



**For Immediate Release**

## **Comox Valley to host farmers from across BC at annual conference, AGM**

**Feb. 22, 2012, Courtenay, BC** – With a year-round farmers market, containing local products that range from organic wasabi to bison, coupled with the regions' efforts to increase investment and economic activity in agriculture, it's really no wonder why Vancouver Island's Comox Valley was picked as the hosting grounds for the 13th-annual conference and AGM for the BC Association of Farmers' Markets.

Scheduled to take place March 2 - 3, 2012, this year's conference, "For the Love of Farmers' Markets," will be held in the Comox Valley at the Best Western PLUS – The Westerly Hotel & Convention Centre, in partnership with the Comox Valley Farmers' Market Association. Highlights include a keynote address about market integrity from Stacy Miller, executive director of the Farmers Market Coalition; sessions on how to measure social and economic impact and position a market for success; and roundtable and breakout discussions.

"The Comox Valley is known as a hub for agriculture and it's an honour to welcome farmers from across the province to our region, showing off the bounty from our land and sea," said Murray Presley, president, Comox Valley Economic Development, one of the event sponsors. "Our region is unique in that it has a popular, year-round farmers market – instead of packing up in the wintertime, our climate and demand for the product enables our progressive producers to continue to meet the demand throughout the seasons."

In addition to providing opportunities to network and share ideas, conference will be beneficial to market organizers, farm direct marketers, vendors and stakeholders interested in starting (or growing) community farmers markets.

"This is the one time of the year that markets have a chance to share ideas and talk about successes and challenges, face to face," said Elizabeth Quinn, Manager, BC Association Farmers' Market Association. "Each year, themes emerge – helping us direct our action in the coming year. We are always happy to hear new voices."

The conference kicks off on Friday, March 2 from 7 to 9 p.m. with a welcoming reception, continuing on Saturday, March 3 with welcoming remarks from Minister of Agriculture, Don McRae, and a day of workshops, panels, roundtables and breakout sessions. After the conference closes at 4:45 p.m., the BC Association of Farmers' Markets will hold their Annual General Meeting and election, starting at 5 p.m.

For full details or to register, visit [www.bcfarmersmarket.org/conference/index.htm](http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/conference/index.htm) or call 604-734-9797.

### **About the Comox Valley**

Located halfway up Vancouver Island's east coast, the Comox Valley abounds with culinary bounty from land and sea. The region has been activity focused on the Agrifood sector and its business retention and enhancement as well as new agriinvestment attraction and is considered a leader in the development and support of the sector. For more information, visit [www.agrifoodcomoxvalley.com](http://www.agrifoodcomoxvalley.com)



**About the BC Association of Farmers' Markets**

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets, a not-for-profit organization committed to developing and strengthening the capacity of farmers' markets in all regions of British Columbia.

**About the Comox Valley Farmers' Market Association**

The Comox Valley Farmers' Market Association is a non-profit organization committed to: promoting the economic health of the local farm community, providing quality locally grown farm products, educating the community in agricultural issues, and promoting local agriculture.

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