

BC Dairy Association
2025 – 2026 Annual Report

BC DAIRY

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Growing Forward means creating the conditions for long-term success.

The future of dairy is built one step at a time. Through advocacy that supports profitable dairy farms, partnerships that encourage processing growth, and leadership that strengthens producer representation, BC Dairy is working to build a stronger future for dairy farming in British Columbia.

Message from the Chair.

Progress in dairy farming is rarely linear. It requires steady decision-making, practical problem-solving, and balancing the delivery of ongoing tasks with long-term strategy.

This year, there were meaningful reasons for confidence: continued consumer demand for dairy products, processors investing in future growth to meet that demand, strong public trust in farmers and important work underway to strengthen our sector for the years ahead.



Producers continued to navigate rising costs, difficult weather conditions, trade pressures, and uncertainty beyond the farm gate. From flooding in Sumas Prairie to drought conditions in the Okanagan and on Vancouver Island, farmers once again demonstrated resilience while continuing the disciplined work of running strong farming businesses. As a Board, our role is to stay grounded in the realities producers face today while advancing the priorities that will shape tomorrow. This includes relationship building with government and industry partners, being prepared to support producers during emergencies and strengthening the public's understanding of dairy farming here in British Columbia. These relationships allow us to represent producers on critical issues that extend beyond our province, from trade and flood advocacy to protecting Canada's supply management system.

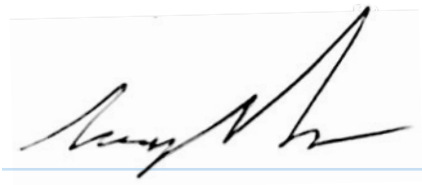
One example is BC Dairy's Cost of Production study, which completed its second year with participation from 100 dairy farms across the province. The study is helping build a stronger evidence base for advocacy, providing reliable data to inform policy discussions and demonstrate the economic realities facing dairy farmers.

This year also brought important milestones in how the dairy sector works together. The approval of the Western Milk Pool's 10-year strategic plan marked a significant step forward, and our Board is considering the important role BC Dairy can play in supporting growth and innovation across the region. At the national level, Dairy Farmers of Canada approved a new mandate and memorandum of understanding, clarifying its role as a member-driven organization. BC Dairy board members continue to contribute to this work through key national committees, including those focused on proAction and sustainability. At a regional level, BC Dairy worked with each region to sign Regional Collaboration Agreements that will support regular communication and engagement.

The pages that follow highlight the work of BC Dairy through three connected priorities: growing demand, building trust and strengthening resilience. Together, they reflect our commitment to creating value for producers and helping ensure dairy farming in British Columbia remains strong, competitive and well positioned for the future.

Thank you to my fellow Board members for their leadership, to the BC Dairy staff team for their work on behalf of producers, and to dairy farmers across British Columbia. Your dedication, resilience and care continue to move this industry forward.

There will always be challenges ahead, but BC dairy farmers have shown that we can meet complexity with focus, collaboration and purpose. By keeping producers at the centre of our decisions, we can help ensure a profitable and resilient future together.



Casey Pruim | Chair, BC Dairy

Message from the General Manager.

This year, BC Dairy continued to focus on the work that helps build a stronger future for dairy farmers in British Columbia: growing demand, building trust, and strengthening resilience. As the industry prepares for a period of growth, that work is helping set the foundation for what comes next.

Across the organization, this means turning strategy into action. We invested in promotions that connected with consumers and supported demand for dairy products. We strengthened partnerships that build public trust, from classrooms and community programs to children's health initiatives.

We also advanced key advocacy priorities, including work with the Province of BC on implementing recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy, supporting flood resilience investments, and contributing to the Look West strategy, which identifies growth in dairy production as an opportunity to support expanded value-added manufacturing and agricultural exports. This work included sustained engagement with provincial and federal governments that contributed to a $20 million federal commitment for flood planning and mitigation in BC.

Alongside this work, we continued our focus on processor engagement, emergency preparedness, sustainability, research, and producer education to help ensure farmers are supported in a changing environment and creating opportunities for investment in Western processing and enhanced producer returns.

A key part of that work is preparing before challenges arrive. Whether the pressure comes from trade uncertainty, flooding, wildfires, drought, or rising costs, BC Dairy's role is to build relationships, systems, and plans that enable us to respond quickly and effectively.

