
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture

BC Wine Institute promotes “Be Label Conscious” with funding

KELOWNA – The British Columbia Wine Institute (BCWI) is raising a glass to thank British Columbians for their loyalty to BC VQA wines. To build and strengthen relationships with consumers, the BCWI is receiving \$100,000 of Buy Local funding to market BC VQA wines in the province.

In celebrating 25 years of BC VQA, the BCWI is driving home the message “Be Label Conscious” with their “BC VQA. Or You Could Call it BC DNA” promotional materials to encourage shoppers to support Wines of British Columbia that are made 100% from B.C. grown grapes. By promoting the benefits of buying local and supporting B.C. winemakers through traditional advertising and social media, the BCWI is aiming to increase sales of BC VQA wines at liquor retail outlets and wineries.

The funding will also be used to send hospitality and wine retail workers to the Institute-led Wines of British Columbia Ambassador Program. With the knowledge gained through the program, ambassadors are better equipped to make BC VQA wine recommendations, helping to maximize sales. This summer alone, the BCWI has hosted 25 training sessions, reaching over 450 retail wine and restaurant employees in Vancouver, Victoria, Tofino, Prince George, Penticton and Kelowna.

BC VQA includes only B.C. wines and ensures qualifying wines meet certain minimum quality requirements. The message “BC VQA. Or You Could Call it BC DNA” is meant to connect consumers to local wines and wine producers on a personal level. The BCWI is responsible for marketing, communications and advocacy for almost 150 wineries in the province.

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://iafbc.ca/funding-opportunities/buy-local/>

Quotes:

Minister of Agriculture Norm Letnick –

“Wines with BC VQA on the label are guaranteed to be 100% B.C. – a guarantee that dollars spent on that wine will stay local and support B.C. farmers and local wine producers. Through promotional efforts and the Buy Local funding, consumer demand is created and British Columbians are connected with local products from B.C.”

Minister of Small Business, Red Tape Reduction and Responsible for Liquor Coralee Oakes –

“The BC Wine Institute’s commitment to promoting local VQA wines is an integral part of ensuring that their members, many of which are small B.C. businesses, are not only recognized but celebrated. This latest push to be label conscious is a great initiative, and builds on their continued dedication to upholding the quality of locally produced wines, while encouraging consumers to buy products made in B.C.”

Maggie Anderson, marketing director, British Columbia Wine Institute –

“We are very excited to be partnering with the B.C. government on this Buy Local Program this year. Through this program, we are able to reach B.C. wine consumers at multiple touch-points and inspire them to support their local grape growers and winemakers by choosing a BC VQA Wine.”

Quick Facts:

- The B.C. wine industry’s \$2-billion economic impact is a significant driver to the B.C. economy. For every bottle of wine produced in the province, \$42 of economic impact is generated.
- The wine sector in B.C. consists of 252 wineries and over 864 vineyards on more than 3,965 hectares (9,800 acres) of land.
- Wine-related tourism welcomes more than three million visitors each year, generating more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and employment.

Learn More:

Wines of British Columbia: <http://www.winebc.com/>

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

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