

British Columbia Association Of Farmers' Markets

Presidents Report 2007

After several years with the board of directors enjoying the fruits of an organization with a paid staff member, the wheels fell of the cart this spring after the Annual General Meeting. The board quickly took stock, addressed paying down the debt and continued with services to members, as well as implementing some new initiatives.

As reported at the BCAFM 2006 conference and again at the Chilliwack General Meeting, David Connells' report- Economic and Community Impact of Farmers' Markets was completed. Agriculture Minister Pat Bell released the finding in a press conference in November. This resulted in a number of other local media releases celebrating the successes of farmers markets throughout B.C. 118.5 million dollars of economic activity generated in B.C. by farmers markets are numbers to be proud of! The study also highlighted the benefits of agriculture sustainability and community building fostered at farmers markets. The results of this report can be used by both new and established markets in showing governments the real values and benefits of supporting a viable farm based market in their locale.

A key area in the BCAFM strategic plan addresses Farmers' market visibility. Directors are currently preparing a BC wide brochure of farmers markets. The BCAFM website at www.bcfarmersmarkets.org has all B.C. farmers markets listed and has additional information about the BCAFM member markets. While online check the pages of insurance information, advice for shoppers, vendors or market managers. Curious about the strategic plan? -Read it online .The farmers market highway signage program is ongoing in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture. There are links on the website.

The third area identified in the strategic plan addresses education and training. As well as the 2006 annual conference workshops, this year we held a general membership meeting in Chilliwack which illustrated agri-tourism opportunities, reported on the Chefs to Market pilot and had information on the BC Ministry of Health upcoming guidelines for farmers' markets. To take advantage of the proximity of the North American Direct Marketing Conference (held in Calgary this year) the association is holding the 2007 AGM at the conference to maximize member benefits and training, with the high caliber workshops available. Enjoy yourselves, broaden your networking, and good farming.

Don Parmenter
Chair BCAFM