



## The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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**For immediate release**

### **MUNICIPALITIES SUPPORT INCREASED AGRICULTURAL FUNDING BY THE PROVINCE**

**July 5th, 2011 (Kelowna) – Municipalities from Vancouver and the Okanagan are calling on the Province to increase public awareness and promote BC Agriculture.**

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Metro Vancouver Board of Directors endorsed a resolution, in support of the BC grown food sector, to be brought forward at the next Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) 2011 Convention taking place this fall. The proposed resolution calls upon the Province to honour the commitment in the BC Agriculture Plan, Growing a Healthy Future for BC Families, to invest in an industry-led marketing program that will increase public awareness and branding for BC grown food and increase support for agricultural extension services. A resolution to request financial support for BC's agriculture sector and promote the sale of locally produced foods has also been approved by members of the Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA) to be endorsed at the next UBCM Convention.

Funding for agriculture programs in British Columbia is poor in relation to other Canadian provinces, which creates a competitive disadvantage and places financial pressure on growers. According to Statistics Canada, in 2010 British Columbia's agriculture sector lost \$87 million; making it the only Canadian province to have negative income that year.

"Our industry has reached a critical point due to depressed market returns. Growers are adamant that it is a matter of survival of their orchards and the industry", stressed Joe Sardinha, President of the BC Fruit Growers' Association. "Our province is not competitive with government support for agriculture, resulting in unfair trade impact on pricing. This is why I am particularly pleased to see the resolutions endorsed by both Metro Vancouver and Southern Interior Local Government Association to increase financial support for agriculture in BC and support local farm families."

The BC Fruit Growers' Association represents 760 family operated farms that provide \$300 million in economic activity, and which mandate is to foster a healthy food system for the long-term prosperity of BC tree fruit growers.

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