This year we worked closely with Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), processors, industry partners, and governments in Victoria and Ottawa to ensure BC's perspective was reflected as uncertainty related to tariffs and Canada-United States, Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) continued to evolve.

Much of our progress happens through collaboration. BC Dairy's work this year reflects the commitment of producers, Board members, staff, industry partners, researchers, processors, educators, community organizations, and government representatives who share an interest in a strong and sustainable dairy sector. It also reflects important progress at the national and Western levels, including DFC's approval of a new mandate focused on its role as a member-driven organization and the Western Milk Pool's approval of a 10-year strategic plan.

The challenges facing agriculture are real, but so are the opportunities. With strong relationships, practical planning, and a shared sense of purpose, BC Dairy is well positioned to support growth in domestic demand, create opportunities for additional value-added processing, and help BC dairy farmers succeed in a changing environment.

Thank you to the Board for its leadership, to our staff team for their dedication, and to producers across the province for the work you do every day. Together, we are growing forward with purpose.



Jeremy Dunn
General Manager,
BC Dairy

Board of Directors

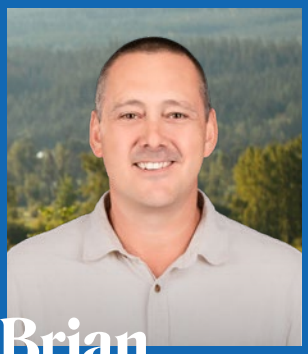
BC Dairy's Board of Directors is made up of eight dairy farmers who represent dairy producers from across BC. The Board provides strategic leadership and governance oversight, helping ensure BC Dairy remains focused on creating long-term value for producers and supporting a strong and resilient dairy sector.



Casey Pruim

Board Chair

BC Dairy's representative on the DFC proAction Committee



Brian Janzen

Vice Chair + Treasurer

Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee



Luke Van Huizen

Secretary

Chair of the Governance Committee



Henry Bremer

Director

BC Dairy's representative on the BC Agriculture Council Board



Ron Kooyman

Director

Joined the Board in March 2026



Sarah Sache

Director

BC Dairy's representative on the Dairy Farmers of Canada Board



Mark Van Klei

Director

Western Milk Pool Representative

BC Dairy's representative on the Dairy Innovation West Board



Nico Vankeulen

Director

Joined the Board in March 2026

Throughout 2025–2026, the Board provided leadership on the strategic issues shaping the future of dairy farming in BC, including market development, government advocacy, and producer support, while continuing to respond to evolving industry, environmental, and economic challenges. Through its oversight of BC Dairy's strategic direction, the board helped ensure the organization remained focused on the priorities that matter most to producers.

In June, the board updated the mission for BC Dairy to better reflect its purpose and guide priorities moving forward.

Through active participation with the Western Milk Pool, Dairy Farmers of Canada and BC Agriculture Council, directors helped ensure that the perspectives of BC dairy producers are represented in discussions and decisions that affect the future of the dairy sector at provincial, regional and national levels.

Acknowledgement of Service

BC Dairy extends its sincere appreciation to
Lindsay Heer, who concluded her service on the Board in September 2025, and
John de Dood, who concluded his service in March 2026.

Our Vision.

Better together for Canadian dairy

Our Mission.

Serving BC Dairy producers to advance a strong, profitable and resilient BC dairy sector, contributing to a thriving Western and Canadian dairy industry.

Guiding Behaviours.

Think bigger
Accountability
Win-win
Fact-based
Care

Growing Forward starts here.

Growing Forward is about creating the conditions for long-term success. Strong consumer confidence in dairy farmers, steady demand for dairy products, and strategic investments in research and collaboration are helping position British Columbia's dairy sector for growth.

Amid trade uncertainty and growing interest in supporting Canadian food production, consumer confidence in BC dairy farmers increased. National research conducted for Dairy Farmers of Canada found that 75% of Canadians support supply management, while ongoing tracking in British Columbia showed that 79% of consumers feel positive about dairy farmers.

Research and collaboration are helping build a stronger future for the sector. Through partnerships with researchers, processors, governments, and industry organizations, BC Dairy contributed to 63 collaborative projects involving 68 partner organizations. These initiatives generated $1.94 million in value.

