

Farmers' markets prez brings fresh perspective

by TAMARA LEIGH

QUESNEL – When Wylie Bystedt stepped up as president of the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM), she became the first president in the organization's history from the BC Interior, and the first livestock producer to take the helm.

Bystedt runs Coyote Acres Ranch near Quesnel, where she raises beef, pork, chicken, lamb and llama. Her llama meat, a common South American protein, has also earned her a loyal following at markets in Quesnel, McLeese Lake and beyond.



Wylie Bystedt

"I feel very lucky to be stepping into the president's role at this time. I'm coming into an organization that is really strong," says Bystedt. "In terms of our market presence and where we fit into agriculture provincially, we are not quite

where we want to be yet, but there's a recognition that the BCAFM is a pretty outstanding group."

She points to the BCAFM's BC Buy Local campaign, #MeetYourMarket, and the nutritional coupon program as initiatives that have helped farmers' markets across the province increase sales for their vendors.

Looking ahead, Bystedt would like to leverage those successes and explore opportunities to expand their impact. She points to her own experience as an example of how markets can help launch farm businesses and increase profitability. "I'm an example of how markets can help incubate farm businesses," Bystedt explains. "For the first two years at the Quesnel market, I shared a spot with a bread maker so we could support each other and help with manpower. I needed that time to learn the ropes."

This fall, BCAFM will embark on a new strategic planning process and Bystedt is keen to bring some substantive issues to the table; supporting more First Nations participation, helping young farmers access markets and continuing education and outreach programs for members.

"Our focus is on markets, but within that, what kind of value building can we do? What's our role in engagement?" she says. "Farmers' markets are in every region of the province. We have markets in places where other agricultural activities just don't happen. We need to start putting it all together. We have organizations and infrastructure in 107 communities with strong grassroots partnerships in place – what do we do with all of that?"

Lewisdale Gold Missy tops Westcoast Classic

by DAVID SCHMIDT

ABBOTSFORD – "They saved the best for last" proved to be more than just an expression at the Westcoast Classic Holstein sale in Abbotsford, March 16.

Morsan Doorman Missy, a September Doorman daughter of Eastside Lewisdale Gold Missy, the supreme champion of both the Royal Dairy Show and the World Dairy Expo in 2011, was paraded in front of the large crowd of admirers before the sale began, then brought back for sale at the end of the auction.

Although the crowd had thinned considerably by the time she was finally available for auction, this did not diminish interest in the stylish young heifer. Missy attracted the top price at the annual auction, \$20,500. Making the purchase was Jorge Prieto, a Colombian now living in Victoria. Interestingly, Prieto paid the same price, \$20,500, for the top seller in last year's Westcoast Classic.

This was the second year Westcoast Holsteins of Chilliwack organized the spring sale of elite Holstein genetics and they have promised to continue with it for at least another year.

This year, the auction featured 74 animals, one more than in 2015. The sale averaged \$4,400, a drop of



Moir and Jorge Prieto are all smiles as they hold the top seller at the Westcoast Classic Holstein auction. Standing with them and Morsan Doorman Missy 3362 is consignor Jeff Kooyman of Westcoast Holsteins in Chilliwack. (David Schmidt photo)

\$900 per animal from last year's average, reflective of this year's generally lower cattle prices.

Stanhope-Wedgwood of Victoria and Cobble Hill hoped to add to their award-winning collection of show cattle by buying the second and third highest selling animals in the auction. They paid \$15,200 for Siemers Defiant J-Bright, a

Very Good two-year-old with at least eight generations of Very Good or Excellent dams behind her, and \$12,700 for Morsan Kingboy Aubry, a September daughter of Ms Atlees Shottle Aubry, a full sister to Aftershock, one of the breed's top bulls.

All three top sellers were consigned by Westcoast Holsteins.

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