



B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



This journey map scenario considers the following...

A new or existing Indigenous rancher wishes to process livestock (e.g. bison, cattle, sheep, goats, fallow deer, etc.) and sell the meat products within the province. The rancher seeks plain-language guidance on revenue-generating pathways.

Note: Although this scenario is built around a ranch operation, many of the business planning and regulatory considerations would also apply to poultry production, processing and retail.

What is the Journey Map Series?

The Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map series illustrates economic opportunity pathways for Indigenous food and agriculture entrepreneurs to build market awareness, understand key success factors, and support informed decision-making.

The Journey Map is designed to highlight key considerations and prompt discussion. It is not intended to replace detailed business planning, feasibility analysis, or professional advice.



Other Journey Maps in this series:

- Salmon Products for Sale to International and Interprovincial Markets
- Apple Sauce for Sale to B.C. Healthcare Facilities
- Jams, Sauces, Stews, and Soups for Sale to B.C. Consumers
- Fresh Food Production for Sale within Indigenous Communities
- Dried or Frozen Fruit for Sale to B.C. Schools and Districts

Also see: [Stewarding Food Systems Projects: A Decision-Making Guide for Indigenous Communities](#)

A Note About These Journey Maps

The current pathways of business, agriculture, finance, and regulation were shaped without consideration of Indigenous governance systems, land-based economies, or legal orders.

The effects of dispossession, uneven access to capital, and structural power imbalances are not historical footnotes. Rather, they continue to influence opportunity, risk, and recognition.

At the same time, Indigenous communities are actively shaping their own economic futures. Food systems are being rebuilt, enterprises are being launched, and Nations are making strategic investments grounded in sovereignty and long-term vision.

Structural change is necessary, and that work continues. These tools are offered to support that movement, with clarity, humility, and accountability.



Sources Used to Inform This Journey Map

Choosing your business type. 2025. Government of British Columbia.; Discussion Paper on Indigenous Food Sovereignty. 2023. Tea Creek Enterprises.; Gap Analysis of Funding for Indigenous Agriculture and Food. 2022. Osier Consulting.; Indigenous Agriculture Inventory, Understanding the Needs of the Sector. 2021. Keefer Ecological Services LTD.; Indigenous Agriculture Situation Assessment. 2020. Tapestry Evaluation & Strategy.; Information on the tax exemption under section 87 of the Indian Act. 2025. Government of Canada.; Joint Venture Agreements with First Nations. 2025. Harper Grey LLP.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this material provided by the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) and the Province of British Columbia.



The Journey Map Series was developed by Upland Agricultural Consulting and Ispahcâw Consulting for the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) and B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food. We would like to thank the many IACAF members, ministry staff and subject matter experts who contributed to the development and review of these resources. We recognize that any resource like this will always be a work in progress.

We welcome your input! Please contact the IACAF Secretariat (IACAF.Secretariat@gov.bc.ca) to share your feedback. Thank you!



B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Journey Map “At A Glance”

The information in this Journey Map will walk you through the following phases.
Detailed resources are available on the last page of the Journey Map.

Preparation Phase

Determine whether there is enough demand and good revenue margins to justify the investment.

Phase 1: Business Planning

Update your business plan to reflect your new goals. Consider rules and regulations about products, and if you need to change your business structure.

Phase 2: Production

Assess your land and herd capacity, build a support network, and develop a Ranch Management Plan.

Phase 3: Processing

Determine if you will process livestock on or off the farm.

Get appropriate slaughter licensing, tags and training.

Phase 4: Distribution and Retail

Learn about labelling regulations and distribution options for selling your meat products.





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Preparation Phase

It's important to do upfront research to determine whether business objectives are justified by demand, workable margins, and the capital required to operate in new markets. These considerations should help you to make a well-informed go/no-go decision about moving forward. Once this fact-finding and idea validation stage is over, move into **Phase 1** of actioning.

Clarify Your Objectives

Are you going to be:

- Increasing profits?
- Selling direct-to-consumer?
- Targeting retail grocery and/or restaurants?
- Building an Indigenous meat brand?

Be honest about scale ambition!

Meat processing is highly regulated and upfront costs can be expensive.

Determine Market Demand

- Identify retail and direct-to-consumer demand.
- Confirm price points for comparable products.
- Assess cold storage needs.
- Speak with local butchers and grocers.

Consider building your support network:

- Reach out to the [Small-Scale Meat Producers Association](#) and [BCMeats](#) to speak with producers that have taken these steps.





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Create Your Financial Snapshot

Estimate:

- Slaughter licensing and costs, cut and wrap fees, packaging needs
- Refrigerated transport and storage
- Insurance
- Costs related to animal raising; feed, shelter infrastructure, water, etc.

