

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## BC Farm Industry Review Board 2024 to 2027



**Advancing the public interest through fair  
and effective supervision, adjudication, and  
dispute resolution**

# MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

BCFIRB plays a key role in advancing the public interest through its administrative justice role providing accessible decision-making and dispute resolution, and through its effective supervision of British Columbia's agriculture commodity boards and commissions.

BC's agriculture sector is a cornerstone of local food production and a vital and highly valued asset in the rapidly changing world of food supply management.

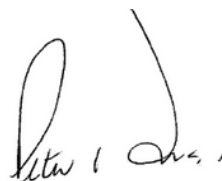
Eight BC agriculture commodity boards and commissions do the crucial work of regulating the market for eggs, milk, chicken, hatching eggs, turkey, hogs, vegetables and cranberries. This system of regulatory market controls ensures BC farmers can maintain efficient production and sell their products at fair prices to local consumers and beyond.

The BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) has a supervisory role overseeing the work of these boards and commissions to ensure their decision-making on issues such as production, supply, and pricing balance the public interest with the needs and challenges farmers face with dynamic market conditions.

BCFIRB has an important dispute resolution and adjudication function in its role as an independent administrative tribunal that hears appeals of agriculture commodity board and commission decisions, complaints arising from farm practices, and appeals of animal seizures by the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Each of these mandates sits within a landscape of challenges and opportunities which BCFIRB works to understand and proactively address in how we do our work, including adaptation and improvement in our own policies and processes.

Work on BCFIRB's **Strategic Plan 2024-2027** has been underway for several years. The plan links our goals and values with our strategic priorities and actions to deliver on our mandates, advance the public interest, and report on our progress through our Annual Report. I am excited to share this three-year plan with you.



**Peter Donkers**  
Chair

# INTRODUCTION

BCFIRB is a BC government-appointed administrative tribunal that operates independently under BC's **Administrative Tribunals Act** and specific mandates established under the **Natural Products Marketing (B.C.) Act (NPMA)**, the **Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act (FPPA)**, and the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCAA)**.

BCFIRB is accountable to the BC Government under each statute and for its administrative operations but is independent in its decision making.

Demonstrating accountability is a requirement and priority for BCFIRB, which uses two annual reporting mechanisms to do so:

- An **annual report** submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the provincial ministry with oversight for the NPMA, FPPA, and PCAA), which includes and measures BCFIRB's goals and progress.
- An annual **public accountability report** that highlights the work of BC's agriculture commodity boards and commissions, and BCFIRB supervision that supports their continued good governance.

This **Strategic Plan 2024-2027** situates BCFIRB's mission, vision, values, goals, performance, and reporting to **strategic priorities and actions** that reflect challenges and opportunities and which will help BCFIRB effectively supervise, adjudicate, resolve disputes, and advance the public interest for the next three years and beyond.



# THE BOARD

BCFIRB members are appointed by the BC Lieutenant Governor in Council, and bring skills and expertise in agri-food production, marketing and economics; regulatory/government processes; animal welfare; mediation and dispute resolution; governance and board management; and law and administrative justice. To support continued growth and expertise, members participate in ongoing training and education opportunities.



**Peter Donkers**  
CHAIR



**Al Sakalauskas**  
VICE CHAIR  
Term Ended Nov 2023



**Gunta Vitins**  
VICE CHAIR  
Appointed Nov 2023



**Neil Turner**  
VICE CHAIR  
Appointed Jul 2024



**Wendy Holm**  
MEMBER



**Pawan Joshi**  
MEMBER



**Dennis Lapierre**  
MEMBER



**David Zirnhelt**  
MEMBER



**Jane Pritchard**  
MEMBER



# MANDATES

BCFIRB supervises, adjudicates and resolves disputes in the public interest under mandates established by three provincial statutes and under the authority provided in BC's *Administrative Tribunals Act* (ATA).

## ACTS

## BCFIRB MANDATE/ROLE

### ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS ACT

Provisions that apply to BCFIRB when exercising a particular administrative tribunal function under one of BCFIRB's mandates for hearing appeals or complaints.

### FARM PRACTICES PROTECTION (RIGHT TO FARM) ACT

Hearing farm practices complaints from persons disturbed by odour, noise, dust or other disturbances arising from agriculture or certain aquaculture operations. Supporting studies and reporting on general farm practices in the province.

### PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT

Hearing appeals about certain animal custody and related cost decisions of the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BCSPCA).

### NATURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING (BC) ACT

Supervising BC's regulated agriculture commodity boards and commissions (see below) responsible for orderly production and marketing of commodities, to ensure decisions and actions reflect sound marketing policy in the public interest.

Hearing appeals from persons aggrieved by or dissatisfied with orders, decisions, or determinations of these commodity boards and commissions.

Serving as a signatory party to federal-provincial agreements for supply managed agriculture commodities under the federal-provincial supply managed system.



BC Egg Marketing Board



BC Chicken Marketing Board



BC Cranberry Marketing Commission



BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission



BC Vegetable Marketing Commission



BC Turkey Marketing Board



BC Hog Marketing Commission



BC Milk Marketing Board

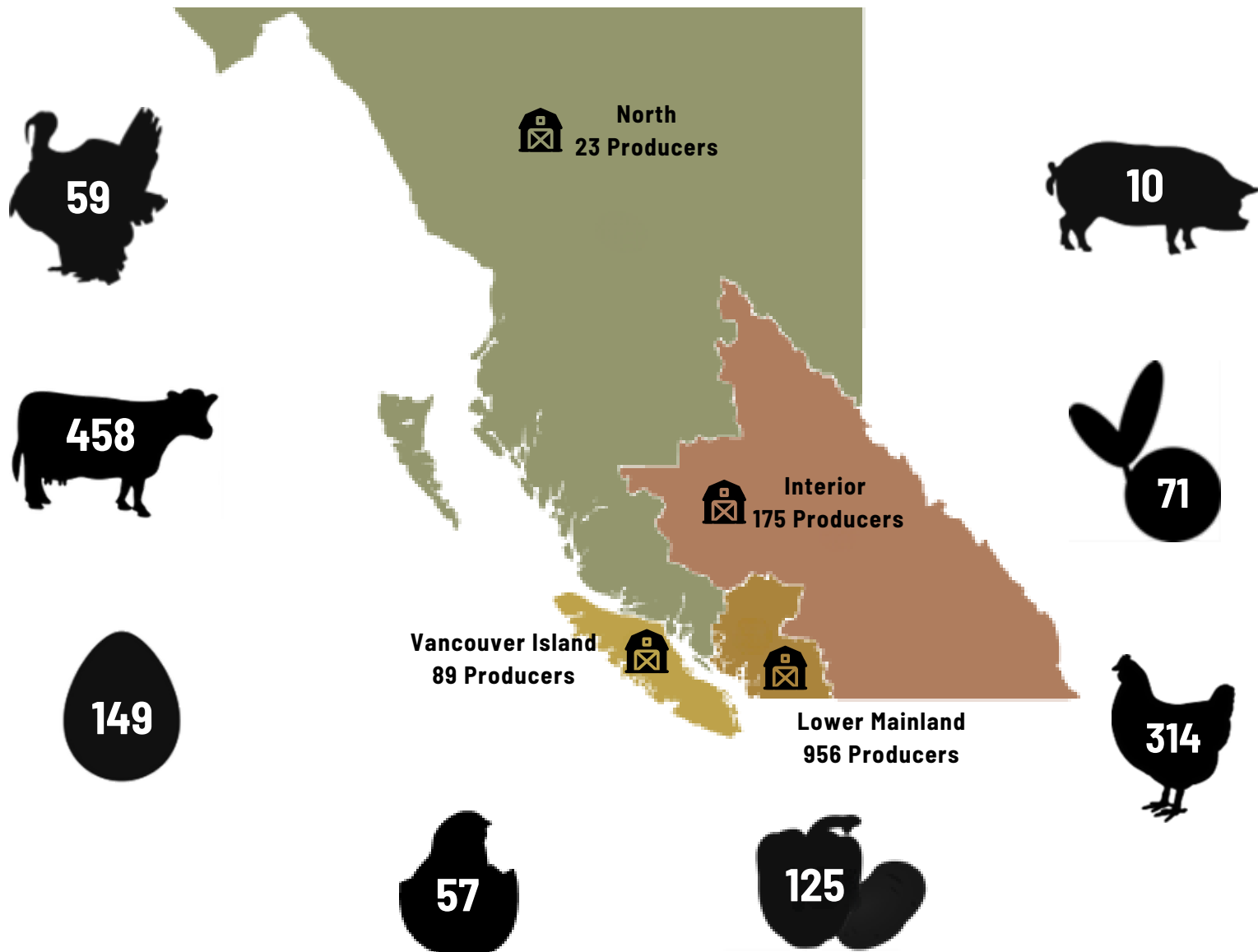
# BCFIRB'S SUPERVISORY ROLE

In addition to its appeal and complaints mandates, BCFIRB has a unique role in supervising the regulated marketing boards and commissions that are the first instance regulators of BC's eight agriculture regulated commodities.

