



**Agritech**

Where agriculture, processing and food meet innovation



**British Columbia, Naturally.**

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British Columbia's (B.C.) agritech sector has the **potential to transform agriculture around the world**, making it more productive, sustainable and resilient.

British Columbia's thriving tech industry, top universities and research centres converge with one of Canada's most diverse agriculture, seafood and food processing industries. There are approximately 32,000 agriculture and food sector businesses in B.C. and over 200 primary agriculture products and 100 fish, shellfish and marine plant species harvested in B.C. Not to mention, there are over 11,000 tech companies. It is no surprise that technology is one of the fastest-growing sectors in B.C. Coincidentally, B.C.'s 150-plus agritech companies are applying technology and innovation to the farm, food processing and seafood sectors to address global issues ranging from food safety and production, to food security and sustainability.



### Sustainable Food Systems

A sustainable food system delivers food security and nutrition for all. It needs to be profitable throughout (economic sustainability), have broad-based benefits for society (social sustainability) and a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability).

The global food and agriculture sector accounts for approximately 21 to 37 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, 70 percent of freshwater use and almost half of the world's habitable land, making food and agriculture a critical sector for agritech companies to engage in climate change, conservation, biodiversity and clean technology. There is a strong culture in B.C., shared by consumers, processors and producers – of prioritizing sustainability in their decisions and pursuing food and agriculture products that offer sustainability benefits.

## Strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Practices

B.C.'s agritech sector is increasingly attracting private capital and investors, both from within Canada and globally. B.C.-based agritech firms have a competitive advantage over global counterparts in attracting investors who value high ESG scores due to their focus on environmental stewardship and sustainability, access to clean sources of energy, high-quality water and opportunities to partner with First Nations communities.

## Vibrant Climate

B.C. is known globally for its rich, fertile land, abundant fresh water supplies and diverse geography. An impressive history of farming and fishing originates from the natural wealth of the province. Today, B.C.'s agrifood and seafood sectors offer abundant resources and supports that result in economical advancements.

B.C. has an excellent environment for agricultural activity and research and development in the agritech and foodtech space, because of its temperate climate, diverse array of agricultural commodities and a variety of unique biogeoclimatic zones. For agritech, this creates advantages from being a "living lab" for the development and trial of a wide range of new agricultural and food technologies.

## Skilled Workforce

B.C.'s vibrant and thriving tech sector has helped the industry grow by providing access to trained talent. Attracting agritech talent is often in part due to the worker's passion for agriculture, food security, or climate change.



## Opportune Location

B.C. is well positioned to export agritech products and services to key markets given its strong trading relationships with several Asian countries. B.C. is Canada's gateway to the Asia-Pacific region. Another advantage of B.C.'s geography is the proximity of urban tech-development ecosystems to productive farms in some parts of the province.

## Growing Agritech Sector

The agritech sector in B.C. is a vital and expanding network of investors, researchers and businesses – advancing opportunity and cultivating new knowledge. The sector is modernizing by testing and adopting innovative technology to respond to new opportunities and challenges such as climate change, food security and increasing pressures on agricultural land – conditions faced worldwide.



# Industry Profile

British Columbia has the most diverse array of agricultural commodities in Canada, unique biogeoclimatic zones, an internationally recognized sustainable food system and partnerships with academic programs and other nations. There are plenty of agritech opportunities in British Columbia that offer innovative solutions, especially in the following agritech subsectors.

## Foodtech

Foodtech encompasses technologies designed to improve the productivity and efficiency of transforming raw agricultural products into food items suitable for human consumption.

A Vancouver-based agritech company, ThisFish, aims to improve profitability and sustainability in the seafood industry through digitization, traceability and innovation.

## Precision Agriculture

Precision agriculture is a farm management strategy that involves a suite of technologies (e.g., GPS, sensors, big data and AI, application programming interfaces (APIs)) to collect and share information about the local soil, climate, plants and livestock to inform agriculture processes and decision-making for increased productivity and costs savings. Precision agriculture can help to guide targeted farm management activities (e.g., seeding, input application, harvesting) to improve the sustainability, efficiency and productivity of agricultural operations.

There is international investment interest in B.C.-based precision agriculture companies. For example, Semios has raised over \$100 million in external capital to date.



## Controlled Environment Agriculture

Controlled environment agriculture is an indoor technology-based production system where crops are grown under a modified and highly conditioned environment; common forms are greenhouses, vertical farming and hydroculture.

Windset Farms headquartered in Delta, uses state-of-the-art technology and sustainable growing methods to sell and market over 2,500 acres of high tech glasshouse production – the equivalent of 50,000 acres of field farming.

## Agricultural Biotechnology

Agricultural biotechnology is a set of highly sophisticated techniques and tools used by scientists to understand or manipulate the genetic makeup of organisms for their use in the production or processing of agricultural goods.

Catalera's biopesticide solutions are registered for use in consumer, professional and agricultural applications. They are unleashing the full potential of biological ingredients in natural, safe formulations to ensure food security, restore ecological balance and revitalize human health.

## Automation Robotics

Automation robotics represents an area of opportunity to develop new machines that can help farmers and processors to operate in constrained labour markets, while also driving productivity improvements and/or reducing waste. Agriculture robots, or agribots, are advanced machines designed specifically to perform various farming tasks, such as planting seeds, watering crops and harvesting produce by leveraging advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and GPS navigation.

