

# AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING

## SECTOR PROFILES



**Chamber of  
Commerce**  
GRANDE PRAIRIE & DISTRICT





The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.

The Sector Profile project was led by the **Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce** in partnership with the **City of Grande Prairie**, **County of Grande Prairie**, **MD of Greenview**, **Northwestern Polytechnic**, and **Alberta Labour and Immigration**.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed their feedback, ideas and expertise to the study.

Please note that every effort has been made to use the most current data available. There are four major sources of information for this part of the research.

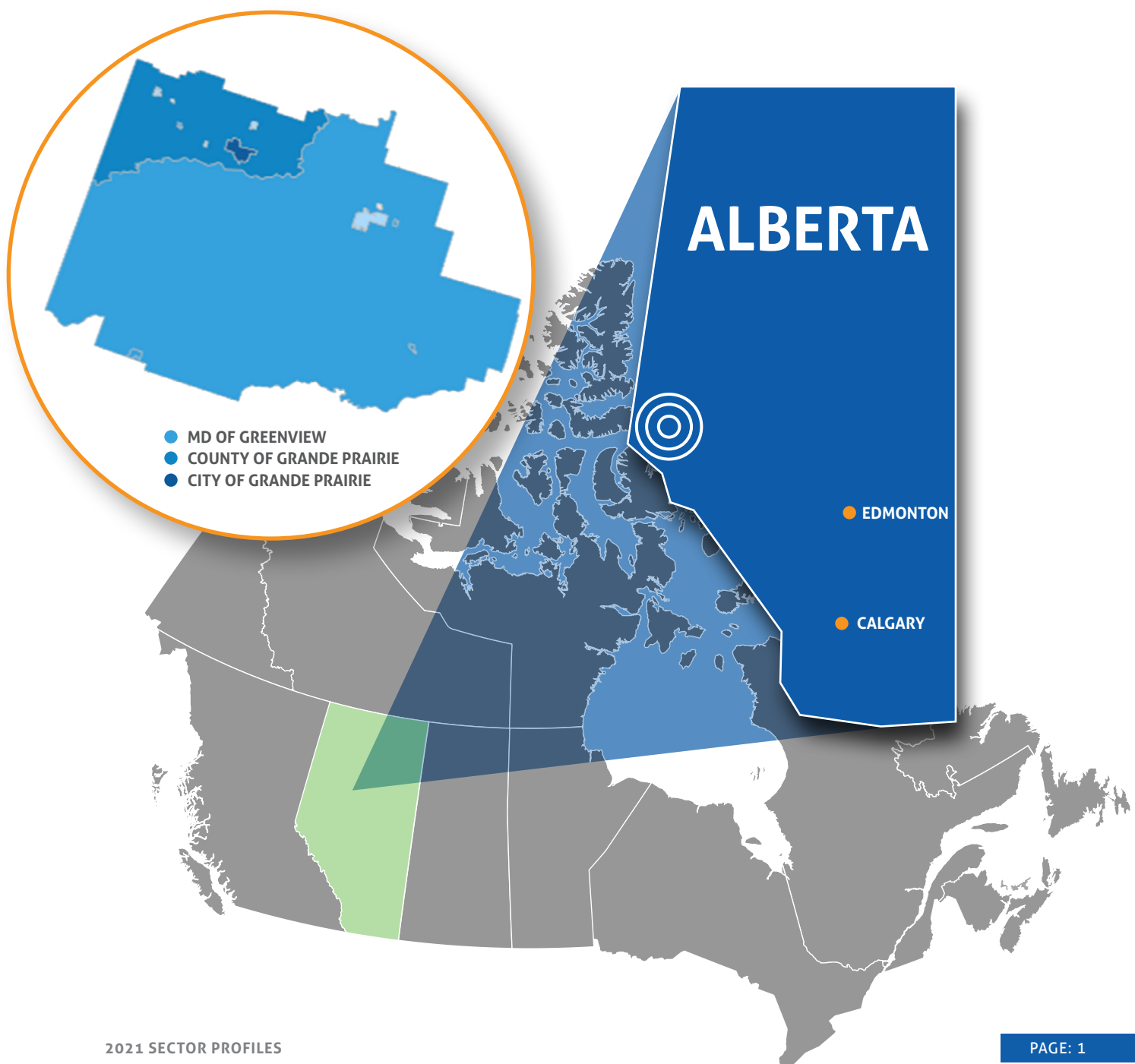
- SuperDemographics 2020 from Manifold Data Mining Inc.
- EMSI Analyst 2021.Q1
- Statistics Canada - 2001 to 2016 Census Profiles
- IBIS World 2020 and 2021 Industry Profiles