In 2022, there were **1,243 licensed producers** across British Columbia within BC's regulated marketing commodities.

See below for **number of producers** by **commodity** and by **region**.

In 2022, these commodities generated **over 45% of total farm gate sales** in BC.





# VISION

**Advancing the public interest  
through fair and effective  
supervision, adjudication and  
dispute resolution  
across BCFIRB mandates**





# VALUES

Since its inception in 1934 as the BC Marketing Board and one of BC's first tribunals, BCFIRB has gained additional mandates and made strides in fair and effective supervision, adjudication and dispute resolution. BCFIRB's values are reflected and demonstrated in its day-to-day operations, processes, actions, and decisions.

**See below for examples of how BCFIRB upholds its values through policies and practices.**

## SUPERVISORY ROLE

## ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL ROLE

### INTEGRITY

#### SAFETI POLICY LENS

BCFIRB and commodity boards and commissions apply **SAFETI principles** in decision-making: Strategic, Accountable, Fair, Effective, Transparent and Inclusive.

#### RULES OF PRACTICE & PROCEDURE

BCFIRB dispute resolution processes reflect principles of administrative fairness and meet BCFIRB's publicly posted Rules of Practice and Procedure.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING PROJECT

BCFIRB reports on sector data, governance, and quota management practices and progress.

#### ANNUAL REPORTING

BCFIRB includes details of adjudication and dispute resolution cases, processes and decisions.

### LEADERSHIP

#### NEW ENTRANT PROGRAMS (NEPs)

BCFIRB sets the requirements for boards and commissions to have NEPs that support new growth, farm succession, and sector resilience.

#### ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

BCFIRB leads and supports ADR when possible to help resolve disputes between parties.

### TRUST

#### DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY & TRANSPARENCY

BCFIRB operates within its mandates, holds hearings that are open to the public, and provides timely public information including clear rationale for decisions that helps build stakeholder and public trust.

### RESPECT

#### FAIR & TRANSPARENT PROCESSES

BCFIRB ADR and hearing processes reflect respect for all parties and provide access to justice through timely and fulsome information, fair and impartial hearings, and publicly-posted information.

# APPLYING VALUES IN DECISION-MAKING

See below for examples of how BCFIRB upholds its values through BCFIRB decisions.

## 2021 REVIEW OF ALLEGATIONS OF BAD FAITH AND UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES

BCFIRB led a comprehensive supervisory review when the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission faced accusations of bad faith and unlawful activity, focusing on the integrity of BC's regulated vegetable industry and its orderly marketing to ensure continued sector and public trust and confidence in the integrity of BC's regulated marketing system and the vegetable sector.

**INTEGRITY**

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

## 2020 CHICKEN PRICING SUPERVISORY REVIEW

Since 2018, appeals of BC chicken pricing by poultry processor and chicken grower associations, together with a BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission decision to exit a price linkage agreement with the BC Chicken Marketing Board, has impacted the orderly marketing of chicken in BC. In 2020, BCFIRB initiated a supervisory review to support greater supply chain stability and accountability. The review includes the Commission and Board working together and with industry stakeholders to establish long-term pricing options and solutions.

## 2018 QUOTA ASSESSMENT TOOLS EVALUATION REVIEW

Orderly marketing through sound marketing policy is an overall goal for BCFIRB and boards and commissions within BC's agriculture supply-managed system. In consultation with boards and commissions, BCFIRB reviewed its 2005 quota transfer directions, leading to confirmation of quota management core policies which reduce barriers to quota transfer between producers and supports the public interest. In its decision, BCFIRB demonstrated leadership in establishing first-of-its-kind public quota management reporting in Canada.

**LEADERSHIP**

**TRUST**

## 2023 BC EGG MARKETING BOARD PRIOR APPROVAL

The BC Egg Marketing Board has long been required under regulation to seek BCFIRB approval before it can distribute quota to BC egg producers. Working with BCFIRB over time, BCEMB developed a robust SAFETI approach to egg quota management that reflects sound marketing policy and the public interest. In 2023, BCFIRB supported BCEMB's request to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to remove the requirement for BCFIRB prior approval going forward.

