

# What data is available and how to use it?

How to Use Data to Your Advantage

Session #2

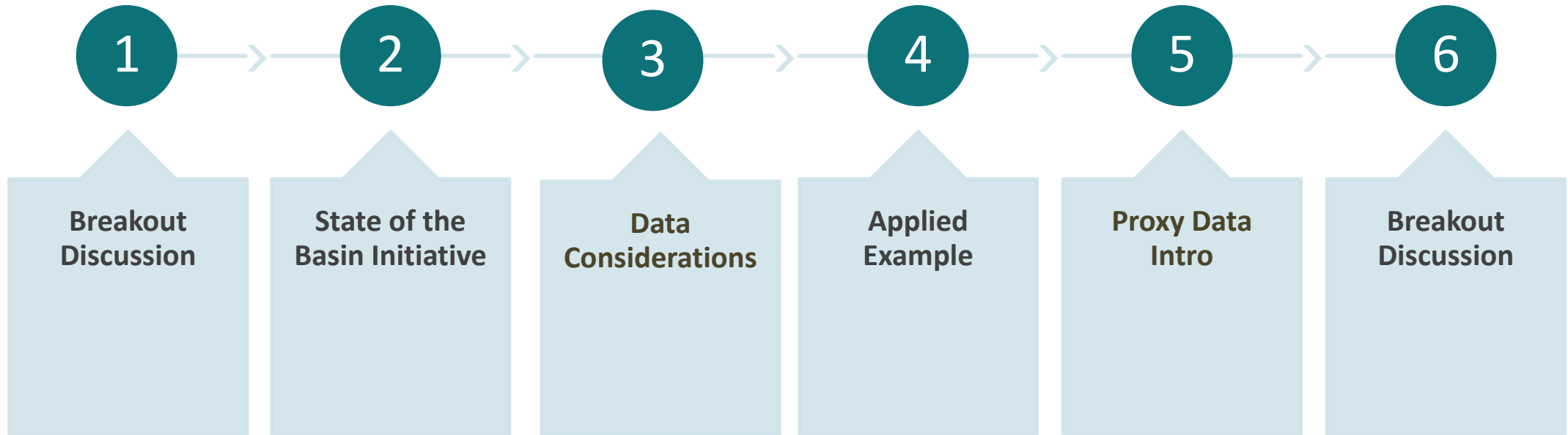
February 7, 2024

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Caroline Tremblay, Golden Community  
Economic Development



