

2001 CENSUS BULLETIN #2 – CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Summary of Farming in Greater Vancouver

The Board's regional growth strategy, the Livable Region Strategic Plan (1996), provides support for agriculture through its designated Green Zone and associated policies. First, the LRSP protects agricultural land in the Green Zone from the pressures of urban development. Second, the LRSP supports the viability of agriculture as an important part of the region's economic base.

Overall, the data reported from the 2001 Census of Agriculture show that agricultural land has been generally well protected from urbanization through such mechanisms as the Agricultural Land Reserve, the Green Zone and municipal Official Community Plans. The total amount of agricultural land farmed has remained essentially the same since the previous census in 1996 (at approximately 98,000 acres).

With respect to the continuing economic viability of farming in Greater Vancouver, the 2001 Census data appear to show that the industry is generally successful, but in a period of significant transition. In general, the agricultural sector of the economy appears to be healthy, showing gross receipts of almost \$700-million, up from \$500 million in 1996. However, a slim majority of census farms reported less than \$10,000 in gross receipts, and less than a quarter of census farms reported more than \$100,000. About 10 percent of GVRD farms reported more than \$500,000 in annual gross farm receipts – approximately double that of BC and Canada as a whole.

Farms within the region appear to be following a nation-wide trend in the consolidation of farm operations, with a smaller number of operations, but with each operation growing larger in area, such that there are 610 fewer farms in 2001 (vs. 1996), but with the same land area.

Some agricultural livestock sub-sectors in the region are numerically in decline, particularly cattle and pigs, with fewer farms and fewer animals. These operations are often in conflict with urban neighbours, and the reduction may reflect the pressure of this conflict. However, chicken farming appears to have expanded significantly since 1996.

Greenhouse operations in the region have been growing in number and in size. While this indicates that the sector is thriving economically, the pace of change in the area "under glass" in some parts of the region has led to concerns about the location of large-scale greenhouses.

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Greater Vancouver Farming Facts

The 2001 Census of Agriculture provides a snapshot of Greater Vancouver's agricultural industry taken on May 15th, 2001. A small collection of the 2001 Census results have been compiled into this Bulletin for general information. In some cases, local farming facts are compared to provincial and national figures, or to the previous 1996 Census results, in attempts to provide a broader context for the 2001 figures.

Several of the more notable changes in regional farming practices observed over the 1996-2001 period are:

- 18 percent decrease in the number of farming operations;
- 22 percent increase in the average farm size;
- 74 percent decrease in poultry farms;
- 60 percent decrease in pig inventory;
- 40 percent increase in gross farm receipts;
- 73 percent increase in greenhouse square footage; and,
- 42 percent decrease in mushroom bedding area.

According to figures released in the 2001 Census, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area) had 98,187 acres of land in agricultural production in 2001, up marginally (146 acres) over 1996. The regional inventory of farmland has risen consecutively over the past several census periods, increasing 1.6 percent (1,570 acres) since 1991 and 4.8 percent (4,483 acres) over 1986. In 2001, Greater Vancouver had 1.5 percent of the total farmland in British Columbia.

Table 1. Inventory of Census Farms and Agricultural Land Area for GVRD Municipalities, 1996 and 2001

Municipality	Number of Census Farms				Agricultural Land Area (acres)			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Burnaby	54	51	(3)	-5.6%	1,349	722	(627)	-46.5%
Delta	186	196	10	5.4%	18,641	19,372	731	3.9%
Langley	1,584	1,417	(167)	-10.5%	33,042	35,056	2,014	6.1%
Maple Ridge	331	237	(94)	-28.4%	4,801	3,990	(811)	-16.9%
Pitt Meadows	178	132	(46)	-25.8%	7,603	7,350	(253)	-3.3%
Richmond	247	182	(65)	-26.3%	7,442	8,315	873	11.7%
Surrey	744	557	(187)	-25.1%	21,509	17,505	(4,004)	-18.6%
Other GVRD	140	82	(58)	-41.4%	3,654	5,877	2,223	60.8%
GVRD Total	3,464	2,854	(610)	-17.6%	98,041	98,187	146	0.1%