# INTRODUCTION

This sector profile focuses on the Region consisting of the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, Municipal District (MD) of Greenview, Town of Beaverlodge, Town of Sexsmith, Town of Wembley, Town of Fox Creek, Town of Valleyview, Greenview Co-ops and Enterprises, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, and Horse Lake First Nation. Any references to "Region" within this document refer to the custom region above.

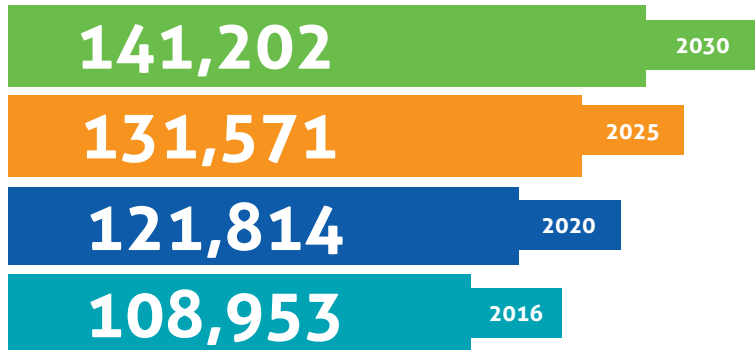
The Region spans nearly 40,000 square kilometres and acts as a gateway and resource hub for northwestern Alberta. Its largest centre, the City of Grande Prairie, is located approximately 450 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. With a strong postsecondary institution, new hospital, skilled labour force, and significant business supports, opportunities abound within the Region.



# REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

All data sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics unless otherwise specified.

## Population of Region, 2020

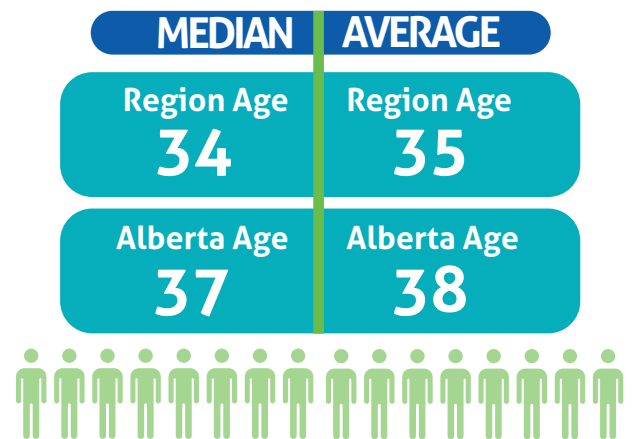


## PERCENTILE INCREASE

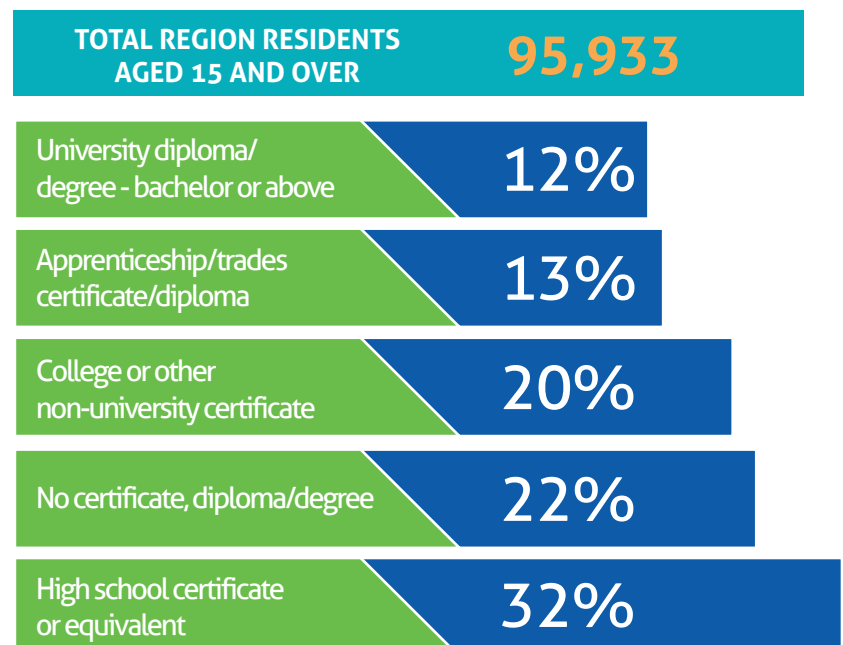
The 2020 population estimate relies on a different source (Manifold Data Mining) than the 2016 population estimate (Statistics Canada Census) and the numbers are therefore not directly comparable.

