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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture

### **BC Association of Farmers' Markets launches #MeetMyMarket**

VANCOUVER – This July, the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) is inviting you and your friends to join the fun, and enjoy the fresh and local foods at farmers' markets throughout the province.

The B.C. government's Buy Local program is providing \$47,135 to the organization to promote local farmers' markets and increase sales.

As the busy summer market season is approaching, the BCAFM is launching a campaign to encourage British Columbians to share their favourite markets with friends. The 'Meet My Market' campaign runs throughout the month of July to create awareness and increase visitors to the farmers' markets in B.C.

The funding from the Buy Local program will be used to launch the campaign through a combination of traditional and social media activities. Throughout the month of July, farmers' market shoppers will be able to enter two grand prize giveaways, for a chance to win a three-night getaway for two at a prestigious Okanagan resort, as well as weekly prize draws on social media. Many participating markets will be offering additional incentives including market treats and deals to welcome shoppers who bring a friend. These strategies are aimed at bringing in potential customers to gain future business by promoting the benefits of buying local. For more details, see the "Learn More" section below and visit the BCAFM website.

The BCAFM represents over 125 farmers' markets in the province. Each market offers a variety of products, from farm-fresh fruits and vegetables to one-of-a-kind artisan goods. Buy Local funding provides opportunities to local food processors in B.C. to thrive and achieve long-term success.

The Buy Local program has received \$6 million in B.C. government funding since 2012 to increase sales of locally grown and processed agrifood and seafood products within the province.

Building the local market for B.C. foods is a key commitment of government's Agrifoods Strategy, a component of the BC Jobs Plan, to lead the agrifoods-sector growth into a \$14-billion-a-year industry by 2017.

The provincial government's Buy Local program is administered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia. Applications are available at: <http://www.iafbc.ca/>

#### **Quotes:**

**Minister of Agriculture Norm Letnick –**

“The BC Association of Farmers’ Markets does so much for the agrifood community in B.C. to support local farmers’ markets. The Buy Local funding gives a helping hand to our farmers to reach new markets and bring in new customers. This campaign, ‘Meet My Market’, is a wonderful idea! I look forward to sharing some of my favourites this summer.”

**Jon Bell, president, BCAFAM –**

“We are pleased to run a campaign that speaks about the value of fresh, local food and at the same time encourages British Columbians to become better acquainted with the local farmers, small-scale food processors and artisans who put food on our table. We encourage everyone to bring a friend to their local market and enjoy the bounty of B.C. farmers’ markets.”

**Tara McDonald, executive director, Vancouver Farmers’ Markets –**

“VFM is thrilled that the Ministry of Agriculture is helping BCAFAM to connect more people across the province to farmers’ markets, farmers, and local food.”

**Quick facts:**

- The number of B.C. farmers’ markets has more than doubled in the last 10 years.
- The BC Association of Farmers’ Markets represents a network of 125 markets throughout the province.
- B.C. farmers’ markets connect people directly to the source of their food and preserves small-scale, family farms for future generations.
- B.C. farmers’ markets contributed \$170 million in economic benefits in 2012, a 146% increase from 2006.
- British Columbia has the most diverse agrifoods industry in Canada, producing more than 200 agriculture commodities and 100 seafood species.

**Main Street Farmers Market facts:**

- Great mid-week local food shopping destination.
- Market includes 45 vendors, including farm, prepared food, craft and food trucks.

**Learn more:**

B.C. Association of Farmers’ Markets: <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/>

Locate a farmers’ market near you: <http://markets.bcfarmersmarket.org/>

B.C. Buy Local program: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/agri/buylocal.html>

**Follow ‘Meet My Market’ month:**

Website: <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/meetmymarket>

Twitter and Instagram: @BCFarmersMarket #MeetMyMarket

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BCAFM>

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