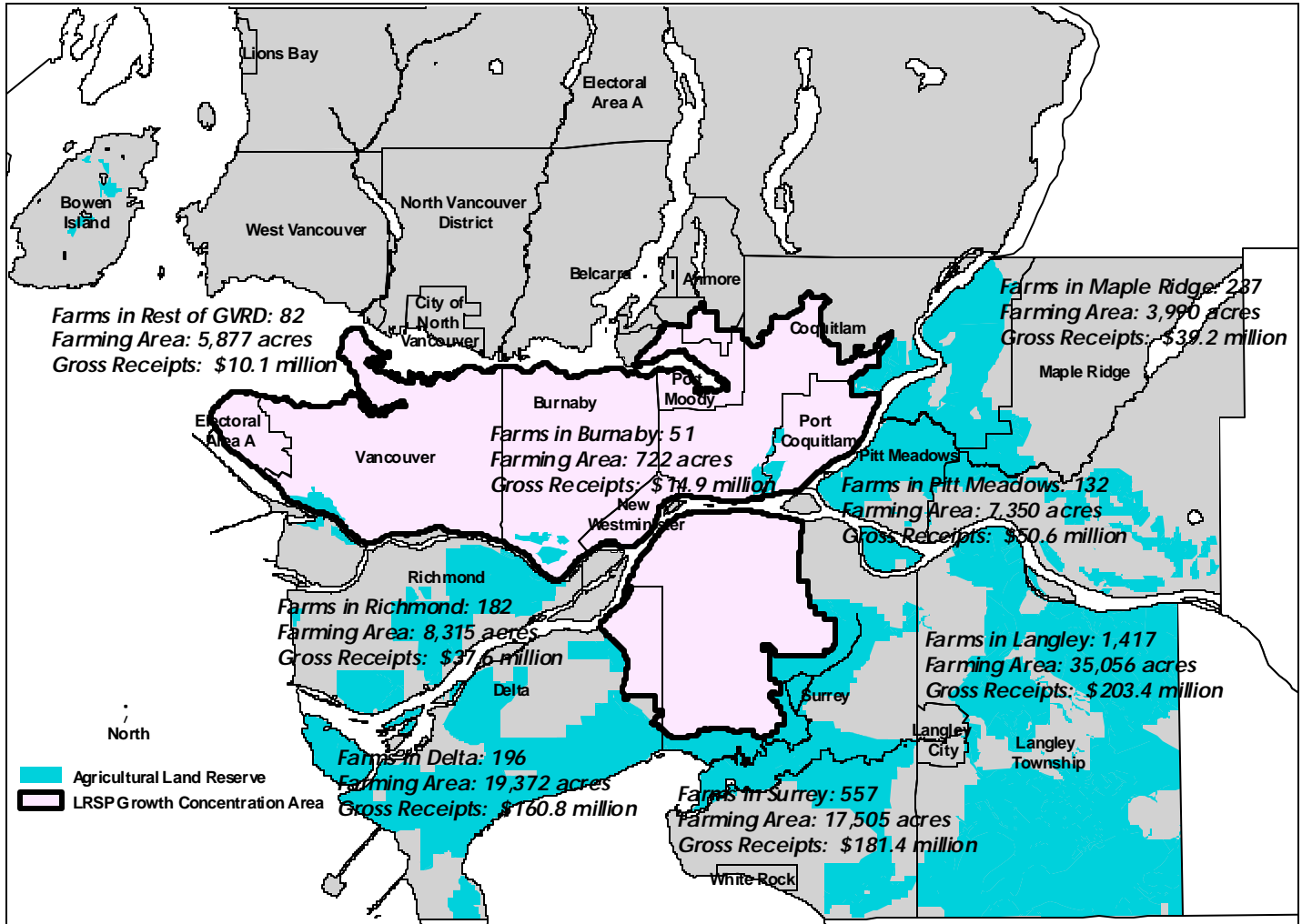
The 2001 Census figures reported 2,854 census farms across the region, marking a decline of 610 farms (17.6 percent) over 1996-2001 period¹. The rate of decline in local farming operations was greater than provincial and national figures, which decreased 7.1 percent and 10.7 percent respectively over the same period. In

¹ A census farm as defined by Statistics Canada is an agricultural operation that produces at least one of the following agricultural products intended for sale: crops (hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock); poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry); animal products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or other agricultural products (Christmas trees, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products).

