

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2009AL0014-000502  
October 18, 2009

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

### **FAIR AWARDS HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE**

VERNON – The B.C. Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions’ (BCAAFE) annual awards banquet showcases the importance of agricultural fairs and how they connect the public to one of B.C.’s most vital sectors, Minister of Agriculture and Lands Steve Thomson announced today.

“British Columbians are very privileged to have so many great agricultural fairs in communities across the province,” said Thomson. “Fairs in B.C. are a tradition and they’re one of the best ways to help the public understand the importance of farming and where our food comes from.”

Thomson attended the BCAAFE banquet last night to present some of the annual awards that recognize the top fairs in the province, including the award for Agricultural Achievement. Fairs in B.C. usually attract more than 1.5 million people each year, and although official numbers aren’t in yet, attendance for 2009 appears to have increased.

“We’re so proud of all of our member fairs,” said Janine Saw, executive director of the BCAAFE. “All of the fair volunteers and vendors work hard to showcase the best of B.C. food, animals and products, and I think this year’s attendance shows they’re still doing it in a way that’s really fun for B.C. families.”

Thomson announced \$9,500 provided through the Investment Agriculture Foundation to help fund a five-year strategic plan for the BCAAFE. In 2010, the BCAAFE celebrates its centennial and will undertake strategic planning to make sure that the association continues to be a strong resource for B.C. fairs.

“I’m happy that we were able to help B.C. fairs in this important task of strategic planning,” said Thomson. “It’s good to see the association planning for the future so that B.C. fairs will continue to be a strong connection to agriculture.”

For more information about B.C.’s fairs and exhibitions, visit [www.bcfairs.ca](http://www.bcfairs.ca).

-30-

A backgrounder follows.

-more-

## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **B.C. FAIRS CELEBRATES AGRICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Minister of Agriculture and Lands Steve Thomson attended the B.C. Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions (BCAAFE) awards banquet on Saturday night to present the following awards for top evaluation scores:

Division #1 (Attendance 3,000 & under): Pender Island Fall Fair  
Division #2 (Attendance 3,001 – 20,000): Comox Valley Exhibition  
Division #3 (Attendance 20,001 and over): Vancouver Island Exhibition

Each of the winners received a plaque and a \$1,000 cheque from the BCAAFE.

Minister Thomson also presented a plaque and a \$500 cheque from the BCAAFE for Agricultural Achievement of the Year Award to the Interior Provincial Exhibition of Armstrong, B.C. Agricultural achievement is defined as any special agricultural accomplishment such as the introduction of a significant new idea, a major facility or grounds development, dealing with adversity or receiving recognition from the community for agriculture.

The B.C. Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions (BCAAFE) Annual Awards Program is designed to recognize the organizations and individuals who excel in the following categories.

- A Showcase of Your 2009 Fair (based on 2008 attendance division)
- Milestone Award
- Agricultural Achievement of the Year Award
- Distinguished Service Award
- Unique Idea Award
- Blooper Award
- Industry Service Provider Award
- Member's Choice Awards
- Agricultural Education Exhibits (new award for 2009, based on 2008 attendance division)
- Economic Importance Exhibits (new award for 2009, based on 2008 attendance division)

A complete list of this year's award winners will be available in the upcoming BCAAFE newsletter at [www.bcfairs.ca](http://www.bcfairs.ca).

-30-

Contact: Jessica McLachlin  
Public Affairs Bureau  
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands  
250 356-1674  
250 812-8368 (cell)

Janine Saw  
Executive Director  
B.C. Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions  
778 574-4082  
604 505-4920 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca).