

AGRICULTURE

The Township of Langley *is home to more farms and more farmed area than any other municipality* in Metro Vancouver. The most common uses of the 10,807 hectares of farm lands in the Township include (i) land in crops/food production, (ii) natural land for pasture, and (iii) other farm land uses. Forty-eight percent of Township parcels in the ALR are smaller than 4 hectares (10 acres). The number of smaller parcels is an opportunity to encourage intensive operations not requiring a large land base, as well as direct farm market operations able to capitalize on its proximity to the Metro Vancouver market. BC's Ministry of Agriculture identifies that in 2015, agriculture accounted for 2.1% of BC's GDP and some 23,800 jobs. In 2015, the Township had the largest gross farm receipts in the region, generating 36% in Metro Vancouver. In 2017, farm cash receipts for BC totalled \$3.2 million.

In addition to the *Township's Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee's* work on enhancing the agricultural sector, in 2013 Township Council endorsed a 20-year *Agricultural Viability Strategy* to support agriculture. Four areas of emphasis were identified including: (i) providing a welcoming business environment for farming, (ii) providing the required services and infrastructure, (iii) providing a secure

agricultural land base, and; (iv) ensuring farmer use of best farm management practices. Over the 20 year term, funding in the total amount of \$2.7 million or up to \$135,000 annually, was endorsed by Township Council. Some of the *strategy achievements to-date* include:

- completion of a food hub feasibility study which is guiding an industry steering group to explore options of establishing a food hub in the Township
- delivery of workshops on small lot farming, farming mentorship, and farm business management, in partnership with the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (LSAF)
- initiation of a 3-year pilot project for Ecological Services Initiative in partnership with LSAF and Farmland Advantage
- update of Agricultural Profile using Census of Agriculture (2016) and BC Ministry of Agriculture Land Use Inventory (2017)
- initiation of a land inventory/land matching program with the Young Agrarians of BC

SEE NEXT 



Useful Links

Agricultural Land Commission alc.gov.bc.ca
BC Agriculture Council bcac.ca

Horse Council British Columbia hcbc.ca
Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC iafbc.ca

For the year 2018, in the Township, there was a total value of permits of over \$33 million for agriculture development.

In 2013, the Township partnered with the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation to run the farmer-led Langley Ecological Services Initiative pilot program that supports financial incentives for agricultural producers to keep waterways, forests, and other ecologically sensitive areas clean and healthy for current and future generations. Eleven farmers along Bertrand Creek are participating and maintaining a second growth forest along the Creekside.

Food security has become a growing topic of realization, recognizing that in the near future food production will have to be more localized. Issues such as climate change, energy price instability, cost of transportation, and changes in the environment are weakening how our current food system functions. In Metro Vancouver, some regions, including the Township are better positioned to be food producers given suitable agricultural land, milder temperatures, and access to water. In 2014, the Township participated in a multi-partner project led by Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Institute for Sustainable Food Systems to explore the economic, environmental stewardship, and food self-reliance **potential for a bioregional food system** in southwest BC. A bioregional food system respects municipal/regional boundaries while it leverages opportunities for an

ecological region. The study identified, amongst other facts, that residents of southwest BC spend over \$6 billion annually on food; a bioregional food system could potentially acquire an increased share of this spend which could then circulate within the regional economy.

The **equine / equestrian industry** is equally a stronghold in the Township. While it carries its own weight economically from agriculture specifically, for the purposes of this backgrounder, it has been included in this section. According to the last 2009 Equine Industry Study, compiled by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and the Horse Council British Columbia (which is located in the Township), the horse industry supported \$740M in economic activity in BC, through some 100,000 horses from within ~14,000 farms throughout the province, and that supports 7,200 full time jobs. Of this activity, \$26M was specific to equine tourism.

As part of staff's **digital marketing collateral** efforts, a video showcasing farm-to-table in the Township was commissioned in 2017 and is available at [YouTube.com/LangleyTownship](https://www.youtube.com/LangleyTownship).