# The journey today...



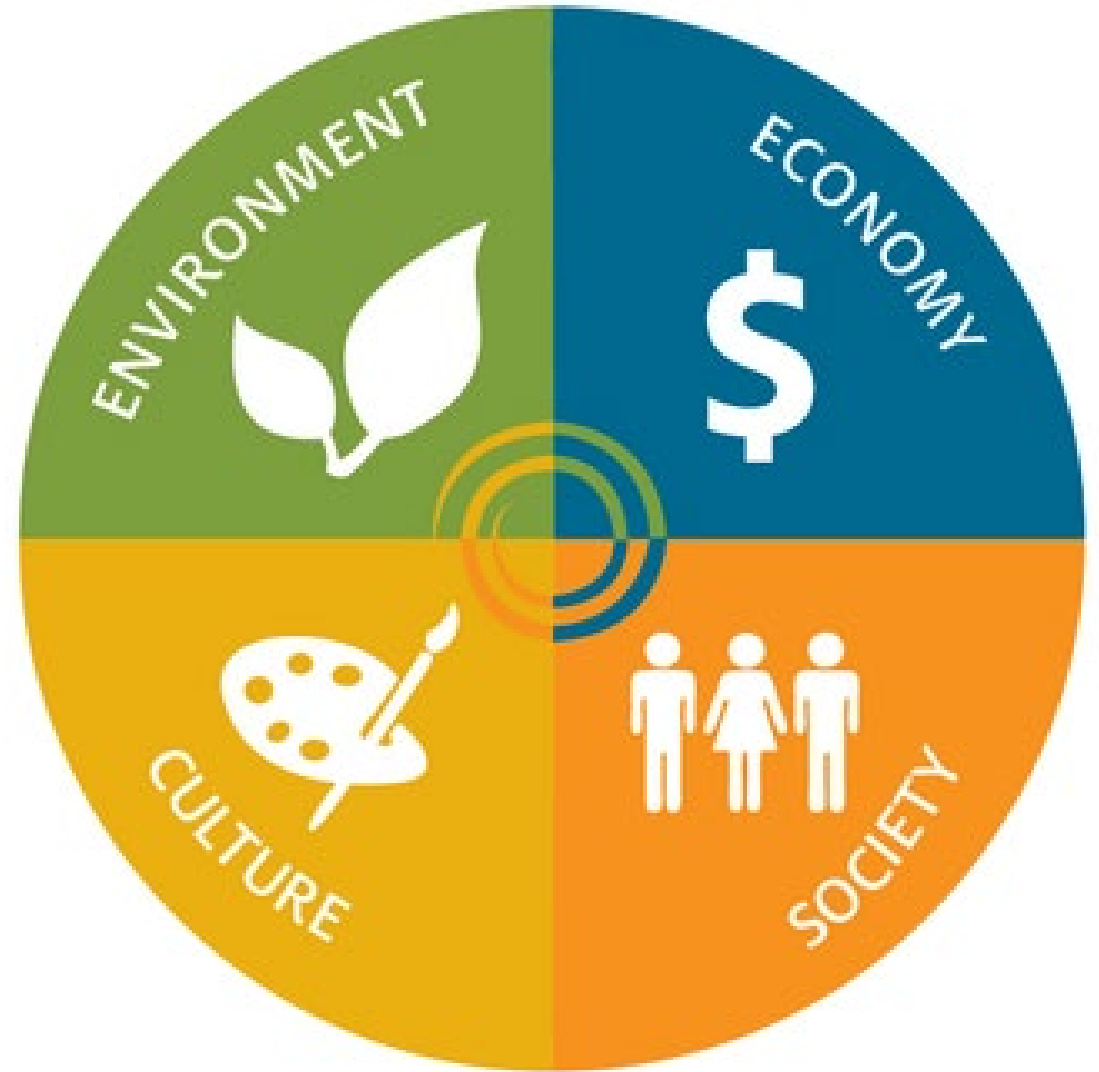
# Breakout Discussion

- Groups of 2-3
  - 10 minutes (short intros + 3 min each)
1. What question(s) do you hope to answer with data?
  2. What data do you think you need to answer those questions?
  3. Where would you go to find that data?

# State of the Basin Initiative

Selkirk  College | SELKIRK INNOVATES

Columbia Basin 



# Supports the Columbia Basin- Boundary Region





# Goal



To provide **access to data** that Columbia Basin-Boundary communities and organizations can use to **support evidence-based decision-making**, leading to **improved well-being** in the region.

**What we measure affects what we do!**



# Objectives

- **Inform** citizens and organizations about the people, natural environment, communities, and economy of the region by providing access to accurate, credible, and timely information
- **Encourage** understanding of complex issues and trends over time, including future projections when possible
- **Signal** whether conditions are similar or different within the region, compare to other areas to highlight and celebrate areas of achievement, and to identify significant issues
- **Motivate** discussion, information sharing, strategic evidence-based decisions, and collective action

# About the Data

## Comes from a wide-variety of sources:

- Statistics Canada
  - Census
  - Taxfiler
  - Labour Force Survey
- BC Data Catalogue
- Local Government Statistics
- Community Data Program
- Custom Data requests
- [Basin Climate Source](#)
- Resident polling
- And more...



[stateofthebasin.ca](http://stateofthebasin.ca)

# Data Uses

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## Evidence-based decision-making

Understand current conditions and trends over time

- Business retention and attraction
- Resident attraction
- Funding proposals
- Priority setting
- Planning
- School projects
- Course curriculum
- Much more...



# Trends over time

## State of the Basin Subjective Well-being Climate Change Questions

Finding	2019	2021	2023
Worried to some degree about the impacts of climate change	68%	79%	74%
Indicated they would have neighbours, friends or family support during an emergency (ex: forest fire or flood)	94%	91%	84%
Perceived impacts of climate change in their community on a regular basis	64%	74%	78%
Indicated climate change is a problem to some degree	34%	48%	67%
Indicated extreme weather events are a problem to some degree	19%	37%	45%



