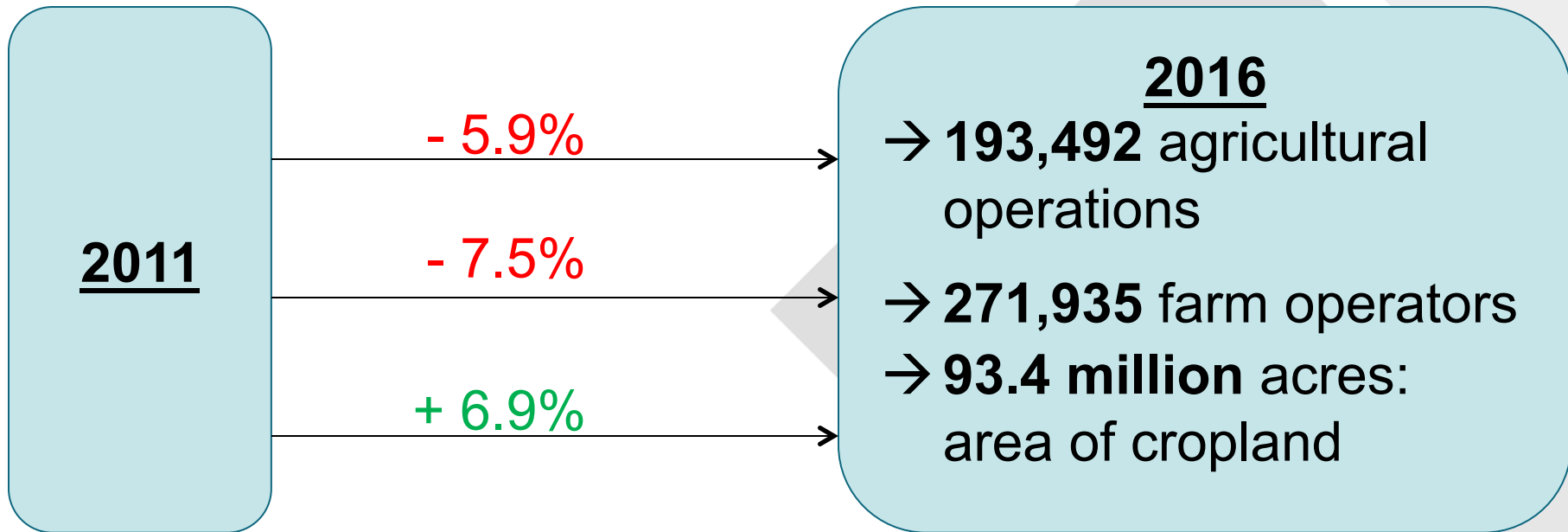


AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, POLITICAL SUPPORT AND MAKING A LIVING

National agricultural operations

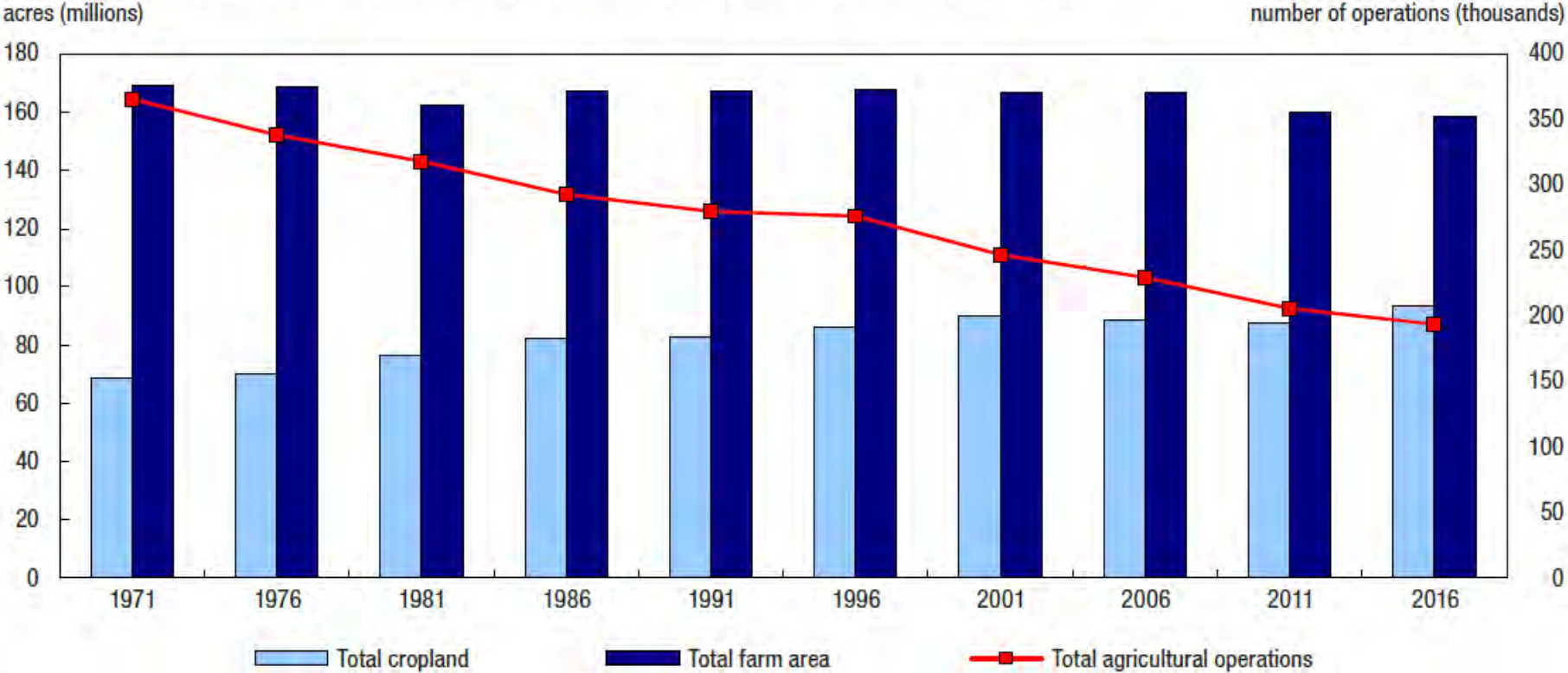
Total farm area down, but total area of cropland at record high

- **Driven by competition and aided by technology, the number of Canadian agricultural operations is decreasing and the agricultural operations that remain are larger and more capital intensive.**



National agricultural operations trend

Total farm area, cropland and number of agricultural operations, Canada, 1971 to 2016



Sources: CANSIM tables 004-0002, 004-0203 and 004-0204.