Calculate:

- Revenue per animal
- Yield percentages
- Size of herd required to break-even

Consider Regulations and Certifications

Meat processing requirements include:

- Slaughter training (SlaughterRight)
- Licensing (FarmGate Plus)
- Cut and Wrap (Health Authority permit)
- [Waste management regulations](#)

Consider:

- Traceability requirements
- Insurance needs
- Inspection compliance

Note: If you are planning to sell products outside of B.C., your livestock will need to be processed at a federally-registered facility.





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Phase 1: Business Planning

Create a business plan that identifies structure, product financials, target sales, and insurance requirements. If the ranch is already established, there may not be any need to re-evaluate your business structure, or you may create a new business for the meat products, so that it is separate from the ranch operation.

Many helpful resources are available to support business planning. See the final page for links.

The plan should include:

- Confirmed production targets
- Regulatory compliance costs
- Distribution strategy
- Working capital requirements
- Governance and ownership considerations

Structure	Best For	Governance	Legal and Tax
Sole Proprietorship	Small-scale startups, harvesters, or artisanal producers/processors in the early testing phase.	You have full control of your business but will be responsible for all business debts.	Profits are taxed as income, but some tax exemptions may apply if the business is operated primarily on-reserve.
Private Corporation	Individuals, or multiple people working together, or family-owned businesses.	Business decisions are directed by the owners; it offers a clear legal separation from the Nation's political structure.	Corporate tax rates apply. However, if the business is on-reserve and owners and employees are Status Indian then dividends from company may be tax exempt.
Economic Development Corporation	Larger scale community ventures like industrial greenhouses or commercial livestock.	Business is either managed by an independent Board of Directors or can have a strong link between Chief and Council and the EDC.	Acts as a central vehicle for a Nation to manage multiple subsidiaries, can be 100% tax-exempt if activities are situated on-reserve.
General Partnership	Smaller-scale businesses with two or more entrepreneurs working together.	Each partner contributes money, property, and/or skills. Partners are active in business operations, and they may employ others to help run the business.	The profits or losses are divided among the partners based on each partner's share. Partners are responsible for all aspects of the business, including the debts of the partnership.

Special Consideration: If your business is registered and operating on reserve there may be specific regulatory or taxation implications. Consult a lawyer or tax professional for advice on business registration/tax implications.





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Phase 2: Production

Land and Herd Capacity

Familiarize yourself with the following details:

- **Land tenure:** Is the ranch located on Indian Reserve land, Crown Land, or private land?
- **Size and access:** How much land is available, what is the access like from roads for trailers?
- **Infrastructure:** Are there livestock shelters, fencing, and water available?
- **Feed and forage:** Is the land capable of providing all forage needs or will supplements be needed?
- **Hazards:** Concerns about poisonous or noxious weeds, and threats of fires, floods, and drought.



Ranch Management Plan

A ranch management plan is made up of various smaller plans that interconnect to keep the whole ranch running smoothly.

A creating a clear plan will help in day-to-day decisions and will be the backbone of the operation's long-term success. *See resource page for more information.*

Build a Network of Advisors

- Connect with networks and resources such as [BC Meats](#), the [BC Cattlemen's Association](#), [Small-Scale Meat Producers Association](#), and [Young Agrarians](#).
- Develop professional relationships with rangeland and grazing specialists to [develop a grazing plan](#) for your site.
- Locate [a veterinarian](#) to advise on health and nutrition.



Minimize Ranch Business Risks

Considerations include:

- **Premises ID:**
 - Required by the Province of B.C.
 - Helpful in cases of natural disasters or disease emergencies.
- **Identification Tags:**
 - Required on each animal as per the federal Health of Animals Regulations.
 - Helpful to track animals in disease outbreaks, food safety issues and natural disasters.
- **Farm Insurance:**
 - Liability insurance can protect against financial losses.
 - Livestock insurance can cover loss of livestock due to injury, illness, or predators.
 - Farm property insurance protects structures like barns, corrals, stables, silos, and fencing.
 - Consult AgriServiceBC's [Preparing to Meet Your Insurance Provider](#) resource.



B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Phase 3: Meat Processing

Livestock slaughtering requires licensing through the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Butchering (cut and wrap) requires a Food Premises Permit from either the First Nations Health Authority (if on Reserve Lands) or from Regional Health Authorities (if off Reserve Lands).

Connect to the Small-Scale Meat Processors Association (SSMPA) to discuss [mobile meat processing options](#).

Alternatively, animals can be transported live to a licensed facility for scheduled slaughter and cut and wrap. Wait times may apply.

Livestock Slaughtering Licensing

All meat processing establishments in B.C. must be either provincially licensed or federally registered, and all meat handling requires a Food Premises Permit.