There is a projected **8%** increase in population from 2020 to 2025, and **7%** increase from 2025 to 2030.

## Median and Average Age, 2020



## Highest Educational Attainment for Region Residents, aged 15 and over, 2020



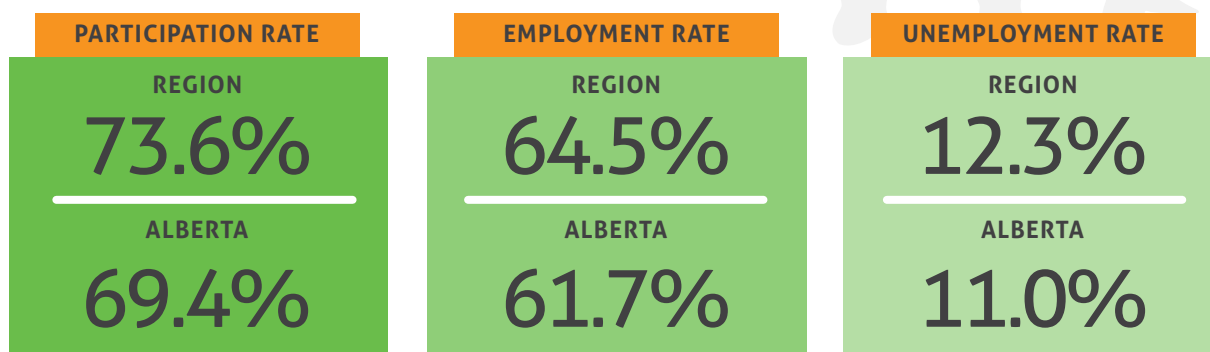
### Top 5 Fields of Study for Region Residents, aged 15 and over, 2020



### Labour Force Status for Region Residents, 2020

Labour Force Status	Region
Total Population, Residents aged 15 and over	95,933
In the labour force	70,682
Employed	61,956
Unemployed	8,726
Not in the labour force	25,251

### Average Labour Force Participation Rates, 2020



# ABOUT THE SECTOR

Agriculture and food processing has been identified as a target sector within the Region. Subsectors within this field consist of farms; activities supporting farming; and beverage, dairy, meat and other food manufacturing. This industry is set up well to support the local economy, as demand for agriculture and food processing businesses is expected to grow over the next decade due to rising consumer demand and international free trade agreements.

## REGION SPECIFIC

The agricultural sector is heavily concentrated within the Region when compared to the rest of Canada and is one of the fastest growing sectors locally. Specifically, beef cattle (393 businesses), oilseed (124 businesses) and hay (113 businesses) farming are the most prevalent farming subsectors within the Region.

The majority of the Region's businesses within this sector with known employment totals are small enterprises, with 78.3% reporting employing 1-4 people.

In total, the Region is home to 1,385 businesses within the agriculture and food processing sector, representing 8.7% of all businesses in the Region. The vast majority of these businesses are farms (1,338) or support activities for farms (32).

