



Ministry of
Agriculture
and Food



Grocery & Specialty Food West 2026 Buy Pavilion Information

Thank you for your interest in exhibiting at the Buy BC Pavilion at the upcoming [Grocery & Specialty Food West \(GSF\) tradeshow](#), Canada's premier western grocery trade show hosted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFG) from Tuesday, April 21, to Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at the Vancouver Convention Centre (East Building).

Please read through this document completely to learn about the opportunity before submitting your application. Questions can be sent to BuyBC@gov.bc.ca.

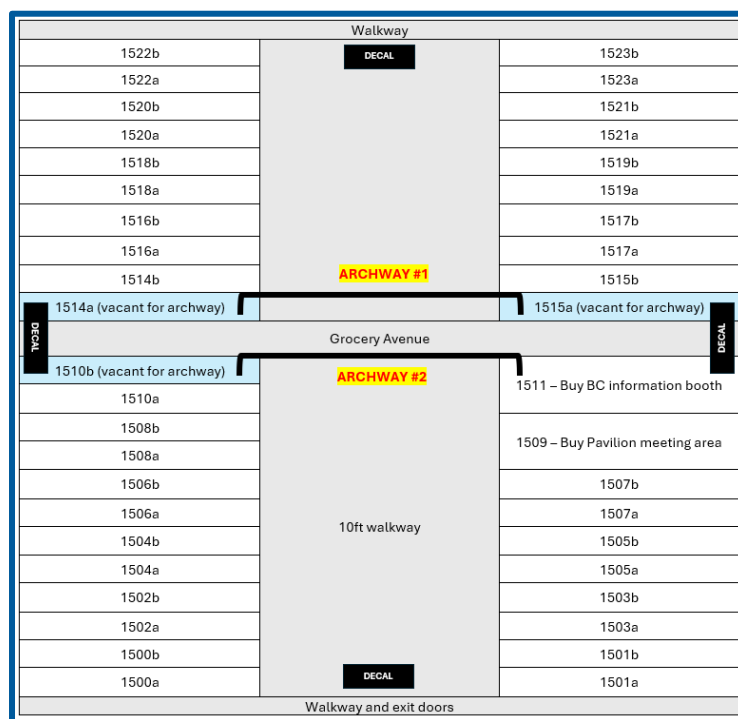


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About

- GSF is Canada’s premier western grocery tradeshow, hosted annually by the CFGI at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Participants include retailers, distributors, warehouse operators, domestic and international producers/processors, and other service providers. Roughly 300 exhibitors and 3,000 attendees are expected at the 2026 show. More information is available on [GSF’s website](#).
- Buy BC is a province-wide marketing program, led by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, that builds greater public awareness, demand, and sales of local agriculture, food, and beverage products within British Columbia. The Buy BC logo provides a trusted symbol for consumers to look for and identify B.C. products. More information is available on [Buy BC’s website](#).
- Since 2024, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food has hosted a Buy BC Pavilion at GSF to showcase Buy BC partners’ products to domestic and international buyers, particularly retailers and distributors.
- Last year, at the 2025 show:
 - 50% of the 36 Buy BC Pavilion exhibitors secured new sales agreements at the show and 94% left GSF with buyer leads (i.e., potential orders)
 - 100% of Buy BC Pavilion exhibitors were either “very satisfied” (75%) or “satisfied” (25%) with exhibiting at the Buy BC Pavilion
 - Three Buy BC Pavilion exhibitors won one of GSF’s ten Best in Grocery awards—a distinction which is advantageous for buyer exposure and marketing materials
- The 2026 Buy BC Pavilion will be in the 1500 aisle block and feature 37 booths for Buy BC producer/processor partners to exhibit their Buy BC licensed products, a meeting area for companies to use to connect with buyers, and a Buy BC information booth:



Buy BC Pavilion Exhibitor Eligibility and Product Suitability

Buy BC has over 1,200 producer and processor partners whose 12,000 licensed products represent the diversity of what B.C.'s food, beverage, and floriculture sectors have to offer. To be fair and ensure the Buy BC Pavilion represents this diversity—while also ensuring the products on exhibit appeal to the buyers who attend GSF—applications are prioritized based on the following criteria.

