
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2018AGRI0039-001101
June 2, 2018

Ministry of Agriculture

Province commits support for B.C. beef packing plant

PRINCE GEORGE – The Government of British Columbia is supporting further development for a beef packing plant project in northern B.C. that will strengthen the provincial food system.

If the Prince George plant becomes fully operational, the North would gain an estimated 80 full-time, good-paying jobs in the plant by 2020, and an additional 620 spin-off jobs.

“I am excited to support the amazing people who work in our ranching sector in the North and throughout the province,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture. “This project has the potential to ensure B.C. cattle are bred, raised and finished in our province, providing retailers, suppliers, restaurants and consumers with great quality B.C. beef. This can provide an economic boost to rural B.C. and give consumers what they want.”

Popham announced a funding commitment of up to \$450,000 at the BC Cattlemen’s Association (BCCA) annual general meeting in Smithers on June 1, 2018. The funding will support the next step in the development of the B.C. Beef Packing Plant, a major milestone in the goal of bringing a federally inspected meat packing plant to Prince George.

The next step for the proposed meat packing plant is to develop the partnerships to organize and build the plant. The funding will be used to develop an industry-led co-operative business model, to support B.C. ranchers, and determine what role they could have in the plant’s ownership and operation.

A similar co-op was implemented for Ontario's pork industry. The B.C. beef plant project proponents will be looking at the best practices and lessons learned from that co-op as the plant is developed in B.C. If successful, the next phase would look at funding approvals, with the goal of construction beginning in 2019-2020.

The BCCA is leading the B.C. beef packing plant. The vision for the project is to provide differentiated, branded high-quality beef products to serve the specific needs of domestic, and select international, customers.

“As beef producers, we know that keeping cattle close to home provides the best opportunity. Having a packing plant here in the province would allow us to market our beef as B.C. beef — something we know consumers want,” said Kevin Boon, general manager, BC Cattlemen’s Association. “We recognize that there will be other considerations before we start building this facility. We need to look at establishing a finishing process, and increasing feeding capacity. There is a lot of work ahead of us, but this is an exciting first step in realizing that vision.”

In 2016, B.C. beef producers brought nearly 174,000 cattle and calves to market, amounting to almost 81,500 tonnes and generating close to \$219 million in farm cash receipts. The B.C. cattle

industry is primarily cow-calf operations, and located mostly in the Thompson-Okanagan, Cariboo, Nechako and Peace River regions.

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