In partnership with the Western Milk Pool, more than $550,000 was committed to dairy research, leveraging producer investment at a ratio of 13:1 through external funding partnerships.



Together, these efforts support a future where dairy farms remain profitable and resilient, processors can invest and grow, and producers are represented by a strong and connected voice. The stories that follow highlight how growing demand, building trust, and strengthening resilience are helping position British Columbia's dairy sector for the opportunities and challenges ahead.



BC Dairy by the numbers:

79%
of British Columbians feel positive about BC dairy farmers

85%
of British Columbians believe dairy farmers are important to their communities

x16
Servings of milk per week are consumed on average per person in BC

$550+K
Research funding committed

63
Collaborative projects

68
Partner organizations

$1.94 M
Value created through partnerships

13:1
Research funding leverage ratio

Growing Demand.

Consumer demand is the foundation of a strong and resilient dairy sector and a key driver of long-term producer success.

Dairy consumption increased across all major product categories in Western Canada during the 12-month period ending July 2026, outperforming the national average. Protein remains one of the strongest drivers of dairy demand, contributing to growth across milk, yogurt, and cheese categories.

While overall milk consumption has moderated alongside slower population growth, demand continues to increase in high-value segments such as lactose-free, high-fat, and protein-enriched milk. Growth in yogurt has similarly been driven by consumer interest in protein-rich foods, as well as evolving cultural preferences and a growing desire for products that balance nutrition and indulgence.

Rapid growth in consumer demand for protein is challenging our dairy system, historically driven by butterfat, and raising complex questions about component balance, markets, and national policy. At the same time, ongoing tariff and trade volatility is adding another layer of complexity.

Retail sales in Western Canada

(over past 52 weeks for period ending Aug 1 2026)

All milk
+0.2%

Lactose-free milk
+12.7%

Protein-enriched milk
+26.6%

Yogurt
+5.6%

Cheese
+2.5%

Butter
+4.4%

Source: AC Nielsen Retail Sales



Building Partnerships that Grow Dairy Demand

BC Dairy invested in partnerships with processors designed to strengthen consumer demand and support growth in Western Canada. In partnership with Alberta Milk and SaskMilk, six processors co-invested on twelve promotions on high-value products processed in Western Canada over the next two years.

Guided by market insights, these investments focused on categories with strong growth potential, helping create the conditions for increased processing capacity, product innovation, and stronger returns for dairy farmers. We are already seeing the impact of these efforts as processors continue to invest in the production of high-value dairy products across Western Canada.



Lactose-free milk, up 12.7% over the past year, is a great example of the win-win benefit of aligning our market investments with processors.

Consumer Marketing that Grows Demand

Ten years of BC Dairy market research conducted by Intensions consistently shows that consumers who recall our advertising consume more dairy. Building on processor partnerships, the 2026 marketing plan focused on strengthening demand by reinforcing dairy's positive role in consumers' lives.

In Spring 2026, BC Dairy launched *Good Goes a Long Way*, an integrated campaign targeting millennials and families. Through small, heartfelt moments, the campaign showed how dairy brings comfort and connection to everyday life.

A partnership with BC Children's Hospital Foundation extended the campaign through co-branded online and in-store creative, connecting its message with support for children's health and reinforcing dairy farmers' commitment to their communities.



IMPACT OF BC DAIRY'S CONSUMER MARKETING

50% of British Columbians recalled BC Dairy marketing activities and reported

- **18%** increase in weekly dairy consumption
- **10%** more positive sentiment toward milk
- **6%** more positive sentiment toward dairy farmers

Growing Demand Among Multicultural Audiences

As BC's population continues to diversify, building strong connections with multicultural audiences is an important part of supporting future growth in dairy demand. BC Dairy worked with processors to grow sales for specialty dairy products for South Asian and Chinese consumers around cultural holidays like Diwali, Vaisakhi and Lunar New Year. To support these promotions, complementary campaigns were developed recognizing the important role dairy can play in bringing people together. Built around shared meal occasions and everyday moments of connection, the campaigns linked dairy products to traditions of hospitality, generosity and family.