Agriculture in British Columbia

- **It is estimated that BC agriculture produces about 200 different commodities and there are approximately 17,500 farms in the province (2016).**
- **Total farm cash receipts from the sale of crops, including grains, oilseeds, tree fruits, berries, grapes, field and greenhouse vegetables, floriculture, nursery, forage and other crops, amounted to over \$1.51 billion in 2015, up 14.6 per cent over the previous five year average.**
- **Total livestock receipts, from the sale of cattle, hogs, poultry, eggs, dairy, honey and other animals and animal products also amounted to over \$1.53 billion, up 13.2 per cent over the previous five year average of \$1.35 billion.**

Employment in Agriculture (BC)

- **Agriculture accounts for 22,200 jobs (2015).**
- **This is just under 1% of total employment in BC.**
- **Continual shift of population away from rural communities and farming life.**
- **This trend is not unique to BC – contemporary production systems enable individual farms and farmers to produce much greater quantities. Throughout North America, average farm sizes have increased and the number of farmers has decreased.**

Agricultural Land Base

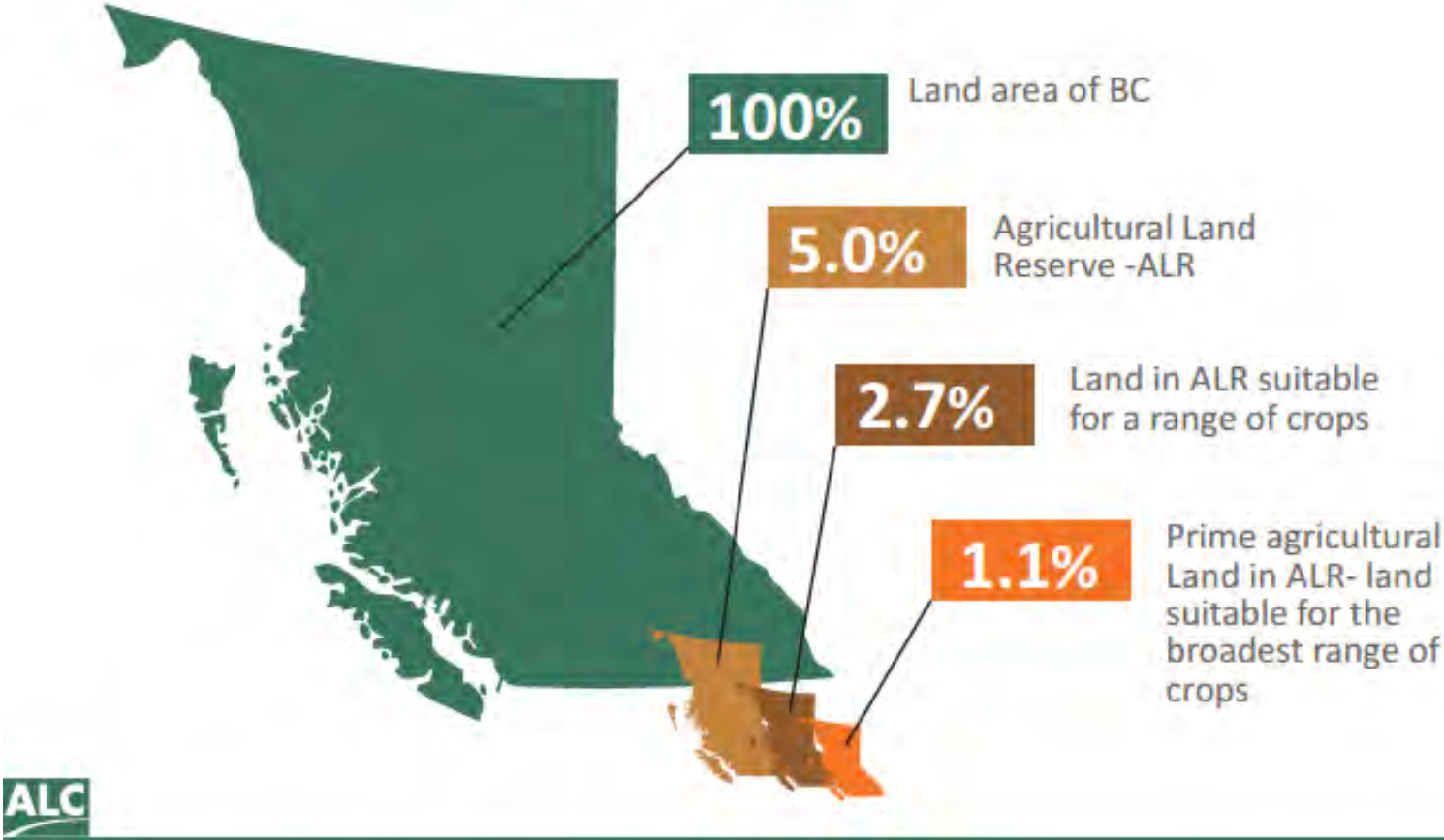
- **BC has an unusually limited agricultural land base, an uncommon level of diversity within the sector (with respect to geography and products) and a high proportion of relatively small family farms.**
- **Less than 5% of the province's land base is considered to be arable, although it is estimated that up to 15% has some agricultural potential.**
- **Approximately 1% of BC's land base is classified as prime farmland.**
- **In comparison, Alberta's prime agricultural land is 17% of its land base.**
- **Certain production systems tend to be concentrated within specific regions.**

Growing Regions

- **North/Peace Region - majority of BC's grains, oilseeds and forage seeds.**
- **Most of the province's cattle ranches are located in the southern and central interior, the Peace Region and the Kootenays.**
- **The Okanagan producers grow most of BC's tree fruits and grapes.**
- **The Fraser Valley, Metro Vancouver, and southern Vancouver Island - range of farm types including berry, vegetable and livestock operations.**
- **Almost 70% of the dairy industry is located in the Fraser Valley.**
- **The greenhouse industry is predominantly located in the Lower Mainland, as are nursery and mushroom operations.**
- **Poultry production is concentrated in Fraser Valley (80%).**

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

- **With some exceptions, much of the best farm land exists within close proximity to urban settings.**
- **This has placed considerable pressure on the province's agricultural land base.**
- **The Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission was created in 1973 to protect BCs agricultural land.**
- **The ALR is a land use zone encompassing 4.7 million hectares of private and public land defined as an area in which agriculture is a priority use (and non-agricultural uses are controlled).**