**Agriculture and Food Processing Businesses, 2021**

Industries	Businesses
Farms	1,338
Support activities for farms	32
Beverage manufacturing	4
Meat product manufacturing	4
Bakeries and tortilla manufacturing	3
Other food manufacturing	3
Dairy product manufacturing	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,385</b>

Source: McSweeney and Associates using data from EMSI Analyst - 2021.Q1

Agriculture and food processing businesses in the Region employed 1,949 people in 2021, a growth of 290 positions since 2019. From 2021 to 2028 this sector is poised to see further growth to 2,078 positions in the Region. The subsector with the largest projected growth is support activities for farms, with a projected 13% increase in total jobs.

**Agriculture and Food Processing Employed and Self-Employed Positions, 2019, 2021 and 2028**

Subsector	2019 Positions	2021 Positions	2028 Positions	Change '21-'28	% Change
Farms	1,352	1,613	1,710	97	6%
Support activities for farms	192	218	245	28	13%
Dairy product manufacturing	5	0	<10	N/A	N/A
Meat product manufacturing	23	21	22	1	6%
Bakeries and tortilla manufacturing	19	23	19	-4	-16%
Other food manufacturing	5	<10	<10	N/A	N/A
Beverage manufacturing	63	67	74	7	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>7%</b>

Source: McSweeney and Associates using data from EMSI Analyst - 2021.Q1

Note: Job totals per subsector may not add up to the total to number of positions within the broader sector due to methodological rounding.



Though many positions within this sector are directly related to the agriculture and food processing process, other occupations of note include accounting technicians and bookkeepers; heavy-duty equipment mechanics; and transport truck drivers. These positions illustrate how agriculture and food processing businesses employ a range of individuals with diverse skillsets. Of those occupations with wage data within the Region's agriculture and food processing sector, the average wages were \$59,282.78.

**Agriculture and Food Processing Average Wages Per Subsector, 2021**

<b>Subsector</b>	<b>Average Wages</b>
Managers in agriculture	Insufficient Data
General farm workers	\$53,514.35
Accounting technicians and bookkeepers	\$60,486.40
Transport truck drivers	\$66,123.20
Agricultural service contractors, farm supervisors and specialized livestock workers	\$50,239.10
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	\$80,641.60
Process control and machine operators, food and beverage processing	\$63,946.54
Industrial butchers and meat cutters, poultry preparers and related workers	\$55,919.21
Oil and gas well drillers, servicers, testers and related workers	\$89,419.20
Supervisors, food and beverage processing	\$71,437.82
<b>Average salary (all positions)</b>	<b>\$59,282.78</b>

