



## BC ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS' MARKETS

### **BC Farmers' Markets Awards Celebrate the Best of the Province**

For Immediate Release

March 9, 2016 (VANCOUVER, BC) – With the farmers' market season just around the corner, the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) celebrated the best of B.C. with its third annual Farmers' Market Awards. The event was held over the weekend at the Manteo Resort in Kelowna, and celebrated those who have made outstanding contributions to B.C.'s farmers' market sector.

Awards were selected by a panel of leading professionals in the sector, including Dr. David Connell, from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Donna Anaka, from the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, and Brent Warner, professional agrologist and owner of White Loaf Ridge (Canada). The judges selected the following winners as the best of 2015 from 24 nominations received throughout the province:

- Farmers' Market of the Year (Large): White Rock Farmers' Market
- Farmers' Market of the Year (Medium): Penticton Farmers Market
- Honourable Mention Farmers' Market of the Year (Medium): Celista Hall Farmers' Market
- Farmers' Market of the Year (Small): Lytton Two Rivers Farmers' Market
- Farmers' Market Manager of the Year: Helen Fathers, White Rock Farmers' Market
- Farmers' Market Vendor of the Year (tie): Jong's Vegetable Gardens; Silver Springs Organic Farm

"When selecting the recipients, we focused on characteristics that stood out for us, which were often little things that made them special or different," said Dr. Connell. Both winners in the category of Farmers' Market Vendor of the Year are long-time family farms; Jong's Vegetable Gardens in Armstrong and Silver Springs Organic Farm in Savona. With over 50 years of experience selling at farmers' markets, Jong's Vegetable Gardens is a unique heritage family enterprise, which is one of the only working farms left within the city limits of Armstrong. Not far behind in years of experience, Silver Springs Organic Farm has been in operation for nearly 40 years. Farmers, Paula and Mendel Rubinson have contributed significantly to their community, serving as founding members of the local farmers' market and food policy council.

The Lytton Two Rivers Farmers Market took home the award for small market of the year. The market was acknowledged for its partnership with the Lytton First Nation Health Department, and Lytton Food Bank to operate the Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program. Serving a population of 227 Lytton residents, the market is the only retail venue in the village where fresh, local food is bought and sold.



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White Rock Farmers' Market won in the large market category and was celebrated for its extensive contributions to the community, including donations of over \$4,000 to local charities, such as the Women's Place and White Rock/South Surrey Food Bank, as well as the distribution of over \$10,000 in grants over the last five years to students entering the field of agriculture, food or farming. The long time manager of the White Rock Farmers' Market, Helen Fathers, took home the award for Farmers' Market Manager of the Year.

The Farmers' Market Awards were part of the BCAFM's annual conference, *Nourish + Flourish*, co-hosted by the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market. The event brought together over 140 delegates from across the province for three days of learning, sharing and networking.

The BCAFM is a registered B.C. society that represents over 125 farmers' markets across the province. Its mission is to develop, promote and strengthen the capacity of farmers' markets. The BCAFM was founded in 2000 and operates out of Vancouver. Visit [www.bcfarmersmarket.org](http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org).

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