
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture

Island cheese companies receive funding for promotion

VICTORIA – Buying local doesn't get tastier than this. Vancouver Island cheese companies, Natural Pastures Cheese and The Happy Goat Cheese Company, are tapping in to the water buffalo and goat cheese markets to make local, fresh tasting cheese for British Columbians to enjoy.

The Buy Local Program, funded by the provincial government, is providing up to \$32,000 to promote locally produced cheese products by the companies. Natural Pastures is receiving up to \$27,525 of Buy Local funding and The Happy Goat is receiving up to \$5,000. Both companies are aiming to increase sales of their specialty cheeses.

Natural Pastures Cheese Company is based in Courtenay and produces artisan cheeses using only local, island cow's milk and water buffalo milk. With the funding from the Buy Local Program, the company is developing promotional print materials and launching an advertising campaign to promote their product line of water buffalo cheese.

The Happy Goat Cheese Company is a farmstead cheese producer located in Duncan. As a start-up company, the Buy Local funding is being used to establish local brand positioning through social media, print ads, packaging and labelling. The company is aiming to increase sales in the Cowichan Valley and Southern Vancouver Island with these promotional strategies.

The Buy Local program has received \$8 million in B.C. government funding since 2012 to increase sales of locally grown and processed agrifood and seafood products within the province.

The B.C. government's Agrifood and Seafood Strategic Growth Plan supports the building of domestic markets and maintaining a secure food supply. The plan is a component of the BC Jobs Plan, and the roadmap to leading the agrifoods sector to becoming a \$15-billion-a-year industry by 2020.

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

Quotes:

Norm Letnick, Minister of Agriculture –

“The flavours of these locally made cheeses represent the natural flavours of British Columbia. Paired with the Buy Local funding, the passion to create art in the form of food is supported and nurtured. Giving companies like The Happy Goat and Natural Pastures the opportunity to

grow continues to benefits the local economy, by providing jobs and a future in the agrifoods industry.”

Doug Smith, Natural Pastures Cheese Company –

“Launching a new product can be difficult, and buffalo milk cheeses, while very popular in other parts of the world, haven’t received much attention yet in Canada. The marketing money received from the Buy Local program allows us to introduce the buffalo milk cheeses in a sustained way, helping develop a market that creates a curiosity and willingness in the public to try something new.”

Kirsten Thorarinson, The Happy Goat Cheese Company –

“At The Happy Goat, we offer our customers unique, raw goat’s milk cheeses from our farm on Vancouver Island. The Buy Local funding has allowed us to promote our products and brand to a larger audience.”

Learn More:

Find out more about Natural Pastures Cheese Company: www.naturalpastures.com/

For more information about The Happy Goat Cheese Company, visit: www.thehappygoat.ca/

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

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