Source: McSweeney and Associates using data from EMSI Analyst - 2021.Q1



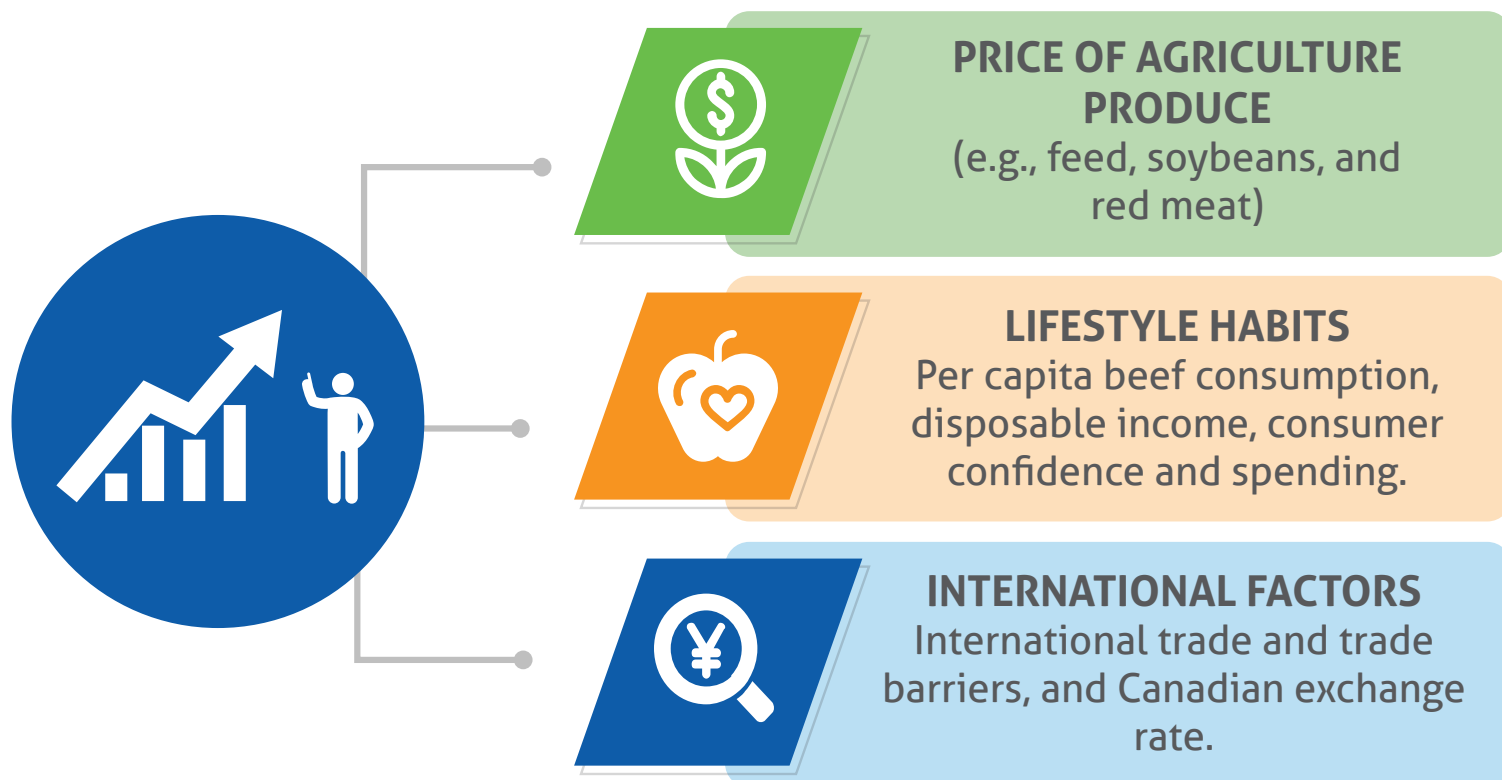
# SECTOR DATA

## FUTURE OUTLOOK OF THE SECTOR

The future outlook of the agriculture and food processing sector is strong. Rising demand (both nationally and internationally) and ensuing price increases post-COVID-19 are expected to buoy the industry over the short to medium term. Uncertainty regarding international trade and exports are a potential challenge, but the risk is considered minimal.

## KEY DRIVERS OF DEMAND

Factors determining national demand for the agriculture and food processing sector can be broken into three categories.



Source: IBISWorld 2021



## KEY SUPPLIERS TO THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

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**Wholesalers and manufacturers of farm supplies**  
(e.g., tractors and agricultural machinery; and pesticides and fertilizers)



**Manufacturers of organic and inorganic chemicals and other pharmaceutical goods.**

## KEY BUYERS TO THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

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**Wholesalers and retailers of agriculture/food produce**  
(e.g., specialty food stores, supermarkets and grocery stores)



**Food service sector**  
(e.g., full-service and fast-food restaurants; caterers; and street vendors)



**Canadian consumers**



## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT FIGURES

In 2019 there were 1,975 Region residents working within the agriculture and food processing sector, with the vast majority working within the farms subsector. This suggests that there are 316 additional individuals working within the sector than there are jobs available within the Region (see table on Pg. 5). As such, this may speak to a current mismatch of local skills to local job opportunities.

**Employment Totals Within Agriculture and Food Processing, Region Residents 2019**

Industries	Workforce
Farms	1,731
Support activities for farms	142
Beverage manufacturing	34
Meat product manufacturing	28
Other food manufacturing	23
Bakeries and tortilla manufacturing	13
Dairy product manufacturing	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,975</b>

Source: Manifold 2020 SuperDemographics  
Photo Credit: Sheryle Runhart

## RELEVANT LEVELS OF EDUCATION

The diverse nature of jobs within agriculture and food processing rely on a diverse set of educational attainments. The top relevant fields of study for Region residents are presented in the table below, including business, management, marketing and related support services; precision production; and agriculture, agriculture operations and related sciences.

