

Introducing Alberta's Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector

Agriculture is a part of the foundation of the Alberta economy.



Canada

Alberta



Agriculture is a part of the foundation of the Alberta economy. There are 40,638 farms and over 50 million acres (20 million hectares) of total farmland area dedicated to crop and livestock production. Many of the crop and livestock products are processed within the province for Canadian and international consumers.

Crops

Alberta's crops sector contributed C\$6.4 billion in farm cash receipts in 2018. In 2018, Alberta produced:

- 10.0 million tonnes of wheat
- 5.9 million tonnes of canola seed
- 4.0 million tonnes of barley
- 1.6 million tonnes of dry peas

The province has excess supply of grain products and accounts for a significant proportion of total Canadian grain exports.



Alberta has built an international reputation as a reliable source of agriculture and food products, technology and expertise. With the coordinated involvement of federal, provincial and local authorities, the Alberta's food products are among the safest in the world. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency provides regulatory oversight to ensure the safety of food products.

In 2018, Alberta exported agriculture and food products valued at over C\$11.6 billion.

Livestock and Meat

Alberta's livestock sector contributed C\$6.5 billion in farm cash receipts in 2018. The largest sector is the cattle industry, followed by dairy products, hogs, and poultry and eggs.

Alberta's cattle and calves sector is the largest in Canada, with 4.6 million head of cattle and calves on farms as of January 1, 2019. Alberta swine industry had 1.5 million hogs on farms as of January 1, 2019. Other livestock production includes bison, poultry, horses, sheep, elk, horses, and others. Alberta employs a livestock traceability system to follow the movement of an animal through specified stages of production.

Meat production is at the heart of Alberta's food processing sector, consisting mostly of beef, pork and poultry meat. Meat product manufacturing accounted for over half of Alberta's food manufacturing with sales of C\$7.5 billion in 2018.

Beef - In 2018, over three-quarters of Canadian beef processing occurred in western Canada, with the vast majority concentrated in Alberta. Alberta beef is known for its superior flavour, texture and quality. Our native prairie grasslands, excellent water sources, favourable climate and efficient production systems equate to high-quality, tender, juicy and great tasting beef that is a trademark of Alberta.

Pork - Alberta is an experienced pork exporter with fresh and processed pork products being shipped to approximately twenty-five countries. Alberta pork is produced by farmers committed to providing wholesome and safe food for consumers here at home and around the world. Pork produced in Alberta is top quality, safe and delicious.

Alberta also produces significant quantities of poultry meat, primarily for domestic consumption. Other products include meat from bison, lamb, horse and elk.

Alberta suppliers are able to produce meat products based on customer specifications, such as organic, halal and hormone-free.

Livestock Genetics - Alberta is also an experienced exporter of genetics from a variety of livestock species. These genetics include semen, embryos and breeding stock. Alberta companies can also provide a range of technical and consulting services such as genetic selection, nutrition and health, animal care and management and biosecurity.



The vast majority of Canada's beef is processed in Alberta

Alberta is home to the Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence. This state-of-the-art facility was created to help the industry test market new products and receive feedback from consumers and others in the value chain. The centre educates attendees on the unique product attributes that differentiate Canadian beef as a world-class product.

The centre includes a food development and education venue with a consumer demonstration and test kitchen, commercial kitchen demonstration theatre and beef fabrication room. People from around the world have visited the centre to learn more about the Canadian beef advantage.



Processed Foods and Beverages

Food processors have access to a bountiful supply of ingredients and benefit from an advanced food processing infrastructure and technology.

Food processing and technology services are available through the Alberta government. For example, the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc is a state-of-the-art facility designed to provide research, product development and commercialization services. It includes a culinary lab, product development laboratories and a fully equipped commercial pilot plant.

Companies can use the Agrivalue Processing Business Incubator (APBI), which is a multi-tenant facility providing the infrastructure and services to support and enhance the establishment and growth of new companies and new business ventures in Alberta. The incubator is a federally inspected enabling resident companies to market their products nationally and internationally.

Grain and oilseed milling is the second largest component of Alberta's food manufacturing sales, valued at C\$1.8 billion in 2018.

Canola oil is the healthiest commodity oil available to consumers, the food service industry and food processors. It is low in saturated fat, high in LDL cholesterol lowering monounsaturated fat, rich in vitamin E and the best source of plant based Omega-3 fats of all popular oils. Alberta exports both crude and refined canola oil as well as canola meal, which is a high protein feed that is easily digested by livestock.



**Alberta
is the largest
producer of
honey in
Canada**



Four of the world's largest oil processors have invested significant capital in Alberta to crush canola and provide value-added packaged canola oil, shortening and margarine. In addition, Alberta has several smaller local suppliers, cold press plants, a large consumer packager, and a plant that supplies the food processing industry.

Honey is a natural sweetener and there are no additives or preservatives in honey making it a healthy choice as a condiment, a sweetener or in beverages. Honey can also be used in cooking and baking as a substitute for sugar.

Alberta is the largest honey producer in Canada producing over 40 per cent of Canada's supply. Alberta's leading role in food safety ensures a safe, quality product of the highest standards that meets the needs of consumers.

French fries are processed using top quality potatoes. During the growing season, Alberta's days are warm with long hours of daylight and the nights are cool. These factors promote high starch accumulation in potato tubers. As a result, Alberta potatoes have consistently higher solid levels than potatoes from other growing regions. Consumers enjoy flavourful, crispy french fries with longer holding times after frying.

Beverages - Alberta produced C\$1.1 billion of beverages in 2018. In the beverage sector, whiskey is the largest export product. Alberta is known for producing premium rye whiskey, which is ideal for sipping or in cocktails. Rye is a crop that thrives in our cold northern climate and contributes a distinctive spicy, bitter edge to whiskey.

The brewery sector is also experiencing growth especially with an increase in the number of craft breweries.

Other aspects of the agriculture sector

Alberta also produces **agricultural equipment** for crop production as well as for livestock and dairy production.

Software is available related to production, business management, and mapping.

As well, the **bioindustry** is growing in Alberta supported by world-class academic and research institutions.

Alberta is the largest producer of hemp in Canada with 30,000 acres of hemp grown in the province in 2018. The crop has many uses in the areas of food, fibre, fractions and animal feed.

Import from Alberta

Alberta has an open business environment and natural advantages that contribute to our strength as a major exporter of primary commodities and manufactured products. Alberta's export industry is served by a comprehensive network of highways, waterways, airways and railways that allow for timely and efficient shipments of products to countries around the world.

We invite you to visit our beautiful province to conduct business, as well as enjoy the scenery, culture and cuisine.

International Relations and Marketing Section
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
July 2019
www.agrifoodalberta.ca