



BC ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS' MARKETS

Issue: May 2015

Message from the President: Jon Bell

Spring has arrived which means farmers' market season is upon us. Earlier this year, we hosted our annual conference & AGM on Vancouver Island, which brought together more than 100 attendees, from all corners of the province and beyond (all the way from Nova Scotia to Haida Gwaii and Creston to Salt Spring Island). Listening in on workshops and conversations over coffee, I couldn't help but notice the remarkable level of energy, inspiration and camaraderie. Whether your markets are small, bustling or struggling to stay afloat, your contributions through sharing your experiences are appreciated and help us all continue our work towards a strong local food system and thriving communities.

In advance of our Annual General meeting a number of changes were proposed to the BCAFMs membership fees and bylaws. We recently sent you an email regarding the outcomes. More details can be found on our [website](#). Proposed changes to the [BCAFM bylaws](#) were accepted with more than 75 per cent of the majority vote, while the motion to approve proposed changes to the [BCAFM member fees](#) failed.

Lastly, I leave you with an interesting tidbit: The 68th United Nations General Assembly declared 2015 the [International Year of Soils](#). For someone like me, who specializes in plant pathology and botany, this is wonderful news. Soil, often overlooked, is the basis of agriculture and essential for health and food security. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has put together some wonderful resources, facts and infographics, which I would encourage you to share.

Best of luck on your upcoming market season.

Jon Bell
BCAFM President

2015 BCAFMs Board of Directors

We are pleased to announce the BCAFMs 2015 Board of Directors:

President: [Jon Bell](#) (Sechelt)
Vice President: [Wylie Bystedt](#) (Quesnel)
Treasurer: [Bruce Fatkin](#) (Abbotsford)
Secretary: [Erna Jensen](#) (Cranbrook)
Director: [Helen Fathers](#) (White Rock)

Director: [Rubina Jamal](#) (North Vancouver)
Director: [Cat Majors](#) (Armstrong)
Director: [Shankar Raina](#) (Whistler)
Director: [Ron Tamis](#) (Surrey)

Introducing Rubina: The Newest Addition to the BCAFM Board

Rubina has a law degree from the London School of Economics. She practiced law in Kenya prior to moving to Canada, and was accredited to practice law in British Columbia in 2000. Rubina has served on the boards of several organizations, including the Royal Roads University (2008-2013), where she served as the chair of the Governance & Nominating Committee. In recent years Rubina has shifted her interest to food security initiatives. She has been a member of the Table Matters Network Steering Committee since 2010 and is currently project coordinator of the Scaling-up Food Rescue Project on the North Shore.

Conference Goodies!



Every year at the end of each conference, we pack up and head back to Vancouver, exhausted but inspired, thinking, “that was the best conference, yet!”

Thank you to all who joined us this past February in beautiful Cowichan Bay. We hope you enjoyed the conference, the workshops sessions, the banquet and awards dinner, and everything in between. We hope the weekend provided an opportunity to catch-up, share, and exchange ideas with others involved in farmers markets from across BC.

Conference Downloads & Links

- [Workshop presentations](#)
- [Image gallery](#)
- [2015 Farmers Market Award Winners](#)
- [Workshop videos](#)

What attendees are saying...

- "Once again the conference was a very worthwhile event....Thank you for creating an event that increases our knowledge, provides networking opportunities, and is strengthening farmers markets as an industry."
- "As usual, reuniting friendships from past years [was most beneficial]. This year, I was more aware of new market managers. The size of the group was good for mingling. The hotel chef outdid herself. The food and its presentation was superb. Thank you for all the work you all do."
- "The conference overall was very well run with a good variety of speakers and lots to learn!"

BCAFM Membership

Have you renewed your [BCAFM farmers' market membership](#)?

[Membership applications](#) are available on our website.

For membership benefits and how to apply or renew, visit our [website](#). And, don't forget to update your web listing on the BCAFM [market finder](#).

Cultivating Community at Farmers' Markets Series

Cultivating Community at Farmers' Markets Series Part 4: Access for Lower Income Consumers

Courtesy of Kelly Hodgins, Masters Candidate in local food systems at the University of Guelph

You can access Kelly's full publication, *Cultivating Community at the Farmers' Market: Successful initiatives, as shared by managers and boards* [here](#).

With the same motivation of providing "good food for all," some markets are trying to directly reach out to low-income individuals, rather than (or in addition to) partnering with emergency food providers.

Successful Ideas:

Expanding the BCAFM Coupon Program: Markets that have had success with the Nutrition Coupon Program have indicated their interest in expanding it. There are a number of

reasons for this: -they don't receive sufficient funding to meet the demand from community members

- They want to be able to change some of the rules to accommodate specific circumstances in their community and at their market
- They want the program to be more resilient, not wholly based upon government funding
- Their market runs in the winter too, so they wish to help families with coupons year-round.

Annual fundraisers can help raise this money.

The Squamish Farmers' Market has successfully partnered with their local credit union, Squamish Savings, to allow more than 20 families and seniors to get involved in the coupon program. They use the BCAFM model, simply injecting the donated funds and piggybacking on the existing program infrastructure.



A few markets are asking local businesses for funds, framing the approach as “sponsorship.” That is, the business is asked to donate money to offer a season's worth of coupons to one or more families. They have asked the BCAFM to improve the program by offering a sponsorship package, which would make approaching businesses easier.

Other Ideas: For markets that offer “market dollars” or “market tokens,” encourage customers to donate these to a jar for a charity that can give them to low-income consumers.

For markets that have a POS system to exchange debit or credit for market dollars, consider charging a \$1 fee or having a “tip” option. Use the money gained from this to support food-insecure individuals in your town (for example: use the accumulated dollars to purchase farmers' produce for the food bank or to donate market vouchers to social-service organizations).

The Haney Farmers Market has a \$15 membership program for customers where “Friends of the Market” receive a book of coupons, discounts on monthly Member Appreciation Days, and a newsletter of special events. The Vancouver Farmers' Market offers a similar program, with different membership sizes, and the North Saanich Farm Market offers another set of member benefits to provide you some examples.

The Vancouver Farmers' Markets host “Seniors Days” offering discounts for seniors, as well as a nurse to provide blood pressure checks and a dietician to give dietary advice and answer questions.

Pay your musicians with products donated from vendors (see image for how well this works at the Comox Valley Farmers' Market); or offer market vouchers/tokens to start-up videographers, photographers, or artists in exchange for promotional material for the market.

The Celist Hall Farmers' Market is giving every elementary school student in the small local

school a five-dollar coupon for the market. This is partly a way to make fresh products more affordable, but also, says Patsy Alford, market manager, “a way to encourage families to come to the market for the first time, to educate children about local food, and to invest in the market vendors.”

Accessibility: Some markets have been able to work with their municipality or regional district to get public transportation to the market. Another idea for markets where transportation poses challenges is to facilitate a ride-share program, either through sign-up at the market, or online through a tab on the market website, or via a heavily-trafficked site such as Facebook.