Mandatory Criteria

1. The company is a Buy BC licensed producer or processor, with Buy BC licensed products
2. The company has read this document and, if selected, knows they must review the GSF Exhibitor Manual (coming soon to www.gsfsfshow.com) to identify all mandatory forms (e.g., Vancouver Coastal food safety permit, insurance, move-in) and checklists for completing before the show
3. The company can pay the government-subsidized fee of \$445 plus tax to CFG by Friday, December 19, 2025, if selected for the Buy BC Pavilion

Preferred Criteria

Note: Companies can still be selected even if they do not meet these criteria

1. The company did not exhibit at the GSF Buy BC Pavilion the year prior (i.e., in 2025)
2. The company is market ready OR somewhat market ready and, if somewhat market ready, commits to attending the mandatory market readiness training webinar on Thursday, January 22, 2026, from 10:00AM-12:00PM, delivered by [BC Food & Beverage](#) and [This Commerce Life](#)¹
3. The Buy BC licensed product(s) the company wishes to exhibit have the Buy BC logo on their packaging AND are targeted toward grocery department buyers
4. The company's primary production or processing occurs in British Columbia
5. The company is women, LGBTQIA2S+, and/or IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, Person of Colour) owned (to support the B.C. Government's commitment to gender equity and reconciliation)

Notes:

- Companies can contact BuyBCLogoLicensing@gov.bc.ca to confirm their Buy BC license number and which products are licensed, and to license new products.
 - Requests to license new products must be submitted by Tuesday, November 25, 2025, to allow enough time for review.
- If there are ties between companies after all the criteria has been applied, Buy BC reserves the right to make selections that will enhance the Buy BC Pavilion exhibit while being as fair as

¹ Market readiness is the degree to which a company is ready and able to meet the business and/or product requirements of a specific market or market channel, and compete in said market or market channel. Elements of market readiness include market research and planning, marketing skills, capacity building, product readiness and adaptation (including considerations related to certifications, labelling, production volume), logistics and transportation, marketing and promotional material development.

possible (e.g., selecting companies with products that align with what buyers are looking for, ensuring there is a diversity of products being exhibited).

- Alcoholic products can be exhibited but, due to regulations, the Vancouver Convention Centre (VCC) does not allow exhibitors to sample products with alcohol (even when served by a VCC bartender or when the product is purchased under the VCC's license).

Cost and Buy BC Pavilion Package

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food subsidizes 2/3 of the booth costs for Buy BC Pavilion exhibitors. As such, **the Ministry offers companies selected for the Pavilion a rate of \$445 plus tax.**

Included in this is:

- A 5'x10' booth (with 5' being exposed to the 1500 aisle and 10' being in depth)
- A 4'x2' white skirted table, chair, and waste basket
- A booth nametag and listing in the GSF directory
- Three exhibitor passes
- Five passes for companies to invite retailers to the tradeshow
- Complimentary market readiness training, including a pre-tradeshow webinar and 1:1 coaching session
- Complimentary ice and electrical (which Buy BC will coordinate with selected companies)
- Buy BC marketing, including Buy BC ceiling signs and walk-through archways for Pavilion visibility, social media promotion, and invitations to [Buy BC's retail partners](#) to attend
- Increased exposure to GSF's 3,000+ attendees by being affiliated with the popular Buy BC Pavilion

Notes:

- Once paid to CFG, the subsidized fee is non-refundable and non-transferable per [CFG's space application](#).
 - If a company has already purchased a booth for GSF 2026 outside the Buy BC Pavilion, they cannot transfer that purchase to the Pavilion if they are selected.
 - If a company doesn't know whether to purchase a booth independently or wait to be selected for the Buy BC Pavilion, they are encouraged to do what is best for them. Unfortunately, no guarantees can be made until the selections are complete.
 - If a company is selected for the Buy BC Pavilion and pays CFG their fee, but becomes unable to exhibit, the fee is non-refundable and other benefits, such as exhibitor passes, are forfeited. In this happens and the company would still like to walk the show, they should contact BuyBC@gov.bc.ca to discuss options.
- Additional exhibitor passes can be purchased from CFG; although, no more than 3 exhibitors are recommended per booth given the sizing.

- Additional opportunities, such as tickets to the networking dinner and product inclusion in the New Product Showcase (which makes exhibited products eligible for awards), are managed by CFG (details coming soon to www.gsfsfshow.com).
- Travel (including parking), accommodations, equipment (e.g., hot plates, fridges) and additional furnishings/décor (e.g., banners, lamps) are at the expense of companies.
 - CFG offers group rates on select air travel and accommodations, on a first-come-first-served basis (details coming soon to www.gsfsfshow.com).
 - Additional furnishings can be brought in or rented from the show's furnishings/décor provider, LEVY Show Services, and audiovisual (e.g., TVs) can be rented from the Vancouver Convention Centre; HOWEVER, all materials must fit the booth size (5' wide and 10' in depth) and not encroach or block other exhibitors or exhibits. See the GSF Exhibitor Manual (coming soon to www.gsfsfshow.com) for display rules and regulations.
- Carpet and drape for the Buy BC Pavilion is all black to generate a strong visual presence. This cannot be changed.
- Larger booth sizes are not available. While a 5'x10' booth might initially seem small, the overwhelming response from past Pavilion exhibitors is that it works well and generates great buzz with show attendees. It also makes the opportunity available to as many Buy BC partners as possible.