Two-Zone System

- **On March 27, 2014, the Province of BC introduced Bill 24, the Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2014.**
- **Bill 24 established a two-zone system with panels within each zone:**
 - **Zone 1 – consists of Vancouver Island, South Coast, and Okanagan panel regions.**
 - **Zone 2 – consists of the Interior, Kootenay, and North panel regions.**
- **These zones are intended to recognize the province's regional differences:**
 - **Zone 1 - where land is in greater demand and there are development and population pressures.**
 - **Zone 2 - where generally the growing seasons are shorter and there are lower-value crops.**

Two-Zone System

	Region	ALR Area hectares	Percent ALR Area	Percent in Each Zone
Zone 1	Okanagan	224,977	5%	10%
	Island	116,207	2%	
	South Coast	148,207	3%	
Zone 2	Interior	1,528,968	33%	90%
	Kootenay	392,557	8%	
	North	2,210,783	49%	
	Total	4,621,699	100%	

PIBC 2017



Intent of the Two-Zones

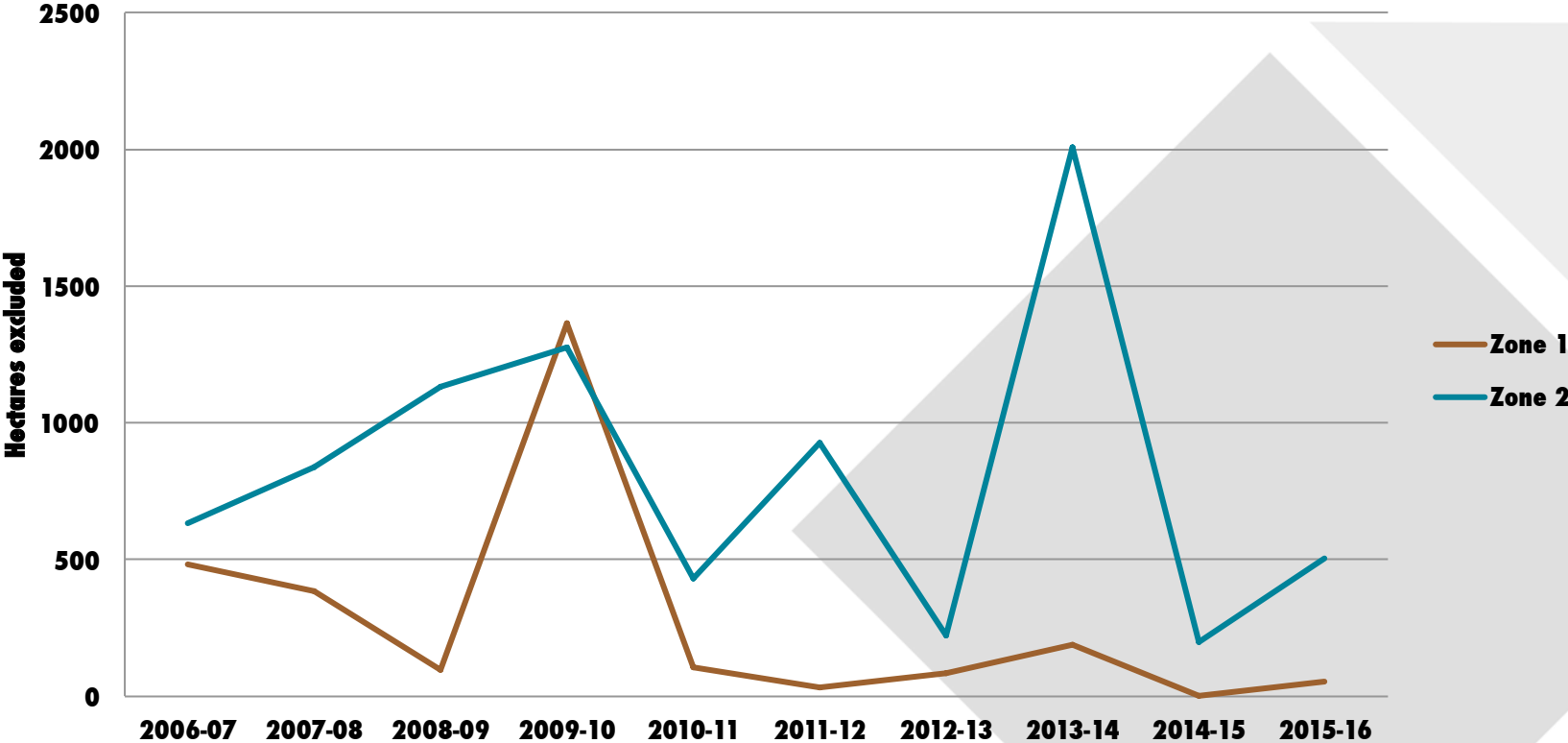
- **To better protect in-demand land in Zone 1, which will remain status quo, while offering the ALC more flexibility in its decision making in Zone 2.**
- **In Zone 2 only, the ALC was given broader flexibility to consider non-agricultural home-based businesses, to better support farmers and farm families and ensure they can continue farming their land.**
- **Acceptable uses are determined through regulation in consultation with the ALC, the agricultural sector, and UBCM.**

Concerns

- **Changes met with considerable opposition.**
- **Fear that the change would result in significant loss of agricultural lands from the ALR.**
- **5 words added between 1st and 3rd readings of Bill 24, May 2014.**
 - **"In descending order of priority"**

