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**Chamber of
Commerce**
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Monthly publication brought to you courtesy of our Media Partner: **THE NEWS**
ABBOTSFORD

AGRICULTURE SECTOR PROVIDES A SOLUTION FOR CANADA'S CLIMATE, DATA AND EXPORT GOALS



Canadians often don't realize farmers are high tech or climate experts, but the facts are that, the agriculture and agri-food sector is highly innovative and increasingly recognized as a leader in fighting climate change.

In response, a multi-sectoral coalition has been launched to promote Canada's industry abroad and support the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector in leading Canada's economic recovery.

Canadian agriculture has a good story to tell. On a global average, about 23% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from agriculture. Here in Canada, agriculture accounts for just over 8% of our overall GHG. Canadian food producers are among the greenest in the world. On top of that, there is a high degree of carbon stored in the soil and governments are looking to farmers to meet GHG reduction targets.

Still not convinced? The agriculture and agri-food sector has not only reduced its carbon footprint through technology, but also through carbon capture in soil. Many of the foods you eat today may have been grown using drones and earth sensors, which allow for precise product applications and produce higher yields more efficiently over time. At the outset of the value chain, farms are reaped by autonomous tractors featuring GPS and radar technologies. These same technologies enable us to use products more efficiently and better manage our environmental footprint.

From producers to processors to your plate, the agriculture and agri-food sector exemplifies highly innovative and complex operations requiring not only knowledge of land use and best environmental practices, but also significant skill in operating these new tools. These new precision agriculture tools are allowing farmers to produce more while reducing their environmental footprint.

"After the early days of the pandemic, Canadians came to appreciate just how secure our food supply chain is. For a brief moment, Canadians and politicians didn't take farmers for granted. It shouldn't take a crisis like COVID-19 for us to recognize the businesses in our national agriculture sector supply chain continue to deliver food to our tables in Canada and around the world," said Perrin Beatty, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Businesses in this sector face some of the highest costs compared to their G7 counterparts, thanks in large part to endlessly overlapping federal, provincial and regional regulations. In the recent *Canadian Survey on Business Conditions*, 26.6% of agricultural business owners reported government regulations as a key obstacle to their survival.

"Canada must modernize its approach to regulations or risk severely hampering the economic potential of the agriculture and agri-food sector, one of its shining examples of business innovation. We need a regulatory environment that is consistent, predictable, timely, and supports

innovation. If Canada wants a blueprint of what climate change mitigation and big data looks like in the real world, we need look no further than sustainable and smart farms. Imagine what they could do if they weren't taxed and regulated to near extinction," added Beatty.

Canada's agricultural and agri-food sector has tremendous impact on the lives of everyday Canadians, accounting for one in eight jobs (2.3 million people) and contributing \$143 billion per year to our economy (7.4% of GDP). That's why the Canadian Chamber has launched *Canada's FoodLink* campaign.

"The *Canada's FoodLink* campaign is about supporting businesses all along the food chain in Canada, who want to build a more secure, environmentally-friendly food supply system for Canadians. We have to make it easier for them to do just that, or we risk facing fewer food choices and lower security, forcing us to depend on food imported from other countries," concluded Beatty.

For more information about the Canada's FoodLink campaign go to: <https://chamber.ca/campaign/canadas-foodlink>

For more information, please contact:
Phil Taylor
ptaylor@chamber.ca (preferred and fastest response time)

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

CHAMBERS CALL ON BC MINISTER DAVID EBY TO AMEND BC LOBBY ACT AND LESSEN RESTRICTIONS ON CHAMBERS, NOT-FOR-PROFITS AND SMALL ORGANIZATIONS

Did you know that the requirements for businesses and organizations that have to register their activities as lobbyists has increased significantly and also impacts many more than before? Financial costs and strained capacity has become a serious issue because of recent updates to the BC Transparency and Lobby Act (2020) and many are not aware. These costs are prohibiting key organizations from participating in the democratic process of informing government of issues because they are choosing to avoid this overly burdensome situation. The law is in effect decreasing open dialogue and transparency with government on important issues.

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, Surrey Board of Trade, Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce and BC Chamber of Commerce wrote a joint letter to BC's Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing, David Eby, on the administrative red tape the revised BC Lobbying Act of 2020 has for non-profits, small organizations, and chambers of commerce/ boards of trade. The

group recently met digitally with Minister Eby also to explain their concerns and a pathway towards a solution.

Government relies on boards of trades/ chambers of commerce (and other non-profits) to inform them of the issues of the day – either through policy or advocacy. Now more than ever this matters as when it comes to economic recovery and identifying gaps and opportunities for the government, there should be no red tape and administrative burden to the chambers of commerce/boards of trade to speak to government.

WHAT THE BUSINESS GROUPS WANT, IN SUMMARY:

Amendments to the BC Lobbying Act to alleviate the degree of administrative obligation:

- a. Only require the registration of an actual act of lobbying (letter, meeting, policy decision) upon completion, increase the 50-hour threshold to 200-hours for charities and not-for-profits, and



Katerina Anastasiadis
Executive Director

- eliminate the requirement for chambers of commerce and boards of trade altogether;
- b. Establish a more streamlined lobbying tracking report form and process; and,
- c. Remove accumulated lobbying reporting requirements when working with other organizations.

If you are impacted by this legislation we want to hear from you and if you want to learn more please reach out to us at the Chamber and send an email to: katerina@abbotsfordchamber.com. We are working for you to ensure you can do business and operate as effectively as possible!

NEW BUSINESSES:

Northwestern Electric Inc.
www.northwesternelectric.ca

Faeine Grant Personal Real Estate Corp.
www.themodernrealtors.com

Veerji Fish 'n' Grill
www.veerji.ca

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, May 26
Environmental Sustainability in the Agri-Food Sector
11:30am-12:30pm

Monday, June 7
Post Budget Tour with Hon. Selena Robinson
10:00am-11:00am

Thursday, June 17
New Member Orientation
11:30am-12:30pm

Thursday, June 24
Summer Update and Q&A with MP Brad Vis
11:30am-12:30pm

For more information on our upcoming events, please go to our website www.abbotsfordchamber.com.

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CHAMBER'S VIRTUAL AGRICULTURAL BUS TOUR "BACK STAGE PASS" COMING SOON!

As with most things these days involving what is typically in person, the Chamber's Agricultural Bus Tour has gone virtual, and for the first time ever! Taking on this year although, different has certainly been an adventure and interesting as in years past and we are looking forward to sharing the experience with you. The video and filming process was creative and interactive with the small crew consisting of our Executive Director Katerina Anastasiadis as host, our farm operators at each stop (Mark Siemens, Derek Arends and Nick Warmerdam) educating us about the innovation and productivity happening on-site, special guests such as from RBC's Agricultural Services and our staff.

This year in addition to the virtual communication campaign, we were able to take advantage of accessing locations that we typically could not get into with larger in person groups due to biosecurity concerns. We truly have a "backstage pass" for our members and viewers and cannot wait to share what we uncovered with you! We visited:

- Aviary Barn, (chicken and egg facility)
- Arendsdales Dairy Farms
- Lakeland Flowers

Keep your eyes open for the week of June 7-11th when we will be launching this year's Virtual Agricultural Bus Tour throughout the week through videos, social media and a local media campaign!



**IF THE TOOTH
FAIRY WON'T PAY
YOUR DENTAL BILLS,
WE CAN!**

The reality is we all can use help with unexpected expenses like dental bills, prescription drugs, or medical supplies. Now help is here, with affordable group coverage designed specifically for small to medium sized businesses. **See why over 25,000 business owners selected this plan!**

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