Background Report

Metchosin Agricultural Area Plan

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District of Metchosin

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Acronyms

AF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food
ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
ALUI	Agricultural Land Use Inventory
AWDM	Agricultural water Demand Model
BC	British Columbia
BCA	British Columbia Assessment
CCS	Census Consolidated Subdivision
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CLI	Canadian Land Inventory
CRD	Capital Regional District
GDD	Growing Degree Days
Ha	Hectare
MFI	Metchosin Farmers Institute
MISC	Metchosin Invasive Species Council
MPA	Metchosin Producers Association
OCP	Official Community Plan
PAAC	Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission
PCIC	Pacific Climate Impact Consortium
SIFT	Soil Information Finder Tool
SVIFI	South Vancouver Island Farmers Institute
YA	Young Agrarians

1.0 Introduction

Agricultural production in Metchosin dates back to the 1850s, with the establishment of the first homestead, a 121-hectare (300 acre) farm between Witty's Lagoon and St. Mary's Church. Soon after, more farms appeared on the landscape, cultivating vegetables, strawberries, tree fruits, as well as dairy, pig and sheep farming. The Metchosin Farmers Institute was established in the 1890s.

While farmland in Metchosin is extremely fertile, parcels of land were slowly subdivided into smaller and smaller lots, many of which are used for non-agricultural purposes, until the creation of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the enactment of the BC Land Commission Act in 1974, which prevented further subdivisions of agricultural land.

Recent years have seen a rise in small-scale, mixed production in Metchosin, with most farmers producing fruit and/or vegetables. Metchosin is also home to many small-scale egg producers, flower or plant growers, and sheep farmers. Metchosin producers largely sell their products through direct-to-consumer sales and at local farmers markets, allowing them to fetch higher prices than would be possible through wholesale markets. The following report will explore some of the factors relating to agricultural production in the Metchosin area in order to provide a clear baseline of information to inform the development of the Agricultural Plan.

2.0 Local Context

The District of Metchosin is located on the southernmost tip of Vancouver Island, sandwiched between Colwood and Sooke. Metchosin is a small, rural community with just over 5,000 residents. Metchosin is located approximately 16 kilometers from downtown Victoria, providing good access for producers to an urban customer base and tourism sector. Metchosin contains many large rural-residential lots outside of the ALR, which lend themselves to hobby farming, as well as many lots within the ALR which host small scale agricultural production.

Metchosin's landscape provides regional benefits with an abundance of greenspace away from the busy centres of neighbouring Colwood, Langford and Victoria. Metchosin is comprised of rolling hills and rugged coastline, dotted with golf courses, parks and small agricultural holdings. The region has a relatively low population, therefore a limited tax base from which the District of Metchosin can draw resources from. There is limited commercial and industrial activity within the community, but the Department of Defense has had a long-term presence with a military base located at Rocky Point. The local agricultural sector in Metchosin is well established, with many producers having resided in the area for decades, implementing innovative farming approaches to manage landscapes and adapt to a changing climate. The Metchosin agricultural sector includes an abattoir that is used by producers from within and outside the community, and the farms provide food for residents of greater Victoria and beyond.

Figure 1. Boundaries of the District of Metchosin. (Google Earth)

According to the 2021 Census data, the population of Metchosin is 5,067 which is a 7.6% increase since 2016. Table 1 provides an overview of the changes in population demographics between 2016 and 2021.[1] The majority of the increase in population is attributed to residents over the age of 65. Metchosin has a relatively low population with a population density of 72.8 people/km^2 compared to 571.3 people/ km^2 across the Victoria metropolitan area.[2]

Table 1. Population demographics in Metchosin. (Statistics Canada Census of Population 2016 & 2021).[3]

	2016	2021	% Change
Total Population	4,708	5,067	+7.6
0-14 years old	565	605	+7.1
15-64 years old	3,120	3,140	+0.6
65 + years old	1025	1,320	+28.7
Average age	46.5	46.6	+0.2

[1] Statistics Canada. Census of Population. District of Metchosin Census Profile. 2016 & 2021.
[2] Census of Population. 2021.
[3] Ibid

Average total income in Metchosin rose by 26.8% from 2015 to 2020, at which point the average total income was $61,850. This average is relatively high compared to the average across the province ($54,450) and the increase has outpaced the rate of inflation in Canada.[4]

Table 2. Income statistics for Metchosin. (Statistics Canada Census of Population 2016 & 2021)[5]

	2015	2020	% Change
Total income earners over 15 years old	3,955	4,115	+4.0
Average total income ($)	$48,760	$61,850	+26.8
Inflation	$1.00	$1.08	+8.0

3.0 Agriculture Profile

The following section provides an overview of the agriculture sector in southwest Vancouver Island including Metchosin. A variety of data sources were used to compile the information and trends over time and are described below.

3.1 Agriculture Profile Methodology

This agricultural profile was compiled using existing reports and data sets. The main sources of data regarding agricultural activities are the 2018 Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) from the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF), the Census of Agriculture (2011, 2016, 2021) from Statistics Canada and the 2023 BC Assessment Farm Class Data. There are some clear differences in the way that these data sets are compiled, which can lead to discrepancies when some indicators are compared. Whenever possible, these differences are explained. For example, if five acres of apple trees are noted on a parcel in the ALUI then this contributes to the acreage listed as 5 acres of apple orchard production, even if the apples may not be sold and/or otherwise be brought into the local food system. By contrast, the Census of Agriculture includes data on farms that are self-reported by individuals, specifically those from commercial operations. This is one example of how the data sets can lead to differences in results.

Agricultural Land Use Inventory

The most up-to-date ALUI data is the 2018 Capital Regional District (CRD) dataset. Metchosin agriculture data was segregated out from the whole data set, offering a more accurate depiction of the Metchosin agricultural profile in 2018. While the data is specific to Metchosin, some inaccuracies may occur. The ALUI data is collected through visual interpretation of aerial imagery combined with a drive-by 'windshield survey'. The resulting product is a snapshot in time of land cover and land use on agricultural parcels, and is subject to human error, and will depend on what types of livestock and farm infrastructure is present on

[4] Bank of Canada. Inflation Calculator. Access October 2023.
[5] Statistics Canada. Census of Population. District of Metchosin Census Profile. 2016 & 2021.

the day of the inventory. Despite some potential site-based omissions, the ALUI data is helpful in answering the following questions:

- What is the current extent, type, location, and scale of agricultural activities in the area?
- To what extent is irrigation used and what are the water demands?
- What proportion of the ALR is available for farming?

Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture collects information from self-reporting individuals every five years as part of the larger Statistics Canada census collection and the completion is mandatory under the Federal *Statistics Act*. The Census of Agriculture is a federal data collection initiative, and as such the geographic resolution is coarser than that of the ALUI. This is another reason for some discrepancies found in the datasets. The latest available Census of Agriculture uses 2021 data from Statistics Canada. Census Canada agglomerates data from Juan de Fuca EA, and the Districts Highlands, Colwood, Langford, up to Port Renfrew including Jordan River, Shirley, Sooke and Metchosin. This area together makes up Census Consolidated Subdivision (CCS) Juan de Fuca (Part 2) [CCS590117056] (Figure 2, next page).

In the 2011 and 2016 Census, a "farm" was defined as any "agricultural operation" that grows or produces agricultural products with the intent to sell these products. This means that farms with no to very low farm revenues were included as long as the agricultural products produced were intended for sale. In the 2021 Census, the definition of a farm changed so that: a "farm" or an "agricultural holding" (i.e., the census farm) now refers to a unit that produces agricultural products and reports revenues or expenses for tax purposes to the Canada Revenue Agency. The new definition removes ambiguity in the definition of a farm, focusing on business-oriented agricultural operations. This change affects the comparability of farm counts and related statistical data from previous census years, particularly for small-scaled operations with low levels of farm income earnings.[6]

BC Assessment Farm Class Data

The *Assessment Act* is administered by BC Assessment, a provincial Crown Corporation responsible for the classification of properties for property assessment and tax purposes. Farm classification is a voluntary program providing the benefit of a lowered tax rate for assessed properties.

Even though a property may be zoned as agricultural land, or located in the provincial ALR, farm classification will only be granted if the land (or at least a portion of it) is being actively used for agricultural production and it meets the other requirements of the Act. Only land can be classified as farmland - buildings (residences and outbuildings) are classified separately. Farm status properties may or may not be located within the ALR and are valuable for noting the distribution of farmed land in both the urban and rural areas. A certain minimum amount of gross income must be produced from the primary agricultural production, and these requirements vary depending on the total land area. Minimum gross income requirements are calculated as follows:

$10,000 on land less than 0.8 ha (1.98 acres);

[6] The Western Producer. Stats Can changes "Farm" definition. April 2022.

$2,500 on land between 0.8 ha (1.98 acres) and 4 ha (10 acres); and
On land larger than 4 ha (10 acres), you must earn $2,500 plus 5% of the actual value of any farmland in excess of 4 ha.