Types of Provincial Licenses

- **Abattoir License:** A licensed Abattoir is a provincially licensed establishment. This license is best suited for producers who need reliable slaughter capacity, want to access retail and wholesale markets across B.C., and/or have production volumes over 25,000 lbs. live weight per year. Licensed abattoirs do not have annual production limits that Farmgate and Farmgate Plus Licenses do, can provide custom slaughter services to multiple producers and are intended to serve broader agricultural and commercial needs. Licensed abattoirs meet stricter facility, sanitation, record-keeping, and inspection requirements.
- **Farmgate and Farmgate Plus Licenses:** Held by farmers who process their own animals and can legally sell meat within BC. These licenses are suitable for small-scale operations. What is the difference?
 - **Farmgate License:** Suitable for producers wishing to slaughter their own animals on farm. Allows for slaughtering up to 5 animal units (5,000 lbs live weight) per year and for sale directly to local consumers from the farm gate or farmers' markets.
 - **Farmgate Plus License:** Allows producers to slaughter their own animals and provide custom slaughter services for other producers. This license allows for up to 25 animal units (25,000 lbs live weight) per year and to sell throughout B.C. to retail outlets as well as through direct-to-consumer channels.
- **Cut-and-Wrap or Butcher Shops:** Facilities that do not slaughter animals, but process meat must obtain a Food Premises Permit from the regional health authority.

Provincial licenses restrict sales to within BC, while federal registration allows export and interprovincial trade.





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Example: Applying for FarmGate Plus License

Steps include completing the following:

- [PremisesID](#) form
- SlaughterRight Training
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) using the [SlaughterRight Food Safety Plan Template](#)
- [Farmgate Plus](#) application

A site assessment can then be scheduled with the Provincial Meat Inspection Program staff.



If livestock are to be processed off-farm, [locate the nearest licensed facilities](#) that can accommodate you.

It is important to connect with these facilities early on, to understand their availability, as well as their in-take processes and turn-around times.

You will also need to make a plan for transporting your animals to the facility, including refrigerated transport vehicles if needed.

Slaughter and Butcher Training Options

Conducting slaughtering and/or butchering requires training.

There are several options, including:

- [SlaughterRight Training](#): A requirement for FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licenses. It does not provide meat cutting training, but is intended to support producers in safely and humanely slaughtering their animals on-farm.
- [Thompson Rivers University Meatcutter Program](#): Available as an Industry Training Authority subsidized program.
- [Olds College Alberta Meat Processing Program](#): Provides online slaughter skill training.
- The SSMPA can provide in-person training on your farm and/or in your community, and grants can cover the costs. Find out more by emailing info@smallscalemeat.ca





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map

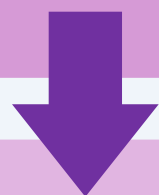


Example: Applying for FarmGate Plus License

Steps include completing the following:

- [PremisesID](#) form
- SlaughterRight Training
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) using the [SlaughterRight Food Safety Plan Template](#)
- [Farmgate Plus](#) application

A site assessment can then be scheduled with the Provincial Meat Inspection Program staff.



If livestock are to be processed off-farm, [locate the nearest licensed facilities](#) that can accommodate you.

It is important to connect with these facilities early on, to understand their availability, as well as their in-take processes and turn-around times.

You will also need to make a plan for transporting your animals to the facility, including refrigerated transport vehicles if needed.



Slaughter and Butcher Training Options

Conducting slaughtering and/or butchering requires training.

There are several options, including:

- [SlaughterRight Training](#): A requirement for FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licenses. It does not provide meat cutting training, but is intended to support producers in safely and humanely slaughtering their animals on-farm.
- [Thompson Rivers University Meatcutter Program](#): Available as an Industry Training Authority subsidized program.
- [Olds College Alberta Meat Processing Program](#): Provides online slaughter skill training.
- The SSMPA can provide in-person training on your farm and/or in your community, and grants can cover the costs. Find out more by emailing info@smallscalemeat.ca



B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Phase 4: Distribution and Retail

Deciding Where to Sell

Once processed, your meat products will need to be labeled and stored prior to distribution.

Note:

- Whether your meat is sold locally or in other parts of BC, you will need to make sure that labelling follows appropriate rules and regulations.
- Meat that has been processed at a licensed facility can be sold through farmers' markets, grocery stores, or direct to consumers through delivery.
- Knowing your planned sales route(s) is critical to selecting the appropriate processing facility and preparing the right transportation vehicles and storage equipment.

Labelling

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) provides a good [overview of labelling requirements for meat and poultry products](#). There is also a free and interactive [Food Labelling Tool](#).

[Farmgate and Farmgate Plus](#) products have specific labelling requirements.

You may wish to sell your meat products through a distributor and allow them to coordinate retail logistics.

The [B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food](#) has a [fact sheet on selling meat to distributors](#).