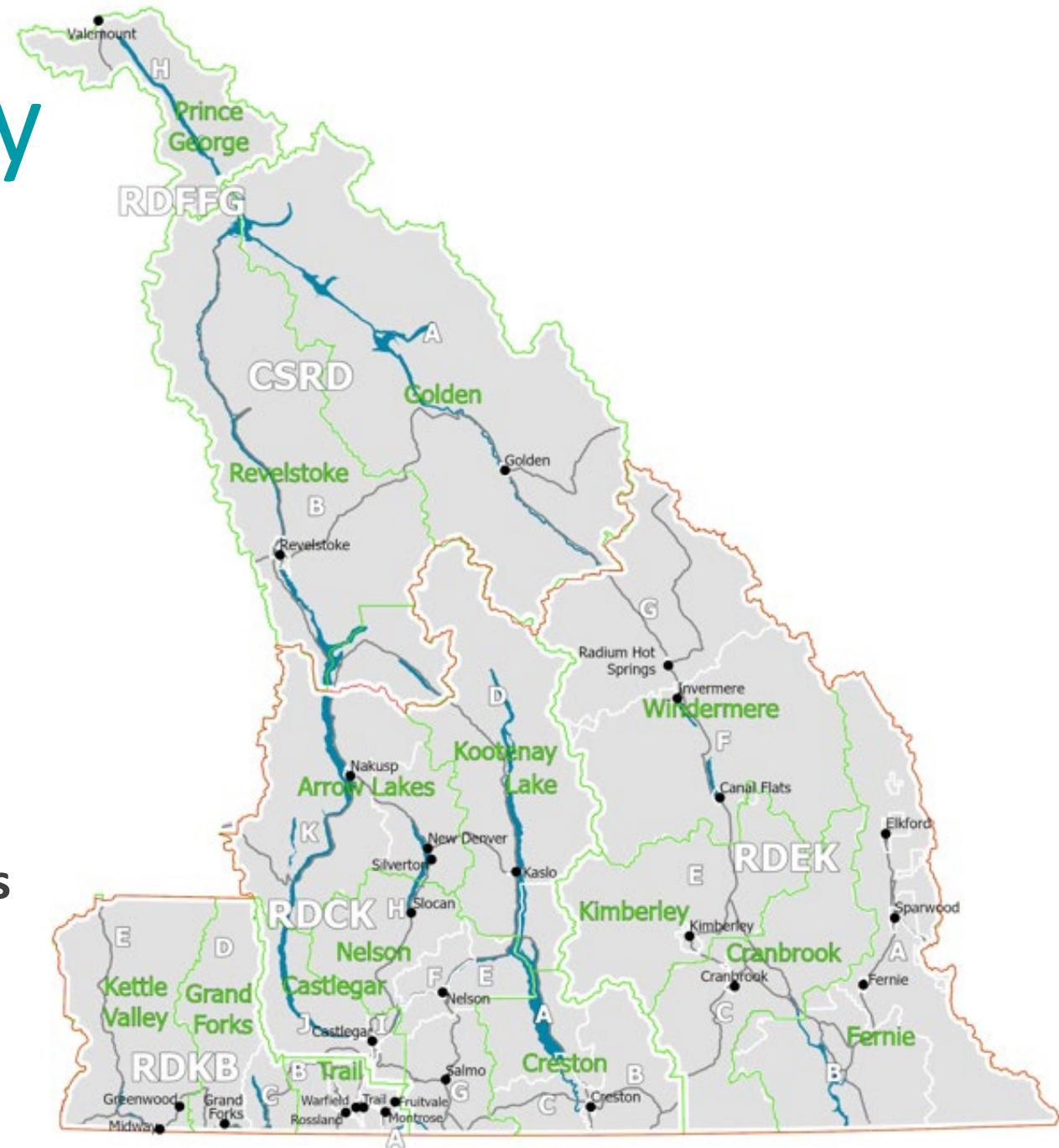
# Data Considerations

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# Levels of geography

- Data available at different levels of geography
  - Census division
    - Regional districts
  - Census sub-division
    - Municipalities/Electoral Areas
  - Local Health Area
  - Economic Development region
  - School District
- Postal code vs municipal boundaries
- **Consider how geography of data impacts your question**



# Not all data sources are equal

- Is the data source credible?
  - Who provided it?
  - What is their expertise?
  - Has it been peer-reviewed?
- What are the methods?
  - Are methods replicable?
- Is data published at regular intervals?



# Data Considerations



Methods

What are they?

Did the methodology change over time?



Publication date

Time delay normal



Masking and suppression

Common with small populations



Take time with analysis

Ensure proper use of summary statistics and calculations

# Using Data Effectively

- Careful when comparing
  - Impact of population size differences
- Methodology challenges for small communities
  - Ex:
    - Crime Severity Index
    - Low Income Measure
- **Always ask questions about the data!**
- Use multiple points of data to tell your story
  - Quantitative & Qualitative



