



For Immediate Release

B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets Launches New MarketSafe Training Program

Penticton, B.C., March 13, 2010 – The B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) and the B.C. FOODSAFE Secretariat today announced the new MarketSafe Food Safety Training Program at a ceremony to honour the first graduates of the program.

The Honourable Member of Parliament Stockwell Day Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, President of the Treasury Board and Member of Parliament (Okanagan-Coquihalla) and Honourable Steve Thomson, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Lands were present to issue certificates to program graduates at a special ceremony at the BCAFM's annual conference "New Partners – New Opportunities: Working Together for the Future" in Penticton.

With the growing popularity of farmers' markets, coupled with emerging concerns about food safety, the MarketSafe Training Program is designed for people who make, bake or grow products to sell at farmers' markets, farm gates or other temporary markets in B.C. and across Canada. The food safety training program is the first training in Canada designed specifically for farmers' markets.

"We are very excited about the MarketSafe program because it's the first of its kind in Canada," said BCAFM president Mary Forstbauer. "MarketSafe will be recognized by health authorities across the province as the standard to be set for farmers' markets and other direct marketers. We thank the Investment Agriculture Foundation for their support of the BCAFM strategic plan by supplying the funding."

MarketSafe is a five-hour interactive and dynamic classroom-based training program. Topics include the causes of foodborne illness; methods of transmission; high and low risk foods; allergies; and specific steps to control contamination at every stage of the market process, including preparation, storage, packaging, labelling, transportation, display and sampling. The program is applicable to all provinces and jurisdictions, with suitable adaptations for differences in guidelines and legislation outside B.C.

MarketSafe was developed through a partnership between the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets and the B.C. FOODSAFE Secretariat. Funding for this project was provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food program. In B.C., federal adaptation funding is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF). MarketSafe is a component of the IAF-funded implementation of BCAFM's strategic plan.

The MarketSafe student workbooks and instructor's manual will be available for purchase through Crown Publications, Queen's Printer by early April 2010. For more information about the MarketSafe program, contact the B.C. FOODSAFE Secretariat at 250-370-4779 or by email at foodsafety@foodsafety.ca.

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