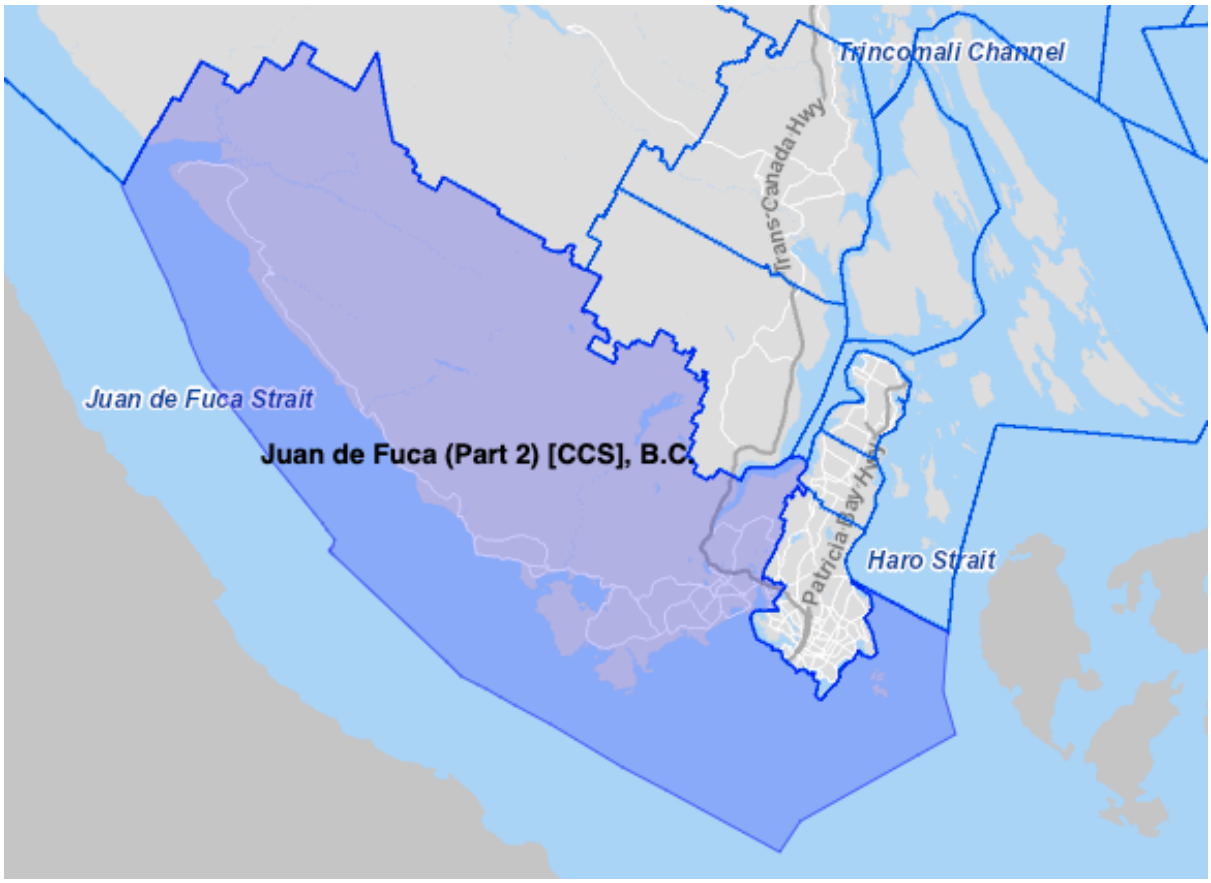

Figure 2. Map of Census CCS [CCS590117056] (Statistics Canada).

3.2 Agricultural Land

Metchosin has 1,569 ha (3,877 acres) of land within the ALR[7], as shown in green in Figure 3 (next page). This land is protected from development and non-farm use under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* (ALC Act). There are also parcels of land outside the ALR that are being used for agricultural production.

The majority of farmland in the Census area is being used as pastureland and cropland (Table 3). The exact amount of land in each category was suppressed in the 2021 Census of Agriculture for privacy reasons because the overall number of farms reporting is reduced (likely due to the changes made to the definition of a "farm" as noted above), but the 2016 statistics offer a clearer image of agricultural land use in the CCS area.

[7] CRD 2018 ALUI. Accessed November 2023.

Table 3. Agricultural land use in Juan de Fuca CCS. (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016, 2021[8]).

	2011		2016		2021	
Agricultural Land Use	# of farms	ha (acres)	# of farms	ha (acres)	# farms	ha (acres)
Total Farm Area	*217*	*2,905 (7,178)*	*181*	*2,351 (5,810)*	*147*	*x*
Natural land for pasture	104	799 (1,974)	76	1,096 (2,709)	60	x
Cropland	122	613 (1,515)	98	523 (1,292)	92	x
Tame or seeded pasture	48	611 (1,510)	33	280 (691)	37	x

Figure 3. ALR in Metchosin. (BC SIFT)

3.3 Farm Characteristics

3.3.1 Number of Farms and Farmed Parcels

In 2023, BCA data indicated that the number of Farm Tax Status properties in Metchosin was 145. It is assumed that some active farms in Metchosin do not have Farm Tax Status, therefore the total number of active farms in Metchosin is likely higher than the BCA representation. The 2018 ALUI notes 148 parcels of land in Metchosin being actively used for agriculture.

[8] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Land Use 2011, 2016 & 2021.

According to the 2021 Census data, the number of farms in the Juan de Fuca CCS decreased from 181 to 147 between 2016 and 2021 (Table 4). This reduction is consistent with census numbers across the province which reflect a reduction of 1,687 of Census-defined "farms" between 2016 and 2021 in B.C. The reduction is likely due to the change in definition of a "census farm" in 2021, as described in section 3.1.

According to the 2018 ALUI data, which is based on activities observed on the ground rather than attempts to define a "farm", the District of Metchosin contains 330 parcels of land within the ALR, comprising 1,023 ha (2,528 acres) of land. Some of those parcels may be farmed cohesively as a single farm "unit", while other ALR parcels may currently be unused and/or available for farming. Figure 4 shows that 148 parcels (614 ha) are used for farming (shown in green), and a further 98 parcels (218 ha) are available for farming but are not being used for agriculture (shown in yellow). An additional 71 parcels (826 ha) are unavailable for farming due to current land cover or land uses (shown in blue). The unavailable parcels include the Federal Government's Department of Defence as Canadian Forces Bases (CFB) at Rocky Point, golf courses, parks, and institutional uses such as churches and schools.

Figure 4. Availability of ALR parcels in Metchosin, excluding Esquimalt-Rocky point CFB. (2018 CRD ALUI)

3.3.2 Size and Type of Farms

Census of Agriculture data indicates that land in the region supports mainly small-scale agriculture operations, with 59% of farms measuring under 4 ha (<10 acres), 29% of farms to over between 4 – 28 ha (10-69 acres) and 11% of farms from 28 ha and over (>70 acres) (Table 4). BC Assessment data indicates that 99 (68%) of properties in Metchosin with Farm Tax Status are under 4 ha (10 acres), and only 4

properties are over 28 ha (70 acres). This points to a greater proportion of small farms (<10 acres) in Metchosin as compared to the wider Juan de Fuca Census region.

Table 4. Farm Size in Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2016 & 2021[9]) and BC Assessment (2023).

	2016 Ag Census		2021 Ag Census		2023 BC Assessment	
	Number of Farms	% of Farms	Number of Farms	% of Farms	Number of Farms	% of Farms
Total Number of Farms	181	100%	147	100%	145	100%
Under 4 ha (10 acres)	114	63%	87	59%	99	68%
4-28 ha (10 - 69 acres)	54	30%	43	29%	41	28%
> 28 ha (70 acres)	10	7%	17	12%	4	3%

The 2023 BC Assessment Farm Tax Data shows mixed farming as being the most common primary use of parcels with farm tax status in Metchosin. Grain and Forage and "Other" are the second most common uses, followed by beef and vegetable production.

