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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

### **Major partnership with the Netherlands signed to better support B.C. food security**

VICTORIA – A new agreement signed between the Province of B.C. and the Netherlands will help further secure British Columbia’s food supply by developing agricultural technology (agritech) opportunities in both jurisdictions.

Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, co-signed the new action plan agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Nature Quality of the Netherlands, on the first leg of B.C.’s trade mission.

“The ongoing international unrest, and the ever-evolving changes to regional and global food systems, has shown us the importance of a more collaborative approach to develop new ways to produce healthy and sustainable food,” Kahlon said. “This agreement will help create more sustainable jobs and opportunities for British Columbians and allow us to better position B.C. as a frontrunner in agritech, aligned with key missions in our StrongerBC Economic Plan.”

The focus of this action plan is to deliver initiatives and cross-cultural learning exchanges to support sustainable agricultural and agritech opportunities for people and businesses in B.C. and the Netherlands. Encouraging collaboration in agriculture and agritech will increase food security, good jobs for British Columbians and help feed the world by fostering innovative solutions to create more productive, diverse and stronger food supply chains.

“Creating resilient and sustainable food systems for B.C. is essential for our economy and food security,” said Lana Popham, B.C.’s Minister of Agriculture and Food. “The Dutch are known for their innovative food practices, and we are excited to expand our work with the Netherlands, while showcasing our own prosperous farming communities. This agreement will allow for more strategic resource sharing and create new opportunities for agritech practices and existing traditional farms right here at home.”

This action plan focuses on specific strategies to further collaboration between the government, science, academia and companies in B.C. and the Netherlands. This model, referred to as the Triple Helix in the Netherlands, has contributed to the northern European country’s success as the second largest food exporter in the world.

“The relations between B.C. and the Netherlands in the agricultural community are very strong,” said Henk Snoeken, consul general of the Netherlands in Vancouver.

Part of the Netherlands’ long-term strategic vision focuses on circular agriculture, which aims to produce food with as little impacts on nature, environment and the climate as possible. This aligns with the agritech sector in British Columbia and furthers goals in the StrongerBC Economic Plan.

“As a renowned leader in agriculture in food, the Netherlands has a key role to play in the global shift towards sustainable agriculture, but we need to share knowledge and collaborate to drive innovation forward,” said Marianne Vaes, the Netherlands agricultural counselor to the United States and Canada. “The continued collaboration between the two jurisdictions will aid in creating a more sustainable agriculture and help to improve the food systems in both B.C. and the Netherlands.”

British Columbia is also home to more than 150 innovative companies that are developing and using leading-edge technologies to enhance productivity, increase sustainability and improve food security. The actions in this agreement will benefit each jurisdiction’s economies to create stronger, more resilient food systems for future generations.

The StrongerBC Economic Plan moves British Columbia forward by tackling the challenges of today, while growing an economy that works for everyone. The long-term plan builds off B.C. 's strong economic recovery and works to address two long-standing challenges - inequality and climate change - by closing the skills gap, building resilient communities, and helping businesses and people transition to clean-energy solutions. The plan sets two main goals for the Province - inclusive growth and clean growth - and puts forward six missions to keep B.C. on track.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- B.C. has more than 150 agritech companies, including in areas of food processing, precision agriculture, bioproducts, food safety/traceability and soil/crop technology.
- B.C. has an agritech land strategy that builds on recommendations made in 2019 by the Food Security Task Force to review land-use planning policies and regulations to ensure B.C.’s agritech sector has a place to grow.
- Positioning B.C. as an agritech leader while ensuring provincial food security and protecting farmland is a priority in Kahlon’s and Popham’s minister mandate letters.

#### **Learn More:**

For more information on the StrongerBC Economic Plan, visit:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/plan>

For more information on trade mission to Europe, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/26835>

To learn more about B.C. agritech, visit:

<https://www.britishcolumbia.ca/TradeBCPortal/media/Marketing/bc-agritech-mit.pdf>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/innovation-and-technology>

To learn more about the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force,

visit: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/impact/food-security-task-force-results/>

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