



For Immediate Release

BC Farmers' Markets Bring Annual Conference for Growers, Vendors and Market Organizers to the Columbia Basin

Farmers' market vendors and organizers from across the province will gather in Kimberley to connect, learn and advance the local food sector with workshops, networking events and training

March 5, 2019 (VANCOUVER, BC) – For the first time in 20 years, the [BC Association of Farmers' Markets](#) (BCAFM) is taking their conference on the road to the Columbia Basin and Kootenay Rockies region thanks to the support of presenting sponsor, [Columbia Basin Trust](#). The conference, titled [Cultivating Community](#), runs from March 8 to 10, 2019 in Kimberley with farmers' market organizers, growers, small-scale food businesses, artisans and community leaders from across the province taking part in workshops, trainings, and various networking events to advance the local food sector.

"We are thrilled to have our conference in Kimberley and be able to connect directly with the region's farmers' markets, vendors and community. This area is known as a hub for fresh local food and farming, and is home to over 20 of our BCAFM member farmers' markets," says Wylie Bystedt, BCAFM president. "The conference is a unique opportunity for farmers and market organizers from across the region and province to gather and address critical issues, such as regional marketing strategies and other sector needs, that individual vendors and markets can't tackle alone."

"Bringing this conference to the Columbia Basin for the first time is great for this region's farmers' markets as so many more will be able to attend and take away tools to continue strengthening their efforts," said Johnny Strilaeff, Columbia Basin Trust President and Chief Executive Officer. "Fostering this opportunity for producers, processors and farmers is one of the ways we're supporting agriculture businesses to flourish and grow, which enables residents to have access to healthy, local food."

The conference includes over 15 workshop sessions that cover a range of topics from regional farmland matching initiatives, developing farmers' markets in rural areas and assessing the profitability of farmers' market businesses to starting farm marketing co-ops, social media storytelling, regional marketing strategies, and how farmers' markets and food hubs can work together.

Speakers include [Greg McLaren](#) of Farm Food Drink, [Josie Cale](#) of the Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services, [Paige Dampier](#) of Close to Home Organics, [Hailey Troock](#) of the Young Agrarians, [Livia Lara](#) of Cranbrook Farmer's Market, [Stuart Anderson](#) of Community Futures North Okanagan and Belinda Ewald-Middleton of Destination BC. The conference and festivities are organized by the BCAFM in partnership with the [Kimberley](#) and [Cranbrook Farmer's Markets](#).

Highlights of the weekend include the sixth annual [Farmers' Market Awards Gala](#), which will feature a locally sourced dinner and recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to BC's farmers' market sector and local food system. The top farmers' markets, market manager, vendor, volunteer and community partner of 2018 will be honoured at the Awards Gala, Saturday, March 9 at the Kimberley Conference Centre.

Members of the public are invited to attend the conference, or register for a single workshop or networking event. Tickets and information are available on the [BCAFM website](#).

The BCAFM is a registered society that represents over 145 farmers' markets across BC. Its mission is to develop, promote and strengthen the capacity of farmers' markets in all regions of the province. Visit www.bcfarmersmarket.org to learn more or find a farmers' market near you.

Webpage: bcfarmersmarket.org/markets/bcafm-conference-agm

Tickets: available for purchase on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/BCAFM](https://www.facebook.com/BCAFM)

Twitter: [@BCFarmersMarket](https://twitter.com/BCFarmersMarket)

Instagram: [@bcfarmersmarket](https://www.instagram.com/bcfarmersmarket)

Hashtag: #BCAFM2019

Contact: Georgia Stanley, BCAFM Communications Manager

georgia@bcfarmersmarket.org (office) [604-734-9797](tel:604-734-9797), (cell) [778-713-1220](tel:778-713-1220)