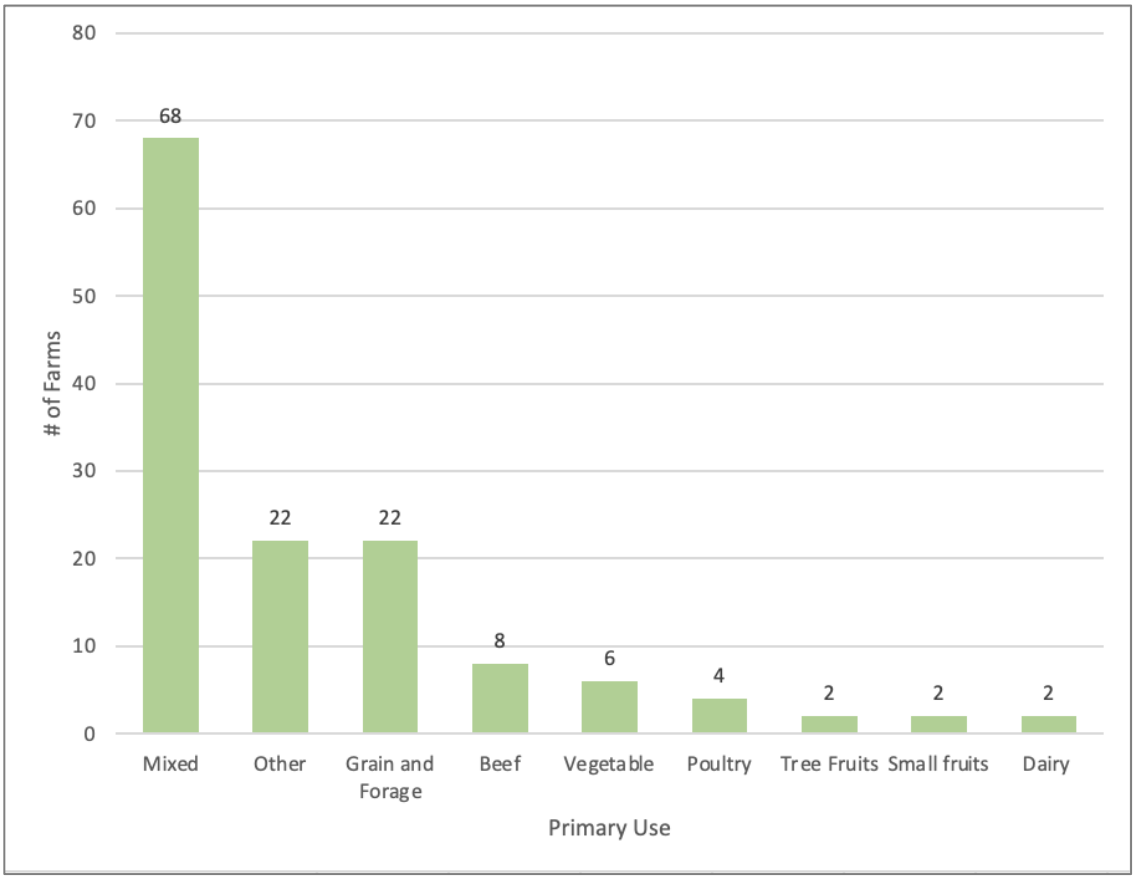

Figure 5. Primary Land Use on Farms in Metchosin. Source: BC Assessment 2023.

[9] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Farms Classified by Total Farm Area. 2011, 2016 & 2021.

Census of Agriculture data indicates that the most common type of farming in Juan de Fuca CCS is chicken egg production (31 farms), followed by vegetable and melon farming (21 farms), and horse and equine (15 farms) (Table 5). Most types of farming have experienced a decline in the number of farms reporting to the Census of Agriculture, most notably beef and cattle ranching, which has reduced by 10 farms since 2011, horse and equine (reduced by 17 farms), nursery tree production (reduced by 15 farms) and sheep production (reduced by 8 farms). As previously discussed, these figures reported through the Census of Agriculture have been impacted by the changes in the definition of a "farm", therefore it is possible that these farms are still actually productive but are just not reporting any farm income to the CRA.

Table 5. Type of farming in Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016 & 2021[10]).

	2011 (217 Farms Reporting)	**2016 (181 Farms Reporting)**	**2021 (147 Farms Reporting)**
Chicken egg production	21	35	31
Vegetable & Melon	17	22	21
Horse and equine	32	19	15
Fruit and tree nut	22	14	12
Sheep	16	12	8
Apiculture	10	8	7
Beef cattle ranching	15	7	5
Nursery tree	18	10	3
Dairy cattle	1	1	2

A closer look at the livestock and poultry inventory in Table 6 shows that Juan de Fuca CCS is most populated by sheep and lambs (1,575), followed by pigs (447) and horses (244). Many of the specific animal numbers are suppressed in the 2021 census data for privacy reasons, however we can deduce that there are likely many chickens, as chicken egg production is one of the most common types of farming, and 76 farms are reporting chickens in 2021.

[10] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Farms Classified by Farm Type. 2011, 2016 & 2021.

Table 6. Livestock Inventory for Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016 & 2021)[11][12][13][14][15]

	2011			2016			2021		
Total Animals	# of farms	# of Animals	Average per farm	# of farms	# of animals	Average per farm	# of farms	# of Animals	Average per farm
Horses & Ponies	51	260	5	30	122	4	26	244	9
Cattle & calves	33	384	12	18	536	30	17	x	X
Hens & Chickens	108	96,070	890	103	25,882	251	76	x	X
Sheep & lambs	36	2,957	82	34	2,600	76	28	1,575	56
Pigs	8	156	19	7	497	71	9	447	50
Goats	15	98	7	16	152	9.5	10	x	X
Llamas & Alpacas	8	112	14	6	60	10	5	36	7.2

Of the crops produced in the region, the Census of Agriculture indicates that tame hay and fodder historically consumed the most land base, however the exact numbers are suppressed in the 2021 census data (Table 7). Fruit is reported on the most farms (50) with a total of 24 ha in production, most of which is under apple production. 42 farms reported producing field vegetables.

Table 7. Most common crops produced in Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016 & 2021)[16][17]

Crops Produced	**2011**		**2016**		**2021**	
	# of farms	ha	# of farms	ha	# of farms	ha
Tame hay & fodder	45	407	40	335	25	x
Alfalfa	6	91	4	x	10	x
Potatoes	8	3	11	8	13	x
Field vegetables	51	22	48	28	42	x
Fruits	67	33	48	21	50	24

The 2018 ALUI data provides insight into the types of crops being produced in Metchosin more specifically than the Census of Agriculture (Table 8). Of the 304 ha (751 acres) in production in Metchosin, the most common crop is forage, at 133 ha (329 acres), followed by pasture at 92 ha (227 acres). Vegetable production is recorded at 8 ha (20 acres) and mixed fruit as 4 ha (10 acres).

[11] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Other Livestock Inventories on Farms. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[12] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Cattle Inventory. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[13] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Poultry Inventory. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[14] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Sheep Inventory. 2011, 2016 & 2021
[15] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Pig Inventory. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[16] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Field Crops and Hay. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[17] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Fruit. 2011, 2016 & 2021.

Table 8. Crops produced in Metchosin (2018 CRD ALUI)

Crops Produced	ha	acres
Forage	132.9	328.4
Pasture	91.7	226.6
Forage & Pasture	47.9	118.4
Barley	8.5	21.0
Mixed Vegetable	8.3	20.5
Mixed Fruit	4.0	9.9
Other	10.6	26.2

3.3.3 Farm Labour and Succession

In terms of labour, farms in Juan de Fuca CCS provided 16 year-round full-time jobs across 6 farms in 2021 (Table 9). Year-round part-time employment was provided to 21 individuals on 8 farms, and 5 farms employed 13 seasonal workers. Farm labour is not tracked through the ALUI, therefore more specific data for Metchosin was not available.

Table 9. Labour on farms in Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016 & 2021)[18]

	2016		2021	
Labour Types	**Farms reporting**	**Total employees**	**Farms reporting**	**Total employees**
Year-round full time	9	19	6	16
Year-round part time	12	19	8	21
Seasonal/ Temporary	17	41	5	13

3.4 Farm Profitability

Producers in the region must offset income with expenses related to land, labour, inputs and fuel. Farmers in most of BC have difficulty producing sufficient revenues to afford adequate farm labour, equipment, and other farm inputs (seeds, feed, soil amendments, etc.) to enhance production levels, and the situation in Metchosin is no different. Most farmers need financial assistance (through loans or other investments) in order to scale up their production and often one family member must work off the farm. Farm profitability is difficult to measure or to estimate. The following proxies can be used:

- Farm capital and assets
- Gross margin of farm operations
- Average farm receipts per farm
- Net revenue margin

[18] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Paid Labour. 2011, 2016 & 2021.

3.4.1 Gross Margin of Farm Operations

In the decade between 2011 and 2021, gross margin of farm operations increased from -2% to 12% (Table 10). This can be considered as a margin of 12 cents on every dollar spent in the farm in 2021.

Table 10. Gross margin of farms in Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016, 2021)[19])[20]

Year	Number of Farms	Gross farm receipts (Million $)	Total operating expenses (Million $)	Gross margin
2011	217	5,972,934	6,113,457	-2.3 %
2016	181	5,993,586	5,386,514	10.1 %
2021	147	5,942,274	5,220,722	12.1%

3.4.2 Farm Revenue by Category

While gross margins have been on the rise, most farms in Juan de Fuca CCS (91 farms in 2021) report earning less than $10,000 annually (with 8 farms reporting $0 income) (Table 11). Very few farms (8%) report earning over $100,000. It is also likely that the number of farms earning under $10,000 is higher than reported. This is due to the change in the definition of "farm" as previously discussed, whereby only operations reporting revenues to the CRA are participating in the Census of Agriculture. This would also partly account for the large decrease in the number of farms reporting less than $10,000 from 2011 (155 farms) to 2021 (91 farms).