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2001, the region contained 14 percent of the total number of farms in the province, down from 16 percent in 1996.

Map 1. Agricultural Land Reserve and Census Farming Statistics for GVRD Municipalities, 2001



The census includes farming operations of all economic sizes ranging from hobby farms to large corporations. According to Statistics Canada, there is a general trend across Canada towards consolidation in agricultural operations into fewer but larger farms². Confronted with increasingly tighter operating margins, many Canadian farmers are facing the financial decision to either become bigger or leave the business due to rising costs and lower profits. Consolidation within Greater Vancouver's farming community over 1996-2001 is apparent by the region's loss of 610 farms combined with its unchanged inventory of farmland. The impact of recent consolidation activity increased the regional average farm size to 34 acres in 2001, up 22 percent (6 acres) over 1996.

Statistics Canada indicates that the consolidation of farming operations typically occurs with greater frequency among smaller operators. This tendency holds true in Greater Vancouver as well. In 2001, the number of

² Statistics Canada, The Daily, May 15, 2002

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smaller farming operations (under 70 acres in size) decreased by 19 percent over 1996, while the number of local operators having a farm size 70 acres or more remained unchanged over the five year period. Overall, the physical size of Greater Vancouver farms are comparatively smaller to those operations across BC and around the country. In 2001, 89 percent (2,529) of regional farms were under 70 acres in size, considerably higher than provincial and national averages which stood at 62 percent and 19 percent respectively.

Table 2. Census Farms Classified by Farm Size for GVRD Municipalities, 2001

Municipality	Total Census Farms	Land Area (Acres)	Average Land Area (Acres)	Number of Census Farms by Farm Area Size			
				Under 10 Acres	10 to 69 Acres	70 to 399 Acres	Over 400 Acres
Burnaby	51	722	14	35	13	3	-
Delta	196	19,372	99	41	84	59	12
Langley	1,417	35,056	25	649	655	110	3
Maple Ridge	237	3,990	17	131	96	10	-
Pitt Meadows	132	7,350	56	41	63	25	3
Richmond	182	8,315	46	106	48	24	4
Surrey	557	17,505	31	265	232	53	7
Other GVRD	82	5,877	72	31	39	10	2
GVRD Total	2,854	98,187	34	1,299	1,230	294	31

Fifty-two percent of Greater Vancouver's farms were operated by persons between 35 and 54 years of age, which is slightly below the 54 percent average for BC and Canada as a whole. Only 8 percent of the region's farm operators were under age 35 while 41 percent were 55 years of age or older. Overall, the average age for local farmers was 52.2, slightly higher than the 49.9 average across Canada. Thirty-five percent of the region's farms were operated by females, considerably higher than the national average of 26 percent.

Table 3. Farmland Use in GVRD, 1996 and 2001

Land Use	Census Farms By Land Use				Land Area (acres) By Land Use			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Crops	1,882	1,657	(225)	-12.0%	58,033	56,747	(1,286)	-2.2%
Summerfallow	64	65	1	1.6%	954	725	(229)	-24.0%
Pasture (managed)	674	505	(169)	-25.1%	7,196	6,602	(594)	-8.3%
Pasture (unmanaged)	1,404	1,173	(231)	-16.5%	14,892	16,374	1,482	10.0%
Other	2,699	2,123	(576)	-21.3%	16,966	17,739	773	4.6%
Land Use Total	3,464	2,854	(610)	-17.6%	98,041	98,187	146	0.1%

Greater Vancouver's 98,187 acres of farmland occupies 14 percent of the total regional land base. Local farmers devote more land to crop production than to any other use. In 2001, local crop production, led by vegetables, berries and forage for local dairy herds, occupied 56,747 acres, or 58 percent of the region's total agricultural land area. Unmanaged and managed pasture land were the next most common uses on local farmlands occupying 17 percent and 7 percent respectively.

