

## BACKGROUND

### Proposed UBCM Resolution: Increased Ministry Funding for Agriculture

#### Proposed Resolution:

WHEREAS provincial funding for agriculture in British Columbia (BC) as a percentage of the sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the lowest in Canada;

AND WHEREAS an increase to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's budget would demonstrate the province's commitment to food security and the sustainability of agriculture;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM call on the Provincial government to raise agriculture funding in BC to the national average to support much-needed investments in the agricultural sector.

The lack of agriculture funding in BC was last raised as an issue at UBCM in 2014 (see [Resolution Number B29](#)).

In BC Agricultural Council's (BCAC) [BC Agriculture Sector Strategic Priorities](#) (released in 2024), the five year average of public spending as a portion of agriculture's contribution to GDP was reviewed for each province, and BC was last in provincial investment in agriculture, at approximately 2.5% (see Table 1 below):

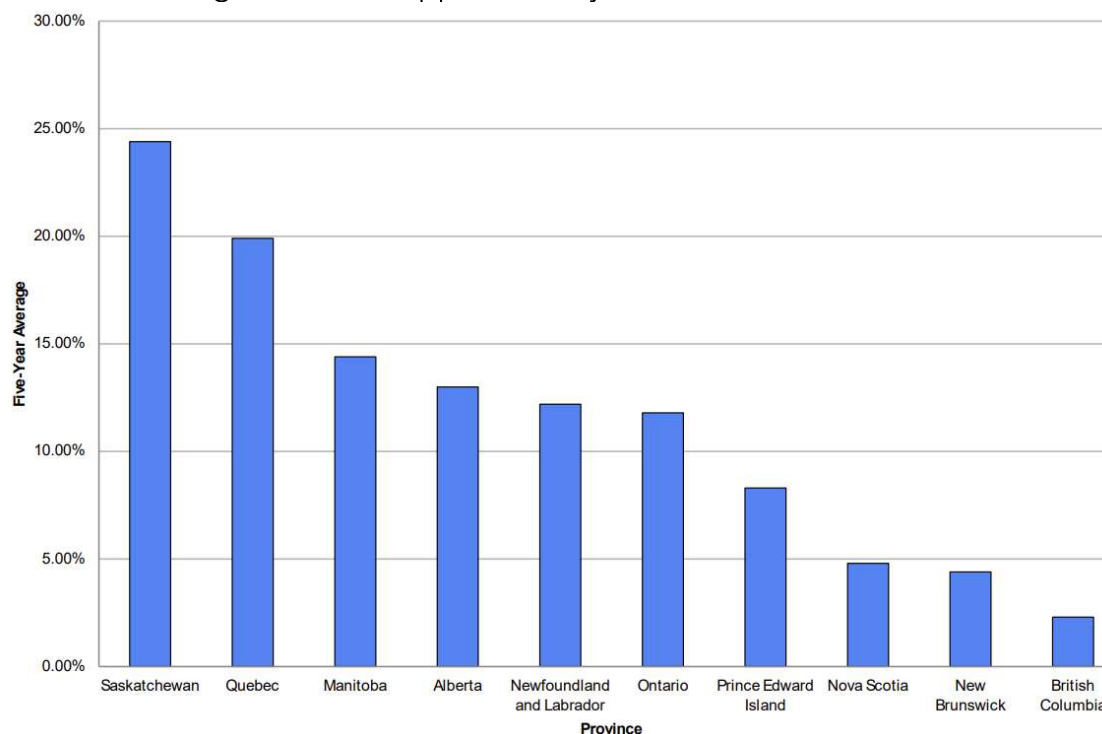


Table 1 – Five-Year Average of Public Spending on Agriculture by Province

The Canada-wide historical average of direct investment in agriculture is approximately 12%. Addressing this investment gap in BC would help level the playing field for BC producers and help to keep them in BC, rather than being attracted to other provinces where agriculture is prioritized.

An increase in provincial agricultural funding could be invested in much needed programs and support for:

- Regional water sustainability plans, agricultural water reserves, and upgrades to water infrastructure storage to help alleviate the increasing water shortages brought on by climate change;
- Emergency management programs and training for agricultural liaisons during emergency events, which are becoming more frequent due to climate change;
- Programs to provide immediate economic relief for producers who have experienced adverse climate and emergency events;
- Incentives, funding programs, and tax exemptions to enhance the viability of the agricultural sector;
- Programs for wage subsidies for farm workers to ensure a stable labour force; and
- Additional Ministry staffing to support the above-mentioned programs and improve much needed regulatory enforcement.

The economic viability of farming is in jeopardy in BC. Increasing the amount of funding invested into supporting agriculture would help keep producers in BC, keep the sector viable, and protect local food security.