# Applied Example

## GOLDEN AREA AGRICULTURE SECTOR PROFILE 2023

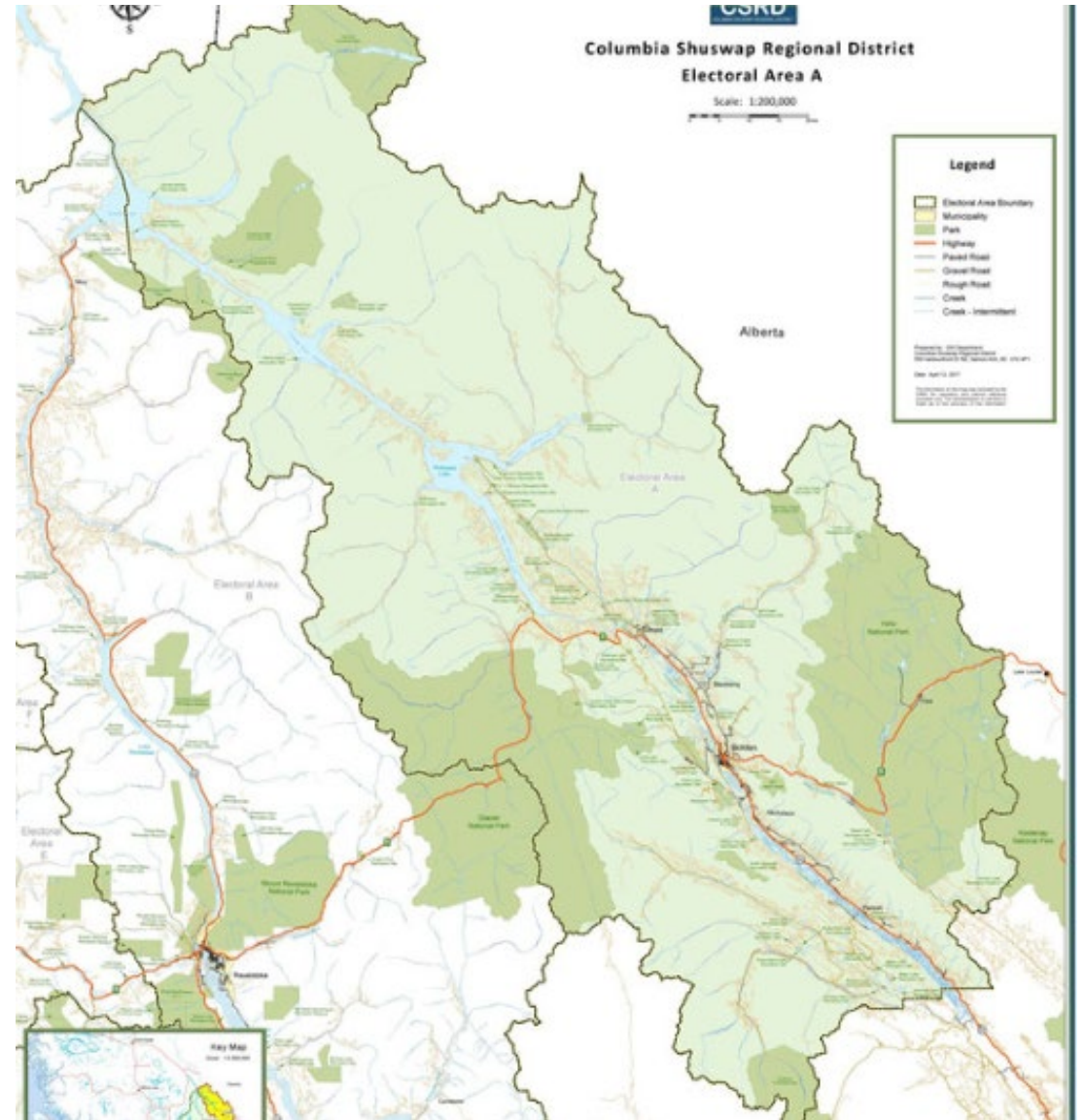


**Golden Community Economic Development**

[www.goldenced.ca](http://www.goldenced.ca)

[info@goldenced.ca](mailto:info@goldenced.ca)

# Golden Area Boundary



## Economic Snapshot

### Demographics

#### POPULATION



Total Golden Area: 7,311  
Town of Golden: 3,986  
CSRD Area A: 3,325

#### LABOUR FORCE \*

Total Golden Area

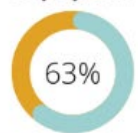
Labour Force



Participation



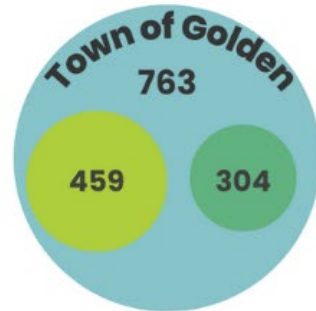
Employment



Unemployment



### Businesses



Without employees

With employees

Key  
Economic  
Indicators



# Agriculture Sector Profile

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- **Intention**

- Understand current agriculture sector market trends and issues, identifying characteristics, including performance in terms of production and contribution to the regional economy.

- **Guiding questions:**

- What is known about the agriculture sector within the Golden area and how does it compare regionally, provincially and nationally?
  - What are the current and projected opportunities and threats for the Golden area?