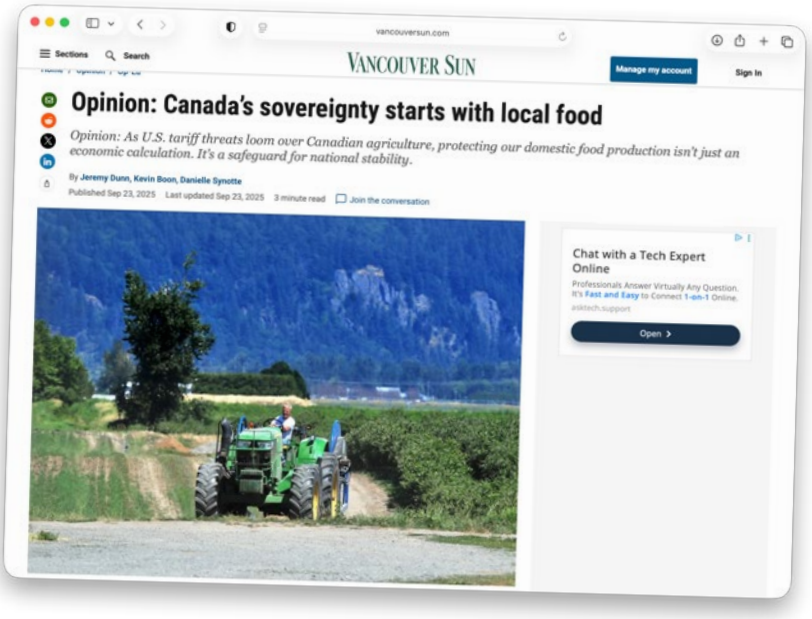
Growing Trust.

Building public trust is essential to the long-term strength of BC's dairy industry. Through community partnerships and education, BC Dairy deepened connections between consumers and dairy farmers while strengthening confidence in dairy farming and its role in communities across the province.

Growing Trust Through Agriculture's Voice

Public trust is strengthened when agriculture speaks with a clear, coordinated voice. Throughout the year, BC Dairy worked alongside BCAC, commodity organizations, governments and DFC to advance shared priorities including water security, emergency preparedness, competitiveness, land use and food security.

In September 2025, BC Dairy collaborated with BCAC and the BC Cattlemen's Association on a Vancouver Sun opinion piece highlighting the importance of domestic food production and agriculture's role in Canada's food security and resilience amid global uncertainty.



BC Dairy also remained actively engaged in provincial and national policy discussions to help ensure programs, regulations and sustainability initiatives reflect the realities of farming in British Columbia. This work strengthens confidence in a resilient, competitive food system while ensuring dairy farmers' perspectives are represented in decisions shaping the future of agriculture.

Growing Trust Through Community Partnerships

Milk & Cookies for Canuck Place

In 2026, BC Dairy proudly presented the fourth annual Milk & Cookies for Canuck Place campaign, inviting schools, businesses and community groups across British Columbia to support Canuck Place Children's Hospice with custom cookie sales at their businesses and schools.

New this year, the campaign featured the Hill-Davie family, dairy farmers with a personal connection to Canuck Place, bringing authenticity and emotional resonance to the message. The campaign reported a 21% lift in positive sentiment toward dairy farmers and their contribution to BC communities and raised more than $70,000 for Canuck Place, and audiences exposed to the campaign.



By connecting dairy farmers with a cause that touches families across BC, the campaign created meaningful opportunities to build trust and demonstrate the industry's commitment to strong communities.



Helping students understand where their food comes from.

BC Dairy continued its long-standing partnership with the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation through support of the Take a Bite of BC program.

Through the initiative, BC Dairy donated locally produced milk and cheese to more than 60 teaching kitchens across the province, giving students hands-on culinary experiences while learning about BC food systems and local food production.

Supporting a Meaningful Connection to Agriculture & Local Food in BC Classrooms

For more than 20 years, the Mini Food Grants program has helped teachers create hands-on food experiences through tasting activities, cooking lessons and classroom projects. It helps students explore new foods, develop practical food skills and understand where their food comes from.

Teacher feedback highlighted the program's impact, with educators reporting increased student engagement and greater willingness to try new foods. By helping students build positive relationships with food at an early age, BC Dairy is strengthening long-term understanding and appreciation of BC's agriculture and dairy farming community.

