



Celebrating Excellence at Ontario Farmers' Markets

BRIGHTON, February 14, 2020/ - Farmers' Markets Ontario® (FMO) is excited to announce the winners of their Awards of Excellence for the 2019 market season.

"We are very excited to recognize exemplary Farmers' Markets that added value to their communities and the Ontario farmers' market sector this past market season," says Farmers' Markets Ontario® Executive Director, Catherine Clark. "After the success of our inaugural presentation last year, in addition to recognizing the Market of the Year, FMO decided to add two new categories: Best in Innovation and Best Special Event."

The 2019 Farmers' Market of the Year honour goes to the Uxbridge Farmers' Market. The market, managed by Lisa Cooper, will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2020. "The market was dying just four years ago but moving to a new location–The Second Wedge Brewing Company's parking lot–turned things around. Now, the market gets about 600 customers per day during the busy season."

The 2019 Best in Innovation award goes to the Innisfil Farmers' Market. The market, which started in 2011, is managed by Jaime Grant and runs throughout the summer and fall. Last summer, the market implemented a loyalty coin program as a way to give back to its devoted customers. The program featured 2,000 wood coins crafted by hand by high school students and distributed by volunteers to customers to use as currency to buy goods. "People loved the idea of collecting something physical," Grant said. "Maybe it brings back memories of a time when we collected things. It's fun and nostalgic."

The 2019 Best Special Event award goes to the Simcoe Farmers' Market. The market is managed by Carmen Locke and will be celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Its award-winning event was the 2019 farm to table fundraiser supper held last August. Locke says, "The idea for the event came out of necessity– the market was in need of funds for upgrades– but it's turned into so much more." The dinner was held outside the market building where attendees feasted on local food donated by the market's vendors. A silent auction, live auction and local musicians added excitement to the evening.

Farmers' Markets Ontario® is the source for information for Ontario market managers, vendors and consumers.

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