
BC Public Attitudes Toward Agriculture and Food 2014



Detailed Topline Report



August 2014



This study was sponsored by the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia and the Vancouver Foundation. For further information on the study, please contact:

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Study Methodology

Study results are based on province-wide online survey with 1,704 British Columbia residents aged 18 and over. Respondents were recruited from web panels and contacted by email invitation July 17-29, 2014. Online interviews were of an average duration of approximately 18 minutes.

The sample of n=1,704 was weighted by gender and age within region. Regional sample proportions and weighting effects are shown below. While results are based on a non-probabilistic online sample, current practice (see Nate Silver, 2012¹) merits comparison with a random probabilistic sample of n=1,704 respondents. Such a sample would be considered accurate to within $\pm 2.36\%$ 19 times out of 20, or $\pm 2.38\%$ accounting for design effects.

The final database is based on a design survey instrument comprised of over 250 question items or synthetic variables created from survey questions, location or web data. Data was cleaned for fraudulent respondents using various techniques to flag for speeders, incompletes, straightliners and other behaviours that could affect data quality.

Sampling Distribution / Margin of Error				
BC Development Regions	18+ Pop	WEIGHTED SAMPLE	BASE SAMPLE EQUIVALENT	MARGIN OF ERROR*
Lower Mainland/Southwest, <i>including Metro Vancouver</i>	2,286,094	1041	965	$\pm 3.2\%$
Vancouver Island/South Coast	647,903	295	353	$\pm 5.2\%$
Southern Interior	557,388	254	280	$\pm 5.8\%$
Northern Interior	251,872	115	106	$\pm 9.5\%$
TOTAL SAMPLE	3,743,257	1,704	1704	$\pm 2.36\%$
DESIGN EFFECTS				
EFFECTIVE SAMPLE SIZE	KISH FORMULA	1,704	1,679	$\pm 2.38\%$
EFFECTIVE SAMPLE SIZE	LOHR FORMULA	1,704	1,686	$\pm 2.38\%$

*95% confidence level

¹ <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/10/which-polls-fared-best-and-worst-in-the-2012-presidential-race/>

D3. In which region of BC do you currently live?

Region	%
VanIsle /Coast	17
L. Mainland	61
S. Interior	15
N. Interior	7

D4. Your Gender:

Gender	%
Male	49
Female	51

D5. What language do you speak at home? Select all that apply.

Language	%
English Only	87
Non-English	13

D6. In which decade were you born?

<i>Converted to Age Decade</i>	%
18-29	8
30s	22
40s	22
50s	18
60s	20
70+	10

D7. Home ownership. Select all that apply.

Ownership	%
Own home	70
Rent home	28
Own 2nd home/vacation home	4
Live with family member/children/parents' home	2

D8. How many years in total have you lived in your current community?

Years	%
Under 10 years	37
10-19 years	23
20-29 years	18
30+ years	15
All my life	7

D9a. Please select all that apply.

Depth of Neighbour Relationships	%
I often speak with my neighbours	64
I know the first names of my neighbours.	72
I consider my neighbours to be friends.	40
I have shared a meal with my neighbours in the past year.	24
NONE OF THE ABOVE / NO ENGAGEMENT	17

D9b. Social Engagement [Synthetic Variable]

Depth of Neighbour Relationships	%
NO RELATIONSHIP	17
LOW – One Activity	25
MED – Two Activities	18
HIGH – Three Activities	21
TOP – All Four Activities	19

D10. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Attainment	%
Less than high school	3
High school graduation	13
Some post-secondary	17
Community college/vocational training	29
University graduate	39

D11. Some people vote in elections, while others choose NOT to vote. In the next BC PROVINCIAL election are you...?

Voting Behavior	%
Definitely voting	76
Probably voting	15
Probably NOT voting [SKIP TO Q0]	5
Definitely NOT voting [SKIP TO Q0]	3
Don't know	<1%

D12a. [ALL VOTERS] If a BC election was held today WHAT PROVINCIAL PARTY would you be MOST likely to support in your riding?

Party Preference [ALL VOTERS - INCLUDING UNDECIDED]	%
The BC NDP	28
The BC Liberal Party	27.8
The BC Conservative Party	7
The BC Green Party	13.5
Other	0.8
Undecided / Refuse	22.8

D12b. [DECIDED VOTERS ONLY] If a BC election was held today WHAT PROVINCIAL PARTY would you be MOST likely to support in your riding?

Party Preference [DECIDED VOTERS ONLY]	%
The BC NDP	36.3
The BC Liberal Party	36
The BC Conservative Party	9.1
The BC Green Party	17.5
Other	1.0

Q1. As population increases, land becomes more valuable. What would you say are the PRIORITY USES FOR LAND in British Columbia? Drag item from the centre below up into the appropriate rating box. Ratings can be changed or repeated.