This year BC dairy farmers supported

418
CLASSROOMS
through the Mini Food Grants program

23% **increase over the previous year**

19,000
STUDENTS REACHED
through BC Dairy nutrition education

"Our students not only learned about healthy eating habits, but also developed a deeper understanding of where their food comes from and the importance of supporting local farmers."

R.S. (Elementary School teacher)



Growing Resilience.

Resilience is built long before challenges arise.

Whether facing extreme weather events, trade uncertainty, rising costs or other external pressures, the dairy industry's ability to adapt depends on both effective advocacy and preparedness.

Advocacy and Relationships

Trade

Trade uncertainty remained a key focus as discussions related to tariffs, market access and the future of CUSMA continued to evolve. BC Dairy worked closely with DFC, processors, industry partners and government officials to ensure BC dairy priorities were represented in federal discussions.

Throughout the year, BC Dairy documented 36 interactions with federal decision-makers, helping ensure elected officials and senior staff understood the importance of supply management, domestic food production and continued investment in Canada's dairy sector ahead of key trade discussions.

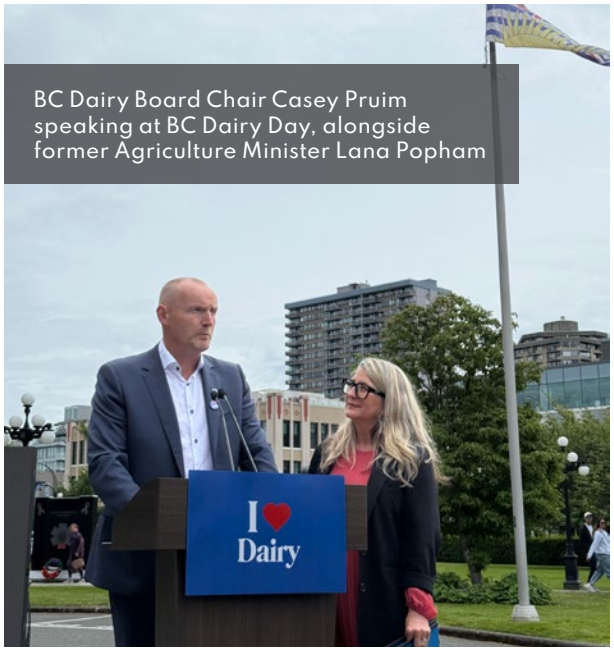


Here in BC – Ready When Trade Issues Emerge

When trade discussions returned to the public spotlight, BC Dairy was prepared to respond quickly. Campaign assets for the Here in BC initiative had already been developed, allowing BC Dairy to highlight that local dairy products are fresh, safe and produced by BC dairy farmers. Having communications tools ready in advance ensured timely and coordinated messaging when consumers needed it most.

Water Advocacy

Water security remained a key advocacy priority as producers continued to face drought risk, permitting delays, and increasing pressure on water resources. In 2025–26, BC Dairy participated in 12 provincial consultations and supported implementation of recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy, helping advance priorities including expanded water storage, streamlined approvals, improved financing, groundwater licensing, and stronger agricultural participation in watershed planning.



BC Dairy Board Chair Casey Pruim speaking at BC Dairy Day, alongside former Agriculture Minister Lana Popham

BC Dairy also continued to champion investment in drought resilience and agricultural water infrastructure in the Koksilah River, Bessette Creek, and Salmon River watersheds, supporting producer-led solutions that strengthen long-term water security and local food production.