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Greater Vancouver farming operations produce more than 80 different farm commodities³. A combination of excellent soils and climatic conditions makes the region one of the most productive and important agricultural areas in BC. While occupying only 1.5 percent of the province's total agricultural land base, regional agricultural productions accounts for 30 percent of provincial gross farm sales. In 2000, annual gross farm receipts among local farm operators reached \$698 million. Gross receipts from local agricultural productions rose 40 percent (\$200 million), outpacing provincial and national figures which rose 25 percent and 19 percent respectively.

In 2000, local farming operations yielded an average gross receipts of \$244,588 per farm, which was more than double the \$113,736 average for BC. In addition, the regional average gross receipt per acre was \$7,109 compared to \$361 for BC and \$230 for Canada as a whole. Generally, the majority of local farming operations are considered to be small-scale on the basis of their gross receipts. Overall, half of the region's farms reported less than \$10,000 in gross receipts. In contrast, less than one quarter (23 percent) of local farms reported receipts in excess of \$100,000. About 10 percent of regional farms reported more than \$500,000 in annual gross farm receipts – approximately double the average of BC and Canada as a whole.

Table 4. Gross Annual Farm Receipts and Operating Expenses for GVRD Municipalities, 1995 and 2000⁴

Municipality	Gross Annual Farm Receipts			Farm Annual Operating Expenses			Ratio of Expenses/Receipts 2001
	1996	2001	Change	1996	2001	Change	
			1996-2001			1996-2001	
Burnaby	\$ 19,388,020	\$ 14,949,181	\$ (4,438,839)	\$ 18,212,667	\$ 13,919,780	\$ (4,292,887)	0.93
Delta	\$ 65,177,713	\$ 160,841,471	\$ 95,663,758	\$ 56,471,900	\$ 138,965,301	\$ 82,493,401	0.86
Langleys	\$ 150,355,771	\$ 203,399,307	\$ 53,043,536	\$ 132,545,906	\$ 184,491,083	\$ 51,945,177	0.91
Maple Ridge	\$ 27,106,058	\$ 39,180,041	\$ 12,073,983	\$ 23,407,618	\$ 32,904,315	\$ 9,496,697	0.84
Pitt Meadows	\$ 59,368,379	\$ 50,592,345	\$ (8,776,034)	\$ 50,220,256	\$ 43,261,351	\$ (6,958,905)	0.86
Richmond	\$ 56,388,204	\$ 37,646,150	\$ (18,742,054)	\$ 46,016,249	\$ 33,199,069	\$ (12,817,180)	0.88
Surrey	\$ 106,866,115	\$ 181,371,891	\$ 74,505,776	\$ 100,413,643	\$ 148,244,897	\$ 47,831,254	0.82
Other GVRD	\$ 13,792,404	\$ 10,073,081	\$ (3,719,323)	\$ 13,069,886	\$ 11,530,501	\$ (1,539,385)	1.14
GVRD Total	\$ 498,442,664	\$ 698,053,467	\$ 199,610,803	\$ 440,358,125	\$ 606,516,297	\$ 166,158,172	0.869

The total operating costs reported by Greater Vancouver farmers hit \$607 million in 2000. Local farm operating expenses increased 38 percent (\$166 million) over 1995, ahead of provincial and national averages which rose 26 percent and 25 percent respectively. The regional average operating cost per acre was \$6,177 compared to \$327 for BC and \$199 across Canada.

In 2000, the ratio of operating expenses to gross farm receipts was 0.87:1 for Greater Vancouver farms, in other words, 87 cents of operating expenses were spent for every dollar received in gross farm receipts. On the whole, the ratio of local operating expenses was similar to the national average but comparatively lower than the provincial figure of 91 cents for the same period. Five years earlier, in 1995, operating expenses were 1.5 cents higher per dollar in gross receipts among regional farming operations. According to Statistics Canada, farmers are increasingly under the pressures of rising operating costs and are forced to improve farm productivity to keep the ratio of receipts-to-expenses favourable⁵. While such factors as commodities

