
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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March 23, 2016

Ministry of Agriculture

Spring has sprung: healthy Buy Local products to consider Easter weekend

VICTORIA – It's the first week of spring and as British Columbians get ready for jelly beans and chocolate eggs when the Easter bunny visits this weekend, here are some healthy B.C. products to get you prepared for your Easter egg hunt.

Five companies are receiving funding from the B.C. government's Buy Local program.

Did you know B.C. grows goji berries? The fruit that is high in antioxidants is popular in Asian countries and Aldergrove's Peter Breederland took on the challenge of growing the berry in the Lower Mainland. Gojoy Berries now markets smoothie mixes and fresh berries, all from a 100% B.C. product.

Vancouver's Top Tier Foods have launched a new product, Quinoa Quickies, that they hope will be a big hit with health-conscious British Columbians. Quinoa is known for its rich nutritional qualities, nutty flavour and rice-like texture. Quinoa Quickies are quinoa-based side dishes that are produced and packaged in B.C. from 100% Canadian quinoa.

Traveling up the Okanagan now to a farm that has big plans with its fresh, local pre-packaged organic salad greens, Athena Organic Farms is already an established organic producer of root vegetable ground crops. They will be using their existing green grocer relationships to bring their new, high nutritional product to market.

Pranin Organic in Richmond makes 100% organic nutritional supplements made entirely from fruits, vegetables, leaves and super foods. The products are processed and packaged in B.C. using organic B.C. produce as much as possible.

The last stop is to Alpha Health Products in Burnaby and they are looking to grow their line of edible oils including the popular Organic Virgin Coconut Oil. All of their products are processed and packaged in B.C. In 2015, they also introduced a vegan hot chocolate mix.

The B.C. government has invested \$8 million in the Buy Local Program since 2012, including \$2 million in Balanced Budget 2016. The Buy Local program aims to increase consumer demand and sales of B.C. agrifoods and seafood products. Businesses and organizations can apply for matching funding from the B.C. government for projects that promote local foods.

Quotes:

Norm Letnick, Minister of Agriculture –

"I want to congratulate all of these companies on receiving Buy Local program funding. Now we can do our part – go out and support them and all of our province's agrifood sector this Easter

weekend and throughout the year.”

Peter Breederland, owner, Gojoy Berries –

“We are extremely grateful for the support provided by the Buy Local program. The funding has helped us to proactively share our story with our local communities. Our farm-grown goji berries are helping people ‘boost their power’ as they consume these vitamin-packed berries and incorporate them into their daily lives. While our communities support local farmers, we can reciprocate by encouraging excellent health.”

Blair Bullus, president, Top Tier Foods –

“The Buy Local program’s commitment to Top Tier Foods means expanded opportunities for us to deliver quality and innovative food products for British Columbians and Canadians. More importantly, it is a way for British Columbians to connect with local producers and farmers to better understand the products they put on the table.”

Krystine McInnes, project developer, Athena Organic Farms --

“We are so passionately committed to creating a more sustainable future that supports regional food economies and keeps dollars in our province, while also creating a better future for our families. It is truly a sustainable, holistic cycle and we are so grateful to the government for supporting this initiative.”

Talia Wiebe, marketing manager, Pratin Organic –

“Pratin Organic is thrilled to have the support of the Buy Local program this year. Thanks to this program and the B.C. government, our young company has more opportunities to speak with B.C. residents in person and online about our innovative products made with local fruits and vegetables.”

Alyssa Robertson, marketing coordinator, Alpha Health Products –

“Everyone needs healthy, well-sourced fats in their diet. The support from the B.C. Buy Local program allows Alpha Health Products to educate our community and continue to provide quality oils for the family kitchen.”

Learn More:

Gojoy Berries: <http://gojoy.ca/>

Goji Berry Ginger Tea recipe: <http://gojoy.ca/recipes/goji-berry-ginger-tea/>

Top Tier Foods (Quinoa Quickies): <https://toptierfoods.com/>

Healthy Quinoa recipe, experimenting with curry: <https://toptierfoods.com/experimenting-with-curry-healthy-quinoa-recipes/>

Athena Organic Farms: <http://www.athenaorganicfarm.ca/our-farms/>

Pratin Organic: <http://www.pratin.com/>

Alpha Health Products: <http://alphahealth.ca/>

Breakfast Truffles recipe: <http://alphahealth.ca/blogs/news/42048705-breakfast-truffles>

B.C. Buy Local program: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/bc-buy-local-program>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Buy Local funding

The following projects have received funding from the B.C. government's Buy Local program.

Gojoy Berries:

\$12,320 to increase sales of the Gojoy smoothie mix and the fresh berries by creating product awareness, developing brand strength and loyalty, and adding distribution channels.

Top Tier Foods (Quinoa Quickies):

\$6,340 to increase awareness of Quinoa Quickies in Western Canada through direct marketing at three consumer expos and in-store demonstrations.

Similkameen River Organic Farm (Athena Farm Holdings):

\$74,500 to launch fresh, local organic pre-packaged salad greens. Raise consumer awareness about why fresh and local matters through a national brand and regional distribution supporting local farms and local economies.

Pranin Organic:

\$35,415 to promote Pranin's brand of organic, vegan, gluten-free and local nutritional supplement products to health-conscious B.C. consumers.

Alpha Health Products:

\$39,390 to promote Alpha's line of oils that are locally processed and packaged in British Columbia. The Burnaby-based company has introduced a vegan hot chocolate mix to the B.C. market.

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