Kiel Giddens, MLA for Prince George-Mackenzie

Bringing Producers' Voices to Government

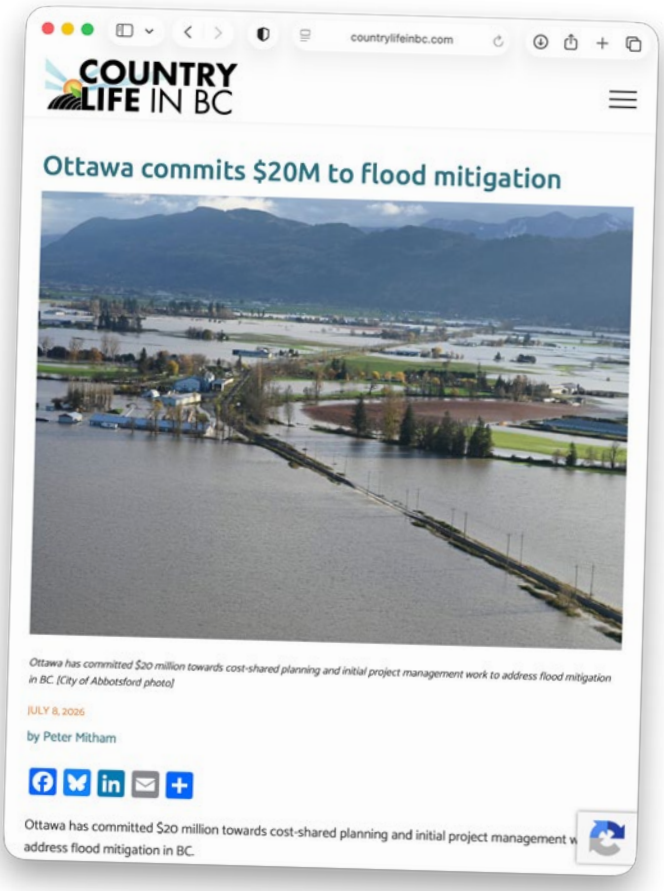
In May, BC Dairy organized the 3rd annual BC Dairy Day at the Legislature in Victoria. In collaboration with the Western Dairy Council, Board members and staff met with 27 MLAs and 7 government staff, including the Premier, to discuss issues affecting dairy farms, including trade, water security, agricultural competitiveness and emergency preparedness. The event strengthened relationships with provincial decision-makers while raising the profile of dairy farming through a well-attended ice cream reception that brought together elected officials, government staff and industry representatives.

Emergency Preparedness and Resilience

Sumas Flood Mitigation

The flooding of Sumas Prairie in December 2025 provided an early test of BC Dairy's Emergency Response Plan and demonstrated the value of investing in relationships and preparedness before an emergency occurs. Existing communication processes and response protocols helped ensure producers received timely, coordinated information during a rapidly evolving situation.

Following the flood event, BC Dairy advanced advocacy efforts related to Fraser Valley flood mitigation, helping elevate the need for long-term flood resilience planning through ongoing engagement with provincial and federal governments. These efforts contributed to a federal announcement of $20 million for flood infrastructure planning in British Columbia.



