

Agriculture Hot Facts

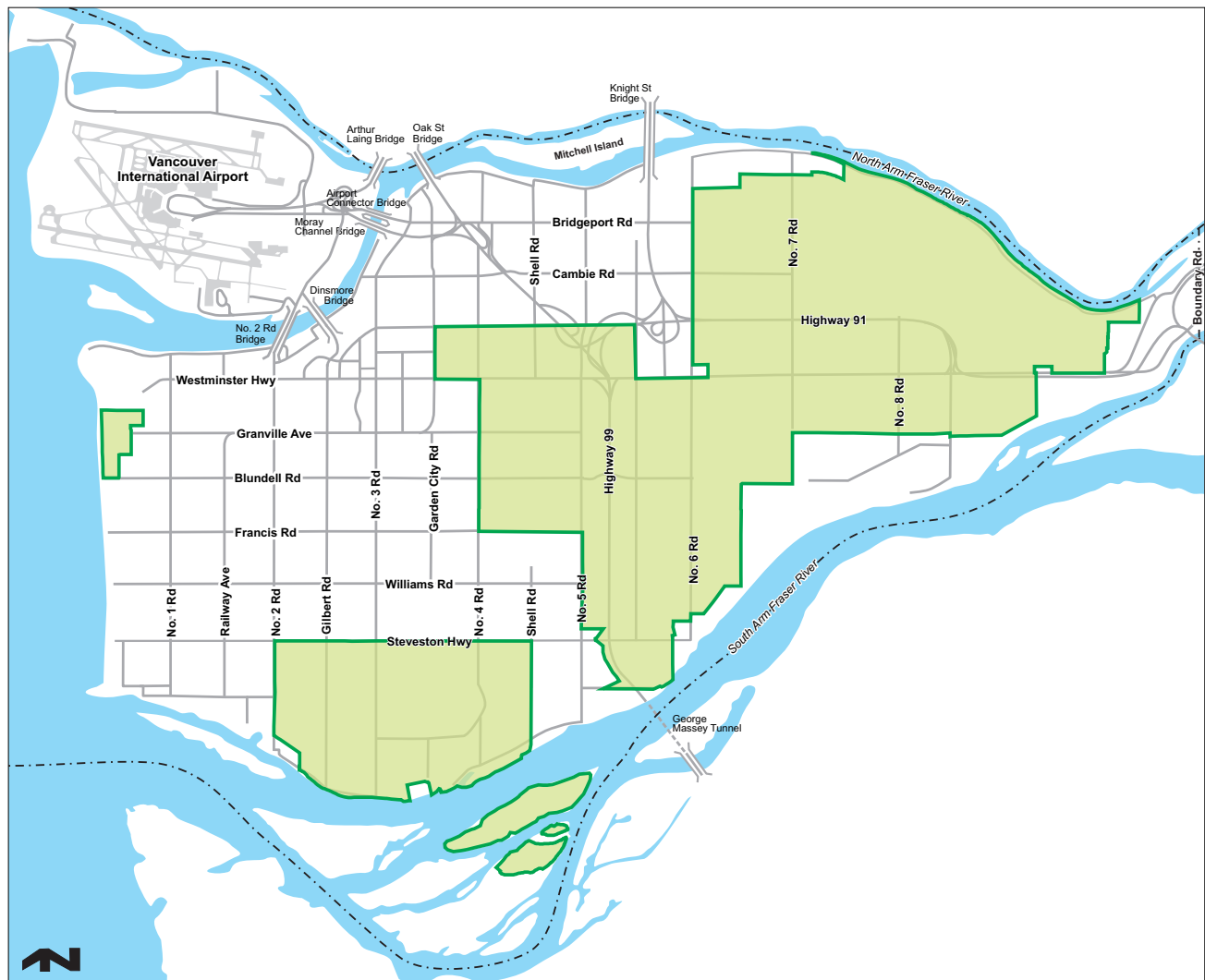
Agriculture is an important part of Richmond's history. Early settlers were attracted to Richmond by the fertile soils of Lulu and Sea Islands and promise of agricultural productivity.

Over the years, Richmond has grown and evolved into a vibrant, cosmopolitan urban centre. Despite the dramatic changes, a significant portion of Richmond's land area remains agricultural. Today, agriculture forms an important part of the local and regional economy as well as a major land use in the city.

The Agricultural Land Base

Approximately 4,993 ha (12,338 ac) of Richmond's land base, or 39% of the City, is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) as shown in Figure 1. The total amount of area within the ALR and area zoned Agriculture outside of the ALR is approximately 5,563 ha (13,746 ac). These figures do not include ALR boundaries on Sea Island.

