
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2012HLTH0070-000969
July 4, 2012

Ministry of Health

\$2-million investment increases access to farm-fresh produce

SURREY – Lower-income seniors and families in communities throughout B.C. will have increased access to locally grown produce and food products as the result of a \$2-million, one-time grant to the BC Association of Farmers' Markets.

Funding supports the Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Program, which provides coupons each week for participants to spend at their local farmers' market. Running for 14 weeks this year, the program is targeted at lower-income seniors and families, including pregnant women, who are participating in cooking and skill-building programs. These programs teach participants how to cook healthy, nutritious meals including using locally produced farm products.

Families will receive \$15 worth of coupons each week, while seniors will receive \$12 worth. Coupons are treated like cash and can be used to purchase a variety of B.C. food products including fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, nuts, dairy and fresh cut herbs.

The program matches BC Association of Farmers' Markets member farmers' markets with one or more community agencies that operate a cooking and skill-building program. The program will support up to 50 families and pregnant women and up to 10 seniors per community. The intent is to expand the program to support more individuals and B.C. communities each year.

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets is a provincially registered, non-profit association, which represents farmers' markets throughout the province. At member markets, the focus is on selling locally grown or processed farm-fresh foods and vendors must either make, bake or grow the products they sell.

The B.C. government continues to support programs that benefit the health of B.C. families and the Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Program is part of the comprehensive Healthy Families BC public-health strategy. Healthy Families BC supports British Columbians in making healthier choices by providing a variety of easily accessible tools and information on healthy eating, physical activity and creating healthier communities.

The Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Program also supports government's Families First Agenda, which is working to ensure that B.C. families continue to progress and thrive. The Families First Agenda focuses on supporting vulnerable families, making communities safer and helping ensure life is more affordable for B.C. families.

Quotes:

Minister of Health Michael de Jong –

“For many B.C. families, particularly those living in urban areas, farmers’ markets provide a great opportunity to purchase fresh produce directly from growers as well as to sample a variety of healthy B.C.-produced foods that they might not ordinarily have access to.

“We are proud to support the BC Association of Farmers’ Markets and the Farmers’ Market Nutrition and Coupon Program, which is helping to improve the health of B.C. families by offering increased access to locally produced food for those in the most need.”

Surrey-Tynehead MLA Dave S. Hayer –

“We are committed to ensuring tools and supports are in place across the province to provide healthy options for B.C. families. This coupon program complements these existing programs nicely by offering families access to local produce and other local food so that they can build on the skills learned.”

BC Association of Farmers’ Markets executive director Elizabeth Quinn –

“Farmers’ markets operate in every corner of the province, offering residents access to a variety of farm-fresh foods, from fruits and vegetables to specialty cheeses. We are pleased that this funding will allow us to operate the coupon program, which provides more B.C. families with access to local produce.”

Quick Facts:

- In year one, the Farmers’ Market Nutrition and Coupon Program is expected to benefit approximately 800 families and pregnant women, 1,360 children and 150 seniors.
- More than 125 farmers’ markets are operating throughout British Columbia.
- The BC Association of Farmers’ Markets represents 101 markets, which include approximately 3,000 vendors.
- In April 2012, the government of B.C. provided a one-time \$75,000 grant to the BC Association of Farmers’ Markets to help implement their 2011-16 strategic plan, which aims to strengthen and promote farmers’ markets in B.C. and to support B.C. farmers.

Learn More:

For more information on the Farmers’ Market Nutrition and Coupon Program or to locate a farmers’ markets in your community, visit: www.bcfarmersmarket.org

For more information on Healthy Families BC, visit: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Farmers' markets participating in the coupon program

FRASER HEALTH

Abbotsford Farm and Country Market

Location: Inside and outside the United church at Montrose Ave. and George Ferguson Way, downtown Abbotsford

Hours: Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Abbotsford Community Services Best for Babies Program

Abbotsford Community Services Seniors program - Food for the Soul Community Kitchen

Coquitlam Farmers' Market

Location: In the parking lot of Dogwood Pavilion, 624 Poirier St., Coquitlam

Hours: Sundays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Healthy Babies Program