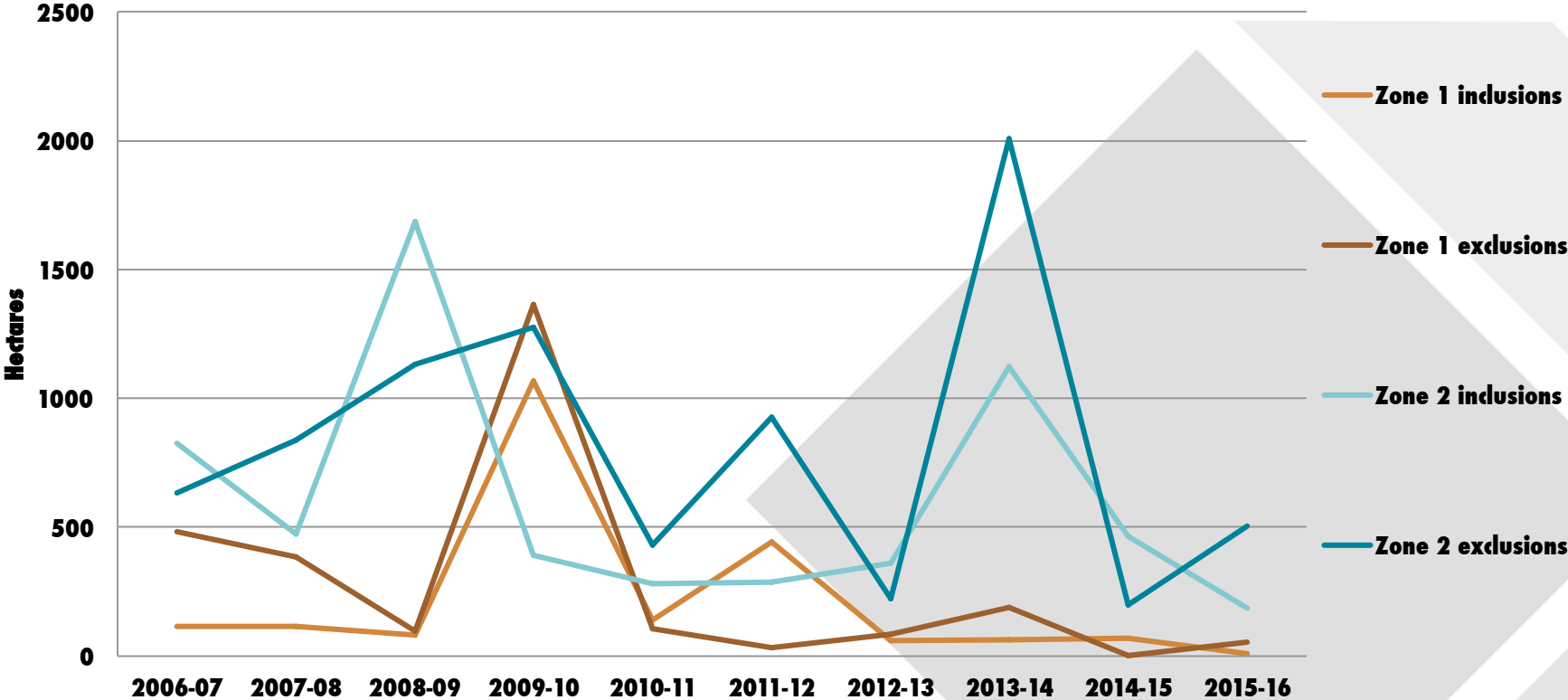
ALR Exclusions - 2006 to 2016

Hectares excluded per year Zone 1 & 2



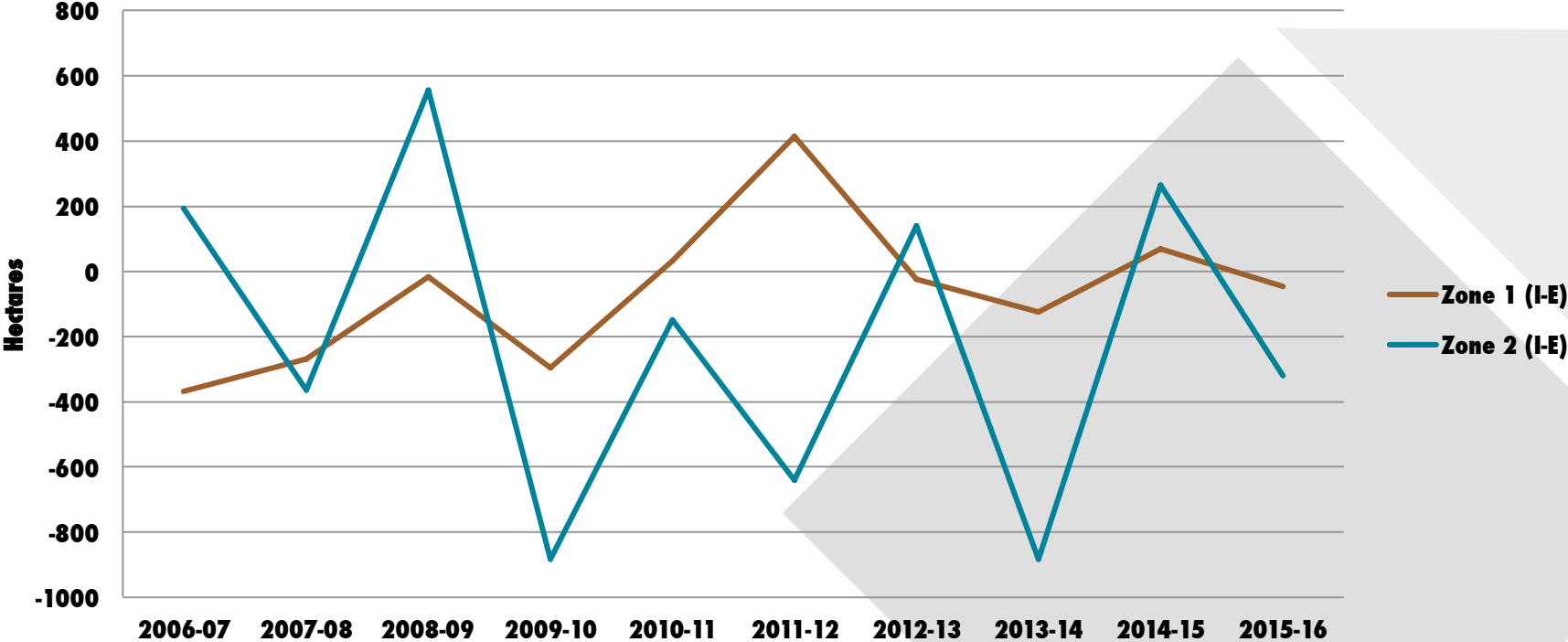
Comparison between inclusions and exclusions

