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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2016AGRI0080-002653  
Dec. 10, 2016

Ministry of Agriculture

### **Local stocking stuffers for the ones you love**

VICTORIA – It's the season for giving and being with loved ones. This year, give the ones you love locally produced agrifood gifts and watch their delight as they open their Christmas stockings up to find local B.C. products, full of home grown flavours and produced with love.

The provincial government's Buy Local Program is supporting local agrifood and seafood companies by providing funding to help promote their products through buy local initiatives such as traditional print advertising and social media marketing. The program is providing a combined total of up to \$44,200 of Buy Local funding to three B.C. companies creating fresh flavours and tasty delights.

Every stocking must have treats to delight both the young and young at heart during the holidays. Local manufacturer, Asti Holdings, produces premium nougat products in New Westminster that are handmade and contain only the freshest ingredients. The recipe has been proudly handed down through three generations. With an emphasis on traditional production methods and delicious flavours, the company's nougat treats are a joy to candy lovers of all ages.

Create a buzz on Christmas morning by slipping some local artisan honey from Big D's Bees Honey into the stockings of loved ones. With flavours like Creamy Cinnamon Honey and Cocoa Honey, it's a gift that will be enjoyed by all. Located in Black Creek, owners Daniel and Justine Ludwig are keepers of 500 hives which have the potential to produce 60,000 pounds of honey per year. Vancouver Island's abundant natural habitat for honey bees makes it a very unique honey producing region.

For those who like to dine on the finer things, West Coast Smokin' Oysters are the perfect stocking stuffer to give this year. West Coast Smokin' Oysters is providing locally sourced, sustainable and naturally smoked oysters in gourmet sauces. The oysters are from the Fanny Bay area on Vancouver Island and are processed in a facility in Sooke, keeping the production local and ensuring jobs for British Columbians. With flavours such as Stout Sensation, Thai Chili and Salt & Pepper, these tasty smoked molluscs are sure to please this holiday season.

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 –**

“This holiday season remember to buy local and support B.C.’s agrifood and seafood industry and experience local flavours and products with friends and family when you come together to celebrate. As our province is on the forefront of producing unique and diverse products, I encourage British Columbians to enjoy the bounty of the industry and share your favourites with the ones you love.”

##### **Mario Rota, VP sales and marketing, Asti Holdings –**

“We are very proud to be a local manufacturer which produces premium nougat products here in New Westminster, B.C. The Buy local program has really elevated our brand awareness to many customers in so many ways from our in store demos to local bus advertising to creative point of sale material. Nothing feels better than doing it right in your own back yard and seeing the community around you embrace your product. A true accomplishment.”

##### **Daniel and Justine Ludwig, owners, Big D’s Bees Honey –**

“The Comox Valley provides a pristine environment and natural habitat for bees, allowing us to produce local sweet, natural tasting honey for British Columbians. Our connection to the land and what it can provide has led us to the agrifood industry and thanks to the buy local program, we are able to share our hard work and passion with honey lovers all over B.C.”

##### **Sue Simcox, owner, West Coast Smokin’ Oysters –**

“As passionate foodies, we wanted to give British Columbians a product that we couldn’t get enough of ourselves. West Coast Smokin’ Oysters is the result of a labour of love that we are proud to say is locally sourced and packaged right here on Vancouver Island. With the support from the Buy Local program, our brand is becoming a household name and recognized at farmers’ markets, craft fairs and specialty retail stores on Vancouver Island.”

#### **Learn More:**

Pick out the perfect candy for the ones you love during the holidays at:

<https://www.goldenbonbon.com/index.html#>

Eat local, eat healthy, eat honey from Big D’s Bees Honey: <http://www.bigdsbees.com/>

Discover the variety of smoked oyster flavours from West Coast Smokin’ Oysters:

<http://www.westcoastsmokinoysters.com/>

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

A backgrounder follows.

**Media Contacts:**

Jill Milne  
Government Communications and Public  
Engagement  
Ministry of Agriculture  
778 676-4460

Daniel Ludwig  
Big D's Bees Honey  
250 703-1358

Mario Rota  
Asti Holdings Ltd.  
604 523-6866

Sue Simcox  
West Coast Smokin' Oysters  
250 324-8881

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## BACKGROUND

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

**Asti Holdings:**

\$30,265.00 to increase sales and increase awareness of locally made Honey Almond Nougat and Jube Nougat products lines to consumers in B.C. through traditional print materials, bus advertising campaign and special events.

**Big D's Bees Honey:**

\$11,500.00 to increase farm gate sales with print and radio ads, video, in-store advertising and new labelling.

**West Coast Smokin' Oysters:**

\$2,500.00 to increase sales at farmers' markets and craft fairs through social media marketing and branded promotional tools.

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