## USER EXPERIENCE SURVEYS

BCFIRB conducts anonymous user experience surveys as part of its administrative tribunal processes to receive feedback from complainants and appellants that help BCFIRB make improvements over time that demonstrate respect and support transparent access to justice for all parties (e.g., updates to BCFIRB public information and guidance to parties).

**RESPECT**

# THE ENVIRONMENT WE OPERATE WITHIN

BCFIRB supervises, adjudicates and resolves disputes of parties that operate within an evolving landscape of social, economic and environmental change. BCFIRB works closely with key stakeholders to understand and balance its actions and decisions while upholding the public interest.

Below are some of the current **external issues and challenges** that can directly or indirectly **impact BCFIRB and its mandates**.

## EXTERNAL ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS

### SUPERVISORY ROLE

#### ENVIRONMENTAL

- Climate change as a continuing, growing concern for producers and regions, including increased size and number of natural disasters, that can impact operations, production and supply chains.
- New biosecurity hazards including disease (e.g., avian influenza, African swine fever) that can harm or decimate livestock and increase stringent and resource-intensive biosecurity, food safety and traceability controls.

#### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

- Local and global food system volatility and complexities that impact costs of production and supply chains, and complex retail relationships with many suppliers and fewer buyers that increase pressure on producers.
- The growth of food insecurity amid high food costs and other inflationary impacts that make it hard for people to put food on the table and for farmers to meet bottom-line costs and sustain businesses.
- Labour shortages and a lack of available and appropriately skilled food system workers that impacts food production and businesses.
- Increased pressure on BC's agricultural land reserve (ALR) that can impact production/farm practices, influence sector consolidation, and create local infrastructure gaps.
- Recognition of interests that require new approaches to existing practices (e.g., Indigenous agriculture economic development and food security interests).

### ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL ROLE

#### ANIMAL WELFARE

- Farm animal activism that can damage awareness, understanding and public trust of appropriate animal husbandry practices.
- Social and economic challenges including homelessness and affordability that impact animal owners to properly care for their animals.
- Extreme weather events and biosecurity hazards that create new pressures that impact animal welfare management.

#### EMERGING FARM PRACTICES

- Evolving farm practices with new technologies that create pressure to change the on-the-ground experience around agricultural land.
- Understanding new and innovative farm practices to support mitigation and effective dispute resolution on BC's agricultural land base.

#### LEGAL PROCESSES

- Barriers such as timing, participation, representation and the complexity of appeal processes for appellants of animal seizures under the PCAA who face socio-economic barriers.
- Changes to the judicial landscape including legal precedents that may impact BCFIRB appeal and complaint adjudication and dispute resolution processes.



# OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT

BCFIRB has a unique opportunity to support the public interest through its mandates for supervision, adjudication and dispute resolution.

**Below are just some examples of the current opportunities available to BCFIRB.**

## SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

- Global supply chain impacts have put government and the public on high alert to the challenges facing food producers and processors. Affordability issues coupled with food security awareness and changes in consumer purchasing and demand have created more opportunities for locally grown and raised food. **BCFIRB can support boards and commissions to identify and try new approaches to address industry challenges including retail practices, consumer food security interests, and market trends balanced with the need to compete nationally and internationally.**

## INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

- The BC government continues to work with Indigenous peoples and communities to support reconciliation, particularly with addressing barriers to participation and economic development and food security needs. **BCFIRB will continue to expand our understanding of Indigenous economic interests in BC's regulated agriculture commodities, including opportunities to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food to consider how BCFIRB's supervisory role in regulated marketing can assist in addressing those interests.**

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION, APPEALS & COMPLAINTS

- New technology improvements, growing awareness of affordability challenges for British Columbians, and evolving farm practices provide an important backdrop for both continuous improvement and frame for innovation. **Through the ongoing review of its policies, processes, and practices, BCFIRB can continue to improve the access to and effectiveness of its dispute resolution processes for appellants, complainants and other affected parties.**

## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Global food system and supply chain challenges create an opportunity for regional, provincial, and national scale collaborative solutions respecting quota and supply. **BCFIRB can continue to lead and support strong collaboration with provincial and federal bodies including through its role on the National Association of Agri-food Supervisory Agencies (NAASA) working group, to help inform and effectively work across BC and Canada to support orderly marketing and sound marketing policy within a prosperous agriculture industry.**

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

BCFIRB's [Annual Report](#) Goals guide the work of our board. BCFIRB's Strategic Priorities below establish how and through what actions BCFIRB will achieve its goals over the next three years (2024 to 2027).

