



For Immediate Release

### BC Farmers' Markets Awards Name the Best of the Province

March 6, 2018 (VICTORIA, BC) – With spring just around the corner, the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) celebrated the best of B.C. with its fifth annual [BC Farmers' Market Awards](#). The event was held over the weekend at the Inn at Laurel Point in Victoria, and celebrated individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to B.C.'s farmers' market sector.

Awards were selected by a panel of leading professionals in the sector, including Dr. David Connell, from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Jon Bell, farmer and former BCAFAM president, and Elizabeth Quinn, former BCAFAM executive director. The judges selected the following winners as the best of 2017 from nominations received throughout the province:

- Farmers' Market of the Year (Large, 61+ vendors): [Nat Bailey Winter Farmers Market](#) (Vancouver Farmers Markets)
- Farmers' Market of the Year (Medium, 21-60 vendors): [Esquimalt Farmers Market](#)
- Farmers' Market of the Year (Small, up to 20 vendors): [North Island Farmer's & Artisan's Market](#) (Port McNeill)
- Farmers' Market Manager of the Year: [Katrina Duwilt](#), [Esquimalt Farmers Market](#)
- Farmers' Market Vendor of the Year (farmer): [Friesen Farm](#) (Abbotsford)
- Farmers' Market Vendor of the Year (non-farmer): [Lita's Mexican Foods](#) (Vancouver)
- Farmers' Market Volunteer of the Year: [Alice Chan](#) ([Vancouver Farmers Markets](#))
- Partner of the Year: [You Gotta Have Friends Program](#) (Langley Senior Centre)

"The judges were impressed by the exemplary caliber of all the nominees, their initiative and ongoing work to strengthen the local food economy and to contribute to their communities," said Quinn.

The Nat Bailey Winter Farmers Market, operated by the Vancouver Farmers Markets, won Market of the Year in the large (61+ vendors) category. "We are so excited that the Nat Bailey Winter Farmers Market was recognized as the best farmers market by the BCAFAM this year," said Laura Smit, Vancouver Farmers Markets operations manager. "Now, after running for over 10 years, thousands of people bundle up, rain, shine or snow, to pick up their weekly groceries and, with a ready market, area farmers are increasing the variety of foods available in the winter - from fresh mustard greens and purple-sprouting broccoli to juiced, frozen and preserved apples and berries. This market has revolutionized the way Vancouver and BC farmers think about winter food and we've all learned that carrots and kale taste sweetest in the winter."

The Esquimalt Farmers Market won in the medium market category, and was recognized for its creative and innovative work, including initiatives to achieve a waste free market, the collection of food donations for community members in need, as well as the "barking lot" dog sitting service offered in partnership with the BC SPCA. The farmers' market was praised as a family friendly gathering place, and a highly anticipated feature of the community every week through the summer. Katrina Duwilt, the Esquimalt Farmers Market manager also won Farmers' Market Manager of the Year. She is a founding member of the market and 2018 will be her fourth season serving as manager.

Winner of Vendor of the Year in the farmer category has been selling at the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market since 2004. Ann and Albert Friesen of Friesen Farm were noted for their community contributions and dedication to supporting the development of their local farmers' market in Abbotsford by serving on the board of directors and mentoring new vendors - not to mention their generous donation of marigold plants to mothers on Mother's Day.

The Farmers' Market Awards were part of the BCAFAM's annual conference, *Growing Together*, organized by the BCAFAM in partnership with three local Victoria area farmers' markets: [Esquimalt](#), [James Bay](#), and [Moss Street](#). A list of all of the winners, and photos are available on the BCAFAM [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](http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org) to learn more or find a farmers' market near you.

-30-

Webpage: <http://bcfarmersmarket.org/markets/subpage/farmers-market-awards-best-2017>

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

Twitter: [@BCFarmersMarket](https://twitter.com/BCFarmersMarket) #BCAFM2018

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

#### Contact

Georgia Stanley, BCAFm Communications Manager

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