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Province injects \$85K into campaign to promote farmers' markets



By Kelowna Capital News

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The BC Association of Farmers' Markets is aiming to target new customers after the province announced \$85,000 in funding Wednesday.

The campaign will take place across B.C. in the 2014 summer market season and will engage all of BCAFM's 100 member markets.

The plan is to utilize social media tools including Facebook and Twitter in combination with media ads and online incentives and contests to raise awareness of local farmers' markets across B.C. The primary target will be women between the ages of 25 and 45.

A video will also be produced for placement on the BCAFM's, as well as other markets' websites.

"We have a goal in our province to take the agriculture industry from \$10.5 billion per year to \$14 billion by 2017," said Agriculture Minister Pat Pimm.

"This is one of the ways that we're looking at doing it."

The agriculture minister added the program will target a "whole different crowd" to shop at farmers' markets throughout the province.

"As local farmers, we have to stay up with the times...that's what it's going to take to grow our industry."

Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market manager Bob Callioux said he believes Kelowna will directly benefit from the investment announcement.

"It's going to educate people about the local products and the health benefits behind them," said Callioux.

Kelowna's market has seen significant growth over its 18 year history, according to Callioux.

"We started in 1995 with four vendors—today we're up to 165 vendors, with 60 per cent of that being farm product. Back then we only had a few shoppers, now we're up to 20,000 shoppers a week that come through the market."

Callioux predicted \$10 million was spent at the local market last year. He is optimistic campaigns like the one announced Wednesday will help that number grow.

Elizabeth Quinn, executive director of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets, said Vancity will also contribute \$70,000 to the campaign.

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