

3.1 Agriculture as an Economic Generator

Abbotsford is Canada's leading agricultural area. The local agricultural economy is the economic mainstay of the community, with the 2011 Census of Agriculture reporting annual gross farm receipts in the range of \$640 million (Statistics Canada, 2011). Agriculture is the leading private sector industry in Abbotsford, supporting one in every four private sector jobs, and one in five jobs overall. Abbotsford has the highest farm gate sales in BC; more than twice as high as Chilliwack, the second largest agricultural municipality in BC.

A 2008 economic report by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce identifies Abbotsford as having the largest farm gate sales per hectare in Canada at \$20,400, more than three times the next highest, the Niagara Regional District.

The report also states that Abbotsford's agriculture sector is supporting 11,300 full-time equivalent jobs and \$1.8 billion in annual expenditures within the local economy, based on the 2006 Census of Agriculture's assessment of \$557 million in farm cash receipts. Paid wages on farms, which includes wages to family members, averaged \$16 per hour. The average annual salary in the agri-business/value-added sector was approximately \$50,000 per year.

The report highlights Abbotsford as becoming the "hub of agri-business activity in the Fraser Valley", and found that 40% of the agri-business sector in Abbotsford is supported by farms outside of Abbotsford. Goods and services purchased by farms outside Abbotsford support \$450 million in annual expenditures and almost 2,000 full time equivalent jobs in Abbotsford.

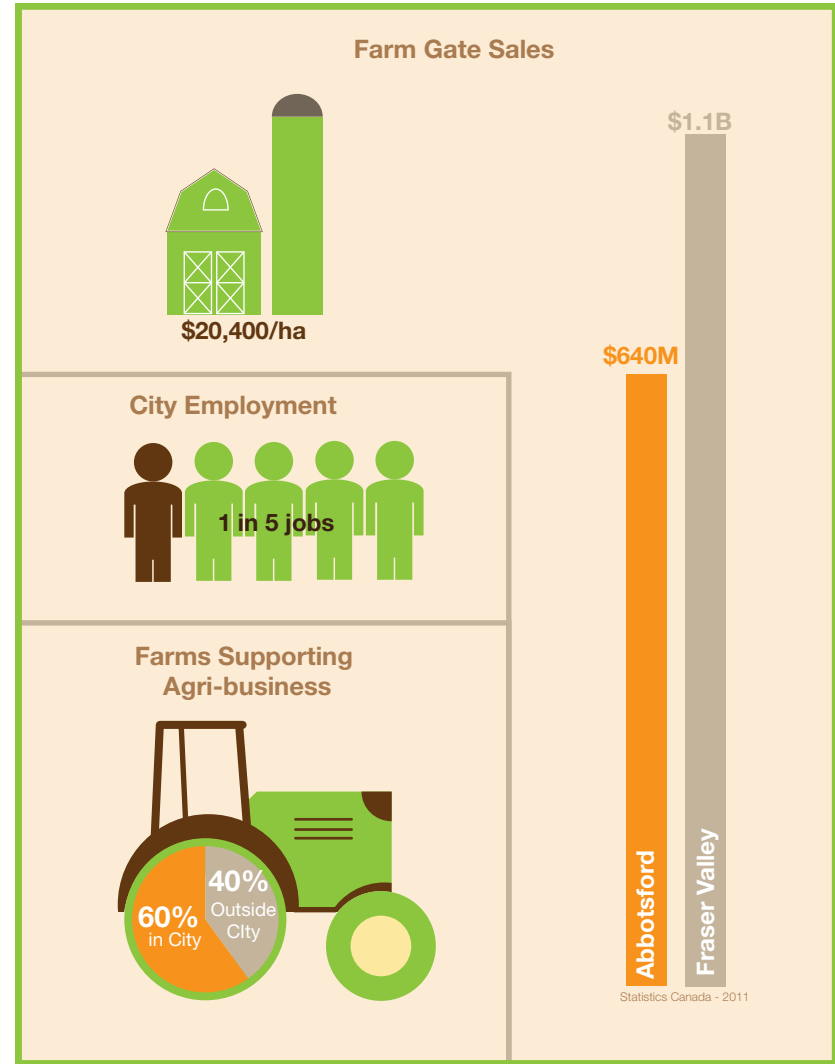


Figure 5: Economic impact of agriculture in Abbotsford