

Social & Community Impact



Vancouver Farmers Markets (VFM) advocates that access to affordable, fresh locally-grown foods is the right of all British Columbians.

Founded in 1995, VFM is a leading Vancouver not-for-profit that began as a grassroots community effort to bring more fresh, locally-grown foods to the east-Vancouver neighbourhoods of Cedar Cottage and Grandview Woodlands, while at the same time supporting small regional farmers and food entrepreneurs, and offering a regular, weekly space where neighbours could re-connect as a community.

In our 23 years of operations we have grown to function as a social enterprise that for many is the bridge from farm to table.

VFM's expanding network of neighbourhood markets successfully brings the healthiest, freshest foods directly to over 450,000 Vancouverites each year. Our vibrant, weekly markets also benefit the community by:

- + serving as bountiful sources of locally-grown food
- + creating robust opportunities for weekly community connection
- + acting as Vancouver's largest food and artisan business incubator
- + building local food access for all people, and
- + playing a key role in sustaining BC's regional agricultural and food economies

Further social and community benefits of Vancouver Farmers Markets include:

+ VFM's Fresh to Families Project will provide four months of weekly access to fresh, local food for over 250 low-income families, newly-arrived refugees, and at-risk expectant mothers in 2017. This access is made possible through direct public donations to VFM's Fresh to Families Donor Advised Fund at Vancity Foundation, and multi-year funding from Whole Foods Market and the Province of BC

+ VFM's Fresh Food Donation Stations annually collect 3,000+ pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables for meal and snack programs at Vancouver's inner-city schools, hospices, women's and seniors centres, and community food programs

+ VFM supports urban youth farming initiatives such as Fresh Roots and emerging artisans from Vancouver's DTES Artists Collective with \$2,000 worth of free stall spaces at the markets in 2017

+ VFM actively promotes numerous urban farming schools, business start-ups and social enterprises such as Sole Food Street Farms and Tsawwassen Farm School

+ VFM's new farm aggregation & distribution service, VFM Direct, is increasing public access to locally-grown foods from small BC farmers by aggregating and delivering products twice-weekly to Vancouver institutions such as UBC Food Services and BC Women and Children's Hospital

+ VFM annually donates 140 table spaces to non-profits and neighbourhood groups for the purpose of education and community outreach

+ Our 120 volunteers donate over 1,000 hours of service to programming at the markets each year

+ In a province with more small farmers than any other in Canada (22,000+) and where only 5% of land is reserved for agriculture, VFM's small scale producers keep 6,000 acres of BC farmland productive annually

+ VFM run several food festivals, tastings, and educational demos at our markets throughout the year – all of which are free to the public

