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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture

### **Stable funding for Buy Local program**

VANCOUVER – As part of Balanced Budget 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture is set to receive a \$2-million budget lift to invest in the Buy Local program.

Through the government's three-year fiscal plan, the Buy Local program will receive \$6 million in funding – \$2 million a year over the next three years. This is helping support local agrifood companies promote local foods that are grown, raised, harvested and processed in B.C.

Norm Letnick, Minister of Agriculture, visited the Hastings Park Winter Farmers' Market to get a first-hand look at how the program funding is helping local agrifood companies achieve success and grow in a competitive market. This funding not only means support for B.C. food products, but also local jobs and continued support for food supply security in B.C.

Since 2012, the government has invested \$8 million in the Buy Local program, funding close to 200 projects to help companies expand their reach and sales in communities throughout B.C. and leveraging \$29 million in investments through matching funds.

Agrifood and seafood companies in B.C. can apply to the program to receive matching funding from the government to help promote their products through buy local initiatives such as traditional print advertising and promotional campaigns.

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 B.C. agricultural sector is world-class and on the forefront of innovation and productivity. With stable long-term funding for the Buy Local program, local agrifood companies can continue to thrive and grow and reach larger audiences all over the province.”

##### **Tara McDonald, executive director, Vancouver Farmers Markets–**

“Vancouver Farmers Markets (VFM), in partnership with Hua Foundation, was thrilled to launch our Local Food Global Flavours program with the generous support of BC Buy Local funding.

Through a 4-part Chinese-language video series, social media posts reaching 68 000 subscribers, posters, recipe and point of sale Chinese language cards, ads and interviews in Ming Pao, Fairchild Radio, VFM widely promoted the great variety of Chinese and Asian vegetables grown right here in our region, and available at the peak of freshness at Vancouver Farmers Markets. The Local Food Global Flavours program, which will continue to run at our year-round farmers markets, resulted in a 10% increase in the sale of locally-grown choy-type greens and a 15% increase in Asian shoppers over 2015.”

**R. Dave Brimacombe, co-founder/head distiller, Wayward Distillation House–**

“The Buy Local Program has allowed us to expand our business, improve our promotions, and try new advertising venues that we would not have been able to do otherwise. With these accomplishments, we have increased our sales across the board and have increased our product line, and we are looking forward to what we will be able to accomplish in 2017 with this momentum. The Buy Local program has given us a running start at the next few years, and has been an excellent learning opportunity on what tactics are working and which ones need further development.”

**Learn More:**

Buy Local program <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/market-development-and-trade/bc-buy-local-program>

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