

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

August 26, 2016



Agristability Deadline Reminder

Insuring catastrophic drops in income

Deadline to submit your complete 2015 AgriStability/AgrilInvest Harmonized form: September 30th 2016.

AgriStability protects agricultural producers against declines in their net farming income due to market conditions, production loss or increased costs of production. Payments are made if a producer's current year margin falls more than 30% below their reference margin.

Watch the videos to learn more about AgriStability.

[English](#)

[Punjabi](#)

Ladder Safety

Reducing accidents and WCB Rates

WorkSafeBC rates have never been lower in the tree fruit sector - the proposed rate for 2017 is 1.55%. As recently as ten years ago, the rates were 2.7%. This shows significant reduction in accident rates - reducing the human and financial costs of accidents!

But the current low premium cost could increase dramatically if the tree fruit sector does not improve ladder safety. Accidents associated with ladder use are the *most frequent* (40%) and the *highest contributor to accident costs* (53%) in the orchard industry. If ladder safety accident rates are not improved, it is possible that rates could go as high as 3.5%, which is three times the current premium rate. The average farm could pay \$200 to \$2,000 more on annual WorkSafeBC premiums, depending on the total payroll for the farm. By working together, industry and WorkSafeBC can reduce accidents and keep premiums at an affordable level.

The BCFGGA is working with WorkSafeBC and AgSafeBC to develop a program to reduce ladder accidents. The first step is to find out which sub-groups in the tree fruit sector are experiencing the highest ladder accident rates. We are working to segregate by size of farm (there is some evidence that large farms have lower ladder accident costs) and by type of fruit (there is some evidence that cherry operations have higher ladder accident costs, but this may be due to cherry operations having more employees). This analysis will allow the BCFGGA, WorkSafeBC and AgSafeBC to focus on accident prevention and keep rates as low as possible for the tree fruit sector.

Minimum Wage Increases on September 15

BCFGA request to change awkward mid-harvest timing was turned down

The minimum wages increases to \$10.85 per hour on September 15. All workers (including SAWP workers and those earning piece rate) must earn a minimum of \$10.85 per hour. In order to convert piece rates to hourly rates, a timesheet must be kept for all workers, including those paid by piece rates.

Note that for hourly workers, it is a requirement that they be paid a minimum additional 4% vacation pay or given paid vacation leave equivalent to a minimum of 4%. For piece rate workers, vacation pay is included in the piece rate - no additional vacation pay is required for piece rate work.

Also, seasonal farm workers are not required to be paid overtime for hours in excess of 8 hours a day, or for hours worked on a Statutory Holiday. Overtime pay is not a requirement in agriculture and it is normal in BC and in all other jurisdictions that overtime is not paid in agriculture harvest work.

Here is a link for more [information on Minimum Wage and Employment Standards](#).

Apple Clearwing Moth Three Year Pilot Project

A steering committee meeting was held on August 10 to discuss the Apple Clearwing Moth project. The project is being funded by BC Investment Agriculture Foundation (through the Agriculture Environment Initiative), BCFGAs Research and Development Orchard Ltd, and Summerland Varieties Corporation.

The project is three years (2016-2018) and includes the following activities:

- Testing of new techniques in areas of very low ACM population.
- A proof of concept for areawide Mating Disruption in areas of moderate to high ACM populations.
- Population monitoring and mapping in 2016 and 2018. The 2016 population results will be mapped over the winter and available in the Spring of 2017 - in time for Rimon applications.

The total budget for the project is about \$200,000 per year cash cost and \$35,000 per year in-kind (non-cash) cost.

Further planning and input will be done this winter through steering committee and BCFGAs grower meetings.

Interior Provincial Exhibition

BCFGA Booth to Promote the Tree Fruit Sector

The BCFGa will have a booth at the [Interior Provincial Exhibition](#) at the Armstrong Fairgrounds, August 31 - September 4. We will be providing the public with samples of Aurora Golden Gala and Salish. Come visit us in the Fruit and Vegetable Pavillion.

Tree Fruit Replant Program 2017

Applications on-line

We have received our first application for the Tree Fruit Replant Program 2017/18!

Program applications and documents are available on the BCFGa website. Applications may be submitted before the deadline date of October 31, 2016.

A reminder that the program is not “first come, first serve” - the Minister of Agriculture is supporting a ‘Quality Program’, where the project applications of highest quality are funded. A Replant Plan must be submitted with the application, and a Horticultural Advisor must assist in preparing and sign the Plan. Each application is reviewed for completeness and eligibility, then a committee of horticultural specialists scores each application for its quality. Projects are then placed in order of score, and the project with the highest score is funded until all funding is allocated. The remaining projects are placed on a waitlist.

Approved projects are inspected after planting - usually July-August. Since some projects plant fewer trees or do not follow their replant plan, those parts of a project do not receive funding. This releases funding for the next top-rated projects on the waitlist.

Visit our website for more information: www.bcfga.com

Summerland Varieties Corp. launches a brand new website!

Summerland Varieties Corp. is delighted to announce the official launch of our brand new website: www.summerlandvarieties.com. With the tremendous help and services of Csek Creative, this new site is now much more user-friendly, and focused on providing local growers and partners with relevant and useful information on varieties and best practices in growing.


In addition, SVC has launched a Facebook page and Twitter profile. Find us, follow and like us at www.facebook.com/summerlandvarieties and www.twitter.com/SVCVarieties. We'll be using our new social media platforms to share news, photos and stories and to connect more quickly with our community members.



Like us or follow us!



How to contact the BCFGA Office

<p>BCFGA Office - 250-762-5226 Toll free -1-800-619-9022</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda Zarr, Member Services and Replant Admin, local 1. • Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2. • Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, local 3. • Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, local 4.
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Dates and Events- check the [BCFGA Calendar](#) on our website for more information

Meetings

Attended recently and upcoming

Date	Meeting	BCFGA representative
August 16	WorkSafeBC - Tree Fruit Rate Consultation and Preliminary Analysis	Pinder Dhaliwal, Vice-President Glen Lucas, General Manager
August 17	Fruit and Tree Nut Biosecurity Advisory Committee	Glen Lucas, General Manager
August 18-19	Jamaican SAWP delegation	Fred Steele, President Pinder Dhaliwal, Vice-President Glen Lucas, General Manager
August 31 -Sept. 4	Interior Provincial Exhibition, Armstrong	
Sept. 8-9	Canada-Caribbean SAWP Canada -Mexico SAWP quarterly conference calls	Pinder Dhaliwal, Vice-President Glen Lucas, General Manager Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary
Sept. 16	Guatemala Temporary Foreign Worker Program	Glen Lucas, General Manager
Sept. 16	Sterile Insect Release Board meeting	Peter Simonsen, BCFGA Director
Sept. 19	CHC Apple Working Group, Apple Research and Innovation Strategy	Fred Steele, President Pinder Dhaliwal, Vice-President
Oct. 5	BCAC Board meeting	Fred Steele
Oct. 7	SIR Board	Peter Simonsen
October 18	BCFGA Annual Regional Meeting and Replant Program Update, Kelowna	
October 20	BCFGA Annual Regional Meeting and Replant Program Update, Oliver	