

## COMMODITY

## FIELD VEGETABLES

### Description

Field vegetable production is a dynamic and diverse industry. A wide variety of field vegetables are produced with potatoes, corn, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, peas and beans being produced in large quantities. Broccoli, beets, Chinese vegetables, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, onions, radishes, rutabaga, spinach, squash, zucchini and a variety of other vegetables are also grown. Most field vegetable industry is located in the Fraser Valley, although production occurs throughout the province.

Field vegetable production requires well-drained soils, adequate irrigation and good fertilization programs. Careful management is necessary for pest control. Some field vegetables are grown from seed whereas others are started in greenhouses and the seedlings are transplanted. Some vegetables, such as carrots, corn, peas, beans, and potatoes, are mechanically harvested. Others, such as lettuce, celery and cabbage are harvested by hand.

Field vegetables are produced primarily for the fresh market, are highly perishable and must therefore be harvested and handled quickly. They are either washed, graded, packed and shipped to market or are held in coolers until required. Some field vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots, turnips and onions, can be kept in longer cold storage and shipped as the marketplace dictates.

Field vegetables are also produced for the process market, with the harvested crop usually being trucked immediately to a processing plant.

### 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 field vegetable production include:

#### Crop Residue Management

Under specific cropping, soil and weather conditions it is necessary for vegetable producers to leave crop residue on the soil surface. These residues can act as protection against soil erosion, however their presence may result in odour (rotting cole crops) or the attraction of waterfowl (potatoes).

See Farm Practice [Crop Residue Management Cultivation](#)

#### On-Farm Produce Handling and Sales

Vegetable farmers often need to wash, grade, package, cool and store produce on their farm. This may require the operation of tractors, compressors, washers, conveyors, graders and other equipment. Farmers may process, pack, store and ship produce at any time during the day or night.

See Farm Practice: [Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism](#)  
[Product Processing](#)  
[Stationary Equipment](#)

## **Pesticide Management**

Vegetable growers may use pesticides to their crops to protect them from weeds, insects and diseases, usually the use of pesticides is part of an integrated pest management approach.

See Farm Practice: [Pesticide](#)  
[Storage of Hazardous Material](#)

## **Tillage, Traffic and Machinery Operation**

Vegetable producers require the use of equipment such as tractors, cultivators and harvesters for land preparation, planting, harvesting and pesticide application operations. A major portion of this equipment use involves the preparation of soil by cultivation for seeding, planting, nutrient application, weed control or harvest. Farm machinery may be operated 24 hours a day during the production season, however use is timed according to the weather, production cycles and crop quality.

See Farm Practice: [Cultivation](#)  
[Mobile Equipment](#)

## **Water Management**

Water is a critical input for vegetable producers. It can be required and supplied by irrigation, in excess and removed via a drainage system or cause concerns due to flooding and quality in terms of stormwater.

See Farm Practice: [Drainage](#)  
[Irrigation](#)  
[Stormwater](#)

## **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 field vegetable producers include the following:

### **Provincial**

*Agricultural Produce Grading Act* – provides a control framework for the grading of agricultural products to a standard grading system

*Seed Potato Act* – facilitates the growing of certified seed potatoes in specified control areas.

### **Local Government**

All applicable *Bylaws* including specific noise and zoning bylaws where in place.

## **Publications**

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

*British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide*  
*Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers*