



BC Farmers' Markets Announce Winners of Annual "Ode To a Farmer" Poetry Contest

For Immediate Release

October 3, 2016 (VANCOUVER, BC) – As British Columbians welcome autumn and prepare to give thanks next weekend, the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) is honouring the province's agricultural sector with the announcement of the winners of the fourth annual Ode To a Farmer poetry contest. The contest is part of the BCAFM's celebration of [Farmers Appreciation Week](#) (September 12 to 18), an annual event highlighting the important contributions that local food and farmers make to our lives. B.C. residents of all writing levels were encouraged to submit their farm-themed poems for a chance to win \$150 to spend at the B.C. farmers' market of their choice.

Gerald Eggert of Chilliwack took home the grand prize with his original poem, "The Farm Wife," which reminds readers of the importance of honouring farmers in today's fast-paced world.

"Late at night reading about this poetry contest set me to thinking back and about the changes (not all good) in farming, possibly the oldest of all foundations of our country," said Eggert. "I thought about the farmers I knew and met throughout my lifetime; about their commitment, their hardworking honesty, and their continued devotion to family values. I thought, too, about how much sadness the changes and pressures of globalization must be putting on them and their families."

The first-time poet is flattered about his win, "If my words can in some way comfort or be seen as recognition of the long-time serving farm families of our country, I'm proud of this small contribution," said Eggert.

Writer and storyteller, [Ronda Payne](#), was one of four accomplished B.C. writers to judge the contest. "I value the diverse views and perspectives the creative mind can take when asked to share a poem about farmers. It's a pleasure to have my own mind stretched by the words and wisdom of people who also love and treasure our farmers," said Payne.

Payne is a regular contributor to "Country Life in BC," and other agriculture related publications. The Ode To a Farmer poetry contest judging panel also included [Renée Sarojini Saklikar](#), poet laureate for the City of Surrey and author of *thecanadaproject*; Trevor Hargreaves, BC Farm Writers' Association president and Director of Producer Relations and Communications for the BC Dairy Association; and Fred Steele, BC Fruit Growers' Association president, published poet and registered lyricist.

Eggert's poem was chosen out of 96 submissions that came from all across the province. In

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addition to the grand prize, a winner from each region of B.C. was selected and awarded \$50 to spend at a B.C. farmers' market of their choice. The six winning poems can be read on the BCAFM [website](#).

2016 Winning Poems

- Grand Prize and Vancouver Coast & Mountain Regional Winner: **"The Farm Wife"** by **Gerald Eggert**

Regional Winners:

- Cariboo Chilcotin Coast: **"Ode To Farmers"** by **Karen Steinson**
- Kootenay Rockies: **"Hail to Our Farmers"** by **Debbie Korn**
- Northern B.C.: **"Ode to a Farmer"** by **Malcolm Coupe**
- Thompson Okanagan: **"Dependable"** by **John H. Fair**
- Vancouver Island/Gulf Islands: **"Belonging"** by **Michael Armstrong**

The BCAFM is a not-for-profit association that represents 135 farmers' markets across the province and works to support, develop and promote farmers' markets in all regions of B.C. For more information on the BCAFM or to find a farmers' market near you, visit www.bcfarmersmarket.org.

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