

What is Agrology in BC?

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To protect the health of our shared land and water resources as a primary goal, and the well being of all British Columbians a priority, Agrology in our province is the multi-disciplinary and objective application of science and economics to the production of plants and animals. The practice is regulated in BC by the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA), and has grown into 38 areas of practice organized within four sectors: Agricultural, Environmental, Agricultural and Environmental, Life Sciences, and Food (BCIA, 2018c). The multi-faceted nature of Agrology in BC is a reflection of the staggering size of our province and mosaicked landscape of lakes, rivers, coastlines, mountains, forests, deserts, plains, and valleys; all with unique eco-systems, functions, and industries.

Accordingly, the protection this diversified environment requires a highly skilled and varied group of professionals. In BC, over 1,500 Professional Agrologists, registered as members with the BCIA, are putting agrology into practice. They work in a variety of sectors ranging from plant pathology, land reclamation, and range management, to academia, policy, marketing, economics, and land use management, and everything in-between (BCIA, 2018a, d). In practice, Agrology in BC is: creating and evaluating land use plans given urban-rural conflicts; developing and facilitating the use of best management practices for producers of all types of agricultural products; collaborating with industry stakeholders to facilitate the transfer of new knowledge; developing new technology to safeguard food production; preparing and hosting workshops; collecting, analyzing and interpreting data; taking soil samples and developing nutrient management plans or land use policies; and, above all, providing “knowledge and advice to support the development of the agriculture sector and the health of the society, environment, and economy” (BCIA, 2018c).

The value of Agrology in BC can be contextualized within the size of the many industries it supports. As just one example, in 2017 the BC Agrifood and Seafood

industry generated \$14.2 billion in sales (BC Ministry of Agriculture, 2018). Considering that Agriculture and Agriculture and Environment are only two of the four sectors of Agrology in BC, this number can be held as only a fraction of the work that benefits from the objective eye of a Professional Agrologist. Finally, given the competing demands for our finite land base and healthy bodies of water, applying the framework of Agrology to find solutions to complex problems will help ensure that our current wealth of - and active economy based on - clean water, healthy forests, and precious topsoil is sustained for all generations to come.

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