# Data used

## Statistics Canada

- Census of population
- Agricultural Census

## Ministry of Agriculture BC

- Agriculture in Brief

## Community Data Program

- Business Counts

## Other literature sources

# Key Economic Data

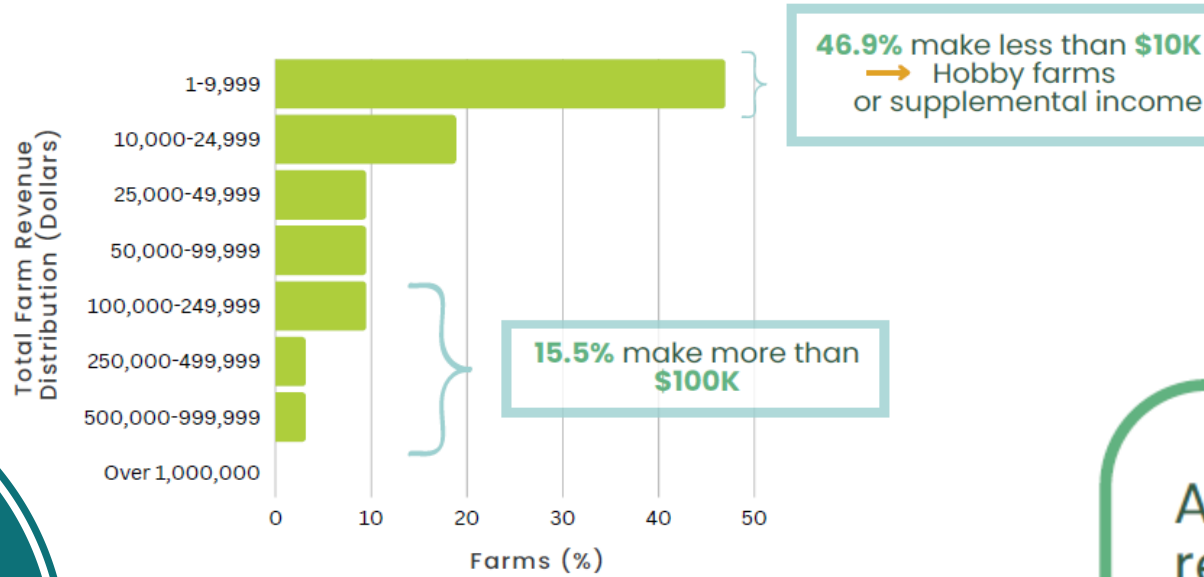


Figure 6: Farm Yearly Revenue Distribution in CSRD Area A<sup>9</sup>

Businesses in the Agriculture industry represent **4%** of the local businesses.<sup>9</sup>

72% of farms are operated by **land owners**, **28%** are **leasing** their land: 3% from governments and 25% from others.<sup>9</sup>

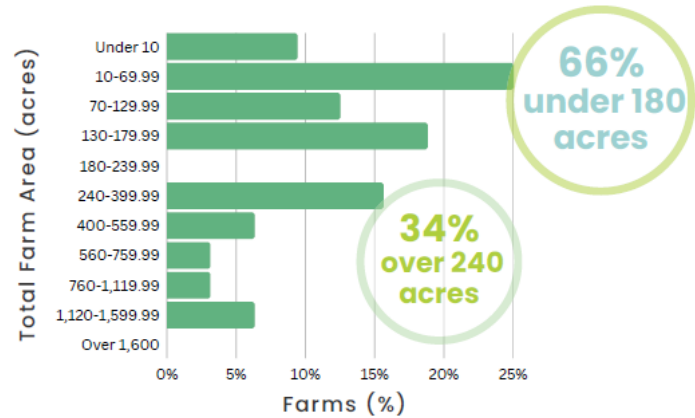


Figure 5: Farm size Land in CSRD Area A<sup>9</sup>



Comparing data overtime allowed us to see trends clearly.