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Examples: Xatśūll Mountain House Ranch and Chezacut Ranch

The **Xatśūll Mountain House Ranch** is a first-of-its-kind partnership between Xatśūll First Nation and the B.C. Government. The Province purchased the ranch and is leasing it to Xatśūll, with the lands to be transferred to the Nation with the ratification of their Treaty. Xatśūll operates the ranch, which includes 3,840 acres of deeded land, additional pasture and range tenure, and over 1,200 acres of hay production. While the land is leased, Xatśūll owns the cattle and equipment, and meat from the ranch supports community food security. Livestock are processed through a local Provincially Licensed Abattoir and then distributed to Xatśūll community members through the Infrastructure Department. Approximately 60 Xatśūll households received around 50 pounds of beef each per year.

Sources: Xatśūll First Nation [Facebook page](#) and [website](#); .
Government of B.C. Video: [Advancing Regional Reconciliation - Xatśūll Mountain House Ranch](#)

In 2024, **Chezacut Ranch** was acquired by the **Tl'etinqox Nation**, marking a significant moment of return, responsibility, and renewal. The ranch is now wholly Nation-owned and operated in Tsilhqot'in Territory, guided by Tl'etinqox laws, values, and long-term vision for land stewardship, food security, and economic self-determination. The ranch raises Angus Galloway Cross cattle and has them processed local Provincially Licensed Abattoir. The ranch sells their ethically raised, hormone-free, grass-fed and grain-finished "Naturally Tsilhqot'in Grown Beef" through retail and wholesale channels, including selling online and through local retails, as well as community sales to schools and social programs by a at wholesale prices, and to Tsilhqot'in Nation Members at a reduced price to support community access.

Sources: [Chezacut Ranch](#)





B.C. Indigenous Advisory
Council on Agriculture and Food

Meat for Sale to Local, Regional and Provincial Markets

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Business Journey Map



Business Planning and Training Resources

- [BC Indigenous Pathfinder Services \(BC Government\)](#)
- [Futurpreneur Business Plan Essentials: A quick overview of what's needed \(Presentation by Futurpreneur\)](#)
- [Get your Business Market Ready \(Critical Path Flowchart by BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food\)](#)
- [Starting or Managing a Business in BC \(BC Government\)](#)
- [Market Readiness: Steps to Sell Your Food Product or Service \(BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food\)](#)
- [Indigenous economic development in British Columbia \(Government of Canada\)](#)
- [Small Scale Meat Producers Association \(BC-based organization\)](#)
- [Building a Profitable Ranch Business \(Video\) \(Ranch Right LLC\)](#)
- [B.C. Employer Training Grant Program](#) to support training cost

Production Resources

- [New Farm Start Up Guide \(BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food\)](#)
- [Beef Production for Small Farms: An Overview \(Oregon State University\)](#)
- [How to Start a Cattle Farm: Easy & Essential Steps for Beginners \(Video\) \(Heifer USA\)](#)
- [How to Start a Farm Checklist \(US Department of Agriculture\)](#)
- [Starting a farm from scratch: Advice from first-generation farmers \(Farm Credit Canada\)](#)
- [Easy 5 Steps Planning for Your Ranch or Farm – G.R.A.D.E. approach \(Video\) \(Noble Research Institute\)](#)

Processing Resources

- [Meat Inspection and Licensing](#) (BC Government)
- [Resources for Abattoirs](#) (BC Government)
- [AbattoirLicenceTBL](#): Locate a licensed abattoir in your region
- [Small Scale Meat Producers Association](#) (BC Organization) – specific list of resources regarding [Slaughter & Butchery](#).
- [Small Scale Food Processor Association](#) (BC Organization)
- [BC Food and Beverage](#) (BC Organization)
- [BC Meats](#) (BC Organization)
- [Q&A for Small Scale Meat Producers: Rules and Regulations \(Video\)](#) (SSMPA)
- [SSMPA Conference: Regulations Demystified](#) (SSMPA)

Distribution and Retail Resources

- [Food Hubs in BC \(Ministry of Agriculture and Food\)](#)
- [BuyBC membership information \(Ministry of Agriculture and Food\)](#)
- [North Okanagan Butcher Hub \(Video\) \(SSMPA\)](#)

Indigenous Resources and Accelerator Programs

- [Indigenous Food Systems: Toolkits and Resources – Province of British Columbia](#)
- [Indigenous Businesses – Buy BC](#)
- [Indigenous Business Incubator – Capilano University](#): Workshop series guiding Indigenous entrepreneurs through founding stages toward a business plan and pitch.
- [Community Futures Indigenous Entrepreneurship Offices](#): Regional advisory and financing support for Indigenous entrepreneurs across BC.
- [Fireweed Venture Accelerator](#): Indigenous-led accelerator is designed to strengthen businesses.
- Consider certifications such as the [Certified Indigenous Business \(CIB\)](#) program.