Table 11. Total Gross Farm Receipts in Juan de Fuca CCS (Census of Agriculture 2011, 2016 & 2021)[21]

Farm Revenue by Category	2011 (217 farms)	2016 (181 farms)	2021 (147 farms)
$0	x	x	8
$1 - $10,000	155	125	83
$10,000 – $24,999	32	28	31
$25,000 - $49,999	13	11	6
$50,000 - $99,000	5	4	6
$100,000 and above	12	13	13

[19] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Farms Classified by Total Operating Revenues. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[20] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Operating Expenses. 2011, 2016 & 2021.
[21] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Farms Classified by Total Operating Revenues. 2011, 2016 & 2021.

4.0 Biophysical and Environmental Context

The biophysical and environmental context of an area impacts the agricultural production through landscape, soil, water, growing conditions and climate change. The following section explores all of these factors and how they relate to and influence the agriculture sector now and into the future.

4.1 Agriculture Capability

Not all agricultural lands are created equal and not all agricultural land is capable of, or suitable for, producing all agricultural products. Some agricultural land is more suitable for certain crops than others, and some land is best suited to pasture or grazing lands for livestock. BC's diverse agriculture industry needs all classes of land to thrive.

There are three dominant limiting factors to agricultural lands in BC[22]:

1. Climate - defined by the heat energy and moisture inputs available for agricultural production.
2. Soil variability - properties and characteristics affect the land's ability to sustain agricultural products.
3. Topography - can limit access and the ability to use cultivation equipment.

The decision to put a particular parcel into a particular agricultural production is not a sole reflection of its agricultural capability or suitability. Agricultural business costs, physical accessibility and market vagaries may result in a certain block of land being used or left fallow and this may vary over time.

The Canada Land Inventory (CLI), developed in the 1980s, used defensible criteria to apply agricultural capability rating for soils in the ALR. There are seven classes[23]:

- Class 1 land is capable of producing the very widest range of crops. Soil and climate conditions are optimum, resulting in easy management.
- Class 2 land is capable of producing a wide range of crops. Minor restrictions of soil or climate may reduce capability but pose no major difficulties in management.
- Class 3 land is capable of producing a fairly wide range of crops under good management practices. Soil and/or climate limitations are somewhat restrictive.
- Class 4 land is capable of a restricted range of crops. Soil and climate conditions require special management considerations.
- Class 5 land is capable of production of cultivated perennial forage crops and specially adapted crops. Soil and/or climate conditions severely limit capability.
- Class 6 land is important in its natural state as grazing land. These lands cannot be cultivated due to soil and/or climate limitations.
- Class 7 land has no capability for soil bound agriculture.

[22] Agricultural Land Commission. Agricultural capability and the ALR. 2021.
[23] Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Environment. Land Capability Classification for Agriculture in British Columbia. 1983.

Although Class 6 and 7 lands have limited capability for soil bound agriculture, they may be agriculturally productive where topography and climate allow. The following are not considered in the classification: distance to market, available transportation facilities, location, farm size, type of ownership, cultural patterns, skill or resources of individual operators, and hazard of crop damage by storms.

Metchosin sits upon a relatively flat landscape close to the coastline, with moderate mountains occupying its northwest reaches. Home to fertile soil, the largest limiting factor for agricultural production in the area is drainage. Figure 6 and Figure 7 provide a snapshot of the agricultural capability classes that have been mapped Metchosin, illustrating that there are some areas of Class 3 lands close to the coast, with ribbons of Class 4 running through it. The vast majority of land in Metchosin is Class 6 and 7, however few farms operate within these areas.

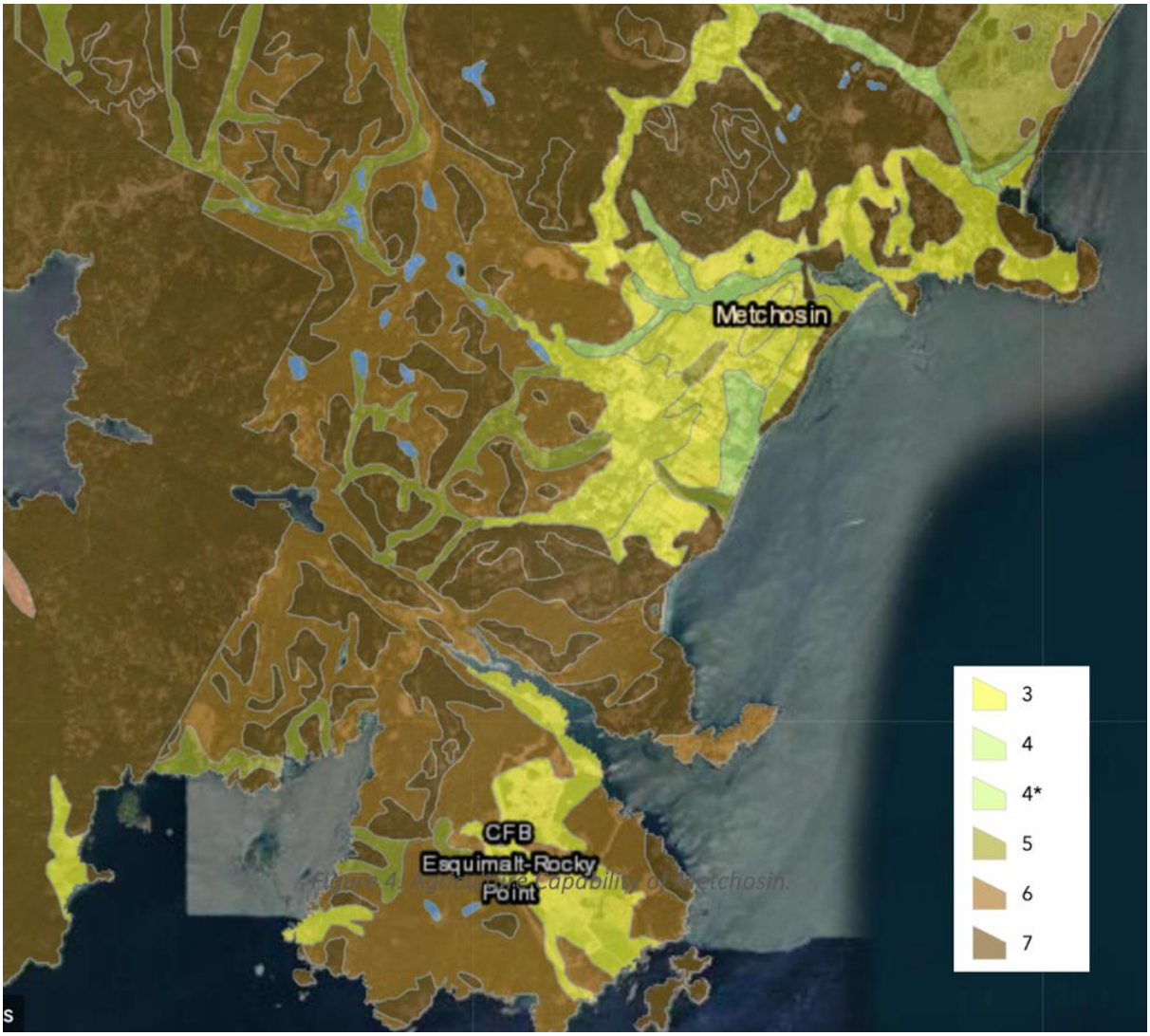

Figure 6. Agricultural Land Capability map of Metchosin and area (BC SIFT).

Figure 7. Agriculture Capability of Metchosin (BC SIFT)

4.2 Soils

In the 1980s, the federal government conducted soil surveys across the CRD. These soil surveys provide detailed descriptions of soils and can be accessed through the BC Soil Information Finder Tool (SIFT) (Figure 6) and the original maps are available online. Much of the area is made up of a colluvium soil, Ragbark, which is stony and sloped, shown in pink on Figure 8. The soils most suitable for agricultural production are found in the lower lands near the coastline. Other soil types in the area are Marine soils, Saanichton soils (shown in brown), Somenos soils (shown in green) and Quamichan soil (shown in orange). These soils are sandy or silty loams and range from poorly drained to moderately drained. The Marine soils in Metchosin are fertile, however remain wet for most of the growing season unless work is done to improve drainage throughout the soil.

