
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

FARMERS' MARKETS WORTH \$118.5 MILLION TO B.C. ECONOMY

ABBOTSFORD – A study has shown that B.C.'s farmers' markets contribute \$118.5 million annually to the provincial economy, Agriculture and Lands Minister Pat Bell announced today.

The study for the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets shows British Columbians spend \$65.3 million directly at farmers' markets and another \$53.2 million at neighbouring businesses. The results of the study are based on surveys of 7,100 market customers and 446 one-on-one interviews.

"These findings really are amazing," Bell said. "I think everyone knows that farmers' markets are popular, but I don't think anyone realized just how important a contribution they make to the economic health of our province. This study not only puts numbers on that contribution but also reinforces the connection British Columbians have with our farming community."

Funding (cash and/or in-kind support) for the study came from the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF), the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets and the University of Northern British Columbia and its School of Environmental Planning.

"This lack of data has hampered the ability of new and existing farmers' markets to plan for the future," IAF chair Bert Miles said. "We agreed to invest in this project to help fill this gap, contribute to broader efforts to build local food systems, and support the overall development and diversification of B.C. agricultural industry."

Farmers' markets benefit more than just a community's economy, said Don Parmenter, president of the BCAFM.

"The study found that many people spend about half their time at a farmers' market simply talking to their friends and neighbours," Parmenter said. "This social aspect helps build and strengthen a community and will help the BCAFM in efforts to grow and expand B.C.'s farmers' markets."

The IAF is a non-profit, industry-led organization responsible for administering and delivering federally- and provincially-funded programs that support innovative projects that advance the agriculture and food sectors in B.C.

To view the complete study, please visit www.unbc.ca/planning/localfood/

Audio clips of Minister Bell talking about the importance of farmers' markets are available at: www.mediaroom.gov.bc.ca//DisplayEventDetails.aspx?eventId=329

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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