³ GVRD, Greater Vancouver's Agriculture, 1998

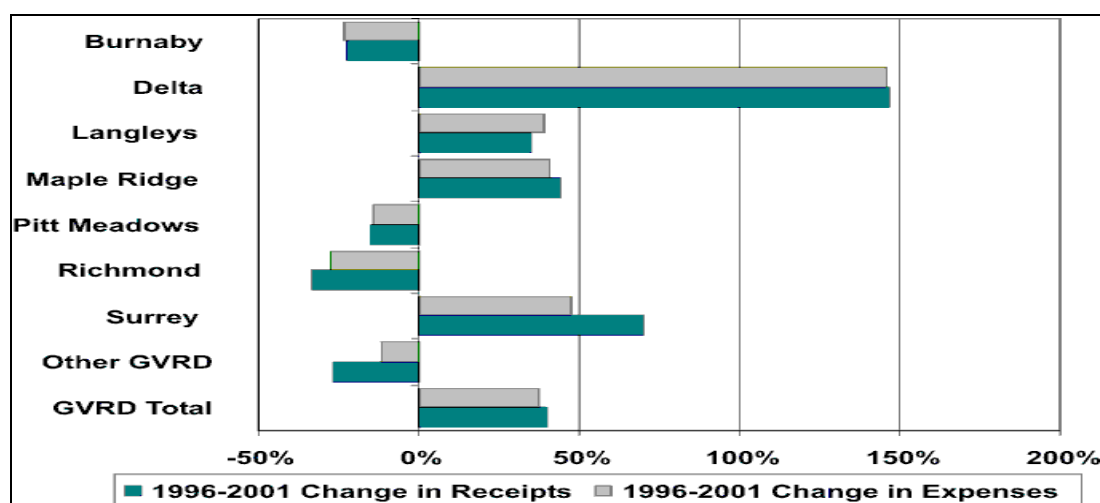
⁴ Expenses collected on the census do not include depreciation.

⁵ Statistics Canada, The Daily, May 15, 2002

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produced and prices received influence the financial operations of individual farms differently, in general, gross farm receipts on regional farms increased slightly faster than operating expenses over the 1995-2000 period. For individual farmers, the ratio of expenses to gross receipts depends on additional factors, but farm size and type of production tend to have the most significant bearing in maintaining a healthy financial balance sheet.

Chart 1. Percentage Change in Annual Gross Farm Receipts and Operating Expenses for GVRD Municipalities, 1995 and 2000



Classifying Canadian agricultural operations into a single farming type category is challenging since most farms will typically undertake more than one type of agricultural activity (i.e. crops and livestock). Standard reporting tables produced from the 2001 Census of Agriculture identify each farming activity reported by an enumerated farm. For example, a farm having a very large poultry and a very small sweet corn production would be classified twice; once for its animal production and a second time for its vegetable production. To gain a better understanding of a farm’s primary agricultural activity, Statistics Canada derives their own classification of farming operations based on annual gross receipts wherein a farm’s primary production activity is determined by the production activity generating 51 percent or more the farm’s yearly gross receipts.

The most recent Census figures indicate 56 percent of regional farms had their primary activity engaged in animal productions with the balance of 44 percent involved in vegetable, fruit, greenhouse or other productions. Cattle and poultry farming were identified as the most common primary animal farming activity accounting for 19 percent and 8 percent of the region’s total farming operations respectively. Fruit and vegetables productions accounted for an additional 11 percent and 6 percent respectively while a further 20 percent of regional farms were identified as having a primary activity in greenhouse, nursery and floriculture productions.

Beef cattle and dairy farming was the most frequently reported animal operation among the region’s farmers in the 2001 Census. In all, there were 756 farms carrying out cattle productions across the region. Sheep farming, poultry and pig operations rounded out the four most common local animal productions.

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Table 5. Census Farms by Type (Based on Primary Activity) for GVRD Municipalities, 2001⁶

Municipality	Census Farms Over \$2,499	Animal Productions			Vegetable, Fruit and Other Productions			
		Cattle & Dairy	Poultry & Egg	Other Animal	Vegetable & Melon	Fruit & Tree Nut	Greenhouse Nursery & Floriculture	Other Crop
Burnaby	46	1	1	5	16	0	20	3
Delta	181	25	3	42	48	16	31	16
Langleys	1230	274	112	451	18	64	242	69
Maple Ridge	202	36	28	74	2	11	44	7
Pitt Meadows	116	20	2	17	0	43	24	10
Richmond	163	13	6	15	16	64	41	8
Surrey	499	96	56	101	54	61	96	35
Other GVRD	71	10	3	21	4	17	10	6
GVRD Total	2,508	475	211	726	158	276	508	154

Overall, local farmers were raising more poultry in 2001 but less cattle, sheep and pigs. The number of poultry animals raised on local farms rose 45 percent over the 1996-2001 period. This rise appears consistent with the national trend of Canadians eating more chicken, more often. Statistics Canada reports that per capita chicken consumption and egg consumption rose steadily between 1995 and 2000⁷. Local increases in chicken productions was offset by local inventory declines in cattle, sheep and pigs which fell 27 percent, 8 percent and 60 percent respectively.