**Fields of Study Within the Agriculture and Food Processing Sector for Region Residents**

Field of Study	Total Residents
Business, management, marketing and related support services	7,693
Precision production	1,924
Transportation and materials moving	978
Agriculture, agriculture operations and related sciences	886
Natural resources and conservation	716
<b>Total residents with degrees in agriculture-related fields of study</b>	<b>12,197</b>

Source: Manifold 2020 SuperDemographics

## PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL LABOUR FORCE AND LOCATION QUOTIENT

Location quotient is a calculation that assesses which industries are more likely to be represented locally, compared to benchmark areas. A location quotient above 1.00 suggests that industry is more heavily concentrated as a percentage of the total jobs available locally, while a location quotient below 1.00 suggests it is less heavily concentrated.

In 2019 the agriculture and food processing sector had a location quotient of 1.02 relative to Alberta, meaning that jobs within this sector made a comparable percentage of the local workforce relative to the provincial level. Specifically, jobs in this sector represented 3.3% of the Region's total jobs, compared to 3.2% of provincial jobs.

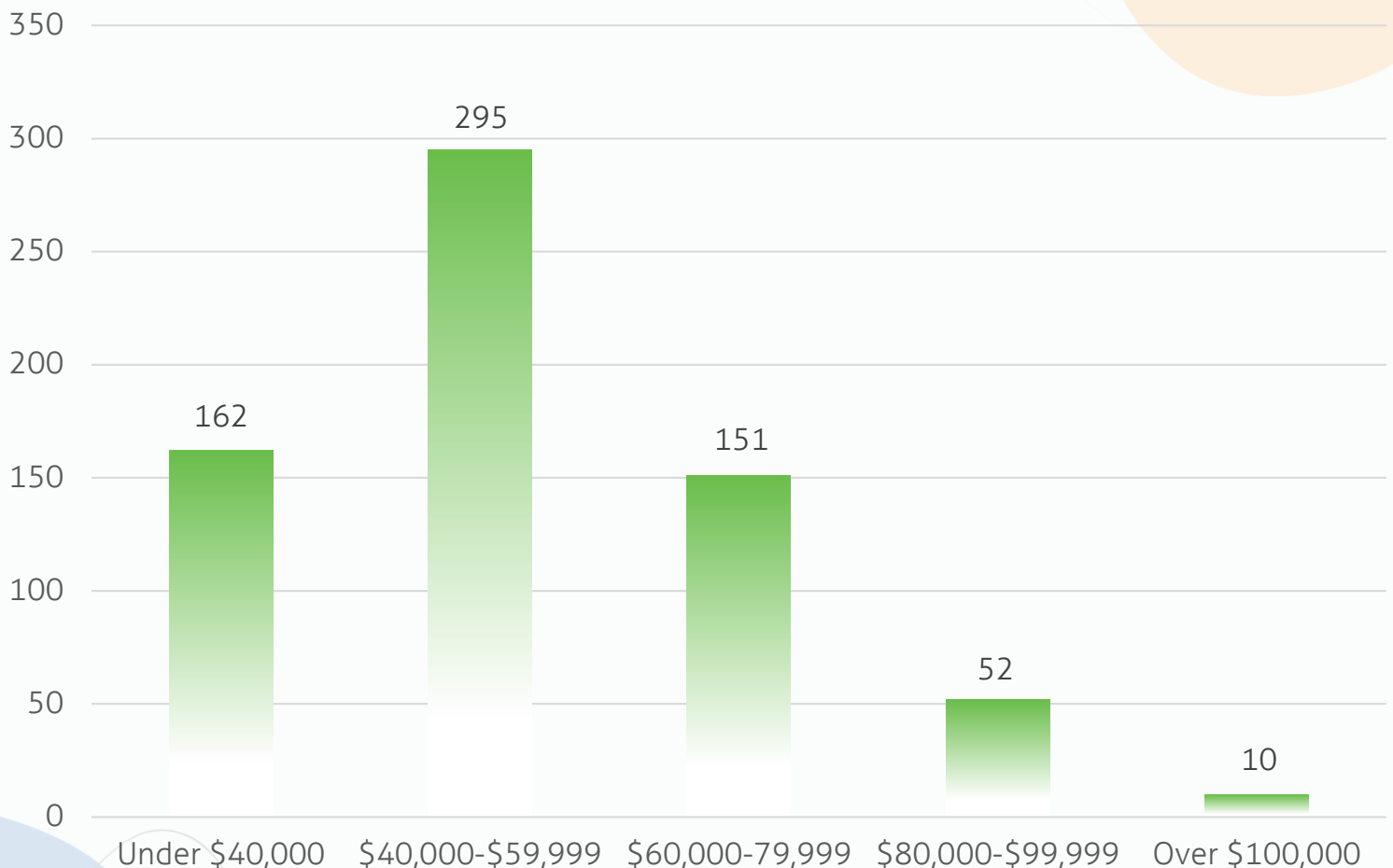


## JOB POSTING DATA

Between March 2019 and March 2020, the Region saw 2,813 unique job postings within the agriculture and food processing sector. Of the jobs posted during this period, 670 had advertised salaries. Those 670 postings had a median advertised salary of \$57,472, with 9.2% offering a salary above \$95,000.

The median posting duration (i.e., how long each job was posted before being taken down) for job postings in this sector was 30 days, compared to the regional average of 31 days for all job postings.

Job Postings by Salary, March 2019-March 2020, Region



Source: EMSI Analyst



**MEDIAN SECTOR  
JOB POSTING  
DURATION**

**30 days**

**REGIONAL  
AVERAGE  
FOR ALL JOB POSTINGS**

**31 days**

# COMMUNITY ASSETS SUPPORTING THE SECTOR/CLUSTER

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**Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP)** offers a variety of educational options and has developed local partnerships to provide programming that rapidly and effectively meets the needs of their learners and the broader community.

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

**Grande Prairie Regional Innovation Network (GPRIN)** helps innovators, entrepreneurs and companies move their ideas forward by offering access to a variety of services and professionals throughout the Alberta innovation ecosystem.

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

**Community Futures Grande Prairie and Region** offers businesses support from first steps through to growth stages. This includes information on how to start a business, developing business plans, financing loans, marketing and feasibility studies.

[grandeprairie.albertacf.com](http://grandeprairie.albertacf.com)

