

## **Families benefit, get better food**

The province has provided \$750,000 to the BC Association of Farmers' Markets to expand the Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Project, benefiting 50 Abbotsford families, MLAs John van Dongen and Mike de Jong have announced.

Province-wide, the program will give about 2,000 low-income families, including 2,500 children, better access to local, nutritious food over the next two years.

"Our government has been actively promoting the 100 Mile Diet, encouraging people to eat locally and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions," said Abbotsford-Clayburn MLA John van Dongen. "This coupon project enables people to go to the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market, meet local producers and learn how to make healthy fresh meals for their families and themselves."

"The Abbotsford Farm and Country Market is fortunate to have this opportunity to develop new relationships with local families," said Abbotsford-Mt. Lehman MLA Mike de Jong. "This is an excellent project showing how innovative policy can meet multiple social goals. Not only are we encouraging healthy lifestyles with this project, we are also reducing our carbon footprint."

This innovative 17 week project – the first of its kind in Canada – provides \$15 per week in coupons to low-income families that will be used to buy any of the fresh produce, herbs, meats, eggs or other local unprepared foods typically found at farmers' markets. Eligible families will be identified by a non-profit organization in each community and coupons will be distributed on a weekly basis.

"Farmers' markets are largely about connecting customers with the local people who grow and produce fresh, healthy foods," said Bruce Fatkin, manager of the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market. "This initiative provides opportunity to introduce markets to young families within a creative and supportive program."

The Abbotsford Farm and Country Market is on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Montrose Avenue, north of George Ferguson Way.