

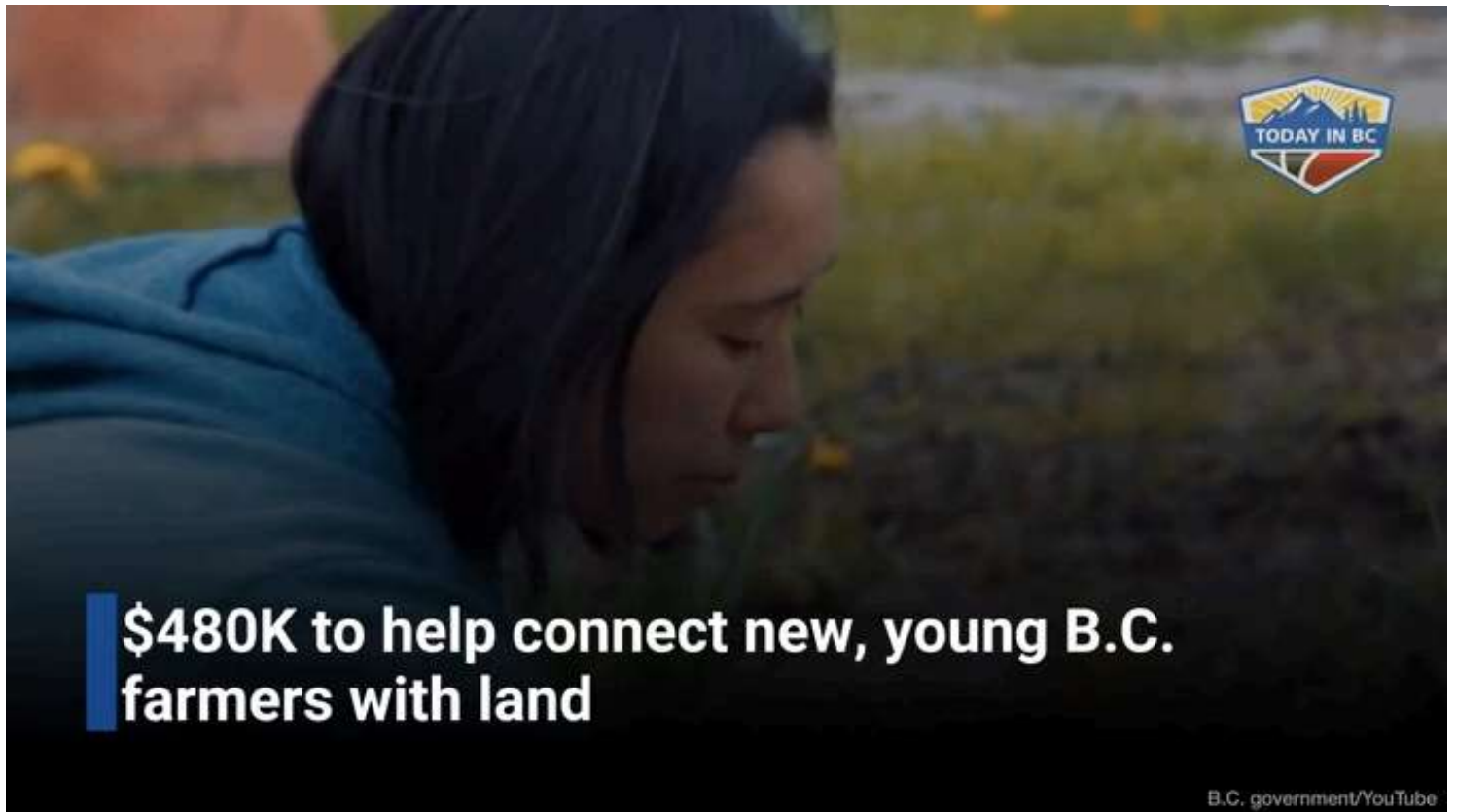
\$480K to help connect new, young B.C. farmers with land



[Lauren Collins](#)

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The provincial government is boosting its land-matching program with \$480,000 for the next year.

The B.C. Land Matching Program helps to connect new, young farmers throughout the province with land they can lease. To date, it has helped match 284 farmers with land throughout the province, with 54 of those in the last year, and \$2.2 million has been put into the program since 2018.

Yuko Sudo created Brave Child Farms to produce Asian vegetables as her parents found it challenging as she was growing up to find authentic Japanese vegetables to create authentic Japanese dishes.

Sudo used the B.C. Land Matching Program to find farmland.

“Finding land in the Lower Mainland is almost impossible. The prices are just astronomical,” explained Sudo, adding that the program helped her to find land without having to purchase it.

Two other farmers helped through the program include Jason Stashko and Krystyna Delahaye.

They began their first farming venture in less-than-ideal soil, but are now thriving at their Seed of Life Farm in Surrey. Stashko and Delahaye found it challenging to find affordable and suitable land in the Lower Mainland, until they were matched with 0.8 hectares through the program.

“When we sought to put down our farm roots, we were discouraged by the unavailability of land, rental costs and the various steps involved,” said Delahaye.

The couple is now growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers at their farm. They’ve also supplied local restaurants, stores and farmers’ markets, which has led to local partnerships and offer seasonal community-supported agriculture boxes.

The program offers one-on-one support through five land matchers delivered by the Young Agrarians, which help new and established farmers start and expand their farm operations and create more regional and sustainable farmland, according to a release from the Agriculture and Food Ministry.

Young Agrarians executive director Sara Dent said access to land is the top barrier facing new farmers today.

“With today’s land prices, it is essential that new and established farmers can access affordable land to grow food for the future of our local food systems.”

Matches range in size between 0.4 and thousands of hectares. Broken down by region: Metro Vancouver has had 72 matches on 90 hectares; Vancouver Island and the Gulf Island has had 86 matches on 139 hectares; 67 farmers have been matches with 1,800 hectares in the Thompson-Okanagan; the Columbia Basin has had 33 matches on 67 hectares; and the central and northern regions has had 26 matches on 2,400 hectares.

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I'm a provincial reporter for Black Press Media's national team, after my journalism career took me across B.C. since I was 19 years old.

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