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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2015AGRI0043-001006  
July 4, 2015

Ministry of Agriculture

### **Comox Valley Farmers' Market receives funding to reach locals**

COURTENAY – The Comox Valley Farmers' Market is receiving \$31,897 in Buy Local funding to increase the sales of local meat, vegetables and other food products by increasing awareness and building relationships between commercial purchasers and local producers.

The Comox Valley Farmers' Market is introducing a traditional advertising and social media campaign over the course of the market season to attract valley residents to shop at the market and support local producers. Also, with the addition of the Downtown Courtenay Evening Market open outside of regular market hours and special events during the season, the market is aiming to accommodate and increase customers' access to buy local.

The second campaign element will facilitate relationship building between commercial purchasers and local producers. The Comox Valley Farmers' Market will be using the funding to host an event in the new year to co-ordinate seasonal planning and finalize purchasing agreements. At this event, Comox Valley farmers will have the opportunity to connect directly with buyers and promote the benefits that buying local provides for the regional economy.

The Comox Valley Farmers' Market is one of the few markets in British Columbia to have only food or agriculture products. Operating for over 20 years, the market continues to thrive and connect local food with local folk.

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:**

#### **Comox Valley MLA Don McRae on behalf of Minister of Agriculture Norm Letnick –**

“The Comox Valley Farmers' Market is an important part of this community. This Buy Local funding supports local farmers and in return puts money back in to the local economy. We have the opportunity to buy fresh, locally grown products, let's take advantage of it!”

#### **Vickey Brown, executive director, Comox Valley Farmers' Market –**

“We are lucky to have so many local farmers coming to our market, this funding will allow us to get the word out about their products and attract more customers to buying local food.”

**Learn More:**

Comox Valley Farmers’ Market: <http://www.comoxvalleyfarmersmarket.com/>

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

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