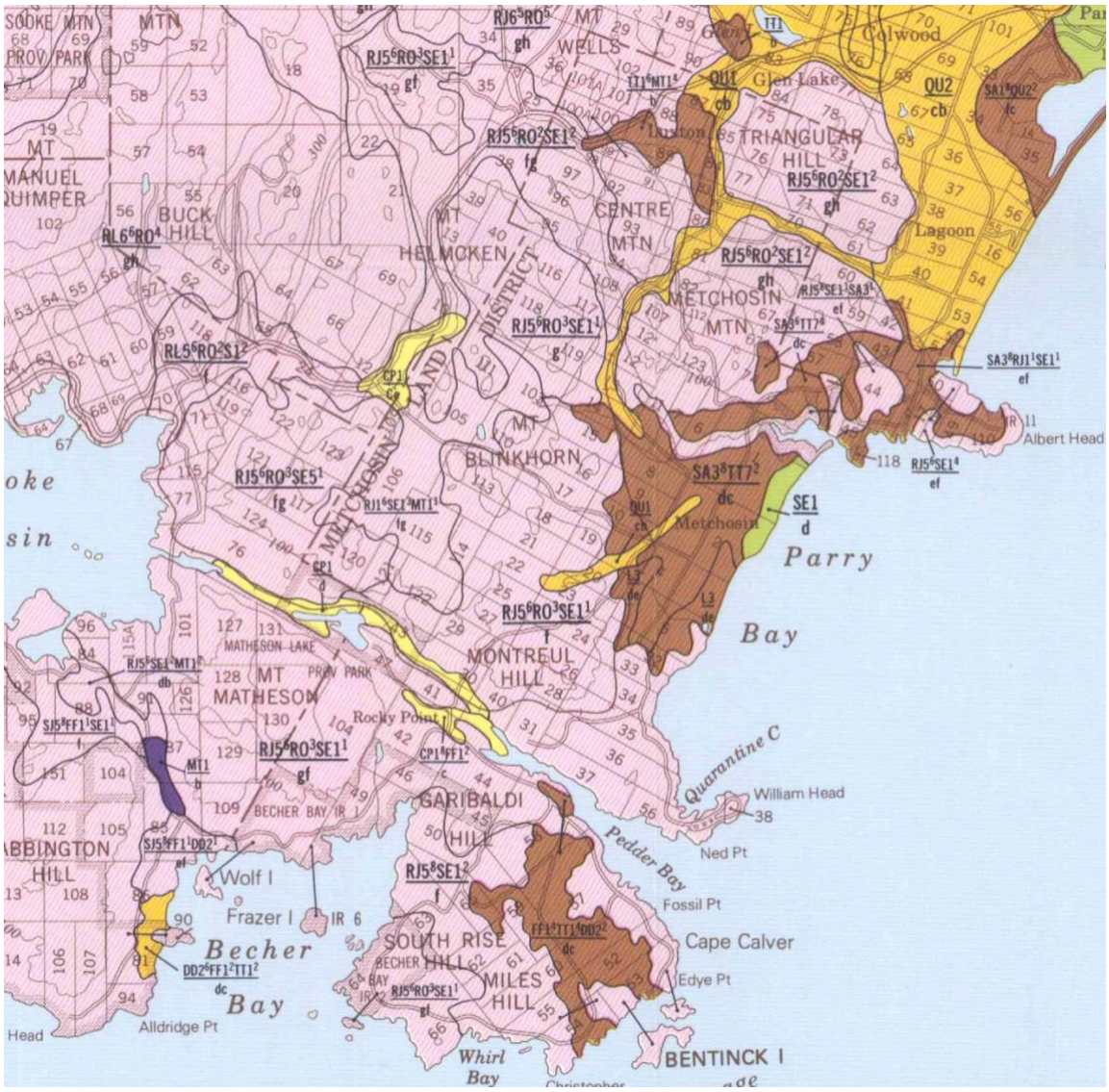

Figure 8. Soil survey map of Metchosin (BC SIFT).

4.3 Water Resources

4.3.1 Groundwater

There are 3 aquifers which serve the water needs of Metchosin (Figure 9).

Aquifer 606: Sooke-Metchosin

Aquifer 606 encompasses Colwood, Langford, Metchosin and Sooke, covering 537 km^2. This aquifer is made of bedrock with low water output and high vulnerability. Tt serves 1,554 wells and produces 15 artesian wells. There is only 1 groundwater licence officially listed within this aquifer, however it is possible that additional groundwater licence applications are being processed.[24]

[24] BC Groundwater Wells and Aquifers. Aquifer 606 Summary. Accessed October 2023.

Aquifer 682

Aquifer 682 encompasses Colwood, Langford and Metchosin, covering 24.1 km^2. This aquifer has moderate productivity and is moderately vulnerable. Aquifer 682 only serves a very small portion of Metchosin, with only 5 of its 48 wells falling within Metchosin's jurisdiction. There are no groundwater licences within this aquifer, however it is possible that additional groundwater licence applications are being processed.[25]

Aquifer 683

Aquifer 683 is a small aquifer and encompasses Metchosin inland 3km from Parry Bay, covering 9 km^2. This aquifer's parent material is sand and gravel, it is moderately productive, with low vulnerability. It serves 28 wells and produces 1 artesian well. There are no groundwater licences within this aquifer, however it is possible that additional groundwater licence applications are being processed.[26]

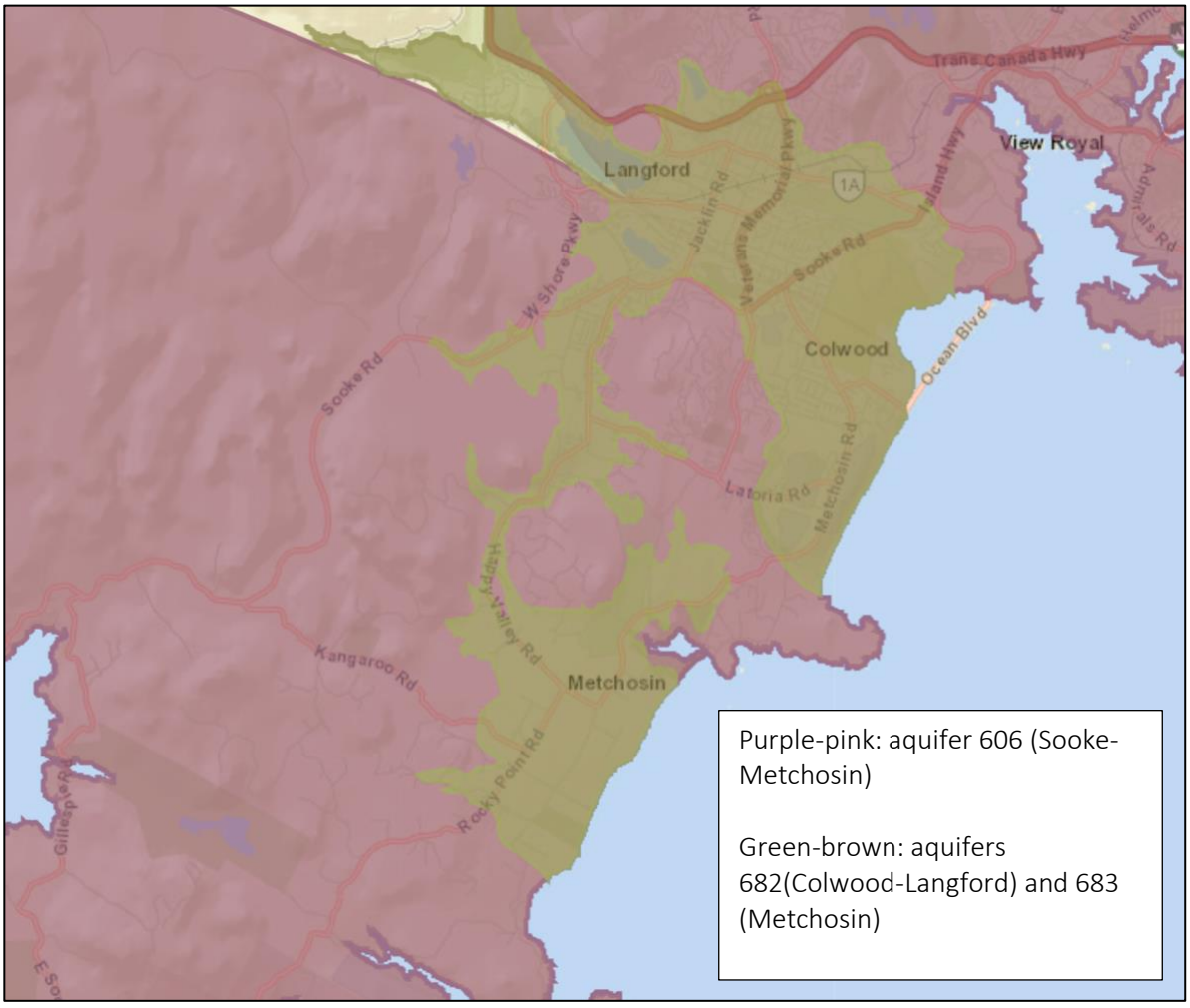

Figure 9. Three aquifers serving Metchosin water needs (BC Groundwater Level Data).

[25] BC Groundwater Wells and Aquifers. Aquifer 682 Summary. Accessed October 2023.
[26] BC Groundwater Wells and Aquifers. Aquifer 683 Summary. Accessed October 2023.

4.3.2 Surface Water

Metchosin lies within several watersheds including the Bilston Creek watershed (over 3,000 ha), the Cole Creek watershed (710 ha), and the Sherwood Creek watershed (110 ha). There are several surface water licences held in and around the Metchosin area, as identified in Figure 9. Irrigation licences are noted on Cole Creek, Rainey Brook, Hewitt Creek, Coolidge Creek, Bilston Creek, and others.