Glen Pine Pavilion Seniors

Royal City Farmers' Market

Location: Tipperary Park, 4th St. and Royal Ave., New Westminster

Hours: Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Burnaby Family Life

Surrey Urban Farmers' Market

Location: North Surrey Recreation Centre Courtyard - 10275 - 135th St., Surrey

Hours: Wednesdays, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub

Umoja Operation Compassion Society

Family and Youth Partnership

INTERIOR HEALTH

Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market

Location: Dilworth and Springfield Rd., Kelowna

Hours: Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

The Bridge Youth and Family Services

Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society

Family and Youth Partnership

Nelson Farmers' Market

Location: 400 Block Baker St, Nelson

Hours: Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Kootenay Kids Society's Farms to Families (The Family Place)

Revelstoke Farm and Craft Market

Location: Grizzly Plaza, Revelstoke

Hours: Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Community Connections Food Bank

Vernon Farmers' Market

Location: Wesbild Centre parking lot - 3445 - 43rd Ave, Vernon

Hours: Mondays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

First Nations Friendship Centre - Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program

NORTHERN HEALTH**Bulkley Valley Farmers' Market**

Location: Central Park Building Parking Lot (corner of Highway 16 and Main St.), Smithers

Hours: Mondays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Northern Society for Domestic Peace - Smithers Pregnancy Outreach Program

Hazelton Community Market

Location: Hazelton Area Visitor Information Centre, Highways 16 and 62, New Hazelton

Hours: Sundays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Storytellers Foundation

Pleasant Valley Community Market

Location: Steelhead Park on Hwy 16 behind the Flyrod, Houston

Hours: Fridays, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Houston Link to Learning

Prince George Farmers' Market

Location: 3rd and George St., Prince George

Hours: Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Prince George Native Friendship Centre

Quesnel Farmers' Market

Location: Helen Dixon Centre Grounds, corner of Kinchant St. and Carson Ave., Quesnel

Hours: Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Quesnel Child, Youth and Family Network

VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH

Ambleside Farmers' Market

Location: In the Parking Lot behind the Police Station on Bellevue between 13th and 14th in Ambleside, West Vancouver

Hours: Sundays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

North Shore Neighbourhood House, John Braithwaite Community Centre

Lonsdale Quay Farmers' Market

Location: On the East Plaza at Lonsdale Quay Market & Shops at 123 Carrie Cates Court at the foot of Lonsdale Ave., North Vancouver

Hours: Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

North Shore Neighbourhood House, John Braithwaite Community Centre

Sechelt Farmers' Market

Location: Cowrie and Shorncliffe, Sechelt

Hours: Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Bellies and Babies: Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program

Sechelt Seniors Activity Centre

Big Folks, Little Folks Drop In at the Sechelt Health Unit

Squamish Farmers' Market

Location: Cleveland Ave. and Vancouver St., Squamish

Hours: Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Sea to Sky Community Services

Vancouver Farmers' Markets

Trout Lake: North parking lot of John Hendry Park between Lakewood & Templeton

Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

West End: 1100 block of Comox St.

Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Main Street: Station St. at Thornton Park near Main St. Skytrain Station

Wednesdays, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Kitsilano: 10th Ave. at Larch St.

Sundays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Kerrisdale: East Boulevard between 37th & 41st Avenues
Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Hastings Community Centre

Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House

Collingwood Neighbourhood House - Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute

VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH AUTHORITY

Comox Valley Farmers' Market

Location: Comox Bay Farm, West Island Hwy., Courtenay (Wednesdays); Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds, Headquarters Rd., Courtenay (Saturdays)

Hours: Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Comox Valley Family Services

Moss Street Community Market

Location: Sir James Douglas Elementary, 401 Moss St., Victoria

Hours: Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Victoria Native Friendship Centre

Port Alberni Farmers' Market Association

Location: Downtown Port Alberni at the Harbour Quay

Hours: Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cooking & Skill Building Program(s):

Port Alberni Early Years Program – Lunch Club Program

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