

New Farmers Initiative British Columbia report

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The New Farmer Scene: Financing

- **Microloans:** Zero interest Micro Loan Fund (up to \$10,000) for farmers and processors., partnership between Islands Chef Collaborative (ICC), Farm Folk City Folk and VanCity.
- **Government:** BC Agri-Food Business Development Program (Growing Forward II), 85% repayment to hire a consultant to conduct a financial analysis (tier 1) and a business strategy (tier 2). Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

The New Farmer Scene: Land Access

- **Organisations:** Linking Land And Farmer (LLAF), Beyond the Market, Young Agrarians.
- **Guides:** Young Agrarians BC Land Access Guide, A Guide to Farmland Access Agreements (FarmFolk CityFolk Society and The Land Conservancy of BC)
- **Research:** Comox Valley Land Access Research Project (Comox Valley Food Roundtable), Farm Land Access Research Project at UBC

The New Farmer Scene: Training

- **Incubators:** Haliburton Farms, Richmond Incubator Farm Project, and the Grow a Farmer Project (CR-FAIR)
- **Educational programs:** UBC Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture, the Richmond Farm School (Kwantlen Polytechnic University), Agassiz Experimental Farm/Milk Technician certificate (University of Fraser Valley), Linnaea Farm
- **Business mentorship, management and planning programs:** Young Agrarians, Beyond the Market (BTM), BC Cattlemen's Association, Growing Forward II (i.e. Smart Farm BC)
- **Conferences:** Certified Organic Association of BC and Farmer2Farmer
- **Youth-focused:** 4-H Youth Mentorship Program
- **Social events with educational components:** Young Agrarians, Mainland Young Milk Producer Association, BC Young Farmers Association (BCYFA)
- **Apprenticeship:** SOIL (Stewards of Irreplaceable Land)
- **General Resources:** New Farm Start-Up Guide to Starting and Growing a Small or Medium Sized Farm Business (BC Government), COABC Small-Scale Certification Guide, A-Z Guide for New Northern Farmers (BTM)



New Farmer Barriers: Pre-production and Post-production

Pre-production barriers

- 1. Land Access:** Land prices. Accessing long-term tenure opportunities. Lease subdivision limit is 3 years. On-site housing. ALR under threat. Retirement dependent upon farm sale.
- 2. Resources:** Little to no financing opportunities for start-up enterprises/capital input/accessing quota. Apprenticing/studying agriculture = no savings. Skill set to access funds. Opportunity cost of the employment sector. Fluctuating costs of production (animals).
- 3. Knowledge:** Lack of extension services.

Post-production barriers

- 4. Demand:** Lack of security of demand. Centralized purchasing not conducive to local food systems.
- 5. Agricultural infrastructures:** Distance, availability, and suitability.
- 6. Overly strict food regulations:** Meat Inspection Regulations, water testing.

Policies: pre-production

1. Land access:

- BC Farmland Trust/Agricultural Gifts Program
- Land speculation
- Collective financing/purchasing agricultural land + enable multiple dwellings on farmland

2. Resources:

- Micro-loans and grants
- Federal subsidy employment for youth
- Direct payments to new farmers

3. Knowledge

- Local food funding stream to support and expand the work of organizations or communities
- Mentorship and on-site/in-person production support

Policies: Post-production

4. Demand

- Legislate social procurement at federal level
- More consumer awareness/education

5. Agricultural infrastructures

- Support the development of community infrastructures (i.e. abattoir, produce processing centres, etc)

6. Overly strict food safety regulation:

- Advocate for scale appropriate food safety regulations amenable to smaller farms

Findings

Pre-production barriers are seen as priority, but post-production barriers are significant.

To ensure the long-term viability of farming enterprises, both pre-production and post-production are equally important and cannot be dissociated.

Emerging policy priorities of national scope = Agricultural Gifts. Microloans and grants. Employment subsidy. Direct payment. Funding stream to support local organisations.

- Arzeena Hamir: COABC, IAFBC, ALR Watch, farmer at Amara Farm
- Keeley Nixon: LLAF, SOIL, COG-VI, Sooke Food Chi, farmer at ALM farm
- Robin Tunnicliffe: Grow a Farmer, Farmer2farmer, Young Agrarians land access guide, farmer at Sea Bluff Farm
- Dave Eto: Executive Director BC Dairy Association
- Jillian Merrick: Beyond the Market program coordinator
- Grant Bouwman: President Mainland Young Milk Producers
- Gillian Robbins: BC Young Farmers Association, BC Ag Council, farmer.
- Jen Gamble: Executive Director COABC
- Trevor Heargraves: Director of producer relations and communications, BC Dairy Association.
- Sara Dent: YA Co-founder and coordinator
- Tamara Richardson: Linnaea Farm
- Kevin Boon: Executive Director BC Cattlemen's Association
- Jason Found: ICC/FFCF/Vancity Microloans manager
- Sandra Hamilton: FEED Comox Valley, Business Consultant & Marketing Specialist, BC Partner for Social Impact
- Moss Dance: land access researcher, YA Vancouver Island Coordinator, farmer at Merville Organics
- Orlando Schmidt, Regional Manager Coast Region BC Ministry of Agriculture
- Patricia Tonn, Manager Youth Development Program, BC Ministry of Agriculture

Thank you