Table 6. Top Four Animal Operations (by Number of Farms) in GVRD, 1996 and 2001

Livestock	Census Farms Reporting Livestock				Number of Animals			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Cattle	1,140	756	(384)	-33.7%	43,942	31,915	(12,027)	-27.4%
Sheep	329	266	(63)	-19.1%	7,355	6,739	(616)	-8.4%
Poultry	711	193	(518)	-72.9%	3,439,091	4,987,882	1,548,791	45.0%
Pigs	157	91	(66)	-42.0%	12,210	4,860	(7,350)	-60.2%

Despite the strong growth in poultry animals, the number of local farms reporting poultry operations fell 73 percent, reflecting the general trend in the consolidation of farming establishments into fewer but larger operations. Similar decreases occurred in other regional livestock operations, as the number of pig farms fell 42 percent, while the number of cattle and sheep farms fell 34 percent and 19 percent respectively. Part of these declines can be attributed to consolidation activity and consumer shifts towards poultry. These reductions also reflect, in part, business shifts towards alternative animal productions. Statistics Canada indicates that less traditional animals (i.e. llamas and alpacas) are becoming increasingly popular among

⁶ Farm typing is a procedure that classifies each census farm according to the predominant type of production. This is done by estimating the potential receipts from the inventories of crops and livestock reported on the questionnaire and determining the product or group of products that make up the majority of the estimated receipts. For example, a census farm with total potential receipts of 60 percent from hogs, 20 percent from beef cattle and 20 percent from wheat, would be classified as a hog farm. Farm type in Table 5 only includes census farms with gross receipts greater than \$2,499 annually. Therefore 346 regional census farms are not included in this Table.

^{6,7} Statistics Canada, The Daily, May 15, 2002

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livestock operators⁸. This trend is evident locally as the number of farms reporting llamas and alpacas operations reached 93 in 2001, marking an 82 percent rise over 1996.

Statistics Canada contends that the general decline in Greater Vancouver's livestock operation is comparable to patterns exhibited in other growing metropolitan areas across Canada, particularly in Ontario. Expanding urban boundaries into rural farming areas heightens the potential for intensified urban-rural conflicts. Animal farming tends to be the most contentious among farming practices along the urban-rural fringe, due to the issues of noise, smell and contamination associated with such operations. Often succumbing to urban growth pressures, many animal farming operations opt to relocate their productions to more traditional rural settings further away from urban boundaries. In addition, some local government zoning bylaws have historically not provided for a full range of agricultural opportunities without re-zoning - thus acting as an added discouragement to livestock operations in growing urban areas⁹.

In 2001, 293 Greater Vancouver farms reported vegetable productions. While the number of vegetable farms were down 11 percent from 1996, vegetable farms occupied 7,845 acres across the Greater Vancouver, up 20 percent since 1996. Green and wax beans occupy the most land (1,549 acres) followed by sweet corn (1,158 acres). Increases in local vegetable productions over the 1996-2001 period were led by strong growth in squash, pumpkin and zucchini lands (up 66 percent), green and wax beans (up 17 percent) and sweet corn (up 28 percent). In all, Greater Vancouver has 16 percent of BC's vegetable farms but contains 43 percent of the province's farmland dedicated to vegetable production. The average vegetable farm in the region is 27 acres, compared to 6 acres across the province.