**ATB Entrepreneur Centre** supports businesses through business-to-business networking, connections and workshops.

[atbentrepreneurcentre.com](http://atbentrepreneurcentre.com)

For information on other Community and Training Assets, please contact the project partners.

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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Employers rated **communication** and **literacy** as the two strongest skills among the Region's workforce.



**30%** of businesses saw a growth in employment in the last two years, including during COVID-19.

Note: Based on a 2020 survey of over 700 regional stakeholders.

## REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT

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**The National Bee Diagnostic Centre** is the first laboratory in Canada to provide a full array of supports and services for honeybees, beekeepers, researchers and agencies across Canada. Using advanced microbiology, microscopy and molecular genetics techniques, this diagnostic centre identifies pathogens that may affect honeybee health.

The laboratory, operated by Northwestern Polytechnic, has the tools and resources to support research and diagnostics for a variety of industries across the agriculture and forestry sector (e.g., animal nutrition and forage quality; crop and animal residues; pest entomology; and bioremediation).

Northwestern Polytechnic is partnering with Lakeland College and regional producer associations to revitalize the Polytechnic's agricultural research and training programs. Researchers and technicians specializing in smart agriculture, pollinator health, forage production, animal science, and other areas are part of a province-wide research network, contributing innovative solutions for the regional agriculture and agri-food industry. With its state-of-the-art molecular genetics and microbiology laboratory in Beaverlodge, and its large animal handling facilities and research plots in Fairview, Northwestern Polytechnic continues to expand its applied research capacity in agriculture.

Photo Credit: NWP/Dania Renae Photography



# TRAINING ASSETS AND INSTITUTIONS THAT SUPPORT THE SECTOR/CLUSTER

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES



The Region's workforce is invested in skills development, with 85% of survey respondents indicating they would like to gain new skills or re-train.

- Agriculture-related skills were one of the most highly sought set of skills to train, including botany and horticulture.



The top three reasons residents would look to remain at a job were:

1. A supportive manager
2. Fair pay
3. Career growth, and learning and development opportunities

Note: Based on a 2020 survey of over 700 regional stakeholders.

