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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Agriculture

### **Growing Healthy Communities: Lillooet gets ready to Grow Local**

LILLOOET – Residents of the northern St’át’imc territory and the greater Lillooet region will be growing more local food in 2017 as the Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society (LAFS) begins its “Growing Healthy Communities” project.

The project is a result of the Society’s successful application to the B.C. government’s Grow Local Program for \$25,000.

The “Growing Healthy Communities” project will deliver tailored events, workshops and seminars in the District of Lillooet, Area B of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and each of the northern St’át’imc communities, on growing and harvesting activities both in and out of season. Participants will learn about soil preparation; seed selections; crop care; harvesting, processing and storing produce; crop diversification; natural pest management solutions and winter crops.

LAFS is an independent non-profit society created in 2016 to implement the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District’s award-winning Area B, District of Lillooet & St’át’imc Agricultural Plan. The organization’s mission is, in essence, to grow more growers, by supporting the local farmers, ranchers, growers and other passionate individuals who are building a sustainable food system to serve local communities, the province and beyond.

The \$250,000 Grow Local program is funding projects in 10 B.C. communities. The projects are designed to:

- involve residents in growing local fruit and vegetables;
- increase awareness and appreciation for supporting local food production; and
- strengthen local food supply security.

The 10 projects include the developing resources on how to grow local food, group education and awareness activities, such as workshops, mini-courses, and “how-to” demonstrations, and one-on-one consultation and advice. The application process was administered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

The BC Agrifoods and Seafood Strategic Growth Plan identifies the next steps in the B.C. government’s goal to grow the B.C. agrifoods industry to a \$15-billion-dollar-a-year sector by 2020. Grow Local BC will assist in maintaining food supply security, a challenge identified in the strategic growth plan.

#### **Quotes:**

**Jackie Tegart, Fraser-Nicola MLA –**

“The Grow Local program is a great way to support local food production, get involved in the community, and learn about getting fresh, nutritious food to our tables.”

**Curtis Cook, president of EcoTactix and consulting executive director of LAFS –**

“We consider this agricultural region among the best in British Columbia, not only because of the fertile soil and unbeatable climate but because of the people. There is a long and respectful tradition of appreciation for the bounty that the Lillooet region provides. It continues to manifest itself in the sustainable agriculture renaissance currently underway as well as in these exciting community initiatives that the Grow Local program is supporting.

**Mickey Macri, director, Electoral Area B, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District –**

“Agriculture is a key opportunity and strength within the SLRD Area B, Northern St’át’imc and Lillooet agriculture food community, to grow the economy, improve our resilience, and continue to build good relationships. We dreamed big with the agricultural plan and while it was great to win an award for that work, it’s what happens now on the ground that is the real measure of our success. This funding will practically help promote agriculture and enable our communities to move towards the vision of food security, one garden plot and new grower at a time. These are the kinds of baby steps we can all take so the entire sector can flourish.”

**Learn More:**

<https://lillooetagricultureandfood.org>

News release announcing Grow Local: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016AGRI0058-001860>

Program background: <http://iafbc.ca/funding-opportunities/grow-local/>

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