

COMMODITY

BERRY

Description

Several varieties of berries are grown commercially in British Columbia. Blueberries, cranberries, raspberries and strawberries are the most prevalent. About 95% of BC's berry production occurs in the Fraser Valley. The rest are grown in the North Okanagan and on Vancouver Island.

Most berries require a mild climate. Some berries require specific soil or growing conditions. Raspberries need sandy, well drained soil. Blueberries are grown on organic and mineral soil. Most cranberries are grown in beds that are flooded to harvest the berries. The soil is usually peat. Sand may be applied to the fields. Pollination is critical in berry production.

The majority of berries are frozen or processed into jam, jelly, juice, yogurt flavoring and ingredients used in baked products. A substantial proportion of BC's berries are exported to eastern Canada, the United States and Europe. Fresh, and therefore highly perishable, berries are shipped in refrigerated trucks or by air. Processed products are shipped by truck, rail, air or cargo ship.

Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the Farm Practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to berry production include:

Aircraft Activities

Farmers may use fixed wing aircraft and helicopters to apply fertilizers to berry crops, sand cranberry bogs, and assist with cranberry harvesting operations. The BC Cranberry Grower's Association's document "Normal Farming Practices for Cranberries in British Columbia" outlines the procedure for aerial spraying.

See Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)

Crop Protection

Berry farmers may use netting and/or noise scaring devices to protect their crops from birds close to harvest time.

See Farm Practice: [Stationary Equipment](#)
[Wildlife Damage Control – South Coastal BC](#)
[Wildlife Damage Control – Interior BC](#)

Pesticides

Farmers may use pesticides to protect their crop from disease, insect and weed infestation. The application of pesticides have the potential to harm the environment and can also be a noise nuisance due to the use of equipment. Producers are responsible for adhering to safety guidelines from the time the pesticide is purchased until the empty containers or unwanted pesticides are disposed of. Pesticides may be applied at any time of day or night to take advantage of favourable weather conditions.

See Farm Practice: [Pesticides](#)

Transportation

Berry producers may have vehicles making deliveries and hauling products 24 hours a day. Vehicles are also used to transport labour. Producers must supply adequate areas on the farm property to handle the volume, movement, and parking of trucks and other traffic related to the activities and farm production. Operations which sell direct to the public must provide adequate off-road parking for customers.

See Farm Practice: [Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism Transportation](#)

Wildlife Control

The use of predator scaring devices in blueberries is a common practice. Propane cannons are noisy and growers may frequently receive complaints about their use from neighbours. Bird distress calls, orchard pistols or other electronic noise makers are also subject to complaints. Growers are encouraged to use an integrated management approach to control bird damage to crops.

See Farm Practice: [Wildlife Damage Control – South Coastal BC](#)
[Wildlife Damage Control – Interior BC](#)

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operation. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Health Act*, *Pesticide Control Act*, *Waste Management Act* and the regulations under those acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the farm practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere that are of special interest to berry producers include the following:

Federal

Fisheries Act – prohibits the discharge of deleterious substances (i.e. pesticides) into watercourses
Migratory Birds Convention Act – protects migratory birds that inhabit Canada
Canada Wildlife Act – provides provisions for conservation of wildlife

Provincial

Wildlife Act – regulates hunting, angling and management of fish and wildlife resources
Motor Vehicle Act – regulates the movement of farm vehicles and implements on the road

Local Government

Applicable *noise bylaws*

Publications

Publications that provide information on berry production include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

Berry Production Guide for Commercial Growers
British Columbia Environmental Farm Reference Guide