## TRAINING ASSETS SPECIFIC TO REGION

### NORTHWESTERN POLYTECHNIC

NWP has a wide array of agriculture and food processing sector-related degrees, diplomas or certificate programs. Students can cultivate skills and knowledge in various productive pathways including: ThinkBIG Service Technician, Business Administration diplomas, Animal Health Technology, and the Parts and Materials Technician program.

Sector-related apprenticeships provide hands-on Heavy Equipment Technician and Sheet Metal Worker experience (Fairview Campus) while NWP's Collaborative University Transfer programs develop Commercial Management and Sciences acumen. Continuing Education offerings strengthen Microsoft Office, Human Resources management and contemporary Computer Skills.

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



Business  
Administration



Animal Health  
Technology



Heavy Equipment  
Technician



## TRAINING ASSETS SPECIFIC TO REGION CONT.

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**CAREERS: The Next Generation** is a non-profit organization that works with schools to connect high school students to employers for paid internships. Youth get the opportunity to test drive in-demand occupations in skilled trades, forestry, information and communications technology, agriculture and healthcare. Companies benefit by attracting local talent and bringing youthful energy to their industry. There are also financial incentives to help employers provide opportunities during tough economic times.

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

**The Rupertsland Institute** supports the well-being of Métis in Alberta through job matching, training partnerships with NWP, access to technology and internet, online counselling tools, information on local services, employers and careers, and self-employment workshops.

[rupertsland.org](http://rupertsland.org)

### **Western Cree Tribal Council**

The **Indigenous Skills Employment and Training (ISET) Program** is designed to help Indigenous people improve their skills and find employment through training and skills development. The program helps the community members find employment and polish employment skills. Funded through Service Canada, it gives members the skills required to find employment and fill job gaps.

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

**Northern Lakes College (NLC)** provides a supported distance learning environment with two locations in the Region. NLC offers Business and Administrative Studies. Continuing Education and Corporate Training programs include Asset Management Professional and Maintenance Management Professional.

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

For information on other Community and Training Assets, please contact the project partners.



Photo Credit: Beauchamp Photography

## Alberta Labour and Immigration

Workforce Strategies Division  
3201, 10320 - 99 Street  
Grande Prairie, AB, T8V 6J4

T: (780) 512-4880  
E: [wfc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:wfc@gov.ab.ca)  
W: [alberta.ca/labour-and-immigration](http://alberta.ca/labour-and-immigration)

## Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce

Centre 2000  
11330 - 106 Street  
Grande Prairie, AB, T8V 7X9

T: (780) 532-5340  
E: [info@gpchamber.com](mailto:info@gpchamber.com)  
W: [grandeprairiechamber.com](http://grandeprairiechamber.com)

## Northwestern Polytechnic

Grande Prairie Campus  
10726 - 106 Avenue  
Grande Prairie, AB, T8V 4C4

T: (780) 539-2911  
E: [studentinfo@nwpolytech.ca](mailto:studentinfo@nwpolytech.ca)  
W: [nwpolytech.ca](http://nwpolytech.ca)

## City of Grande Prairie

Centre 2000  
11330 - 106 Street  
Grande Prairie, AB, T8V 7X9

T: (780) 538-0300  
E: [EcDevinfo@cityofgp.com](mailto:EcDevinfo@cityofgp.com)  
W: [investgrandeprairie.com](http://investgrandeprairie.com)

## Municipal District of Greenview

Valleyview Administration Building  
4806 - 36 Avenue  
PO Box 1079  
Valleyview, AB, T0H 3N0

T: (780) 524-7600  
E: [invest@mdgreenview.ab.ca](mailto:invest@mdgreenview.ab.ca)  
W: [mdgreenview.ab.ca](http://mdgreenview.ab.ca)

## County of Grande Prairie

Administration Building  
10001 - 84 Avenue  
Clairmont, AB, T8X 5B2

T: (780) 532-9722  
E: [EcDev@countygpa.ab.ca](mailto:EcDev@countygpa.ab.ca)  
W: [countygpa.ab.ca](http://countygpa.ab.ca)