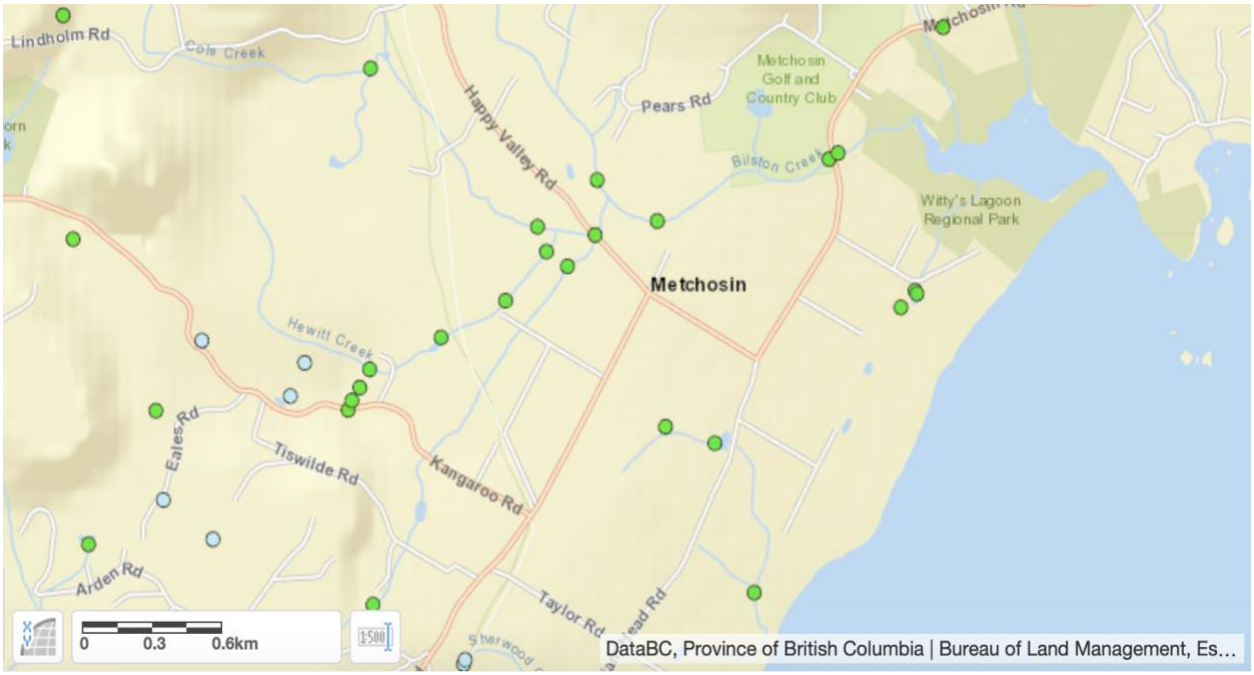

Figure 10. Surface water licences in and around Metchosin (BC Water Resources Atlas, 2023).

4.3.3 Irrigation

In 2019, the CRD completed an Agricultural Water Demand Model[27] (AWDM) for the entire region except Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas. Table 12 summarizes the specific water demands identified in Metchosin.

Table 12. Agricultural water demand in Metchosin. (CRD AWDM 2019).

Source	Irrigated area (ha) (acres)	Irrigation demand volume (m^3)	Average depth of water required (mm)
Surface Water	10.6 (26.2)	94,588	889
Ground water	37.4 (92.4)	285,570	764
Total	48.0 (118.6)	380,158	792

[27] Capital Regional District. Agricultural Water Demand Model. 2019.

The AWDM also provided insight into a potential future scenario for water demand in the 2050s accounting for climate change projections[28]. Table 13 shows the baseline data from 2003, followed by three demand projections in the 2050s across all of the CRD, for both surface and groundwater. The table shows that across the region and without expansion of agricultural land or expansion of irrigation systems, demand is expected to nearly double.

Table 13. Agricultural water demand and climate change in the 2050s. (CRD AWDM, 2019)

	Irrigated land (ha)	Irrigation Demand (m^3)	Average Req. (mm)
2003	1,019.7	4,103,475	402
2053	1019.7	7,273,826	714
2056	1019.7	5,836,547	572
2059	1019.7	7,523,769	738

4.4 Climate Change and Agriculture

Farmers are accustomed to the weather influencing their activities and weather-dependent decisions are a part of farming life. Adapting to climate change, however, involves a more systematic assessment and response. Agriculture is highly vulnerable to changes in climatic conditions and even small shifts could have significant consequences for farm viability and food production. Various climate change modelling scenarios developed by UBC and the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre[29] all predict that precipitation will increase in winter and decrease in summer months on Vancouver Island, when it is needed most. As a result, agricultural water demands are expected to increase as climate change creates hotter summers and longer growing seasons. Table 14 summarizes the most current climate change projections for the Capital Regional District from the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium.

The data shows an overall increase in annual precipitation, though significant decreases in summer months, with moderate increases in winter. The data also suggests that by 2050 the area will see a median 2.7% increase in annual temperatures and an additional 789 Growing Degree Days (GDD) along with 40 frost free days. GDD is a weather-based indicator for assessing crop development and a measure of heat accumulation over time. Exponentially increasing GDDs do not necessarily improve the productivity of an area, as plants also have high temperature cut-offs at which the development of a plant ceases. For example, the cut off temperature for the development of corn is 30°C.

[28] The Model also has access to climate change information until the year 2100. While data can be run for each year, three driest years in the 2050s were selected to give a representation of climate change. Figure 6 shows the climate

[29] Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre. Accessed October 2023.

Table 14. Projected changes in climate characteristics for the CRD. (PCIC Plan 2 Adapt)

		2020 change from 1961-1990 baseline		2050 change from 1961-1990 baseline		2080 change from 1961-1990 baseline	
Characteristic	**Season**	**Range**	**Median**	**Range**	**Median**	**Range**	**Median**
Mean Temperature	Annual	+1.2°C to +2.0°C	+1.5°C	+1.8°C to +4.0°C	+2.7°C	+3.2°C to +6.1°C	+4.3°C
Precipitation	Annual	-1.8% to +3.6%	+0.54%	-0.98% to +4.9%	+2.3%	+0.38% to +13%	+8.0%
	Summer	-29% to +10%	-7.3%	-40% to +3.8%	-11%	-53% to -0.63%	-19%
	Winter	-1.8% to +8.3%	+2.5%	-0.44% to +7.9%	+2.3%	-0.11% to +18%	+10%
Snowfall*	Winter	-87% to -66%	-78%	-94% to -83%	-90%	-98% to -84%	-96%
	Spring	-91% to -0.93%	-67%	-100% to -49%	-69%	-100% to -63%	-100%
Growing Degree Days	Annual	+303 to +595 degree days	+440 degree days	+531 to +1210 degree days	+789 degree days	+967 to +1940 degree days	+1330 degree days
Frost-free days	Annual	+20 to +32 days	+27 days	+32 to +48 days	+40 days	+43 to +53 days	+50 days

* *This variable has a low baseline, percentage changes from a low baseline value can result in deceptively large percentage change values.* A small baseline can occur when the season and/or region together naturally make a zero or near-zero value.

In 2017, the CRD completed a Climate Projections Report[30] which highlighted some of the noticeable changes which can be expected in the region. These include:

- Warmer winter temperatures;
- Fewer days below freezing;
- More extreme hot days in summer months;
- Longer dry spells;
- More precipitation in fall, winter and spring; and
- Higher intensity of extreme weather events.

[30] Capital Regional District. Climate Projections for the Capital Region. Updated July 2017.

The impacts of these changes on agricultural systems will be significant. While an increase in GDD and frost-free days will lengthen the growing season, the negative outcomes may outweigh the positive. Hotter and drier summers will likely lead to increased pressure on water supply and increased drought conditions across the region. Water will be less available for producers in the months when it is needed most. Increased rainfall in the spring and more intense rainstorms can lead to flooded fields and delayed planting causing a shift in seasonal production which may not align with pollinator emergence, limiting pollination and overall yield.

Farming practices and expenses can be expected to change as more energy will be required to cool greenhouses and livestock facilities. New soil management practices will need to be adopted to adapt to wet soils. Infrastructure and ecosystem enhancement may also be required to improve wetlands for stormwater management as well as culverts and ditches to drain fields and improve the movement of water around the landscape.

In 2023, the District of Metchosin commissioned a Climate Action Plan to outline goals and actions to help move the district into a climate resilient future. There are four priority actions within the Action Plan that directly impact the agriculture sector. They are as follows:

Goal	Priority Action
1.1 Preserve, protect and enhance natural ecosystems	a) Investigate and report to Council on development of land-use conservation and enhancement targets.
	b) Engage with partners to solicit external funding for new habitat protection and restoration projects (e.g., invasive species management).
	c) Leverage land acquisition funding to buy and convert additional District lands into protected areas.
1.2 Develop, protect and enhance agricultural lands	a) Develop an Agricultural Plan that encourages and supports climate change resilience, enhanced biodiversity and low carbon agricultural practices.