## Priority 1

*Ensure supervisory direction supports good governance by commodity boards and commissions*

Supports Annual Report Goal 1: A regulated marketing system with effective self-governance

## Priority 2

*Help to future proof the agriculture sector*

Supports Annual Report Goal 2: A principles based, outcomes-oriented approach to regulation

## Priority 3

*Review and improve BCFIRB processes and policies that support effective dispute resolution*

Supports Annual Report Goal 3: Effective, fair and independent resolution of inquiries and disputes

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE

Ensure supervisory direction supports good governance by commodity boards and commissions

## Strategic Actions for Priority #1

- Review effectiveness of board and commission use of the SAFETI principles lens in decision-making.
- Require boards and commissions to report on compliance and enforcement of mandatory biosecurity programs.
- Continue to host bi-annual meetings with boards and commissions to identify best practices and support the work of BC's Centre for Organizational Governance in Agriculture.
- Continue to provide training and other professional development for BCFIRB members.

## Context

Strategic priority and actions help support boards and commissions in practicing strong self-governance and an outcomes approach that reflects BCFIRB direction and intent. They enable boards and commissions to strategically capitalize on larger opportunities such as market changes or consumer needs and trends within a dynamic operating environment.

## Reporting on Progress

In our annual report, BCFIRB will report on each action to show progress:

- BCFIRB and boards and commissions demonstrate that their programs, policies and decisions reflect legislative intent, sound marketing policy and the public interest.
- Appropriate governance and fiscal procedures are exercised.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO

## Help to future proof the agriculture sector

### Strategic Actions for Priority #2

- Review board and commission new entrant programs and quota exchange policies to ensure they are accessible, reflect SAFETI principles, and support succession planning and future-focused quota management (i.e., established quota exchange).
- Require boards and commissions to build and implement Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) as tools to assist and improve biosecurity.
- Continue to forge strong relationships with federal and provincial bodies and other regulated marketing partners to support proactive collaboration and responsiveness to sector challenges and new opportunities.
- Meet with the BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food to better understand economic interests of Indigenous peoples/communities across regulated agriculture commodities.
- Recommend the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food review the 2004 Regulated Marketing Economic Policy to consider new factors and challenges such as disease and biosecurity, climate change and disaster events, food security, Indigenous reconciliation, and BC's agricultural land reserve.

### Context

Strategic priority and actions help ensure BCFIRB supervisory decisions and direction to boards and commissions support good governance and consider and reflect the challenges faced by the regulated marketing sector. They also support the long-term growth and viability of the sector by helping to plan for the future including new or growing risks from climate change weather events, biosecurity issues, and regional agriculture pressures over time.

### Reporting on Progress

In our annual report, BCFIRB will report on each action to show progress:

- BCFIRB and boards and commissions demonstrate a sustainable principles oriented approach to regulation in their programs, policies and decisions.
- BCFIRB orders, decisions and determinations are published publicly and promptly.
- BCFIRB connects regularly with boards and other provincial and national partners to collaborate and share information when possible.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE

Review and improve BCFIRB processes and policies that support effective dispute resolution

## Strategic Actions for Priority #3

- Review the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of BCFIRB's practice directives, and policies of practice and procedure, for each adjudicative mandate, including a 10-year retrospective review of BCFIRB's mandate under the PCAA.
- Continue to actively implement access to justice principles in how BCFIRB provides information and guidance to appellants, complainants and other affected parties.

## Context

Strategic priority and actions help ensure BCFIRB builds and maintains processes, policies and practices that support informed participation by parties and clear, fair, transparent and effective dispute resolution and adjudication.

## Reporting on Progress

In our annual report, BCFIRB will report on each action to show progress:

- BCFIRB reports on updates, revisions, and additions to practice directives, practices and procedures, and appeal and complaint cases on timeframes, costs, and user satisfaction.



# For More Information

BCFIRB has been a key component of BC's agriculture system for almost 90 years.

Learn more about the [BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food](#).

Learn more about BC's agriculture commodity boards and commissions.

[BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission](#)

[BC Chicken Marketing Board](#)

[BC Egg Marketing Board](#)

[BC Milk Marketing Board](#)

[BC Turkey Marketing Board](#)

[BC Cranberry Marketing Commission](#)

[BC Hog Marketing Commission](#)

[BC Vegetable Marketing Commission](#)

Learn more about the [protection of farm practices in BC](#).

Learn more about [animal welfare in BC](#).

Learn more about [BC's administrative tribunals](#).



## BC Farm Industry Review Board

### Contact Us



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