
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture and Food

B.C. increases food security, agricultural resiliency during emergencies

VICTORIA – The Province is supporting B.C.’s farmers, communities and First Nations with a new fund to help with increased planning and preparation for agricultural emergencies, while strengthening food security for British Columbians.

“We continue to see the impacts of a changing climate on our agriculture community, and we are proactively helping farmers adapt and prepare for events like drought, wildfire, flood and extreme weather that are becoming far too frequent in B.C.,” said Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food. “Being able to feed British Columbians is tied to our communities’ ability to be prepared and resilient to emergencies. This investment focusses on how best to plan and prepare for future emergencies so that we’re supporting B.C.’s food producers and our overall food security.”

With as much as \$20 million available, the new Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund will support the purchase, upgrading and installation of equipment and infrastructure by those who have a direct role in preparing and responding to agricultural emergencies, including farmers, local governments, First Nations, industry associations and other service providers.

Examples include:

- upgrading or new water storage infrastructure, such as dams or water dugouts to help alleviate drought;
- increasing capacity for feed-mill storage; and
- ensuring the safe disposal of animals in the event of an animal disease outbreak or animal health emergency.

The fund will also help with emergency response training, emergency planning, and developing the tools and procedures necessary to respond to and manage agricultural emergencies.

Examples include:

- regional plans for livestock relocation in the event of large-scale wildfires or floods;
- local authority and First Nation planning to support agricultural producers during emergency events; and
- development of agriculture industry associations emergency response plans.

“Farmers and ranchers are stewards of the land and are on the front lines, facing the consequences of climate change,” said Jennifer Woike, president, BC Agriculture Council. “This historic investment in the Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund will allow agricultural producers to do more of what they are already doing to protect the resiliency of

our province's food systems, even in the face of wildfires, droughts and more.”

This program is part of the \$200-million food security announcement made in March 2023. Together, these programs are providing supports for farmers so they can sustain and build their capacity to produce food for British Columbians.

Quotes:

Jeremy Dunn, general manager, BC Dairy –

“Through recent wildfire and flood events, we’ve identified opportunities to collaborate with BC Cattlemen’s Association and BC Agriculture Council to support farmers in both emergency preparation and response. Efforts in this area will require a co-ordinated approach between farmers, agricultural associations and all levels of government, including First Nations. Today’s announcement is an important step to advance emergency planning for agriculture and ensure farmers’ voices are included in decision-making.”

Barbara Roden, chair, Thompson-Nicola Regional District board of directors –

“This fund will help ranchers, farmers, cattle producers and more in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District and throughout B.C., to become more resilient in the face of agricultural emergencies. Maintaining the safety of the province’s food supply is of vital importance, especially during an emergency. The funding will allow agricultural producers to develop plans, build capacity and improve their response to ensure that food supply is maintained for all British Columbians.”

Margo Wagner, chair, Cariboo Regional District board of directors, director for Electoral Area H –

“We’re glad the Province recognizes that food security is a provincial priority, particularly during emergencies, and is seeking to address it through this new funding.”

Jack DeWit, chair, Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF) –

“Now, more than ever, emergency planning and preparedness is important to agriculture and agri-food sectors. Delivering impactful, responsive and relevant programming is a priority for IAF in our endeavour to support agriculture and food in B.C.”

Quick Facts:

- The Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund has up to \$20 million available in funding through two streams:
 - Stream 1 provides up to \$150,000 to local governments, First Nations, agriculture, agri-food and seafood associations for planning activities.
 - Stream 2 provides up to \$2 million for equipment and infrastructure to B.C.-based industry associations, primary processors, and supporting service providers that have a direct role in preparing and responding to agricultural emergencies.
- The Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.
- Industry associations may apply for preparedness funding that could be used to directly assist individual producers.

Learn More:

For more information on the fund and to apply, visit: <https://iafbc.ca/fspp/>

For emergency preparedness tips and resources specific to farmers and ranchers, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/emergency-management/emergency-preparedness-for-producers>

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