Table 7. Top Four Vegetables (by Land Area) Grown in GVRD, 1996 and 2001¹⁰

Vegetables	Census Farms With Vegetable Production				Land Area of Vegetable Production (Acres)			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Green/Wax Beans	67	72	5	7.5%	1,096	1,549	453	41.3%
Sweet Corn	101	87	(14)	-13.9%	904	1,158	254	28.1%
Squash/Pumpkin/Zucchini	100	97	(3)	-3.0%	460	762	302	65.7%
Lettuces	90	74	(16)	-17.8%	670	698	28	4.2%
All Vegetables Total	328	293	(35)	-10.7%	6,521	7,845	1,324	20.3%

Fruit farming occupied 9,735 acres or 10 percent of Greater Vancouver's total farmland in 2001. The region's inventory of fruit-barring lands increased by 1,580 acres (19 percent) over 1996, led by strong growth in cranberry lands (up 24 percent), blueberry lands (17 percent) and strawberry lands (up 12 percent). Meanwhile, the amount of lands devoted to raspberry production declined by 292 acres (down 37 percent). In 2001, blueberry (4,339 acres) and cranberry (3,719 acres) production were the most commonly grown fruits in the region, occupying 45 percent and 38 percent of local fruit-barring lands. While the share of local farmland dedicated for blueberry, strawberry and raspberry productions amounts to roughly 4 percent of the national inventory for each commodity, the region contains 50 percent of Canada's farmland devoted for cranberry production, making Greater Vancouver the nation's outright leader in cranberry farming.

⁹ BC Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

¹⁰ Note: Excludes vegetables grown in greenhouses.

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Table 8. Top Four Fruits (by Land Area) Grown in GVRD, 1996 and 2001

Fruits	Census Farms With Fruit Production				Land Area of Fruit Production (Acres)			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Blueberries	296	254	(42)	-14.2%	3,722	4,339	617	16.6%
Cranberries	43	51	8	18.6%	3,010	3,719	709	23.6%
Strawberries	62	46	(16)	-25.8%	504	562	58	11.5%
Raspberries	88	66	(22)	-25.0%	786	494	(292)	-37.2%
All Fruits Total	429	462	33	7.7%	8,155	9,735	1,580	19.4%

The greenhouse industry is a rapidly emerging farming practice in Greater Vancouver. 2001 Census figures indicate fewer but much larger greenhouse operations across the region. In all, 321 local farms reported a greenhouse operation in 2001, marking a 6 percent decline over 1996. During the same period, the region's total area under cover rose sharply by 12.6 million square feet (73 percent) to 30 million square feet in total, a pace considerably faster than the 41 percent average across Canada. In 2001, Greater Vancouver contained 61 percent of BC's total greenhouse square footage and 15 percent of the total for Canada as a whole. In 2001, 46 percent of greenhouse operations were involved in vegetable productions, followed by flower operations (39 percent) and other products (15 percent).

Table 9. Greenhouse Operations for GVRD Municipalities, 1996 and 2001¹¹

Municipality	Farms Reporting Greenhouse Operations				Square Footage of Greenhouse Operations			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Burnaby	21	19	(2)	-9.5%	237,967	463,805	225,838	94.9%
Delta	19	32	13	68.4%	3,306,874	12,547,731	9,240,857	279.4%
Langley	95	118	23	24.2%	3,524,655	5,794,083	2,269,428	64.4%
Maple Ridge	41	25	(16)	-39.0%	n/a	2,760,904	n/a	n/a
Pitt Meadows	15	17	2	13.3%	n/a	2,797,507	n/a	n/a
Richmond	27	37	10	37.0%	1,899,747	1,650,205	(249,542)	-13.1%
Surrey	48	67	19	39.6%	1,693,857	3,837,016	2,143,159	126.5%
Other GVRD	75	6	(69)	-92.0%	3,487,020	159,025	(3,327,995)	-95.4%
GVRD Total	341	321	(20)	-5.9%	17,362,257	30,010,276	12,648,019	72.8%

For those local farms reporting a greenhouse operation in 2001, the average size of operation reached 80,000 square feet, marking an 86 percent (37,000 square feet) increase in five years. Vegetable greenhouse space led the rise in new greenhouse space, increasing by 158 percent and accounting for two-thirds of the region's greenhouse expansion over the 1996-2001 period. During this time, vegetable greenhouse space expanded by 8.5 million square feet to reach 14 million square feet in total, overtaking flowers as the largest component in the region's greenhouse activity.

