
UPDATE

For Immediate Release
2021AFF0002-000033
Jan. 12, 2021

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Land matching program reaches milestone

VICTORIA – More than 100 farmers in the province have started growing crops and raising livestock on more than 2,023 hectares (5,000 acres) of farmland since 2016 through the B.C. Land Matching Program (BCLMP).

The 46 land matches finalized in 2020 will help improve food security, create economic growth and bring more local food options to communities in B.C. following COVID-19.

“This is an amazing milestone reached by the farmers and landholders who have been brought together through the B.C. Land Matching Program,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. “Through this program, we are helping farmers access land and keeping it in production, which strengthens B.C.’s food security and supports our local economies. Each match, whether big or small, adds to our next generation of agricultural leaders and means more opportunities for British Columbians to enjoy local products from their region.”

Okanagan farmer Kanver Brares comes from a long line of farmers and orchardists. He grew up on his family’s orchard playing among the fruit trees. After completing a business degree and trying to find his passion in life, his heart led him back to his roots – agriculture. Brares was matched to long-time organic apple orchardists Alain Peron and Donna Bartlett in Keremeos late last year. Through his lease, Brares will take over the 2.12-hectare (5.25-acre) orchard and business, carrying on the legacy of Old Tower Farm that has been built over the last 25 years.

In Saanich, Ardeo Mann started Rake and Radish Farm, a new market garden business, on 0.8 hectares (two acres) of leased land in spring 2020. The farm uses regenerative farming practices, low-till methods and prioritizes planting habitat for pollinators. Mann delivers pre-made produce boxes to customers by bicycle and tries to avoid the use of plastic wherever possible, to help ensure the farm has a low carbon footprint.

The BCLMP is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries’ Grow BC initiative. The initiative supports young farmers and food producers seeking a career in agriculture and addresses major challenges for new farmers, such as gaining access to land. The program is part of the Province’s New Entrant Strategy, which looks at ways to increase the number of new and young farmers working in B.C.’s agriculture sector.

Quotes:

Sara Dent, executive director, Young Agrarians –

“Accessing land in today’s real estate market is the number-one barrier new farmers have to overcome to start growing food for their communities. It is exciting to see the impact of the program grow and provide this level of support to a new generation of farmers. With an aging

farming population and the number of farms declining annually, it is important we invest now in a resilient future food system.”

Kanver Brares, orchardist, Old Tower Farm –

“Over the past years in the Okanagan, land has become a scarce resource. As a young farmer starting up, the purchasing price per acre is not realistic. The BCLMP offered new opportunities for young farmers who would like to acquire land. This program helps farmers seeking land in B.C by matching their land criteria with landholders looking to lease their land. The experience with this program was outstanding. They offered business resources and professional advice to guarantee full satisfaction from both parties. The BCLMP provided numerous options of land opportunities in the region that one couldn’t find personally. As the interest of new farmers is increasing, this program will help and motivate new farmers to acquire land. BCLMP is an excellent program that is pushing for future sustainability of farmers.”

Ardeo Mann, farmer, Rake and Radish Farm –

“Getting to start my own farm and feed people in my community has been a dream for many years. I’m so thrilled that I’ve been able to make it happen at 23 years old, thanks to the BCLMP and all of its support in securing a land lease.”

Learn More:

Find out more about the B.C. Land Matching Program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/land-matching>

Young Agrarians B.C. Land Matching Program: <http://youngagrarians.org/land/>

Government of B.C.’s New Entrant Strategy: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/farm-business-management/6322_agri_newentrantstrategy_web.pdf

More B.C. Land Matching Program news: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/22744>

Old Tower Farm: <https://oldtowerfarm.com/>

Rake and Radish Farm: <https://rakeandradish.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Facts about the B.C. Land Matching Program

- The B.C. Land Matching Program (BCLMP) is delivered by Young Agrarians. It provides personalized support services to new, young and established farmers and landholders to help them better understand regulations, evaluate opportunities, access resources and find a land-match partner.
- Since launching in 2016, the BCLMP has supported 109 matches, with approximately 2,392 hectares (5,910 acres) brought into or maintained in agricultural production.
- Matches range in size, from less than 0.4 hectares to thousands of hectares of farmland.
- 90% of the matches arranged through the program are in regions with high real estate prices, including Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and the Okanagan.
- The total number of matches (109) made in regions throughout B.C. include:
 - Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley: 33
 - Vancouver Island: 33
 - Okanagan: 26
 - Columbia Basin: seven
 - central and northern B.C.: 10
- The new businesses are farming a range of agricultural products, including mixed vegetables, sheep, goats, cattle, grain, hay, flowers, berries, eggs, tree fruits, buffalo dairy, honey, medicinal herbs, mushrooms and more.

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