



**Honourable George Groeneveld  
Minister  
Agriculture and Rural Development**

**Step It Up Conference  
Awards Banquet**

**Wednesday, February 18, 2009  
7:00 p.m.**

**Black Knight Inn  
Red Deer, Alta**

*Check against delivery*

- Thank you for that kind introduction.
- I am glad to be here and I would like to bring greetings from Premier Ed Stelmach and all my government colleagues.
- It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the Step it Up! Awards...
- ...Thank you to the *Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association* and the *Alberta Farmers' Market Association* for inviting me to present these awards.
- Together these two organizations represent the farm direct marketing industry in Alberta.
- They have many members in common and certainly have a common goal of bringing Alberta grown products to the consumer...
- Collaboration is and cooperation is so important for organizations today...

- ... We see greater success for businesses when they work together.
- That is the definition of synergy...and I applaud that working relationship.
- Now let's celebrate....
- ...We celebrate our achievements in the agriculture industry...
- ...We celebrate the year to come...
- ...Of course we celebrate the coming spring...
- ...And we also celebrate those individuals and businesses that have made an outstanding contribution to our industry.

- I am here today to present to you the winners of:
  - *The Farmers' Market Manager of the Year Award;*
  - *The Market Motivator Award; and*
  - *The Farm Direct Marketer of the Year Award.*

### **The Farmers' Market Manager of the Year Award.**

- First, *The Farmers' Market Manager of the Year* award...
- I would like to recognize the sponsors of this award...
- ...The Cooperators/RBC Agencies, Leduc Branch....
- ...Thank you for your support.
- This award recognizes outstanding accomplishments by a market manager and award winners are evaluated on a number of criteria.

- For the 2008 season the award goes to Harvey and Darlene Sharp... Market managers with the Buck Lake Farmers' Market.
- This husband and wife team has managed the market for the past two years.
- Under their direction, they took a floundering market and revitalized it to become...
- ...”The place to be” on Saturday morning.
- Harvey and Darlene have spent countless hours working for the betterment of the market...
- ...And were instrumental in getting the Buck Lake curling rink upgraded so they could also use the space for the farmers' market.
- Vendor numbers have increased... and customers have responded positively to the changes.
- Congratulations Harvey and Darlene...

## **Market Motivator Award.**

- Now, for the *Market Motivator Award*.
- This award is also sponsored by...
- The Cooperators/RBC Agencies, Leduc Branch....
- ...Thanks again you for your support.
- This award recognizes a farmers' market that produces an exceptional newsletter for their vendors...
- ...And their customers.
- For the 2008 season, this award goes to the St. Albert Farmers' Market for their newsletter titled "The Farmer's Weekly."
- The St. Albert Farmers' Market uses their newsletter as an education and information tool for their vendors.

- It provides helpful hints for vendors to better serve their customers...
- ...Information about upcoming events...
- ...And friendly reminders about do's and don't at the market.
- The layout and writing style make it a pleasure to read.
- Congratulations.
- Debbie Grant, market manager with the St. Albert Farmers' Market, will accept this award on behalf of the market.

## **Farm Direct Marketer of the Year Award.**

- And the final award of the night...
- *The Farm Direct Marketer of the Year Award.*
- This award is sponsored by the Alberta Farm Fresh Producer's Association...
- It recognizes outstanding accomplishments in the area of farm direct marketing by one of the Association's members.
- This year, the award goes to a couple who have a 28-year record...
- ...Of successful marketing of vegetables from their farm east of Edmonton located along the North Saskatchewan River.
- Doug and Evelyn Visser took over the family farm in 1981 and started growing vegetables...

- Over the years they have expanded their operation from 2 acres of vegetables to 75 acres...
- And now work together with their children Janelle and Aaron Herbert and Kevin Visser.
- Doug and Evelyn are being recognized for their hard work, their innovative practices and their successful farming operation...

## Closing Comments

- Please join me in congratulating the winners... and wishing them well in the future.
- Congratulations to all of the recipients on receiving these awards.
- As the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and as a rural Albertan I want nothing but the best for this industry and this province.
- On behalf of all Albertans, thank you for your contributions and commitment to this industry, our communities and our province.
- I hope you all enjoy the rest of the evening ...and the rest of the conference.
- Thank you.