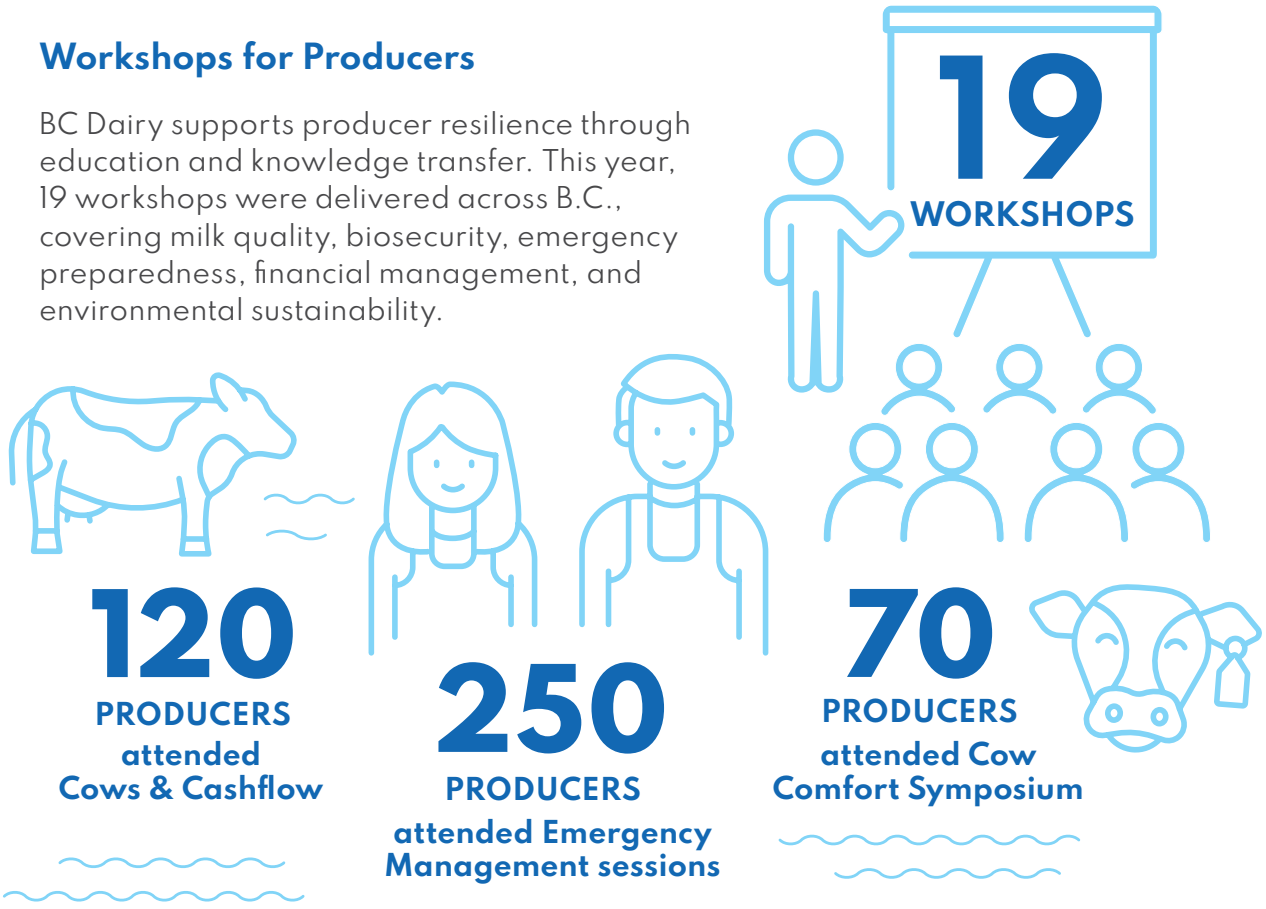
Evidence-based advocacy

Effective advocacy depends on credible data. During the year, BC Dairy completed the 2023 and 2024 Cost of Production Studies and Profitability Analysis in partnership with KPMG and MNP, with more than 100 producer datasets collected each year. The studies provide one of the province's most comprehensive sources of information on dairy farm economics and strengthen BC Dairy's ability to advocate using evidence-based insights.

BC Dairy, in partnership with BCAC, also commissioned the University of the Fraser Valley's Farming at the Edge report written by Dr. Chris Bodnar providing additional analysis on farm profitability and competitiveness in British Columbia. The report calls for targeted reforms to improve the financial resilience of commercial farms and the long-term sustainability of local food production.

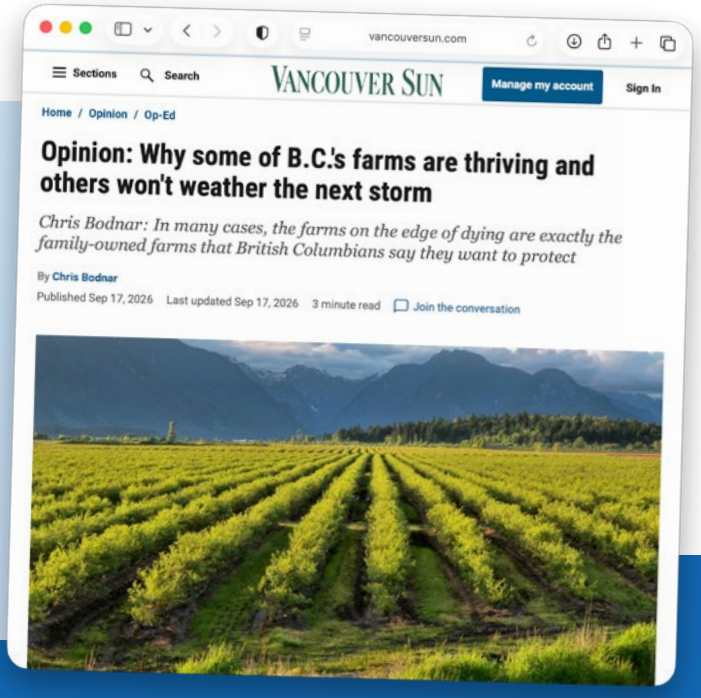
Workshops for Producers

BC Dairy supports producer resilience through education and knowledge transfer. This year, 19 workshops were delivered across B.C., covering milk quality, biosecurity, emergency preparedness, financial management, and environmental sustainability.



