

AGRICULTURE IN CANADA

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There are four main types of farms in Canada. Livestock farms include those specializing in feedlot finishing of cattle, large-scale feeding of hogs bought as weanlings, dairying, poultry production for meat and eggs, and breeding and raising livestock. Grain farms produce such crops as wheat, oats, flax and canola. Special crop farms produce vegetables, fruits, potatoes or other root crops and, to a lesser extent, tobacco or forest products. Other farms combine livestock and grain production. Although each region of Canada has its specialties, none is limited to one type of farming.

The Atlantic Region

This area includes Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Gaspé district of Québec. It is hilly, with a general covering of relatively fertile soil developed under forest cover. The climate is modified by the sea, but also affected by cold currents from the coast of Labrador and winds from the north. Precipitation averages 760 to 1,400 millimetres annually. Mixed farming is general and forage crops support a healthy livestock industry.

Nova Scotia's main agricultural areas surround the Bay of Fundy and Northumberland Strait where they are protected from Atlantic gales. Dairying and poultry production are common and beef farming has increased in recent years. The Annapolis Valley is famous for fruit, particularly apples. New Brunswick produces potatoes and livestock in the Saint John River Valley and there is mixed farming in the northwest. More than a third of the commercial farms in the province are dairy farms.

Climate, soil conditions and geography have combined to form several distinct farming regions in Canada. A harsh northern climate restricts most agriculture to the southern portion of the country and nearly all farms lie within 483 kilometres of the southern border. In the Atlantic provinces and Central Canada farming is limited to coastal regions and river valleys, and soils vary in depth and fertility. In the Prairie

region soil is fertile but rain is light. Farming is linked to high plateaus and river valleys in the western mountainous region.

Farming is a key business in Canada. Approximately 65.9 million hectares in ten provinces are cultivated. In 1986, farm cash receipts exceeded \$20.5 billion and agricultural exports of major commodities reached the \$8.8 billion mark.



A historical photograph of farming in Canada.