Hectares included and excluded Zone 1 & 2



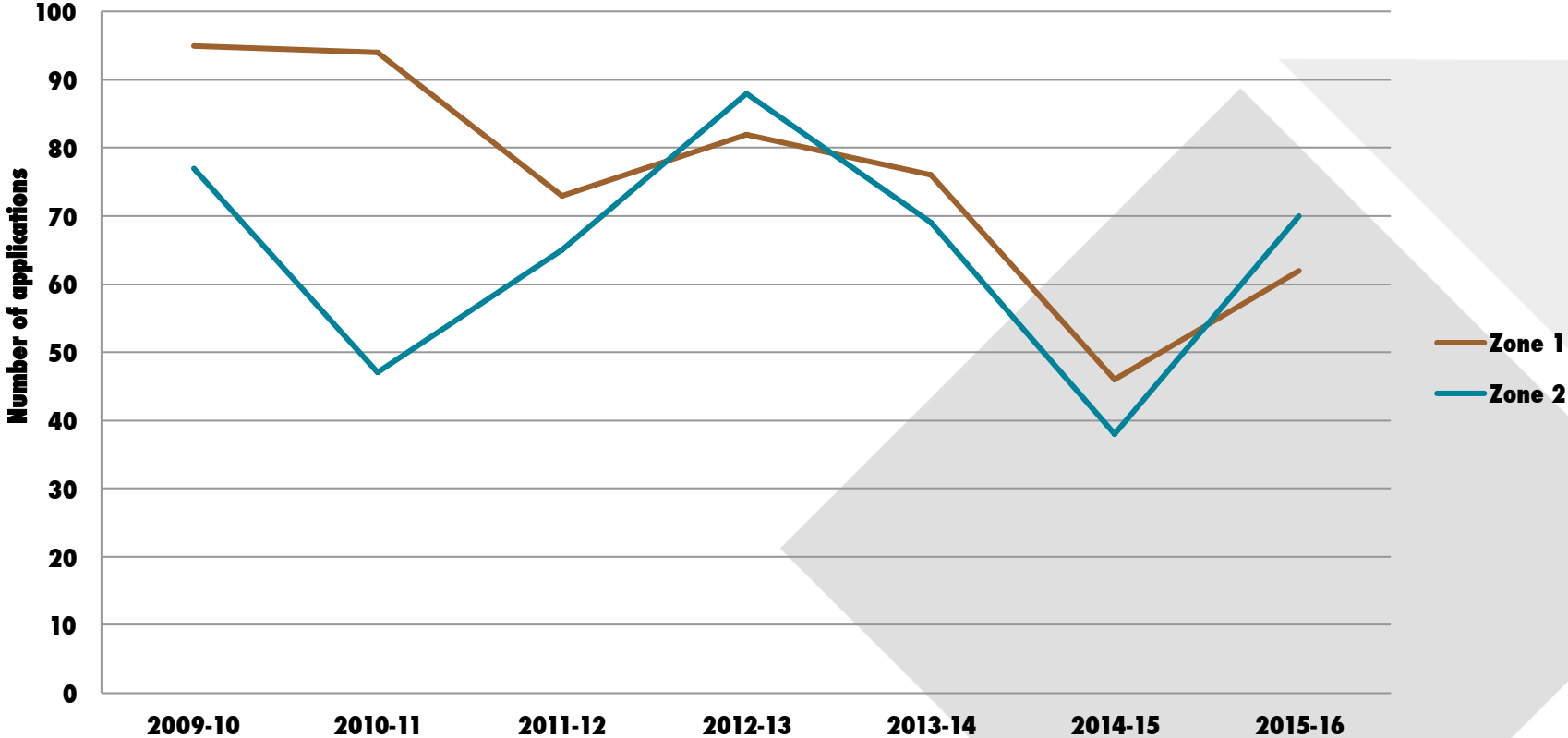
Net Changes

(Inclusions - Exclusions) in ha



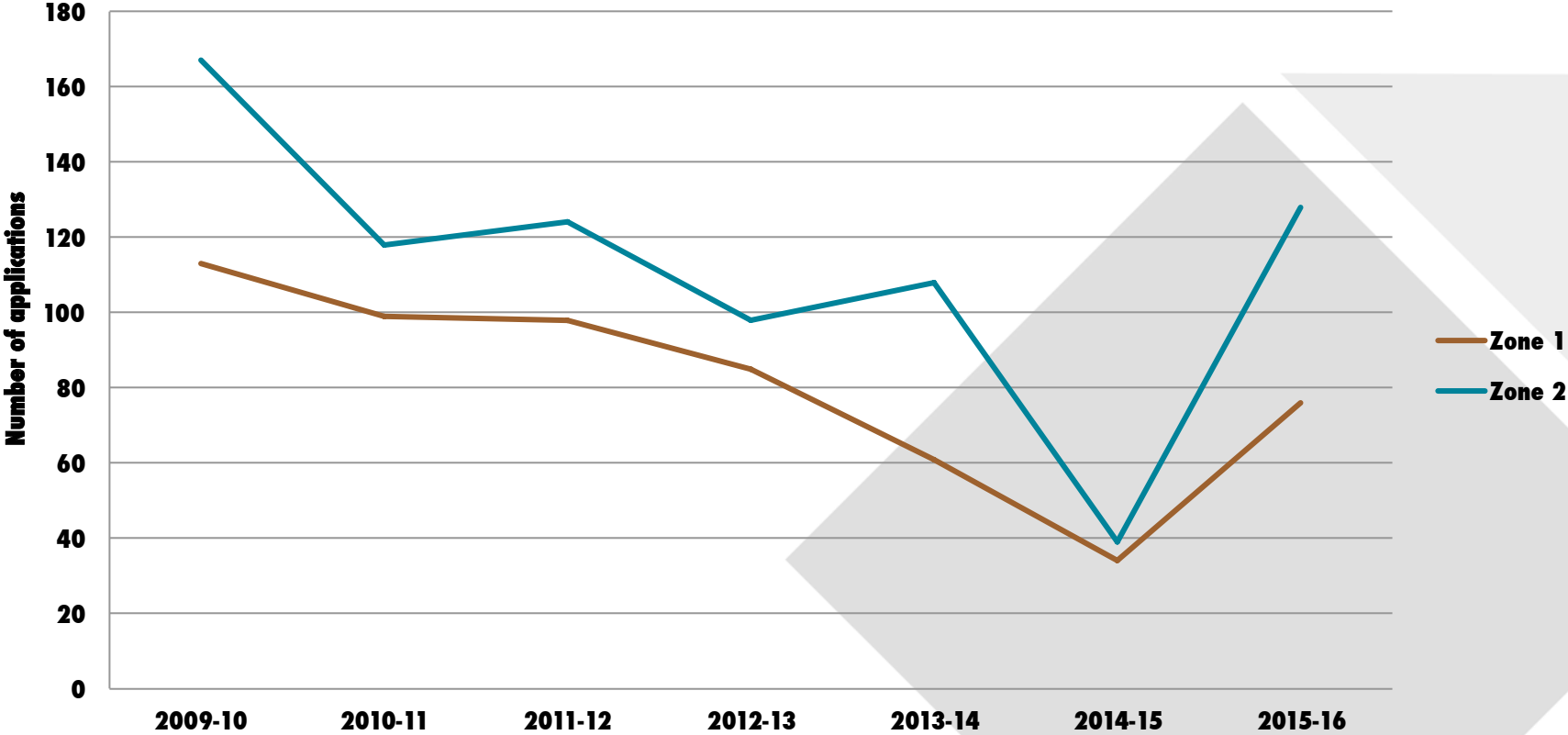
Other ALC Applications

Non-farm Uses



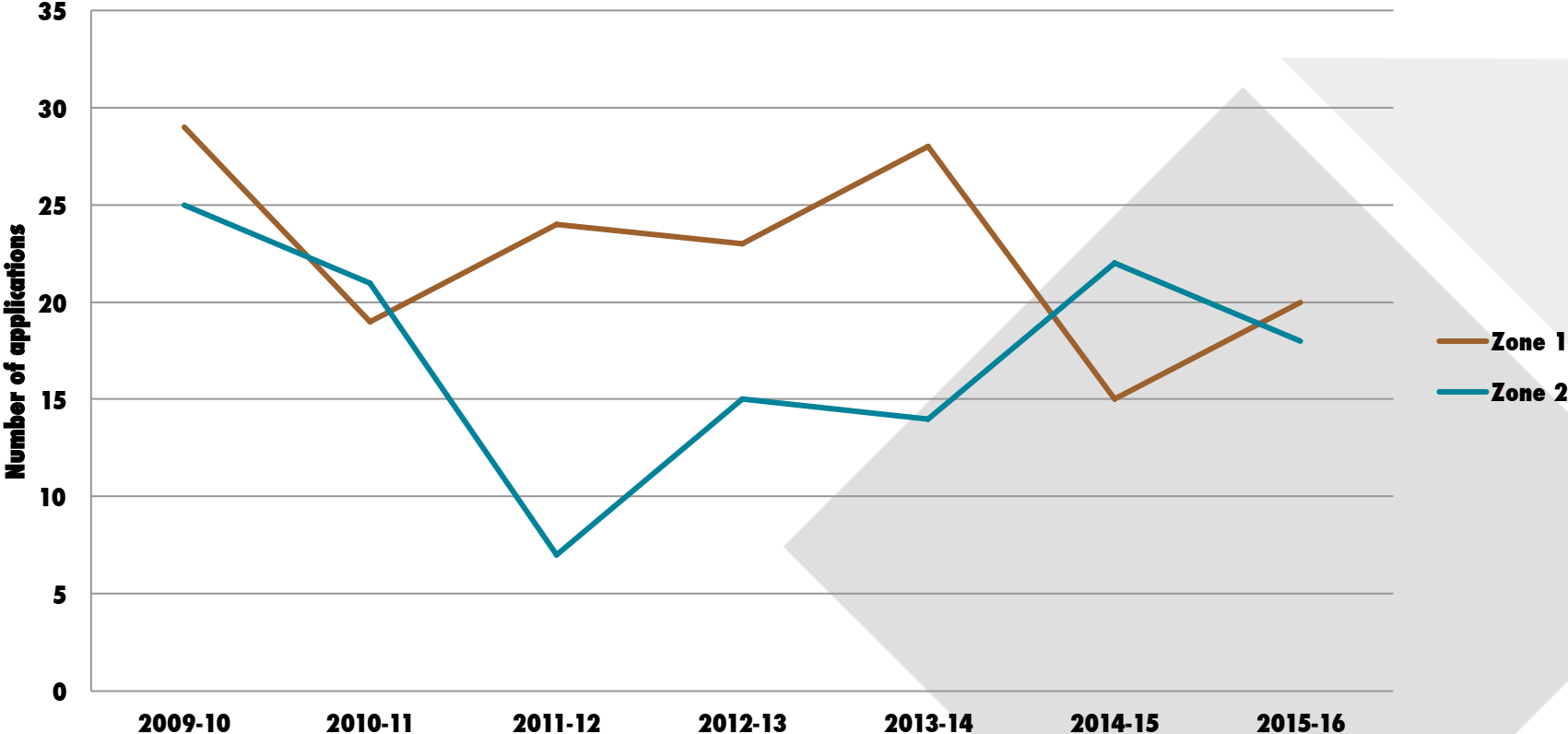
Other ALC Applications

Subdivision Applications

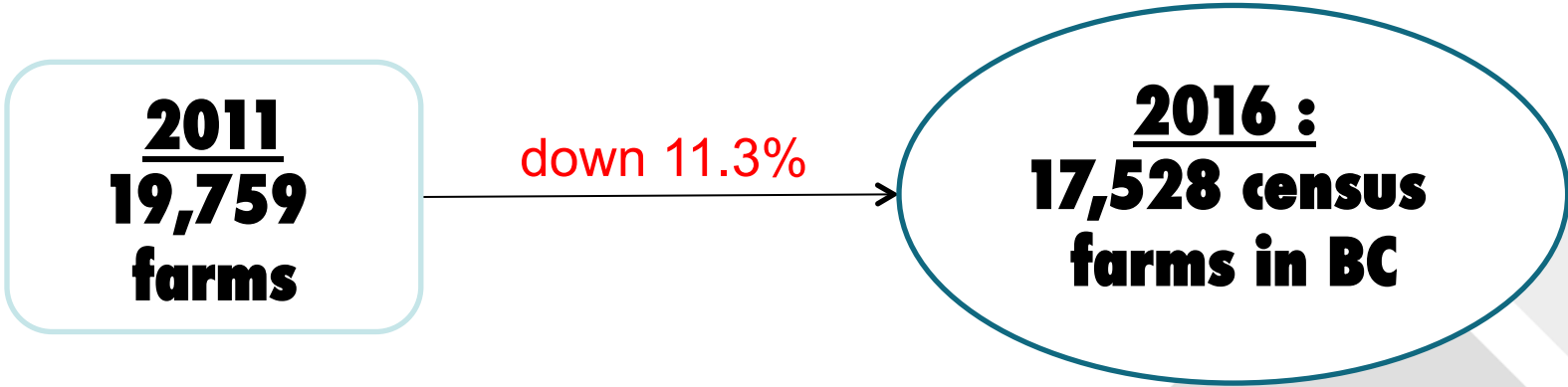


Other ALC Applications

Soil Removal & Fill Placement



BC : Fewer farms from five years earlier

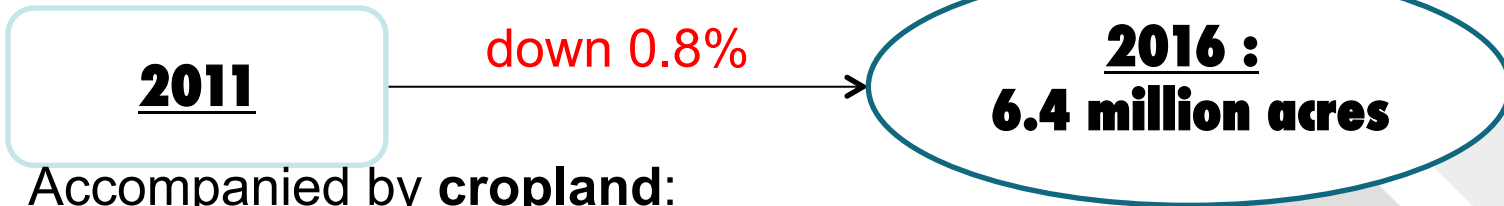


Almost double the decline nationally : -5.9%

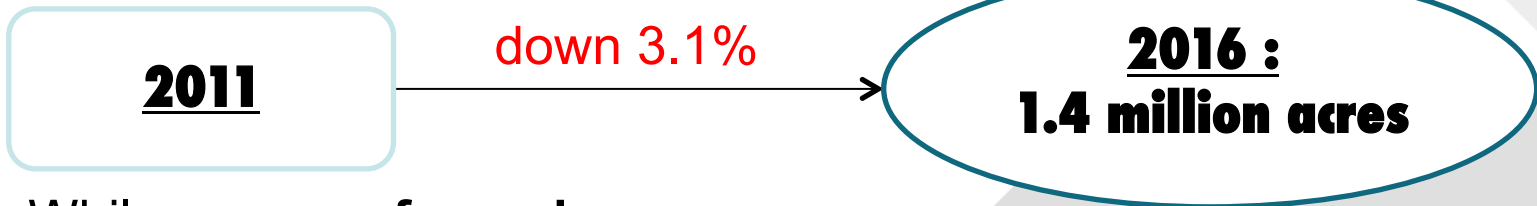
- **BC ranked fifth among the provinces in the number of farms, accounting for 9.1% of the national total.**

BC : Total farm area and cropland decrease

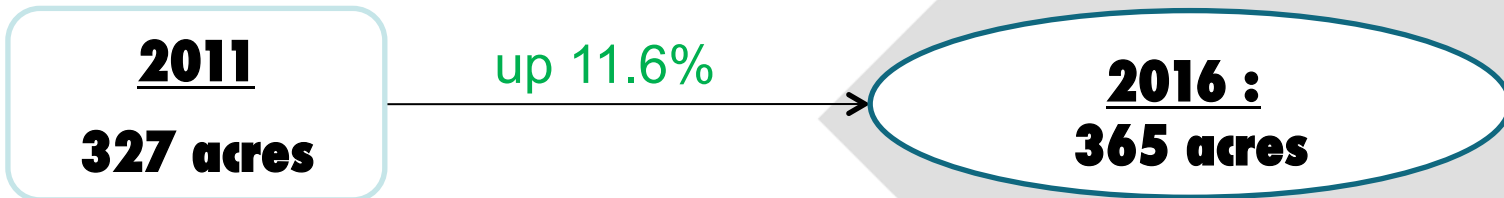
