

# Agriculture Policy and the Leadership Races in BC

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1. Agriculture policy support and budget resources in BC are the lowest in Canada. A policy to bring the agriculture budget to the average level of provinces will require an immediate annual increase from the current level of 5.5% to a new level of 13.8% of Agricultural GDP.
2. In 1933, a growers' strike was organized around the theme "a cent a pound or on the ground". In today's currency, that "cent a pound" would be 16.54 cents. For the 2010 apple crop, the average pool price, including Thanksgiving freeze affected apples, was 13.0 cents. **Today, a total of \$6.7 million would be required to bring the average return up to the 1 cent a pound level that produced the growers' strike in 1933.**
3. An immediate injection of **\$116 million dollars per year will bring BC to the average level of support for agriculture in Canada.** If this request seems excessive, it is not – it is a measure of just how far behind the province has fallen.
4. Another possibility, equivalent to the general agriculture budget increase above, is **redirecting \$9.25 million of the province's Columbia River Treaty funds from general revenue to the tree fruit industry.** (It is notable that potatoes are also impacted by the Columbia River Treaty – therefore the payment of additional Columbia River Treaty funds to the potato industry would alleviate the financial losses due to flooding for that sector.)
5. Short term immediate needs:
  - a. **Reclaimed Input Tax Credit:** eliminate this provision for grower cooperatives.
  - b. **Special payment** (see item 2, above).
6. Increased agriculture budget or redirection of Columbia River Treaty funds would allow the tree fruit industry to implement the following programs:
  - a. **Worker housing** - provided in Washington State
  - b. **Deer fencing** – protects investment from Crownland wildlife
  - c. **Replant** – advancing the tree fruit industry, ensuring competitiveness
  - d. **On-farm environmental projects** – improving compliance with government regulations
  - e. **On-farm food safety improvements and operating costs** – assisting industry to achieve consumer expectations
  - f. **Support for branding/marketing BC apples** – supporting healthy choices

7. Government policies that will encourage healthy eating and support BC producers:
  - a. Ensure the Ministry of Health provides resources, through the health promotion budget, to **introduce the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition program to all schools in BC.**
  - b. Ensure that all government agencies and programs supported by government have a **procurement policy to obtain BC produce if it is available.**