

Agriculture Hot Facts

Introduction

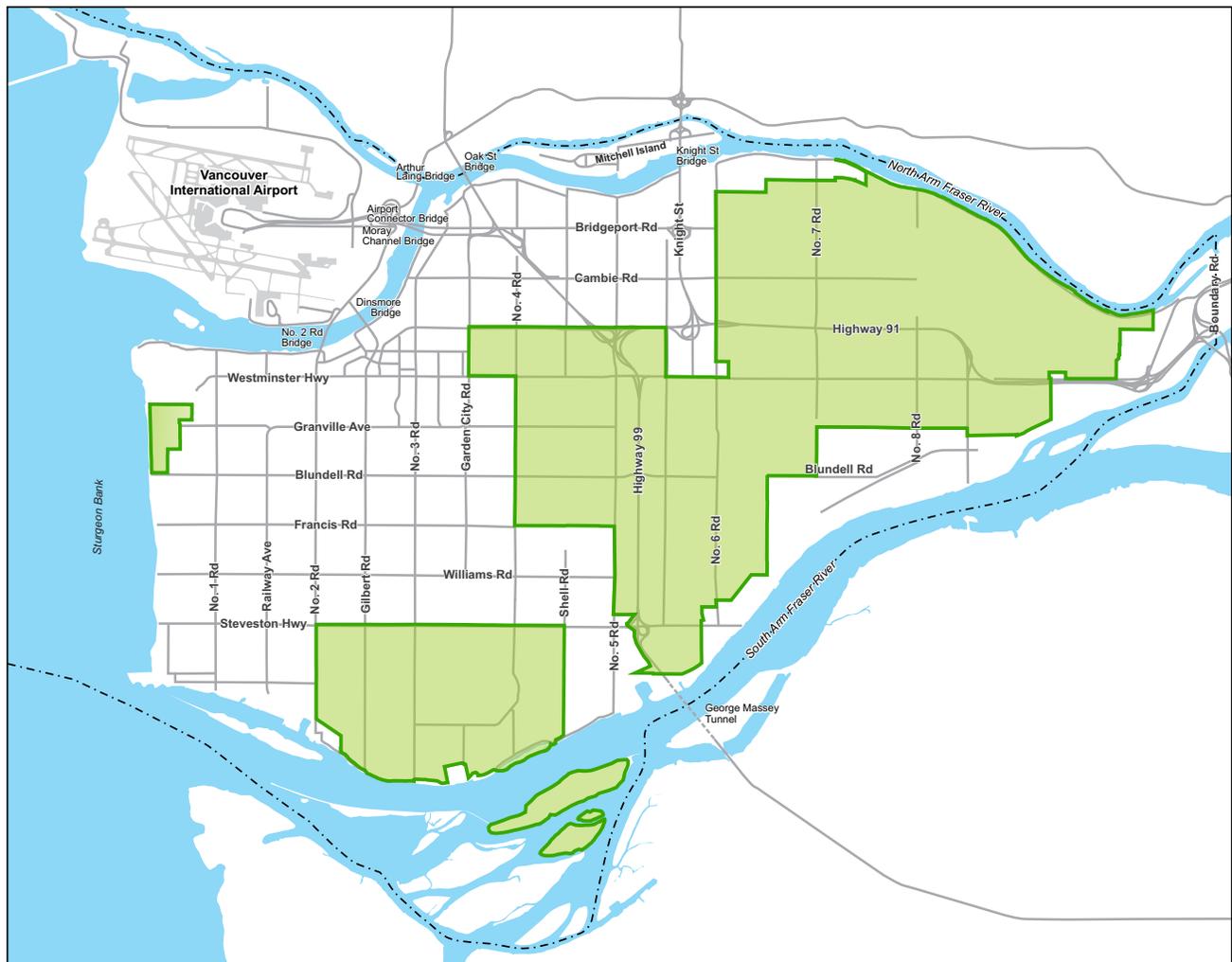
Agriculture is an important part of Richmond's history, and current economy. Early settlers were attracted to Richmond by the fertile soils of Lulu and Sea Islands and promise of agricultural productivity.

Over the years, Richmond has grown and evolved into a vibrant, cosmopolitan urban centre, while retaining a significant portion of Richmond's land area as 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.