Together, these reports provide the credible, third-party evidence needed to support BC Dairy's advocacy on business costs and farm profitability.

To coincide with UBCM, the Farming on the Edge report's findings were also featured in an op-ed in the Vancouver Sun, helping bring its recommendations directly to provincial and local decision-makers.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Opinion: Why some of B.C.'s farms are thriving and others won't weather the next storm

Chris Bodnar: In many cases, the farms on the edge of dying are exactly the family-owned farms that British Columbians say they want to protect

By Chris Bodnar

Published Sep 17, 2026 Last updated Sep 17, 2026 3 minute read Join the conversation

Partnerships

Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) is the national organization representing Canadian dairy farmers and the provincial dairy organizations that serve them. As a member-driven organization, DFC works to foster collaboration, alignment, and a strong collective voice on issues that matter to dairy farmers, including public trust, sustainability, trade, policy, and the long-term success of the dairy sector.

BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) serves as a unified voice to government on issues affecting British Columbia's agriculture sector. BCAC represents 30 commodity organizations whose members include approximately 20,000 farm families, accounting for 96% of farm gate sales in the province.

BC Dairy participates in BCAC to collaborate with other agricultural sectors on shared priorities and contribute to discussions that support a competitive and sustainable future for BC agriculture.

Western Milk Pool

Better Together for Canadian Dairy

The Western Milk Pool is a collaborative partnership between British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba that enables the sharing of markets and milk revenues across Western Canada. Through coordinated planning and operations, the pool helps ensure an efficient and stable dairy system that benefits producers, processors, and consumers.

BC Dairy contributes to the success of the pool through active participation in the Western Milk Pool Advisory Committee and the Western Collaboration Team, helping advance regional priorities and strengthen collaboration across the western dairy sector.

Dairy Innovation West (DIW) is Canada's first and only milk concentration plant jointly owned by the Dairy Industry Development Council, Alberta Milk, Saskatchewan Milk, and Dairy Farmers of Manitoba.

Dairy Industry Development Council

The Dairy Industry Development Council (DIDC) is a corporation governed by directors who also serve as directors of the British Columbia Dairy Association. The DIDC was established November 14, 2002 under the authority of the Farming and Fishing Industries Development Act (British Columbia) and authorizes the collection of levies from B.C. producers. The levies are used to fund initiatives deemed by producers to be in the best interests of sustainable growth of the dairy sector in B.C., including promotion, education, research and development, and policy activities on behalf of the levy payers in the province.

The Council may collaborate with organizations, such as the British Columbia Dairy Association and Dairy Farmers of Canada, to deliver programs, but retains full accountability to levy payers and the B.C. Minister of Agriculture and Food for the use of funds. The DIDC's activities are outlined in the DIDC Plan, as approved by the B.C. Minister of Agriculture and Food from time to time.

DIDC notables this year:

- DIDC continues to be an active shareholder in Dairy Buildings and Land Corporation and a member of Dairy Innovation West. DIDC's shareholder equity in the DIW investment is $14,469,804, representing a 35.42% share.
- During 2026, DIDC consulted extensively with dairy producers on a proposed modernization of the producer levy structure. The DIDC commissioned the BC Council of Marketing Boards to conduct a producer plebiscite from May 12 to June 9, 2026, to seek producer approval for a levy model based on Continuous Daily Quota (CDQ) held. The plebiscite met all required approval thresholds, with 203 of 419 eligible producers participating, 85.22% of votes cast supporting the proposal, and supporting producers representing 93.58% of the milk production volume of those who voted. The BC Council of Marketing Boards confirmed that the plebiscite passed.
- Following its review of the plebiscite results, on June 23, 2026, the DIDC Board voted to request that the B.C. Minister of Agriculture and Food take the necessary steps to implement the producer-supported levy change: a DIDC producer levy of $0.3724 per kilogram of CDQ held on a monthly basis, with all other DIDC levies extinguished.
- The former Minister of Agriculture was in support and in the process of taking the recommendation to Cabinet for a decision. This was put on hold during the provincial election and will be a top priority for DIDC to move forward with the new government.

*BC Dairy and DIDC financial statements are available in a supplementary document.

BC DAIRY

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