

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***REGIONAL FARMERS' MARKET SHOWCASE TO GROW AGRI-TOURISM***

COURTENAY – Changing consumer demand is leading to a surge in local farmers' markets. A new regional marketing campaign, led by the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM), and supported with funding from the Island Coastal Economic Trust, will help strengthen the connection to local farmers and farmers' markets, which serve as important destinations in the growing agri-tourism sector.

Building on the success of the BC Farmers' Market Trail campaign, which provides digital tools and other information to support trip planning to more than 145 farmers' markets across the province, this project will create a regional showcase of farmers' markets located across the Island and Sunshine Coast.

"Many people are taking an active interest in local small-scale food producers, and farmers' markets are the primary direct sales channel for thousands of farmers and food processors across the province," said Heather O'Hara, BCAFME Executive Director. "This project is a natural fit to meet growing agri-tourism demand while directly supporting local farmers and the local economy."

The Island and Coast regional showcase will include micro website landing pages for several dozen markets located within the region, providing in-depth features on each market, compelling imagery as well as select product and farmer profiles. As visual and narrative content is developed, a social media campaign, brochure, and media strategy will be rolled-out across the Island and Sunshine Coast region.

Farmers' markets are a crucial point-of-sale for small agri-food producers in our region and are now also growing into a significant tourism draw," said ICET Chair Josie Osborne. "The same way we see visitors booking vacations around wine tourism or craft brewing, people are now choosing locations to visit based on the number and quality of stops along the Farmers' Market Trail."

The project will receive \$30,000 from the Regional Marketing funding stream of ICET's Economic Development Readiness program. It is expected to get underway in spring with completion anticipated by December 2019.

More information about the BC Farmers Market Trail can be found at: [bcfarmersmarkettrail.com](http://bcfarmersmarkettrail.com).



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

### **About the Island Coastal Economic Trust**

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) has been at the forefront of economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization for the past twelve years.

ICET is independently governed by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials, MLAs and appointees from the Island and Coast. This exceptional team of leaders collaborate to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community centered decision-making process, ICET has approved more than \$50 million in funding for over 200 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2500 construction phase jobs and 2600 long term permanent jobs.

A full overview of ICET can be found at [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca)

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