- The **total farm area** over which farmers had stewardship decreased:



- Accompanied by **cropland**:



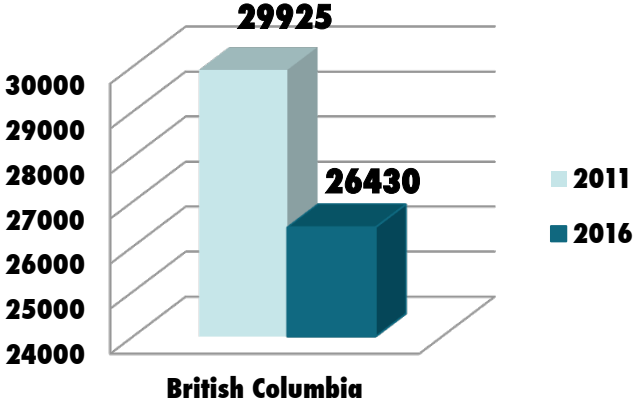
- While **average farm size** grew :



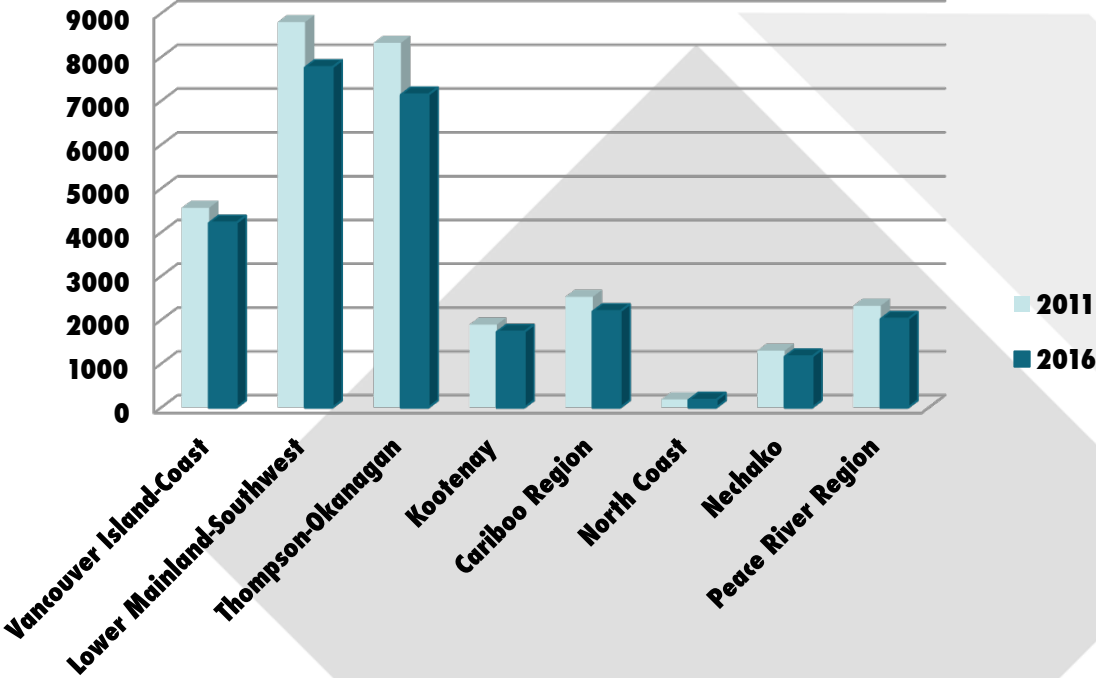
This five-year period saw shifts of area away from hay and certain horticultural production (sod and nursery) to field crops and fruits, berries and nuts.