## Trends

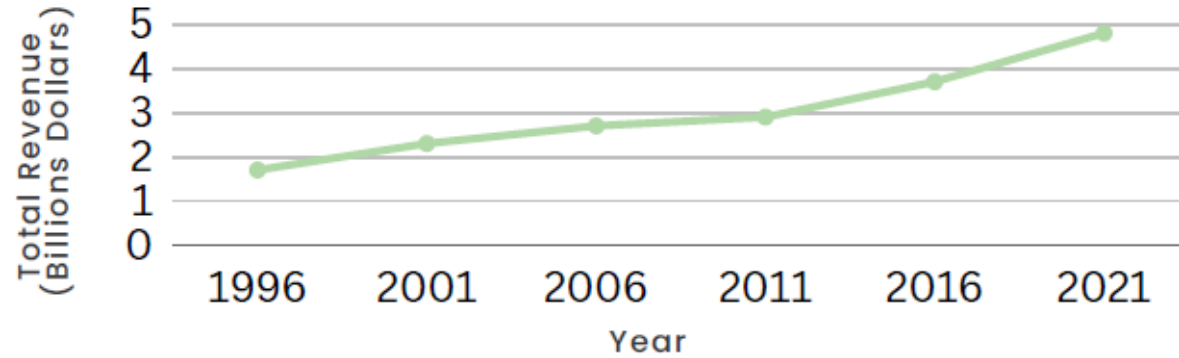
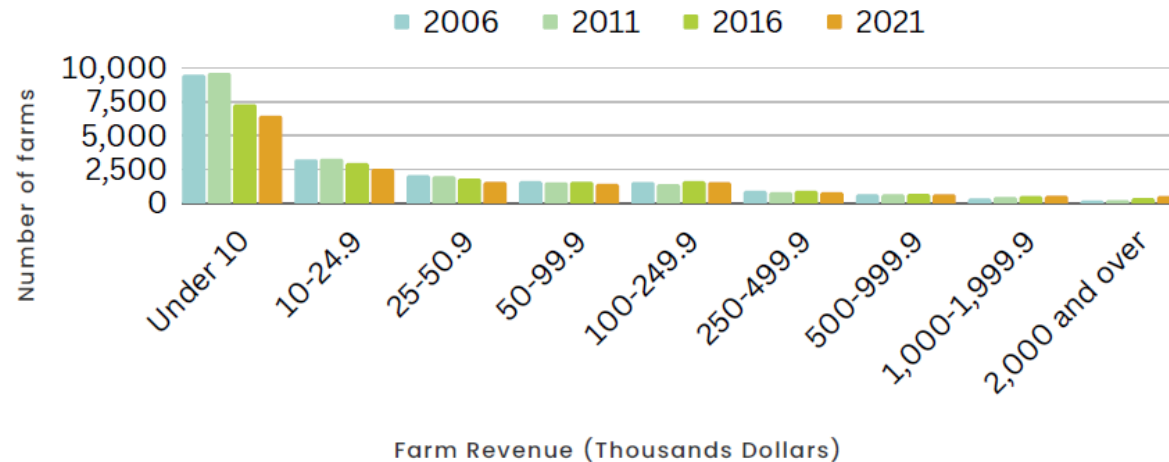
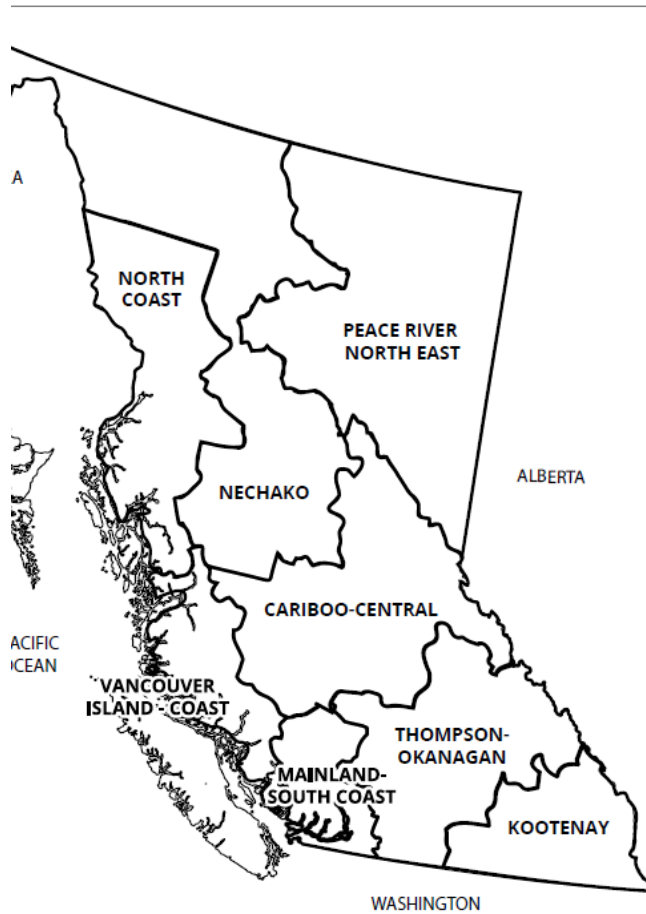


Figure 10: Agriculture Revenue in BC <sup>9</sup>



Farm Revenue (Thousands Dollars)

