

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

November 25, 2016



Help shape Canada's National Plant and Animal Health Strategy

Plant and animal health is vital to agricultural producers. BC tree fruit growers have seen new pest introductions (Spotted Wing Drosophila and Apple Clearwing Moth) impact their orchard operations. Now single detections of Apple Maggot have occurred, and Brown Marmorated Stink Bug is a severe pest threat on our doorstep. Yet the Canadian Food Inspection Agency does not have an adequate comprehensive response plan to slow - and if possible eradicate - new pest introductions. **There is an extreme shortfall in CFIA resources provided to Canadian Horticulture** when compared to CFIA planning for outbreaks such as avian bird influenza and bovine tuberculosis and the government response in Washington State to Apple Maggot detections.

The BCFGA will be providing strong input into the CFIA, both directly and through the CHC, to enhance the resources for plant protection. Our main theme is the need for CFIA to lead the development of a national plant protection strategy, the lack of resources for CFIA to implement a plant protection strategy (similar to livestock protection), and the need for CFIA to take a leadership role.

The CFIA has developed a discussion document outlining the options and scope of this consultation. **Growers should definitely contribute their comments, as there is considerable potential for significant change if you provide your comments.**

The a survey (with background information) is [here](#)>

Provide your input by December 31, 2016.

Labour - Employment Standards Taking note of important regulations

The Employment Standards Branch of the Provincial Ministry of Labour recently reviewed some of the regulations and asked us to raise grower awareness.

1. Minimum wage and piece rate. In BC, growers may choose to pay either minimum wage (plus 4% vacation pay) or piece rate (from the [approved piece rate schedule](#)). Many growers who pay by piece rate do not record hours of work on a timesheet.

It is highly recommended that growers keep timesheets for workers, even when paying by piece rate.

The Employment Standards Branch suggested that an alternative for consideration is to pay minimum wage and then an additional bonus based on volume harvested per hour

or day. BCFGA has not had the opportunity to discuss this method with growers, but the suggestion is recorded here so that growers may provide input to the BCFGA.

2. Pay every two weeks or bimonthly.

Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Negotiation of 2017 Mexico and Caribbean SAWP completed

Important changes to the Canada-Mexico and Caribbean-Mexico SAWP:

1. Work Visa fee change. The employer will no longer pay the work visa fee and recover it from the employee. Further, *the employer is not permitted to recover a work visa fee from the salary of the employee - even if the worker contacts the employer to request a direct 'loan' of the amount*. Workers should be encouraged to contact their country's SAWP recruitment office for more detail.
2. Gender equity. Only 4% of SAWP workers are female workers, the rest are male. A transition is being encouraged by the Canadian and foreign governments to move towards greater female participation in SAWP. Governments recognize the need to segregate male from female workers; work safely and personal safety; and the restrictions of existing housing, as well as having an obligation to the 80% return workers ("named workers"). It was noted that in many instances, female workers prefer shorter, more intense work terms. Packinghouse grading work appears to be a good opportunity to expand female participation in the SAWP, provided that separate housing is available. The BCFGA encourages all growers who have SAWP workers to consider whether female workers could be used effectively, practically and safely, when preparing Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA is the application for SAWP workers).
3. Merging National and BC contracts. The BC contract had several differences from the rest of the provinces, but the main item of difference is the inability to deduct airfare from wages in BC, whereas an airfare amount is deducted from wages in the rest of Canada. Therefore in BC the housing is an allowable deduction from wages - but not in the rest of Canada. Now there will be one national contract, with the BC differences noted within that national contract.

The 2016 LMIA and contract may be used until the new contracts are made available. Contact Bunvir Nijjer at the BCFGA office for further information.

BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium

Mark your calendar

The 2017 edition of the Horticultural Forum will be held as follows:

Feb 15, 2017

At Trinity Baptist Kelowna

More detail will be circulated as agenda and other items fall into place.

Tree Fruit Replant Program 2017

The momentum to renew the industry continues

The total applications received by the October 31 deadline is 170, up from 140 the prior year. The Replant Application Review Committee will be meeting later in November and we are planning to deliver approval and waitlist letters in December.

How to contact the BCFGA Office

BCFGA Office - 250-762-5226
Toll free -1-800-619-9022



- Brenda Zarr, Member Services and Replant Admin, local 1.
- Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2.
- Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, local 4.

Dates and Events- check the [BCFGA Calendar](#) on our website for more information

Licensing Your Well

March 1 deadline

The BCFGA is partnering with the BC Cattlemen's Association, the BC Ministry of Environment and the BC Agriculture Council to hold two workshops on registering water wells.

The sessions are now likely to take place in early January, in Cawston and Oliver.

Wells registered before March 1, 2017 will have their priority date established as of the earliest evidence of use (e.g. well drilling records) and there is no fee.

If registering a well after March 1, 2017, the priority dates may be later than established first use and a fee may be charged (depending on date of registration).

Watch the newsletter for a notice of this session.

Meetings

Attended recently and upcoming

Date	Meeting	BCFGA representative
Nov. 24	Board Training Session, Centre for Organizational Governance in Agriculture, Kelowna	BCFGA Executive
Nov. 30	BCFGA Executive meeting	
Dec. 3	Deadline for resolutions to be submitted to the BCFGA	
Feb. 2-3	BCFGA Annual Convention, Penticton Lakeside Resort	
Feb. 15	BC Tree Fruit Symposium	At Trinity Baptist Kelowna