

For Immediate Release

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BC Farmers' Markets Head To Vancouver Island For Annual Conference, Thrive!

(Vancouver, British Columbia) - Farmers, artisans, chefs and farmers' market organizers from across the province will gather in Cowichan Bay on Vancouver Island for the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) annual conference, *Thrive*, February 20 to 22, 2015.

Over the course of three days, *Thrive* will bring together BC's diverse farmers' market community to delve into issues affecting the sector such as producer workshops on how to increase sales at markets, new regulations affecting the use of the term "organic" and first year results of the sale of BC beer, wine, and spirits at farmers' markets.

Thrive will also address BC's flourishing local food movement with a series of workshops and presentations by Michelle Wolf, Director of Training for Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia.

"BC farmers' markets have continued to grow and thrive over the last few years, becoming an important part of BC's agricultural landscape," said Elizabeth Quinn, Executive Director of the BCAFM. "The conference presents a unique opportunity for us to leverage the growing support for local food. From the future of the ALR and farmland to strategies for successful small markets and working with local governments, this is an event that focuses on supporting local food and food security in our communities."

Don Genova, BC-based award-winning freelance food journalist, will be the Master of Ceremonies at the Saturday Night Banquet and Farmers' Market Awards Gala, taking place Saturday, February 21. Outstanding farmers' markets, market managers, volunteers, and vendors will also be recognized at the 2nd annual [BC Farmers' Market Awards](#) ceremony.

A portion of ticket proceeds from the banquet will go towards the [BCAFM's Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program](#), which supports low-income families, pregnant women and seniors in accessing fresh, locally produced food at BC farmers' markets. The conference and banquet are open to the public with weekend passes or individual workshop tickets available for purchase on the [BCAFM website](#). The event will take place at the Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay on Vancouver Island.

The conference is made possible through the support of Vancity, the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia, FOODSAFE and MarketSafe in partnership with the Duncan Farmers' Market.

The B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets is a registered B.C. society that represents over 125 farmers' markets across BC. Its mission is to develop, promote and strengthen

the capacity of farmers' markets. The BCAFM was founded in 2000 and operates out of Vancouver. Visit www.bcfarmersmarket.org for more information.

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