¹¹ Census farms with greenhouse figures will not add-up due to the fact that one census farm could contain more than one greenhouse operation. For example, a single census farm could contain both a flower greenhouse and a vegetable greenhouse. Figures exclude mushroom operations.

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Table 10. Greenhouse Operations by Type for GVRD, 1996 and 2001¹²

Greenhouse Type	Census Farms With Greenhouse Operations				Square Footage of Greenhouse Operations			
	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001		1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	
			Absolute	Percent			Absolute	Percent
Flower Greenhouse	211	209	(2)	-0.9%	8,741,960	11,644,572	2,902,612	33.2%
Vegetable Greenhouse	105	86	(19)	-18.1%	5,413,148	13,942,514	8,529,366	157.6%
Other Greenhouse	87	80	(7)	-8.0%	3,207,149	4,423,190	1,216,041	37.9%
Total Census Farms	341	321	(20)	-5.9%	17,362,257	30,010,276	12,648,019	72.8%

Mushroom production (farms and bedding area) dropped significantly in Greater Vancouver in recent years. In 2001, 42 Greater Vancouver farms reported mushroom houses, down 43 percent over 1996. Similarly, the region's inventory of bedding area dedicated for mushroom production stood at 1.4 million square feet in 2001, down 42 percent over 1996. The shift in mushroom production appears clearly to be moving into the Fraser Valley - particularly Abbotsford. This may, in part, be related to the moving of Money's composting facility out of the region (Surrey) to the FVRD. Notwithstanding recent declines in local mushroom operations, Greater Vancouver remains a significant player in mushroom production – accounting for 58 percent and 21 percent of BC's and Canada's production respectively. The Township of Langley, which accounts for 63 percent of the region's mushroom operations, has the distinction of being the outright leader in bedding area among all Canadian municipal jurisdictions¹³.

Overall, the data reported in the 2001 Census of Agriculture appear to show that Greater Vancouver's agricultural industry is generally healthy with gross receipts higher than and rising faster than operational expenses, but the nature of local farming practices are clearly in a state of transition. The consolidation of farming productions into fewer but larger operations is seemingly necessary to improve agricultural productivity and overall operating margins. Further, the loss of livestock operations, the shifting towards alternative commodity productions plus unprecedented growth in greenhouse operations are examples of recent changes that are collectively reshaping the region's agricultural landscape. Looking forward, domestic and global economic factors influencing the supply and demand of commodities plus technological changes, urban growth and changing consumer tastes and preferences, among other factors, will continue to transform the region's agricultural activities in years to come.

A fundamental goal of the Livable Region Strategic Plan is to protect the region's farmlands from the pressures of urban development. Through its Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), the GVRD works with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to raise the profile of local farming activities and speak to regional agricultural issues. The AAC is comprised of industry representatives from a variety of farm commodity organizations as well as a representative from the GVRD Board. Recently, the ACC completed a study that investigated ways of increasing the economic viability of the region's agricultural activities. The findings of the study are being crafted into a strategy that will help guide the region's agricultural industry into the future.

¹² Census farms with greenhouse figures will not add-up due to the fact that one census farm could contain more than one greenhouse operation. For example, a single census farm could contain both a flower greenhouse and a vegetable greenhouse. Figures exclude mushroom operations.

¹³ BC Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

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Table 14 - Vegetables

Table 15 - Fruits, berries and nuts

Table 16 - Nursery products, sod and Christmas trees

Table 17 - Greenhouse products and mushrooms

Table 18 - Maple tree taps

Livestock and poultry

Table 19 - Cattle and calves

Table 20 - Pigs

Table 21 - Sheep and lambs

Table 22 - Other livestock and colonies of bees

Table 23 - Poultry inventory

Table 24 - Poultry production

Table 25 - Commercial poultry hatcheries on farms

Farm business

Table 26 - Farms classified by operating arrangements

Table 27 - Farms classified by computer applications use

Table 28 - Farms classified by total farm capital

Table 29 - Farm capital

Table 30 - Farm machinery inventory

Table 31 - Value of farm machinery and equipment

Table 32 - Farms classified by total gross farm receipts

Table 33 - Gross farm receipts

Table 34 - Farm business operating expenses

Table 35 - Paid agricultural work