-operative Start-Up Guide and Cooperative Financing Guide
- Pathfinding new farmers to land access alternatives such as to agriculture cooperatives and incubator farms
- Assess the Agriculture Land Use Inventory and work with local government and other partners to identify unmanaged agriculture land for potential use by new farmers

## New Entrants in Brief

What is a New Entrant to agriculture? New Entrants are defined as individuals responsible for the management decisions in operating an agricultural or agrifood business for 5 years or less, or who intend to establish an agricultural or agrifood business.

Fast stats from 2016 Census:

- Only 7 percent of B.C. agriculture operations reported having a written succession plan
- Farmers under the age of 35 represented just over 9 percent of total farmers. Of B.C.'s 17,528 farms, only 4 percent were operated by farmers under the age of 35

These farms accounted for:

- 2% of the owned farm land and buildings, 3% of B.C.'s total farm capital, and 6% of the value of land and buildings rented or leased from others
- 8% of farms reporting the sale of organic products and 12% of the farms selling directly to consumers through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Source: Statistics Canada





# Access to Knowledge

## Grow BC will increase the business and production knowledge of new entrants

### New Farm Start-Up

*A Guide to Starting and Growing a Small or Medium Sized Farm Business in British Columbia.*

*This popular guide helps new farmers develop their farm business enterprises with the highest potential for success.*

- Deliver educational workshops on business management skills to help new entrants protect and grow their investments
- Provide training and assist new entrants to assess the feasibility of and plan for their new agrifoods businesses
- Provide ready access to farm business and production information such as the New Farm Start-Up Guide, Growing Your Farm Enterprise, Production Guides and AgriService BC webinars
- Provide cost-share funding for feasibility studies and business planning services to Indigenous communities entering the agrifood sector through the B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program
- Support knowledge transfer through field days and speakers and mentorship activities to develop technical, business and leadership skills
- Work with educators and other industry and local partners to facilitate and support practical on farm work experience and training



# Access to Capital

## Grow BC will support new entrants to access capital

- Provide cost-share funding through the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program to help new entrants understand their cost of production and develop plans to improve their ability to access capital
- Deliver financial and cost of production workshops and tools to educate on how to understand and control costs and better manage existing capital
- Work with financial institutions and other agriculture stakeholders to better understand the barriers for new entrants and explore financing options to address gaps

Funding for the New Entrant Strategy is provided through Ministry of Agriculture Grow BC initiatives and programs supported by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year federal-provincial initiative to strengthen the agriculture and agrifood sector.



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