Land Use	Top 2	%					
		Top	High	Med	Low	Not	Unsure
Natural freshwater systems	83	45	38	14	2	1	1
Farming & growing food	81	39	42	13	3	2	1
Nature, wildlife & green space	64	25	39	25	8	2	2
Wind & solar power farms	56	20	36	26	13	3	2
Hydroelectric dams & reservoirs	41	8	33	43	11	3	2
Beauty, tranquility & spiritual values	38	14	24	30	20	9	3
Personal outdoor recreation (eg. hiking, hunting & fishing)	38	11	27	36	19	7	1
Energy transportation corridors (eg. pipelines)	28	9	19	29	22	19	2
Oil & gas development	26	7	19	34	22	15	3
Logging	26	3	23	45	22	5	2
Mining	22	2	20	39	26	9	4
First Nations' rights, title & cultural use	22	10	12	26	23	24	5
Expansion of towns & cities	19	4	15	36	28	11	5
Factories & industrial production	14	1	13	43	31	9	2
Commercial recreational developments (eg. golf & ski resorts)	11	2	9	32	37	18	2

Q2. Overall, what do you consider to be the MAIN BENEFITS of farming and agriculture in British Columbia, if any? Name up to 3. [UNAIDED]



CODED RESPONSES

Top-of-Mind Benefits of Farming and Agriculture in BC	%
Fresh / Quality / Good food	21
Self-sufficient / Secure / Reliable food supply	18
Strong local economy / business / jobs	16
Local food / Homegrown food	14
Safe / Clean / Healthy food	8
Sustainability / Environment	7
Affordable / Cheaper food	4
Food	4
Supporting local farmers / Way of life	2
Preservation of farmland	2
Other	1
Don't know / N/A	4

Q3. Overall, what, if anything, CONCERNS you MOST when you think about issues affecting food & agriculture in the coming years? Name up to 3 issues. [UNAIDED]

CODED RESPONSES

Top-of-Mind Concerns	%
Loss of / development of farmland	25
Pesticides/Chemicals/Pollution in food	14
Food shortages / prices	10
GMOs	10
Farmers Going Out of Business	6
Threats to ALR	4
Climate Change / Extreme weather	4
Imported food / China	3
Food Quality / Safety	2
Water Degradation / Pollution	2
Govt Regulation / Taxes	2
Bee Populations	1
Corporate / factory farming / monoculture	1
Environment / Sustainability	1
Access to local food	1
Oil / Gas / Pipelines	1
Animal Welfare	1
Other	3
Don't know / N/A	9

Q4. How CONCERNED are you about the following issues related to food and agriculture?
Drag item from the centre below up into the appropriate rating box. Ratings can be changed or repeated.



Concern	%					
	Top 2	Extremely concerned	Quite	Somewhat	A little	Not concerned
Contaminated food products from countries like China	82	54	28	12	5	2
Dependence on other countries for our food security	80	42	38	12	6	1
Control of our food supply by large corporations	76	50	26	16	6	2
Farmers going out of business because of cheaper imports	76	36	40	17	6	1
Collapse of bee populations that pollinate food crops	76	44	32	14	8	2
Developers paving over farmland for malls & subdivisions	74	46	28	15	8	3
Rising food prices	69	33	36	25	5	1
Genetically-modified food crops	65	44	21	18	9	8
Severe water shortages in regions that supply our food, like California	63	27	36	27	7	2
Climate change	60	26	34	26	9	5
Economic hardship for farmers due to unfair restrictions on the sale of BC farmland	59	25	34	27	8	5
Food shortages	58	24	34	29	10	3
Factory farming	58	26	32	27	11	4
Food waste	57	23	34	30	10	2
Flooding of farmland for BC Hydro mega-projects	50	22	28	30	15	5
Moralistic, politically-correct attitudes toward food	46	18	28	27	13	13

Q5. Before now, have you heard A LOT, SOME, LITTLE or NOTHING about...BC's Agricultural Land Reserve, or ALR?

Heard Before	%
A lot	18
Some	32
A little	28
Nothing	16
Unsure	5

Q6. The BC Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) was established over 40 years ago to preserve farmland & green space in BC for farming and the growing of food.

	Unsure	TOTAL OPPOSE	Strongly oppose	Oppose	Support	Strongly support	TOTAL SUPPORT
<i>Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the BC Agricultural Land Reserve and the policy of preserving farmland?</i>	3	1	0	1	43	52	95

Q7. How much do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements?

Level of Agreement	%						
	TOTAL DISAGREE	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	TOTAL AGREE
It is very important that BC produces enough food so we don't have to depend on imports from other places.	5	2	3	4	32	59	92
BC agriculture is important because it is a renewable, sustainable industry that can help address climate change.	5	1	3	14	41	40	81
The ALR is important as greenbelt, providing urban containment and environmental benefits like flood control.	4	1	3	17	39	40	79
Local farming & food businesses generate MAJOR economic benefits in my region.	7	2	6	19	42	33	74
Restricting land development in the ALR creates land scarcity, and makes housing even more unaffordable in BC.	48	24	24	27	17	8	25
The ALR unfairly deprives citizens of the freedom to use their land and generate a fair return on investment.	51	24	27	34	10	6	16
Traditional farming will soon be obsolete because new technologies will allow us to grow food in the lab	76	49	27	15	8	2	10
Protecting farmland in BC makes no sense when we can import food much more cheaply from other countries.	91	68	23	5	3	1	4

Q8. Last month, the BC government passed Bill 24 enacting changes to laws governing the BC Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) which oversees the addition and withdrawal of lands from the ALR.

Before now, have you heard A LOT, SOME, LITTLE or NOTHING about Bill 24 and changes to agricultural land use laws in the province?

Heard Before	%
Top 2	25
A lot	6
Some	19
A little	25
Nothing	44
Bottom 2	70
Unsure	5

Q9. Bill 24 relaxes controls on farmland, weakening protection for 90 percent of the Agricultural Land Reserve, mainly in the North and interior of the province. The changes make it easier for ALR lands to be used for economic activities other than farming, for example, commercial or residential development.

Generally, do you think that laws protecting the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in BC should be...

	%
TOTAL Strengthened / Maintained	71
STRENGTHENED to preserve MORE land for growing food.	52
MAINTAINED as is to protect ALL lands within the ALR with no major changes	19
MAINTAINED only for lands that are truly prime agricultural land	27
RELAXED to allow for other non-farming economic activities	2
TOTAL Limited / Relaxed	29

Q12. Which of the following statements about the regulation of agricultural lands is closest to your view?

Indicate your preference by selecting "A" or "B".

		%			
A		Unsure	B		
Much of the land protected in the ALR is made up of poor quality soil, and is useless for farming.	6	39	55	All the ALR is productive greenspace & should be protected, even if not actively farmed.	
50% of BC's food is grown in BC, making the ALR a cornerstone to food security & the BC economy.	73	23	4	The ALR is a bureaucratic sacred cow from the past that impedes real economic development.	
Local politicians should make decisions on ALR lands as they are the most in tune with local needs.	14	26	60	Local politicians should NOT make ALR decisions as they are too easily influenced by developers.	

Q13. The BC Agriculture Council and other BC farm organizations have recently expressed concern about lack of consultation by the BC government prior to passing Bill 24 at the end of May of this year.

The BC government on the other hand says that ALR changes were debated in the legislature over the past 3 months. They also say that even though Bill 24 has been passed into law, there is still ample time to comment on the details.

In your view, has PUBLIC CONSULTATION by the BC government on changes to the Agricultural Land Reserve in Bill 24 been...

Public consultation by the BC Government has been...	%
TOTAL ADEQUATE	7
More than Adequate	1
Adequate	6
Neither	24
Inadequate	35
Completely inadequate	34
TOTAL INADEQUATE	68

Q14. In which of the following players do you have the **MOST CONFIDENCE when it comes to the Agricultural Land Reserve and farmland protection in BC?**

Please RANK 1 to 3 starting with the highest rating by clicking up to 3 names or groups.

Name or Group	AVERAGE RATING 1=MOST 10=LEAST
Local farmers & ranchers	3.04
Local food sustainability groups	5.26
BC Agriculture Council	5.60
David Suzuki	7.85
Fish & wildlife organizations	7.86
The Chair of the Agricultural Land Commission	8.10
The current BC Minister of Agriculture	8.58
First Nations	8.81
Your local city government	9.21
Leader of the BC NDP, John Horgan	9.21
Local chefs & restaurant owners	9.23
BC Premier Christy Clark	9.24

Q15. How much do you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements? Rate each statement by clicking the buttons below.

Level of Agreement	%						
	TOTAL DISAGREE	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	TOTAL AGREE
As with forests and water, BC farmland is a vital public asset. Selling out the ALR is a failure of leadership and a betrayal of the public trust.	9	2	7	9	33	49	82
The BC agricultural land reserve is not just important for protecting farms, it also protects valleys and greenspace needed for wildlife habitat and recreational enjoyment.	7	2	5	16	36	40	76
There are NO acceptable reasons for removing any more farmland from the Agricultural Land Reserve anywhere in BC.	26	5	21	16	29	29	58
The amount of land protected within the BC agricultural land reserve should be DOUBLED.	38	20	18	31	18	13	31
Preserving farmland in the ALR caters to special interest groups that expect the rest of us to carry the cost of their trendy lifestyle choices.	53	29	24	24	17	5	22
Relaxing ALR restrictions is critical to unlocking the economic potential of the BC energy & resource sector.	56	32	24	26	13	5	18
Letting farmers sell their land to non-farmers helps farming by giving farmers badly needed income.	56	29	27	26	14	3	17
ALR is a 40-year old bureaucratic nightmare that preserves questionable farmland to satisfy the trendy food fantasies of spoiled yuppies in the city.	62	31	31	23	10	4	14

Q16. Do you, or anyone in your immediate household GARDEN, FARM or otherwise WORK with food?

Level of involvement working with food	%
No current INVOLVEMENT	58
Current gardening household	30
Food & restaurant industry	6
Current farming household	2
Past member of farming household	5
I'm a foodie	13

Q17. Finally - in your opinion, were the questions in this survey..?

Level of involvement working with food	%
NET BIASED	18
Biased AGAINST ALR	5
Biased IN FAVOUR of ALR	13
NET BALANCED / NO BIAS DETECTED	82
Biased both FOR and AGAINST the ALR	10
Generally FAIR	62
Unsure	10

