



Lesson 3: Farming: A Balancing Act

Farming isn't easy. Every day, farmers face challenges that could threaten their animals or crops. They need to produce enough food to stay in business, cover their costs, and feed our province.

Important Facts you need to know (3 min)

Terms and definitions used in the lesson will be reviewed.

What is Food Security? (5 min)

Imagine going to the grocery store and finding empty shelves. No milk, no eggs, no chicken! That's what food insecurity looks like. Governments are responsible for ensuring everyone can access safe and affordable food. Growing as much food as possible right here in BC is the best way to ensure we always have enough. Plus, it helps reduce the environmental impact of transporting food long distances.

Broiler Breeder Farms: The Starting Point (2 min)

British Columbia has 318 farms that raise chickens for meat. But before those chickens hit the grocery store, they need to hatch from eggs! This is where Broiler Breeder farms come in. These specialized farms produce 56 million fertilized eggs each year, supplying the entire province with the next generation of meat chickens.

Threats and Risks: Facing the Unexpected (5 min)

- What's the difference between a threat and a risk?

A threat is something bad that *could* happen, while a risk is the chance of that bad thing actually happening and the consequences.

- The 2022 Flood: The Sumas Prairie flood was a major threat. The flood was devastating: over 61 farms were flooded, and over 100,000 chickens died.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuo38Cjt0k4&t=1s>

Other Threats to Chicken Farms: (5 min)

- Climate Extremes: Extreme heat, like the 2021 heat dome in BC, can kill many chickens. They can't sweat to cool down, instead they pant or breathe rapidly. Even small temperature increases can be deadly.

- Urban Sprawl: As cities grow, farmland disappears. This reduces our ability to produce food locally and makes it harder for farmers to stay in business.

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR): Protecting Our Farms (2 min)

The ALR is special land set aside for farming in BC. It helps protect our farmland from being turned into houses and businesses. This is crucial for ensuring we can continue to grow food here in the province.

Why is Local Food Production Important? (5 min)

Can't we just import all our food? While importing can give us a wider variety of foods, it has some downsides:

- **Food Safety**: Imported food may not always meet the same safety standards as food grown here in BC.
- **Price Fluctuations**: Global events can cause food prices to skyrocket, making it harder for everyone to afford food.
- **Weakening Local Farms**: Over-relying on imports can hurt local farms, leading to job losses and a decline in our agricultural knowledge.

Avian Influenza: A Serious Threat (5 min)

Avian Influenza, or "bird flu," is a contagious disease that can spread quickly among birds. It can cause serious illness and even death in poultry.

- **How it Spreads**: Bird flu can spread through contact with infected birds, contaminated equipment, and even wild birds.
- **Biosecurity Measures**: To prevent the spread of bird flu, farmers must take strict precautions, such as:
 - Keeping poultry away from wild birds
 - Maintaining high levels of cleanliness
 - Controlling access to poultry houses

Economic Challenges for Farmers (2 min)

- **Avian Influenza**: Culling infected flocks is devastating for farmers.
- **Rising Costs**: The cost of feed, energy, and other supplies is increasing, squeezing farmers' profits.
- **Climate Change**: Extreme weather events and unpredictable conditions add to the challenges farmers face.

Remember: Farming is a vital part of our community. By supporting local farmers and protecting our farmland, we can ensure a safe and sustainable food supply for generations to come.

5. Political challenges (5 min)

In Canada, Chicken, Eggs and Dairy farmers operate under a Supply Management system. Supply management is when the government limits how much of certain foods, like milk, eggs, and chicken, farmers can produce. These numbers are based on how much our population is consuming.

- This helps keep prices stable for both farmers and shoppers.
- It also limits how much of these foods can be brought into Canada from other countries.
- This helps them earn a steady income.
- It also helps ensure there's enough food for everyone in Canada.

Recently, the US Government has been putting pressure on Canada to eliminate supply management so they can sell US dairy, egg, and poultry products here in a free, open market. The elimination of Supply Management in Canada would have an enormous impact on Canadian farms and farmers. Consumers would no longer have the assurance that their food was grown according to the same strict rules and guidelines we currently adhere to.

Cooking and Cleaning (30 min)

Review (2 min)