5.0 Agriculture Supports and Services

5.1 Meat Processing

Each link in the local meat supply chain is vital - a local abattoir allows farmers to get their animals processed in a timely manner and cut and wrap shops (butchers) allow farmers to sell their products in cuts that are tailored to the appropriate market.

In 2007, the province amended meat processing regulations such that licensing and certification was more stringent and involved additional administrative oversight. These changes, along with other challenges in the industry such as the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy crisis, resulted in more than 300 abattoirs closing throughout BC over the last 15 years.

In 2021, the BC government updated the meat processing licensing system. The new system replaces the Class A, B, D, and E system with "Abattoir", "Farmgate Plus" and "Farmgate" licenses. The "Abattoir" license allows for slaughtering of an unlimited number of animals (own and custom for other producers) with sales to retail or direct to customer. "Farmgate Plus" allows for slaughter of own animals and limited custom slaughter for other producers with sales to the retail market or direct-to-customer. The "Farmgate" Licenses only allow for slaughter of one's own animals and are restricted to direct-to-consumer sales. Further meat processing, including cut and wrap requires a Food Premises Permit obtained from a health authority for all levels of licensing. Metchosin is fortunate to have an abattoir located in the community. Table 15 summarizes the licensed meat processing facilities in and near Metchosin.

Table 15. Abattoirs in and around Metchosin (Google).

Name	Location	Service	Livestock Processed
Metchosin Meats	Metchosin	Abattoir	Goats, hogs, sheep
Kildonan Farms	North Saanich	Abattoir	Chicken, turkeys
Glenwood Meats	Langford	Butcher	Lamb, beef, pork, poultry

In addition to these processing facilities, there are also 8 seafood processing facilities in Langford, Victoria and Saanich.

5.2 Distribution and Sales

The agri-food sector in Metchosin is made up of small scale and mixed producers. Farms in Metchosin are often producing a variety of products, with only a few focusing on one or two crops/ animals. Many mixed farming producers have difficulty accessing conventional distribution systems that supply grocery stores and export markets because they are too small to meet year-round minimum supply requirements. Challenges around labelling, quality control, traceability, and food safety are other hurdles to integrating into grocery stores. As a result, many small-scale mixed producers are focused on selling directly to consumers. Table 16 summarizes the number of farms in Juan de Fuca CCS who are engaging in direct-to-consumer sales. The high number of direct deliveries in 2021 may be attributed to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 16. Farms selling direct to consumers in Juan de Fuca CCS. (Census of Agriculture 2016 & 2021[31]).

	Number of Farms	
Year	**2016**	**2021**
Farms Selling Direct to Consumers	121	112
Sales of Unprocessed Agricultural Products	121	112
Using Farm Gate, Stands, Kiosks, U-pick	*107*	*71*
Using Farmers' Markets	*29*	*24*
Sales of Value-added Products	12	18
Community Supported Agriculture	11	10
Direct deliveries to consumers	x	65

Local producers and vendors are creating opportunities for local food sales into the community market through some creative platforms such as the Metchosin Grown Map[32], which highlights 13 local producers with points on a map, and 8 producers without a marked location. The resource includes an overview of each of the 21 producers including information on what is produced, when it is sold, and social media and website links. The District of Metchosin also provides a *Farmer Directory*[33]on the website, listing 28 local food producers, their products, locations and contact information.

5.2.1 Farmers Markets

Metchosin is also home to the Metchosin Farmers Market[34] which is governed by the Metchosin Producers Association. The market is open once a week on Sundays from 11am – 2pm beginning in spring and running until the end of October. The market also holds one Christmas market in December. In addition to the Metchosin Farmers Market, the CRD is home to a number of markets which Metchosin producers may sell at. Table 17 summarizes some of the markets in southern Vancouver Island.

[31] Statistics Canada. Census of Agriculture. Direct Sales of Agricultural Products to Consumers. 2016 & 2021.
[32] Metchosin Agricultural Committee. Metchosin Grown Map. Accessed October 2023.
[33] District of Metchosin. Metchosin Farms. 2022.
[34] District of Metchosin. Metchosin Farmers Market. Accessed October 2023.

Table 17. Farmers Markets in southern Vancouver Island (Google).

Market	Location	Season	Days
Metchosin Farmers Market	Metchosin	May – October	Sundays 11:00 – 2:00
Victoria Farmers Market	Victoria	May – September	Sundays 11:00 – 4:00
Westcoast Outdoor Market	Sidney	June – August	Sundays: 10:00 – 2:00 Thursdays 5:30 – 8:30
Market	**Location**	**Season**	**Days**
Esquimalt Farmers Market	Esquimalt	June- September	Mondays 4:30 – 7:30
		April – September	Thursdays 4:30 – 7:30
		September – December	Thursdays 4:30 – 7:30
Oaklands Sunset Market	Victoria	July – August	Wednesdays 4:00 – 7:30
James Bay Market	Victoria	May – September	Saturdays 9:00 – 3:00
Goldstream Farmers Market	Langford	May – November	Saturdays 10:00 – 2:00
Moss Street Market	Victoria	May – October	Saturdays 10:00 – 2:00
North Saanich Farmers Market	North Saanich	June – October	Saturdays 9:30 – 12:00
Peninsula Country Market	Saanichton	June – October	Saturdays 9:00 – 1:00
Sooke Country Market	Sooke	April – October	Saturdays 10:00 – 2:00

5.2.2 Local Food Box

The Local Food Box[35] is a marketing partnership between farmers in Metchosin and an example of Community Supported Agriculture. Participants pay ahead of the farming season to participate in a weekly or bi-weekly installment of fresh local foods for a total of 20 weeks. The box may include organic fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, seasonal flowers, honey, fresh milled flour or meats (pork, chicken, lamb). The local food box provides producers with a dedicated customer base for the season who pay upfront in the winter or spring when farmers need money to invest in the season's production. There are 10 farms represented in the Local Food Box.

5.3 Agritourism

Agritourism allows for an alternative stream of income on-farm which can help offset some of the costs of farming. Often agritourism endeavors provide critical income to farmers allowing customers to have experiences and explore the farm landscapes and products in innovative ways. Metchosin is in close

[35] The Local Food Box. About. Accessed November 2023.

proximity to Victoria which opens a lot of potential for agritourism activities such as U-Picks, farmstands, special events, and accommodation. Any farm engaging in agritourism endeavours on ALR land will need to comply with ALC regulations which limit the amount of retail space on farmland, the number and use of buildings as well as the number of special events.

The Metchosin Grown Map[36] provides a map of 13 farms in Metchosin, many of which offer a form of agritourism including workshops or events, farm tours, U-Picks and on-farm dining opportunities.

5.4 Extension and Support Services

The agriculture sector encompasses many different types of services and organizations which support agriculture. The following is a list of examples of organizations providing extension and support services to Metchosin producers:

Metchosin 4-H Club

4-H BC builds awareness of agriculture, inspiring, educating and supporting youth by empowering them with skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the agriculture industry and make positive change in the communities. Metchosin has its own 4-H club with four sub groups: Poultry, Foods, Cavy, and Cloverbuds. Learn more: https://www.4hbc.ca/clubs/vancouver-island

Ministry of Agriculture Food Regional Agrologist (AF)

AF provides extension support through a Regional Agrologist.

Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association

The Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association works with farmers across the southern island to assist in marketing their products. One initiative from the association is the Island Farm Fresh website which links consumers to farmers through their "Find a Farm" tool and with a farmers market directory. Learn more: https://islandfarmfresh.com/

The District of Metchosin

The District of Metchosin is a partner to agriculture by supporting the sector with links to online resources as well as providing information to the public about where and how to acquire local foods on their agriculture landing page. Learn more: https://www.metchosin.ca/community/agriculture

Island Flower Growers Co-operative

Island Flower Growers is a producer-owned co-operative of cut-flower growers on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The cooperative operates an online wholesale market, helps local growers in business development and advocates for flower farming's contribution to ecological health and community wellbeing. Learn more: https://www.islandflowergrowers.ca/

[36] Metchosin Agricultural Committee. Metchosin Grown Map. Accessed October 2023.

Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative (MISC)

Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative was formed in 2019 with the intention of mobilizing a volunteer force to help mitigate invasive species threatening the native ecology and the agricultural capacity of Metchosin. MISC provides resources on their website which help to identify invasive and native species, and tools to use in removal of invasive species. Learn more: https://www.metchosininvasives.ca/

Young Agrarians (YA)

Young Agrarians is a farmer-to-farmer education and resource network aimed at supporting new and aspiring young farmers in building their business, production knowledge and skills and community. YA operates their land matching program as well as some farmer mixers and education activities in the Cariboo Region. Learn more: https://youngagrarians.org/

Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC)

PAAC is an advisory committee to the municipalities of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, and Saanich on matters involving agriculture and to facilitate the development of programs for implementation of the Agriculture and Food Security Plan. Learn more: Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission

South Vancouver Island Farmers Institute (SVIFI)

The South Vancouver Island Farmers Institute is a dynamic group of food, fuel, fibre and floral producers, friends and supporters. The group was founded and is governed by farmers - for farmers and community members who support agriculture and growing. The SVIFI's activities are membership driven with a goal to work to improve agricultural land stewardship and food security. The Institute promotes farming in the region through research, education, cooperation and outreach.