BC : Number of operators 2011-2016

Number of operators in BC

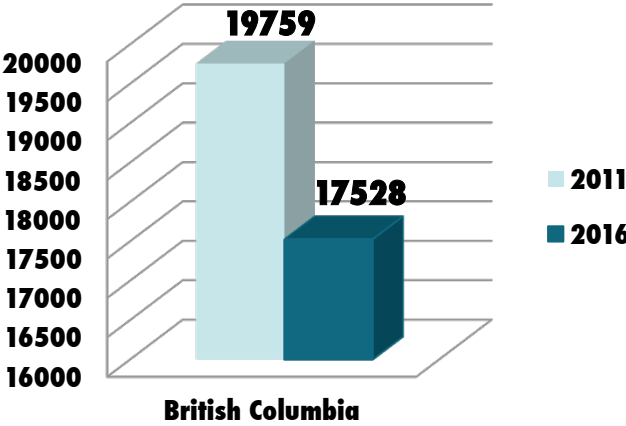


Number of operators in BC regions

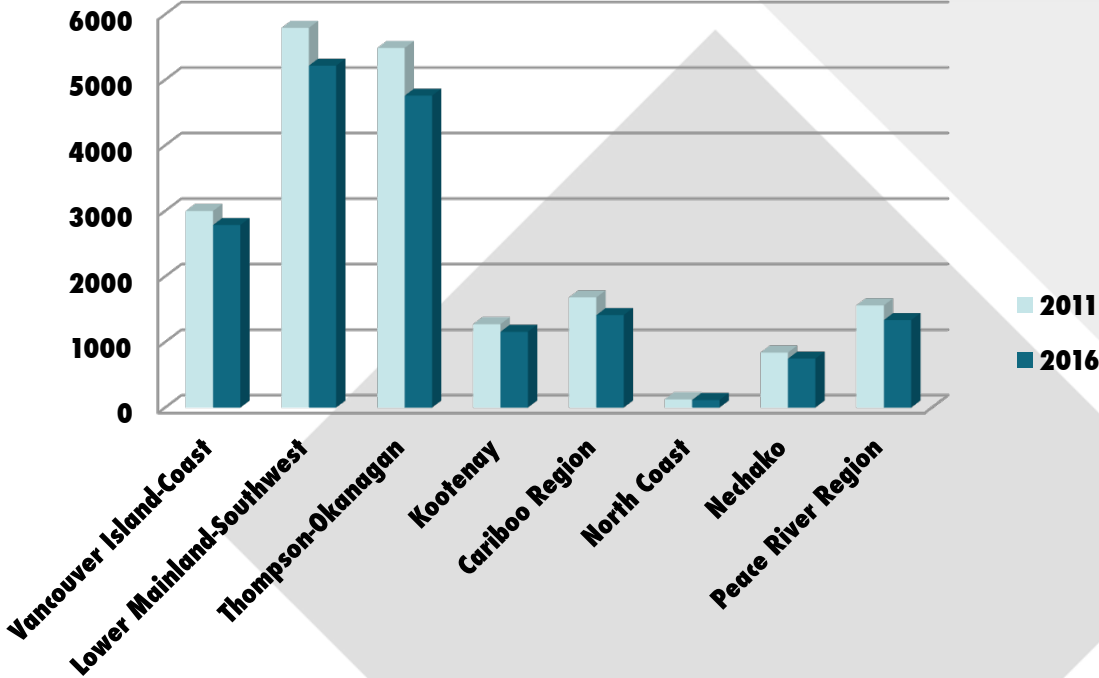


BC : Number of farms 2011-2016

Number of farms in BC



Number of farms in BC regions



Age Profile

- **The average age of a Canadian farmer increased from 54.0 to 55.0 years from 2011 to 2016, with farmers aged 55 to 59 accounting for the largest share of farm operators.**
- **However, the number of operators under the age of 35 increased by 3.0% from 2011 to 2016, despite the total number of operators decreasing. This is the first time that there has been an increase in this age category since 1991.**

Key Trends

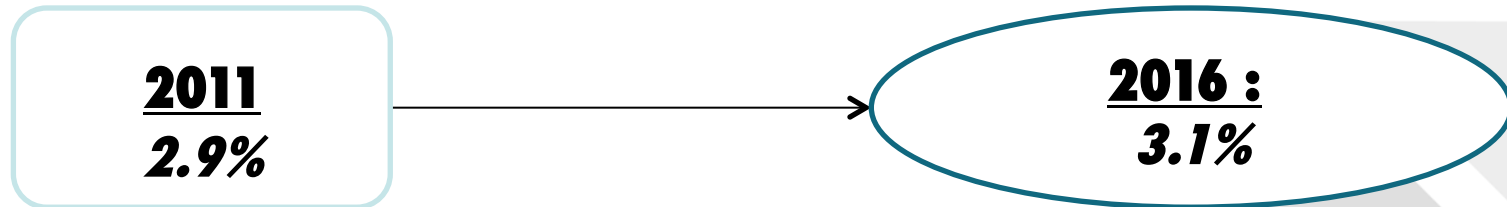
- **The Agricultural Land Reserve has played a key role in preserving the limited arable land base in BC.**
- **Land prices have escalated along with other land uses.**
- **The average value of farmland in BC is more than twice the Canadian average, and significantly higher in regions close to urban centres.**
- **In other parts of the province, resource exploration and extraction is placing pressure on land currently designated for agricultural use.**

BC : Small farms and direct marketing play a large role

- **Over 4 in 10 farms in BC in the 2016 Census of Agriculture were small (less than \$10,000 in receipts), more than double the national average.**
- **Over 40% of these operations reported selling food products directly to consumers.**
- **Due to the prevalence of small farms, BC reported the highest rate of off-farm work and the second highest rate of direct marketing**

BC : Other agriculture highlights

- **Proportion of farms producing organic products in BC :**



Nationally, farms producing organic products accounted for 2.2% of total farms in 2016.

- **In BC, 32.3% of farms reported selling agricultural products directly to consumers in 2015.**

Opportunities

- **Value of BCs agrifood and seafood industry was \$13 billion (2015), up 7.6% over 2014.**
- **Steady increase in organic farming, offering price premiums and potential for job growth (due to the labour-intensive nature of organic farming practices).**
- **Increase in farmers markets, offering some of the highest returns available directly to producers.**
- **In addition to OCPs, many local/regional governments now have Agriculture Area Plans and some have Agriculture Advisory Committees.**
- **Supply-management?**