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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

### **Food Business Refresh Program helps Falkland small business adapt**

FALKLAND – Small B.C. food businesses are accessing customized training, coaching, business planning and implementation support through the Food Business Refresh Program, and the results are being served in Falkland.

Dueck Falkland Farms is a family business that hatches, raises and processes its own chickens, sells sausages and other products to restaurants and wineries, as well as at farmers markets in the Okanagan and from its on-farm store. For Lisa Dueck and her family, COVID-19 presented a series of new challenges that forced their small business to adapt.

“During the initial stages of the pandemic, we lost approximately 80% of our sales in one week,” Dueck said. “We realized that in order to keep our business strong in the face of this new challenge, we needed to regain control of our sales and distribution channels.”

In partnership with the Small-Scale Food Processing Association and Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Food Business Refresh Program is a \$650,000 cost-shared program helping local businesses find new opportunities and pivot from markets disrupted by COVID-19. Launched in October 2020, the program helps participants access mentorship services like business coaching and food industry expertise, along with implementation support to help small businesses adapt to the changing conditions of the pandemic.

“We made the decision to focus on growing our farm store, making it the major hub of our sales, instead of having to rely on other channels,” Dueck said. “The Refresh Program was extremely helpful in this transition. It helped us formulate and implement a plan to make our business more resilient in the face of future unprecedented events. We were able to get useful and relevant information from knowledgeable industry experts, and we’re certain our business will be stronger as a result.”

Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, said, “Throughout the pandemic, farmers, fishers and food and beverage processors have shown incredible resilience by adapting their businesses to keep communities fed, employed and safe. I’m proud of the local success stories we’re seeing through the Food Business Refresh Program as businesses develop new ways for people to enjoy made-in-B.C. food that helps strengthen our food security and our local economies.”

This funding is part of B.C.’s \$10-billion COVID-19 response, which includes StrongerBC: BC’s Economic Recovery Plan that protects people’s health and livelihoods while supporting businesses and communities.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Since the program launched in October 2020, more than 70 small businesses have benefited from the Refresh Program.
- The Province has invested approximately \$550,000 through the Food Business Refresh Program to strengthen small businesses in B.C., with an additional \$100,000 provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada.
- B.C.'s food and beverage processing industry has almost 3,000 establishments and is the second-largest manufacturing sector in the province.
- In 2019, sales were up \$700 million to a record \$10.5 billion.
- In 2019, there were 35,700 food and beverage processing jobs in B.C.

**Learn More:**

For more information about Dueck Falkland Farms, visit: <https://www.dueckfalklandfarms.ca/>

For more information about the Food Business Refresh Program, visit:  
<https://www.foodbusinessrefresh.ca/>

For more information about StrongerBC, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/>

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