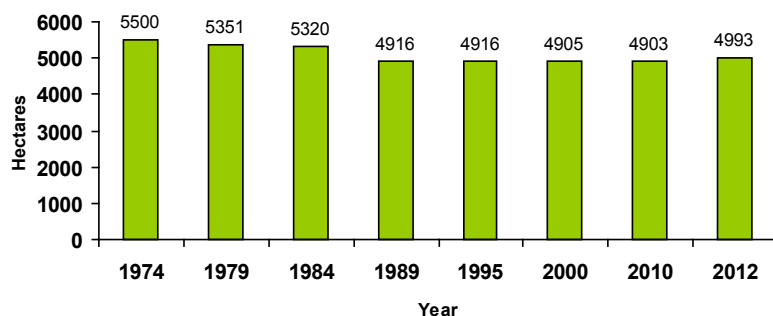
Figure 1: Richmond's Agricultural Land Reserve



Agricultural Land Reserve Boundaries

Figure 2 below shows that the amount of land in the ALR has remained relatively stable in the last 20 years. An increase in Richmond ALR land area from 2010 figures was based on a detailed mapping and data review of the ALR boundary area in Richmond completed in 2012. The increase in ALR land area is not the result of any specific applications to include land in the ALR for Richmond.

Figure 2: Total ALR Land in Richmond (in hectares)



Much of Richmond's soils are organic, formed by fluvial (river) deposits of the Fraser River. Drainage is a major issue in Richmond, where the groundwater table is high. However, with improvements (mainly drainage), all of Richmond's ALR is considered to be prime agricultural land.

Farms

According to the 2016 Census of Agriculture, approximately 3,122 ha (7,714 ac) of Richmond is farmed by 189 farms. The remaining lands in the ALR are either vacant or occupied by non-farm uses (including roads, institutional uses, golf courses, etc.).

The greatest number of farms are owned by sole proprietors (78), with family farms and partnerships also common (67 and 30, respectively).

Farmers

There were approximately 265 farm operators in Richmond in 2016. 170 farm operators were paid solely by farm work, with 95 being paid by some form of non-farm work. In regards to the number of hours which operators worked for an agricultural operation, 90 operators worked more than 40 hours a week, 65 operators worked between 20 and 40 hours a week, and 110 operators worked less than 20 hours a week.

Agricultural Production

Cranberries are the most dominant crop in Richmond, with almost 807 ha (1,995 ac) in production. In 2016, Richmond accounted for approximately 31% of BC's cranberry acreage.

Other top crops in Richmond are outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Richmond's Top Crops by Land Used in their Production, 2016 Census of Agriculture

Land Used in Crop Production – Top 10 Crops				
	Hectares	% of Crops	% of Census Farms	% of ALR
Cranberries	807	35.8%	25.8%	16.2%
Blueberries	577	25.6%	18.5%	11.6%
Other hay	186	8.3%	6.0%	3.7%
Potatoes	164	7.3%	5.3%	3.3%
Sweet Corn	74	3.3%	2.4%	1.5%
Corn for silage	60	2.7%	1.9%	1.2%
Cabbage	43	1.9%	1.4%	0.9%
Oats	40	1.8%	1.3%	0.8%

Land Used in Crop Production – Top 10 Crops				
	Hectares	% of Crops	% of Census Farms	% of ALR
Pumpkins	29	1.3%	0.9%	0.6%
Chinese Cabbage	28	1.2%	0.9%	0.6%
Total	2,008	89.2%	64.3%	40.2%

Agricultural Economy

The 189 farms that reported in the 2016 Census of Agriculture recorded gross farm receipts of \$57.8 million. This is an increase from \$48.6 million of gross farm receipts reported by 211 farms in 2011, \$40.5 million of gross farm receipts reported by 172 farms in 2006, and \$37.6 million of gross farm receipts reported by 182 farms in 2001.

Towards a Viable Future

The viability of farming in Richmond faces a number of challenges, including:

- drainage;
- pressure to urbanize the ALR;
- pressure to subdivide land within the ALR;
- rural/urban conflicts;
- high land values;
- economics of farming;
- servicing and infrastructure limitations.

In 1999, after the adoption of the City's current Official Community Plan (OCP), the City embarked on a process to develop an Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) in order to manage the agricultural areas for long-term viability. The four-year process, which was carried out in partnership with the Richmond Farmers Institute, Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, included extensive consultation with the local farming community. The results of the process are outlined below:

Agricultural Profile (2002)—The Profile is a compendium of statistics and information about the agricultural sector in Richmond. It is largely compiled from the Census of Agriculture.

Agricultural Viability Strategy (2003)—The AVS contains over 60 recommendations designed to:

- Foster and maintain agricultural viability;
- Address the key issues facing the agricultural sector in Richmond;
- Work within the framework of a 2021 vision and guiding principles for the future.

Agricultural Advisory Committee—One of the first recommendations of the AVS to be implemented was the formation of a new Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) in 2003. The AAC, which consists of 10 citizens (7 of whom are farmers), will provide input and advice from an agricultural perspective on a range of policy issues and development proposals that affect agriculture. The AAC will also monitor and guide implementation of the AVS.

Sources:

Statistics Canada, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016 Census of Agriculture.

For Further Information:

The Agricultural Profile and the Agricultural Viability Strategy are both available for viewing on the City's website: www.richmond.ca

For information about the Agricultural Advisory Committee or land use policies in the ALR, please contact the Policy Planning Department at 604-276-4188.

City of Richmond

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