Metchosin Farmers Institute (MFI)

The Metchosin Farmers Institute (MFI) concentrates its efforts on keeping the local community informed about agricultural heritage through traditional events such as spring and fall fairs at the Luxton Fairgrounds, as well as through the sponsorship of the Luxton Antique Farm Equipment Club, Metchosin 4H Club, and the Vancouver Island Blacksmith's Association.

Metchosin Producers Association (MPA)

The Metchosin Producers Association (MPA) is the governing body of the local Metchosin Farmers' Market. The MPA keeps involved in important issues regarding farms and farmland and hold representation on the AASC. The MPA has previously received a Tourism Grant to make improvements to the market site.

Nootka Rose Milling Company

Nootka Rose Milling Company processes different grains from producers in Metchosin. They utilize some fresh milled products in their off-site bakery and provide sales of grains and flours. The mill is located centrally in Metchosin and is a central component of the Metchosin food system. Learn more: https://nootkarose.ca/

Agriculture Resource Suppliers

In addition to extension supports and educational resources, the agriculture industry requires services and supplies which allow farmers to operate their businesses, the following list includes a non-exhaustive list of agricultural suppliers which serve Metchosin:

- Tractor Time Equipment
- Willow Wind Feed & Pet Food
- Metchosin Farm Seeds
- Borden Mercantile Co.
- Integrity Sales and Distributors
- Top Shelf Feeds
- Buckerfields

5.5 Existing Policies and Plans

5.5.1 Capital Regional District Food and Agriculture Strategy

The CRD developed *Setting Our Table*, the Food and Agriculture Strategy in 2016 to help guide decision-makers in matters pertinent to food and agriculture in the region. The Strategy begins with a guiding vision:

> *The Capital Region has a vibrant, valued and evolving local food and agricultural economy that is rooted in the principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect; it recalls and re-establishes the intimate and important relationships between our land and waters, our food, and our community.*

The Strategy puts forward 10 recommendations to respond to the issues faced by the agricultural community in the region. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.
2. Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues.
3. Develop regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture.
4. Address chronic drainage issues across the region.
5. Consider establishing programs to address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.
6. Maintain and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.
7. Encourage a place–based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.
8. Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.
9. Increase access to agricultural and food lands.
10. Support regional economic development.

5.5.2 District of Metchosin Official Community Plan

The Metchosin OCP (2020) includes Section 3, which is dedicated to agriculture. It contains 11 objectives to guide decision makers and 12 policies to support the objectives. The agriculture objectives laid out in the OCP are as follows:

- To recognize and reinforce the agricultural character of Metchosin.
- To preserve and protect agricultural land for future generations.
- To encourage and provide opportunity for lifestyles based on agricultural enterprises.
- To minimize negative impacts on agriculture from non-agricultural use of land.
- To prevent reduction in parcel size of agricultural land.
- To remove obstacles to viable agricultural enterprise while addressing policies and regulations for the protection of Sensitive Environments.
- To support and encourage Federal and Provincial programs for increasing the viability of local farm enterprises.
- To encourage installation of environmentally sound irrigation and drainage systems to upgrade the productivity of agricultural land.
- To encourage wise agricultural practices including sound soil management, crop rotation, waste management and water conservation.
- To promote the use of organic farming methods wherever possible.
- To promote the use of biological control methods for pest management.

Some of the ALR within the District has been historically designated for non-agricultural uses. This is primarily on small lots within the centre of the district that have been used for commercial or institutional uses over several decades. The District works alongside the ALC when updating the OCP to ensure that the ALC is consulted on these land use designations.

5.5.3 District of Metchosin Zoning Bylaw

The Metchosin Zoning Bylaw contains several zones that overlay the ALR. The zoning bylaw is fairly outdated and would benefit from a significant update, particularly regarding agricultural land. The following observations were made regarding some of the issues in the zoning bylaw that may not be aligned with Provincial regulations and/or may not be overtly supportive of farming.

- Definitions of agriculture, farming, agri-tourism, and other related terms are not aligned with those used in ALC regulations, Right to Farm Act, and BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food guidelines and policies.
- AG and AG1 differences appear to be with regards to housing density, and these regulations may no longer align with provincial rules and regulations regarding dwellings in the ALR.
- AG and AG1 zones include restrictions on certain types of agricultural activities and should be revisited.
- Some permitted uses within AG and AG1 would require permission from the ALC (e.g. Agricultural Fairground).

- The minimum parcel subdivision size in zones AG and AG1 is currently 4 ha (10 acres) however this would require approval of the ALC.
- AG zone setbacks for intensive livestock production (e.g. 60m from a front lot line and 20m from side lot lines) may be limiting expansion of a productive farm base.
- There is no reference made to the Agricultural Environmental Management Code of Practice regarding any concerns about manure management, composting, fertilizer runoff and the quality of watercourses and groundwater affected by the farming property.
- Rural Residential Zone 4 (RR4) is within the ALR and the minimum parcel size of 2 acres is small, and certain types of agricultural activities are restricted.
- There are no zones where processing of livestock and poultry (slaughterhouses, abattoirs) is permitted (e.g. in Industrial zones).
- The Commercial Recreation 4 (CR4) zone, which is in the ALR, could be modified to encourage a use other than golf courses if and when property ownership changes or the current business ends.

5.5.3 District of Metchosin Resolution Regarding GMOs

Historically, the District may have passed resolutions regarding issues of agricultural interest. Resolutions are a formal statement of opinion on a topic, however they are not considered policy and are not enforceable. The District does not have a record of past resolutions available on its website, therefore the community must rely on the memory of those who were involved in the resolution or through historical hard copies, or through other online searches. Throughout the course of the development of the Agricultural Area Plan it was indicated by residents that a resolution was passed in 2012 by the District to indicate that it was not in support of farming practices that utilize Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). It is not clear if additional resolutions regarding agriculture were historically passed by the District.

6.0 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats table summarizes the internal (Strengths and Weaknesses), which can be controlled, and external (Opportunities and Threats) influences, which are more difficult to control, that impact the Metchosin agricultural community (Table 18). The information presented in the table has been developed using work previously undertaken by within the community as well as additional information uncovered through the development of the Background Report.

Table 18. SWOT Analysis for Metchosin agriculture.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Long history of agriculture in Metchosin	Lack of new entrants and/or succession planning	Favorable soils and climate for a variety of crop opportunities	High water table and low water holding capacity means drainage and irrigation required
Local food system support infrastructure (e.g. abattoir)	Few local retail opportunities, most producers need to ship out of the community	Relatively close proximity to a large market of consumers in Victoria	Cost of land and housing continues to rise so expansion of farms is difficult
Awareness of value and benefits of local food	Trespass and other conflicts with non-agricultural neighbours	Protection of farmland through the ALR	Challenging to access a consistent and reliable labour market
Small-scale mixed use farms creates resiliency	Additional cold storage options needed	Funding from government for beneficial practices	Pressure from urban development and conversion of farmland to estates
Community is supportive of local farmers	Profitability has been difficult to achieve for some farms – scale is a challenge	Healthy environment: air quality, water quality, biodiversity	Generally high and growing costs of inputs, such as livestock feed
High quality of produce and food products being grown	Lack of consistent marketing to educate consumers	Beautiful landscape and rural aesthetic contributes to high quality of life	Competition from national/global products
Strong local food system contributes to climate change resilience	Lack of shared equipment opportunities (e.g. tool library)	Collaboration and community-building across commodity groups and across farms	Consumers are feeling the impacts of inflation, less willing to purchase if prices are higher
Agricultural sector is an economic driver for the community	Lack of support services in the area (e.g. farm mechanic, extension services)	Community education opportunities through exposure to farms and growers	The majority of seeds are imported
Sense of pride, awareness, purposeful work, generosity	Need for a critical mass of support to ensure the abattoir can continue operating long-term	Regional Foodlands Trust initiative by the CRD could help open up land access	Water licensing and other regulatory requirements
Educated and skilled farmers that are consistently increasing and widening their knowledge base	Lack of affordable housing opportunities for farm labour and farm managers.	Presence of tourists during the summer indicates possible agri-tourism activities could be successful (e.g. cycling)	Local government not speaking up on behalf of farmers (e.g. advocacy to other levels of govt)
Previous Metchosin Grown campaign was	Lack of area specific and accurate agricultural data.		Challenge with pursuing regenerative practices (maintenance of forests

positive (needs to be reinvigorated)			and natural areas) and ability to qualify for Farm Tax Status (too little arable land, too low income)
			Increasing disasters related to climate change (e.g. drought, fires, flooding)
			Invasive species and pressure from new pests
			Insufficient wildlife control
			Cost of water (especially without Farm Tax Status)