

## B.C. Food Hub Program

### Context

The Ministry of Agriculture has heard directly from farmers, processors, industry associations and post-secondary institutions that B.C.'s agriculture and food sectors need increased access to processing facilities and specialized processing equipment, business services, research and development, and innovation supports to advance a competitive food and beverage processing sector in the province.

To respond to this need, the Ministry conceptualized the B.C. Food Hub Program as a joint effort with industry, communities, post-secondary institutions and other levels of government. This initiative is an innovative, novel model that is intended to be reflective of provincial priorities and regional diversity.

### Overview

The B.C. Food Hub Program aims to foster growth and innovation in the processing sector through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, technical services and business supports. The program is being delivered in collaboration with industry, communities and post-secondary institutions. It is an innovative approach that is intended to build provincial food and beverage processing while serving the regional and sector diversity of the province.

The B.C. Food Hub Program is supporting a Food and Beverage Innovation Centre at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver and a series of inter-connected regional Food Processing and Innovation Hubs ('Food Hubs') across the province that will be regionally-tailored, shared food innovation and processing facilities. The program aims to bring together services and technology that improve supports to the agriculture, seafood, and food processing industry and advance innovation in the Province's processing sector.

### Vision

Leading the world in food and beverage processing and innovation.

### Mission

Helping B.C.'s food and beverage businesses grow, innovate and commercialize.

### Regional Food Hubs

The Ministry of Agriculture is supporting a series of regional Food Hubs including a pilot and demonstration Food Hub in Vancouver, a Food Hub in Port Alberni and in Surrey (both of which launched in summer 2020), and two additional Food Hubs that are being established in Quesnel and Salmon Arm.

### UBC Food and Beverage Innovation Centre

The Ministry of Agriculture is currently supporting the development of the UBC Food and Beverage Innovation Centre, to be located at UBC's Vancouver campus, through an endowed professorship position. Dr. Anubhav Singh, who currently holds the professorship, will help to:

- Improve B.C. food processors' access to modern processing technology and practices;
- Provide expertise to help the sector continue to innovate and develop new products;
- Support the creation of new potential post-secondary programs in B.C. to develop qualified personnel who will help to grow the industry locally;
- Lead development of the B.C. Food and Beverage Innovation Centre at UBC Vancouver; and
- Facilitate improved research and information sharing for processors.

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## What the B.C. Food Hub Program Supports

### Infrastructure and Equipment

- Shared commercial processing facility
- Storage and distribution facilities
- Regionally tailored processing and packaging equipment
- Shared office space and/or training space

### Mentorship and Training Support

- Access to business mentors and industry experts
- Product development support

### Innovation, Product Development and Testing Services

- R&D and analytical testing
- Product/prototype/process development, demonstration/proof of concept, commercialization/market validation
- Collaborative opportunities with academic institutions, industry associations and public and private companies

### Networking and Information Sharing

- Technology platforms and/or digital resource portals to virtually connect Food Hubs
- Mechanism to support facilities/equipment booking and operation
- Support for information sharing and knowledge transfer between sites

## Partnerships

The Ministry of Agriculture is working closely with industry associations, post-secondary institutions, local governments and regional organizations to deliver the B.C. Food Hub Program.

## Food Hub Program Information

Through the B.C. Food Hub Program, the Province provides a one-time funding commitment to support the start-up of a regionally owned and operated Food Hub which must be self-sustaining over the long-term. Funding above \$500,000 will only be provided to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)-eligible facilities, and further documentation may be requested to demonstrate that the requirements to achieve and maintain HACCP within the proposed Food Hub can be feasibly achieved and are appropriate to the regional context and the target clients of the Food Hub.

## Requirements of a Food Hub

To be eligible for BC Food Hub Program funding, all Food Hubs (once fully developed and at full capacity) are required to include, at a minimum, the following facility and service components:

Facility Components*	Service Components**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared-use food processing area(s) and equipment<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- For commercial production, <b>AND/OR</b></li><li>- For test/research purposes</li></ul></li><li>• Food packaging area and equipment</li><li>• Food storage (cold/dry)</li><li>• Food testing lab <b>AND/OR</b> equipment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Innovation services (product/process development, applied R&amp;D, food testing/analysis)</li><li>• Business advisory services</li><li>• Training and education on food processing and food safety</li><li>• Food Safety Plan development support for users</li><li>• Facility and services coordinator</li></ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Authority Permit and Food Safety Plan/Program<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CFIA license if required for type of processing/markets proposed</li><li>• HACCP (or equivalent program) optional</li></ul></li><li>• Office/board room/training space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• System for user booking of and access to services and facilities</li><li>• System for data collection and ongoing reporting to the Province on performance metrics</li></ul>
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*\*The lead Food Hub project entity does not need to own/operate every facility component (i.e., facility components and services can be delivered at multiple facilities and/or at partner facilities within the same region).*

*\*\*Not all services are not required to be delivered by the lead Food Hub project entity. The proposed Food Hub must have the capacity to host the required services and they can be delivered by a third party (e.g., existing Ministry of Agriculture, Industry Association, Post-Secondary Institution, etc.). Participation in the program will enable sharing of resources and knowledge to support service delivery at each Food Hub. It is not expected that services need to be newly created by each Food Hub, rather the Food Hub must facilitate access to and delivery of services.*

Additional elements may be included within a regionally tailored Food Hub, which include, but are not limited to:

- Development of products and/or value chains to serve B.C.'s government facilities market (healthcare, post-secondary institutions, etc)
- Regional value chain coordination services
- Aggregation services;
- Distribution services;
- Food 'waste' recovery;
- Waste product revalorization research and development;
- Social service delivery (e.g. job training programs, food donations, etc.);
- Equipment library;
- Mobile equipment;
- On-site sales;
- E-commerce strategies.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/growbc-feedbc-buybc/feed-bc/feed-bc-the-bc-food-hub-network>

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