Figure 11: Farm Revenue in BC <sup>9</sup>



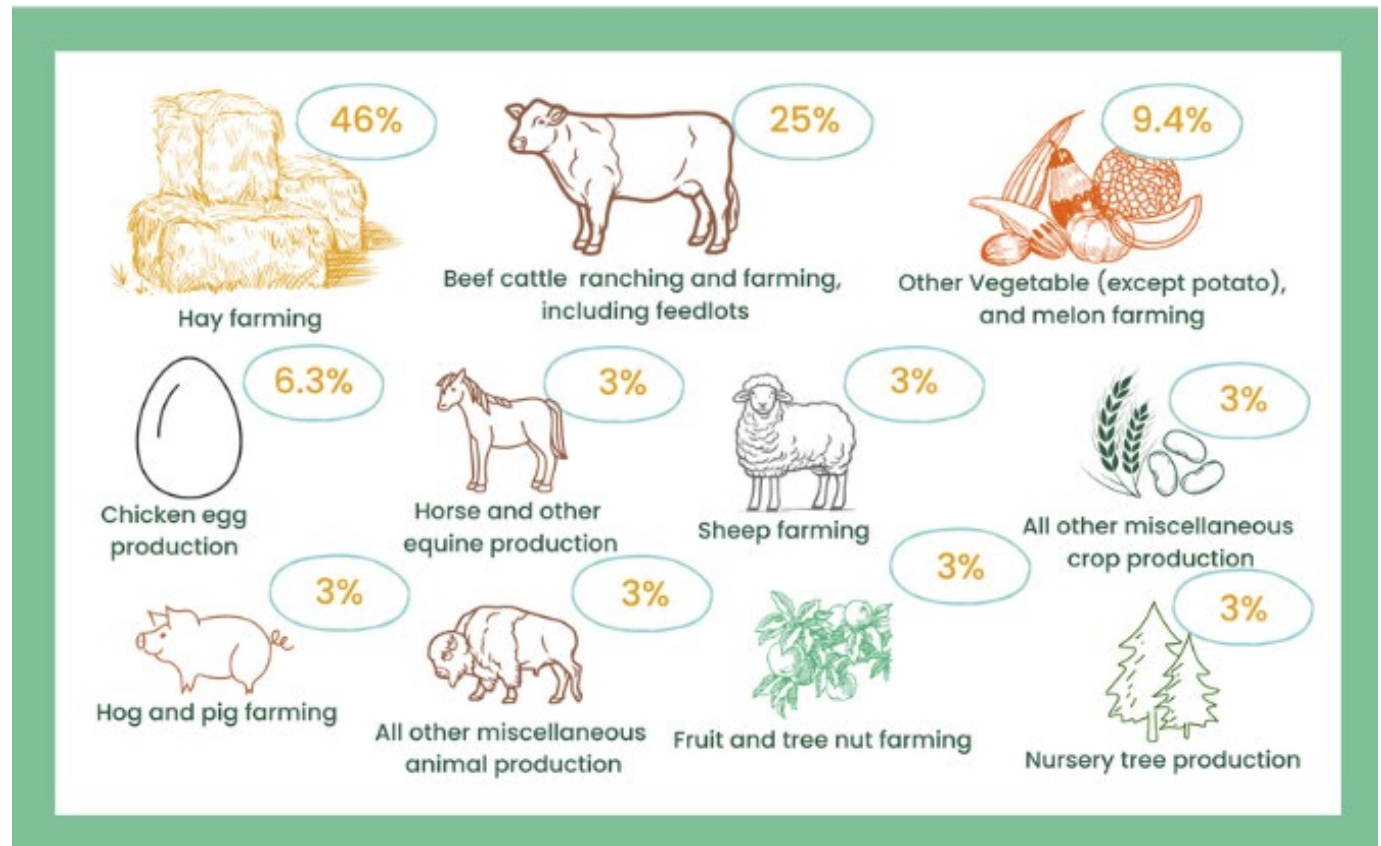
**Shuswap Regional District**

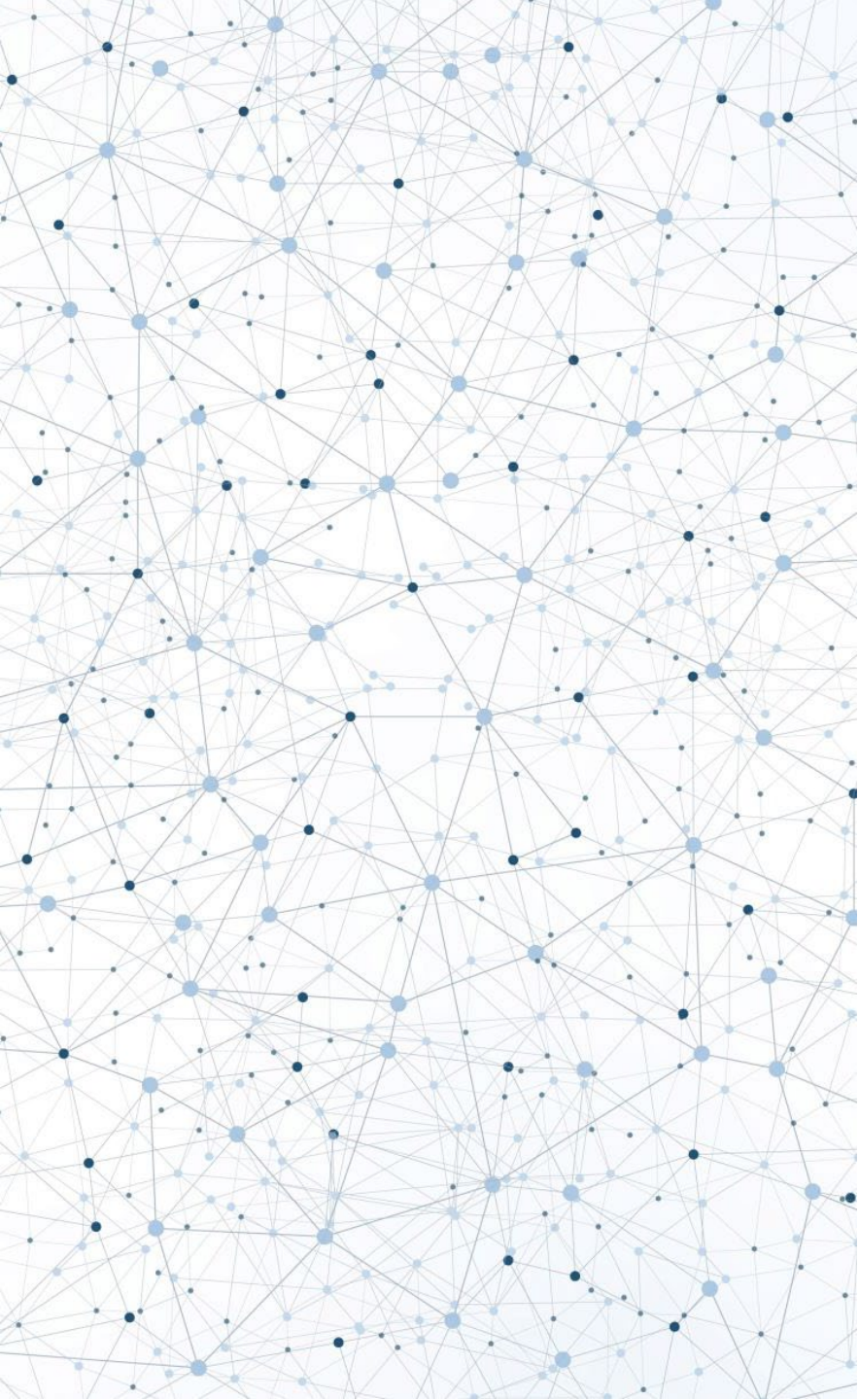
- 1-Columbia
- 2-Columbia
- 3-Shuswap
- 4-Salmon Valley-Ranchero
- 5-Malakwa
- 6-Shuswap-Seymour Arm
- 7-Blind Bay-Notch Hill
- 8-Municipality
- 9-on Reserve
- 10-Park



Larger  
Region  
Limitations

# Masking and suppression





# Golden Area Agricultural Sector Profile

- What were the limitations?
  - Masking and suppression: in small communities for confidentiality purposes
  - Larger region doesn't represent the region (e.g.: CSRD, Thompson-Okanagan)
- How has it been helpful?
  - Combining all these sources, we were able to draw a credible portrait of this sector in our area.
  - This profile will be used as a foundation for strategies



# Proxy data

- What do you do when you don't have access to the exact data you need?
- Example: Tourist data


# Breakout Discussion

- Groups of 3
- 10 minutes (~3 min each)

Now that you understand a bit more on what data is available and data considerations:

1. What data would you start with to answer your community or organization's questions?
2. What data is missing that you think you need to answer your questions?
3. If data is not available, what would you do?

# Recap

- **What we measure affects what we do**
  - **There is lots of data already available to help you tell your story**
  - **Not all data is created equal**
    - Pay attention to your data needs and the data methodology
  - **There will be important considerations and limitations with some of the data you use - That's OK!**
    - Just be transparent – communicate this!
  - **Use multiple data points to tell your story**
  - **Use proxy data if needed**
- 

# Thank you

## Questions?

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