How to Apply

- To apply, complete the 'Application – GSF 2026 Buy BC Pavilion.xlsx' document, available on Buy BC's website [here](#), and submit it to BuyBC@gov.bc.ca by Sunday, November 30, at 11:59PM PST.
- If applicable, remember to add at least one photo that verifies that the product(s) you want to exhibit have the Buy BC logo on their packaging. The photo can be added to either the Excel application or as an attachment in the application submission email to Buy BC.

Notes:

- Regarding photo proof of the Buy BC logo on products, unfortunately, based on prior experience, Buy BC is unable to accept commitments that the logo will be added to packaging before the show.
- Applications will only be reviewed after the deadline.
- Companies selected for the GSF 2026 Buy BC Pavilion will be notified by Monday, December 8, 2025. If your company is selected, you will receive a [space application](#) from CFG where you can pay the \$445 plus tax fee and request your preferred booth spot in the Buy BC Pavilion.
- If your company is not selected:
 - You will receive a regret email outlining ways to strengthen your application for future opportunities.
 - Please understand that Buy BC cannot accept additional products to feature at the Buy BC booth at this time. If interested in other promotional opportunities (e.g., brand ambassador features, social media posts), please contact BuyBC@gov.bc.ca.

Market Readiness Training

To ensure companies selected for the Buy BC Pavilion are prepared to do business with buyers at GSF, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food is hosting a pre-tradeshow market readiness training webinar, delivered by [BC Food & Beverage](#) and [This Commerce Life](#) on Thursday, January 22, 2026, from 10:00AM-12:00PM.²

The webinar will cover topics including:

- Commercial viability assessment and profitability analysis
- Understanding buyer needs, pain points, and decision drivers
- Navigating the retail landscape (chains vs. independents, conventional vs. natural)
- Creating effective show collateral (sell sheets, samples, booth materials)
- Buyer engagement strategies and follow-up protocols
- Listing agreement fundamentals, terms, co-op, and insurance requirements
- Show-specific tactics for the CHFA NOW Vancouver and GSF tradeshow
- Converting tradeshow participation into measurable return-on-investment

The webinar will be available to any B.C. food, beverage, or floriculture company that registers; though, any company selected for the GSF 2026 Buy BC Pavilion who identifies as 'somewhat market ready' on their application will be required to attend. Attendance is optional for companies who identify as 'market ready'.

The Ministry is also offering Buy BC Pavilion companies a 1:1 coaching session with consultant [This Commerce Life](#). The session will be scheduled at each company's convenience but must occur before March 13, 2026. The sessions are intended to suite the needs of participating companies but may include coaching on:

- Product positioning and storytelling for buyers
- Tradeshow booth setup and show preparation
- Pricing strategy and margin analysis
- Specific buyer targeting (identifying the correct contacts at target retailers)
- Tradeshow objectives and success metrics
- Follow-up strategies and sales conversion tactics
- Show collateral (sell sheets, samples, promotional materials)

Other Critical Information

- Companies selected for the GSF 2026 Buy BC Pavilion are not eligible to have their subsidized booth fee (of \$445 plus tax) covered by the Buy BC Partnership Program.

² Market readiness is the degree to which a company is ready and able to meet the business and/or product requirements of a specific market or market channel, and compete in said market or market channel. Elements of market readiness include market research and planning, marketing skills, capacity building, product readiness and adaptation (including considerations related to certifications, labelling, production volume), logistics and transportation, marketing and promotional material development.

- If you have already been approved for Buy BC Partnership Program funding to cost-share your GSF booth fees BUT have not already paid CFGI for a booth outside of the Buy BC Pavilion, you may choose to forfeit that portion of your funding to receive a booth in the Pavilion.
- If you have already been approved for Buy BC Partnership Program funding to cost-share your GSF booth fees AND have already paid CFGI for a booth outside of the Buy BC Pavilion, that payment is non-refundable and non-transferable (i.e., cannot be transferred to the Buy BC Pavilion). As such, you are eligible to use Buy BC Partnership Program funding to cover those fees. See page 4 for more details regarding CFGI's fees.
- Other funding activities, such as developing marketing materials for GSF, can be covered by the Buy BC Partnership Program regardless of whether your company exhibits in the Buy BC Pavilion.
- Companies that were selected for the CHFA NOW Vancouver 2026 Buy BC Pavilion can also be selected for the GSF 2026 Buy BC Pavilion (i.e., no overlap restrictions).
- Companies selected for the GSF 2026 Buy BC Pavilion will be surveyed immediately after the show and three-months post-event about their buyer leads and confirmed sales from GSF. It is imperative that companies respond so the Ministry can continue offering this opportunity to Buy BC partners.