4Ag Robotics is one example of a B.C. company that builds high precision robotic solutions for harvesting mushrooms.

## Ecosystem Partners

■ **B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation (BCCAI)** is located at SFU Surrey campus. The centre connects small and medium sized enterprises in the agritech sector with academic researchers, government and industry partners to develop technology solutions that build resilient supply chains and generate global solutions for food security and climate change.

■ **Innovate BC** is a Crown agency that helps to connect innovators both large and small with provincial government funding, tools, resources and support. Innovate BC exists to serve and celebrate innovation in B.C., helping industries grow, while ensuring people throughout the province benefit from a thriving, sustainable and inclusive economy.



### Join innovative agritech companies, including:



- 4AG Robotics
- Crush Dynamics
- FPS Food Process Solutions
- Lucent Bioscience
- Maia Farms
- Semios
- Terramera
- ThisFish

# Research Institutions

Institution	Areas of Focus
<b>UBC Food Process Engineering Laboratory</b>	Focuses on developing new and innovative food processing technologies to enhance food quality and safety.
<b>UBC Agricultural Technologies and Bioproducts</b>	Brings together experts with diverse skills in biology, bioinformatics, chemistry and engineering to investigate bioproducts in plants grown for food, medicine, cosmetics and industrial raw materials.
<b>UBC Smart Agriculture Living Lab</b>	Enables Canadian start-ups and scaleups to test and validate their products and services in sectors like agriculture, robotics, and applied artificial intelligence at UBC Farm.
<b>UBC Dan On Food and Beverage Innovation Centre</b>	Supports entrepreneurs and food processors through services that range from collaborations with some of the world's top scientists in food process engineering, to training workers on the operations of novel, cutting-edge equipment.
<b>SFU 4D LAB</b>	Helps academic and industry users solve problems at any scale with a full suite of testing, fabrication and prototyping tools under one roof, research freedom and flexible support options and access to industry and academic expertise.
<b>Food and Agriculture Institute (FAI)</b>	At the University of the Fraser Valley, FAI conducts research under two major themes - Agricultural Technology and Innovation and Food Systems Planning and Policy. For agritech, FAI researches the potential that technologies, such as cellular agriculture and indoor farming, have for contributing to sustainable food systems.
<b>Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS)</b>	ISFS is an applied research and extension unit at Kwantlen Polytechnic University that investigates and supports regional food systems as key elements of sustainable communities.
<b>Summerland Research and Development Centre</b>	The centre addresses the mitigation of environmental pressures, control of biological threats and integration of sustainable production and processing systems for the delivery of high quality, value-added horticultural and agri-food products. Research activities focus on high value horticultural crops, particularly wine grapes and tree fruits, and the development of environmentally and economically sustainable methodologies and strategies.
<b>Agassiz Research and Development Centre (RDC)</b>	Agassiz RDC is the lead centre in Canada for integrated research on peri-urban agriculture. Research focuses on developing intensive yet sustainable horticultural and forage management systems that are integrated within a periurban environment. Four broad strategic areas are: soil health management, innovative crop production systems, integrated pest management and biodiversity enhancement.
<b>BCIT Natural Health and Food Products Research Group</b>	Focuses on projects related to health policy, regulatory affairs, product formulation, botanical authentication, analytical method development and validation, chemometrics, and therapeutic monitoring for preclinical and clinical studies. The Group's Phytoanalytics Laboratory is fully equipped for research-oriented investigations. Integrated with classical tools and leading-edge technology, the lab is home to a Bruker AVANCE III HD™ 400MHz Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectrometer, the first certified Food screener in North America.



British Columbia's agritech sector offers a unique opportunity for companies worldwide to test products and practices to achieve market success.

## Supportive Government

- **agriNEXT** is a pan-Canadian, ag-specific accelerator and network hub established by Foresight. This program focuses on ventures with a technology readiness level (TRL) of 4-9+ and accelerates them through technology and industry-specific training, mentorship and ecosystem engagement, and connections to funders, investors and corporate partners.
- **Agritech Concierge** provides government support for agritech businesses to grow, diversify, access new markets and attract investment opportunities. Available to any farmer, food entrepreneur or agritech business that is interested in advancing technology and innovation, growing their business, or establishing a business in B.C.
- **BC On-Farm Technology Adoption Program** provides cost-shared funding to eligible participants to adopt new technologies on-farm that will enhance profitability, productivity, and/or efficiency. While the program is meant for farmers who wish to adopt technology, it benefits the agritech sector greatly, as it is strengthening the market for the technology in B.C.

## British Columbia's Competitive Advantages



- Opportunities to innovate given the proximity of a thriving tech sector to agricultural operations.
- Access to key networks and infrastructure as part of Canada and British Columbia's Asia-Pacific Gateway.
- A diverse crop mix and landscapes that offer a unique opportunity to pilot agricultural technologies.
- A combination of top universities, unique research, commercialization centres and advanced network of business accelerators, supports the breadth of technology development and sales.
- Support from the governments of B.C. and Canada to advance innovation use and development in agriculture and food.



# British Columbia, Naturally.



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