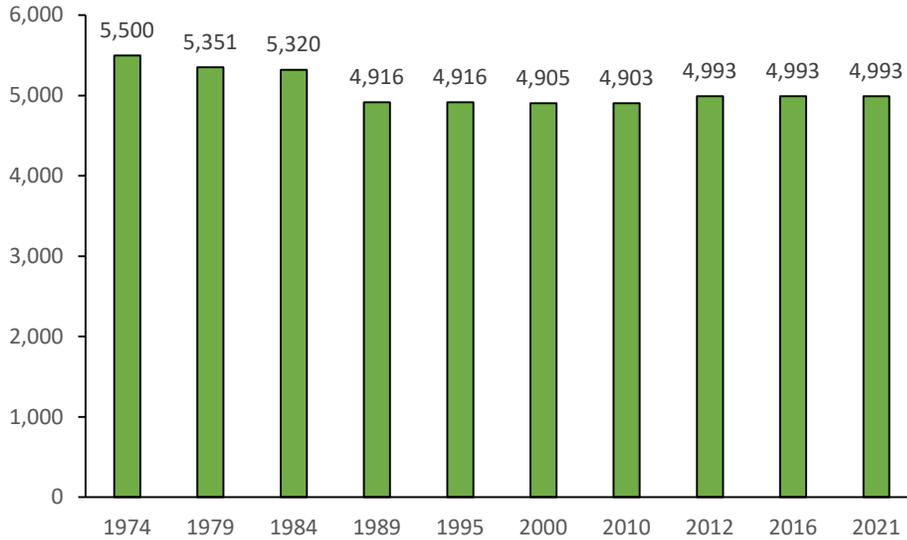
Figure 1: Richmond's Agricultural Land Reserve



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. The figures do not account for ALR land on Sea Island.

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



Farms

According to the 2021 Census of Agriculture, approximately 2,909 ha (7,189 ac) of Richmond is farmed by 184 farms. The remaining lands in the ALR are either vacant or occupied by non-farm uses (including roads, institutional uses, golf courses, etc.).

Farmers

There were approximately 240 farm operators in Richmond in 2021. 145 farm operators were paid solely by farm work, with the remaining 95 also being paid by some form of non-farm work (e.g., other non-agricultural businesses that are owned or operated by the farm operator).

Agricultural Production

Cranberries are the most dominant crop in Richmond, with almost 830 ha (2,052 ac) in production, accounting for 33.6% of the crop total. In 2021, Richmond accounted for approximately 30% 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, 2021 Census of Agriculture

Land Used in Crop Production – Top 10 Crops				
	Hectares	% of Crop Area	% of Census Farm Area	% of ALR Area
Cranberries	830	33.6%	28.5%	16.6%
Blueberries	573	23.2%	19.7%	11.5%
Chinese Cabbage	100	4.0%	3.4%	2.0%
Other field vegetables	98	4.0%	3.4%	2.0%
Cabbage	53	2.1%	1.8%	1.1%

Land Used in Crop Production – Top 10 Crops				
	Hectares	% of Crop Area	% of Census Farm Area	% of ALR Area
Squash and zucchini	53	2.1%	1.8%	1.1%
Pumpkins	34	1.4%	1.2%	0.7%
Cauliflower	22	0.9%	0.8%	0.4%
Strawberries	17	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%
Onions, green/shallots	2	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Total	1,782	72.1%	61.3%	35.7%

Agricultural Economy

The 184 farms that reported in the 2021 Census of Agriculture recorded a total operating revenue of \$66.1 million for the reference year of 2020. For reference, \$57.8 million of gross farm receipts were reported by 189 farms in 2016, \$48.6 million of gross farm receipts were reported by 211 farms in 2011, and \$40.5 million of gross farm receipts reported by 172 farms in 2006.

Towards a Viable Future

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

- 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;
- drainage.

Farming First Strategy (2021): On April 19, 2021, Council adopted the Farming First Strategy, a long-range strategy that includes policies to:

- Guide decisions on land use management of agricultural land;
- Enhance public awareness of agriculture and food security issues; and
- Strengthen agricultural viability in Richmond.

The Farming First Strategy is a result of a multi-phase process, which included consultation with the farming community, the City's Food Security and Agricultural Advisory Committee (FSAAC), and Richmond residents.

Food Security and Agricultural Advisory Committee (FSAAC): The Food Security and Agricultural Advisory Committee (FSAAC) was originally appointed by City Council in 2003. The Committee now consists of ten members, including:

- Four farming representatives from the general agricultural community (i.e. crops, livestock, nursery, greenhouses, etc.). A farming representative is defined as a farmer who derives a majority of his/her income from farming. Farming representatives should include a variety of farmers, including:
 - Two large-scale farmers; and
 - Two small-scale farmers.
- Three food security representatives.
- Two representatives from the community at large.
- One representative from the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE).

Members are selected on the basis of their involvement and knowledge of local farming conditions and commitment to maintaining long-term agricultural viability in Richmond. The purpose of the FSAAC is to advise Council on food security and agricultural issues.

Sources:

Statistics Canada, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021 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 604-276-4207 or communityplanning@richmond.ca.