

BC FRUIT GROWERS'  
ASSOCIATION

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# BCFGA Bulletin



April 2011

## **New Premier and Cabinet: BCFGA Meets with New BC Agriculture Minister**

On March 14th, BC Premier Christy Clark announced a new and smaller Cabinet.

The new cabinet is made up of 17 ministers plus the premier, reduced from the previous total of 24. This includes the new Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation, which will bring together many of the functions in government focused on job creation under a single ministry. As well, three new cabinet committees reflect the priorities of government – the Committee on Families First; the Committee on Jobs and Economic Growth; and the Committee on Open Government and Engagement. Responsibility for colleges and universities has been recombined under the Ministry of Advanced Education; responsibility for mining has been returned to the Ministry of Energy and Mines; Labour and Citizen Services have been combined; and Forests and Lands has been combined with Natural Resource Operations. Agriculture remains a separate Ministry.

The Honourable Don McRae was appointed the new Agriculture Minister. He was first elected MLA for Comox-Valley in 2009, and has served on the Select Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and was a member of the Select Standing Committee on Health and Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

On March 30th, BCFGAs President Joe Sardinha, and Vice-President Fred Steele, met with the new Minister of Agriculture.

The primary issue discussed at the meeting was the current depressed state of the BC Apple Industry. The Minister re-committed to the Tree Fruit Working Group initiated by past Minister the Honourable Ben Stewart to establish industry benchmarks and work on key changes the industry needs.

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The Industry, leaders and the Minister will determine industry strategies and short-term actions, using the Working Group report as a spring board. Joe Sardinha and Fred Steele also reviewed the orchard industry contribution to the BC economy - its impact on jobs and families. At this first meeting with the Minister, other key issues were discussed, including:

- The Recaptured Input Tax Credit (RITC) issue for our recently amalgamated co-operative;
- The School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program funding cutback; and
- The Columbia River Treaty consultation

Although Minister McRae is fairly new to the agriculture portfolio, he is genuinely interested in his duties, and having a young family, our representatives sensed from the meeting that he does recognize where our food comes from and the importance of agriculture in BC. The Minister will be in Penticton, BC on May 13th-14th for the BC Liberal Convention and is looking forward to meeting growers, viewing our facilities and orchards.

The BCFGGA is looking forward to working with the Minister, in the very short term, on key issues for our sector and making the BC tree fruit industry as vibrant and profitable as we know it can be.

***What can you do?*** Contact your MLA to let him know your concerns/situation and that you support the Working Group process to find solutions. *Call Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867 if you don't have your MLA contact information.*

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## **New Energy Efficiency Assessment Tool for “Greener Farms”**

A new energy assessment tool to help farms across British Columbia become more energy efficient will be available to agricultural producers this spring. With funding and development expertise being provided by FortisBC and other collaborators, the BC Farm Energy Assessment pilot project was launched to design and test an Excel-based software tool that measures energy and helps farmers to identify energy efficiency opportunities. During the first phase of the pilot project, which was completed in late 2010, Prism Engineering was contracted to help develop the assessment tool and measure the energy use of 27 B.C. farms. The assessments also looked at ways these farms could become more energy efficient, and covered diverse types of operations from dairy and poultry farms, to vegetable greenhouses.

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The pilot project was led by the BC Agriculture Council's BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative, in collaboration with FortisBC, BC Hydro, the BC Ministry of Agriculture, the BC Ministry of Energy, and the Agricultural Research & Development Corporation.

The second phase of the pilot project is currently underway and will include expansion of the assessment tool to a broader range of farm types such as grain and tree fruit.

For more information on the BC Farm Energy Assessment Pilot Project, visit:  
[www.bcagclimateaction.ca](http://www.bcagclimateaction.ca)

## Kelowna MP Ron Cannan Announces Federal Funding To Help Families Achieve Healthier Weights

On March 17th, 2011, Ron Cannan, Member of Parliament for Kelowna-Lake Country, on behalf of the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, announced funding for an innovative, community-based project to help families achieve and maintain healthy weights for their children.

"To curb childhood obesity, we need to find ways to change the environments that influence children's eating habits and activity levels," stated Ron Cannan.

The Government of Canada is providing over \$150,000 to The Bridge Youth and Family Services Society to develop, test and implement education modules for parents and foster parent caregivers on healthy eating and physical activity. The Healthy Weights for Children modules will cover topics such as meal planning and preparation, activity planning, label reading and growing food.

The modules will be piloted in Kelowna and neighbouring communities and then evaluated to determine their effectiveness in increasing parents' knowledge of healthy eating and physical activity, and helping them to adopt healthier behaviours for their families.

In his final remark, Mr. Cannan reminded Canadians of the importance to invest in healthy weights for a new generation: **"We need to act now. We need to act together. Lets start today by taking a bite out of obesity by committing to take a bite out of a BC apple everyday!"**



## Applications Being Accepted for the Tree Fruit Marketing and Infrastructure Innovation Initiative

In 2010, The federal and provincial governments announced an investment in the BC tree fruits industry delivering AgriFlexibility funds through a new program called the **BC Tree Fruit Market and Infrastructure Innovation Initiative**.

This investment can be used by the tree fruit industry for innovative packing and storage infrastructures, developing strategies to better compete in the market place, promoting Canadian varieties and their health benefits, introducing value-added products, improving area-wide Integrated Pest Management, and new environmentally friendly technologies to compete on the global market. Projects must have significant benefit to the industry.

Growers and industry organizations can apply by submitting their initiatives and project proposals to the BC Fruit Growers Association. AgriFlexibility ends March 31st, 2014.

More information on this Initiative, which is being funded through the AgriFlexibility Program, can be found on the BCFGGA website at [www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com) (under Industry/Initiatives and Programs).

The BCFGGA will be preparing a Workplan for the period of April 1st, 2011 to March 31st, 2012. This is expected to be completed by March 16th, 2011. Project applications for that period should be submitted to us prior to March 12th, 2011.

Projects for April 1st, 2012 to March 31st 2013 can be submitted prior to February 1st, 2012.

**For more information, please contact Glen Lucas, BCFGGA General Manager, at 250-762-5226, ex 23 or at [glucas@bcfga.com](mailto:glucas@bcfga.com)**



## BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium: A Great Success!

On behalf of the BC Fruit Growers' Association and Okanagan Packinghouse Fieldmen's Group, I would like to take this time to thank all of our sponsors, exhibitors, growers, industry colleagues and everyone who was involved in making our 1st Annual BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium a great success! I hope this has been a worthwhile venture for you, and we hope that we will see you all next year!



### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



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## Announcement: Increase to Minimum Wage

On March 16th, 2011, newly elected Premier Christy Clark announced an increase to the BC minimum wage. The minimum wage will be increased in three phases, starting with \$8.75 by May 1st, 2011, and rising to \$10.25 by May 2012. The minimum wage for some restaurant server jobs are not increased. The training wage will also be eliminated as of May 1st, 2011, so all hourly paid employees will receive minimum wage regardless of how long they've been in the work force.

### General Minimum Wage

Today	\$8.00/hr
May 1st, 2011	\$8.75/hr
Nov 1st, 2011	\$9.50/hr
May 1st, 2012	\$10.25/hr

Piece rates for hand harvesting certain crops will be adjusted as a percentage of the **first phase** of the general minimum wage and will be further reviewed by government, in consultation with the BC Agriculture Council and the horticulture commodity associations, including the BCFGAs.

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## Updated Mission Statement for PICO

The Board of the Okanagan Improvement Plant Corporation (PICO) has recently updated its Mission Statement to reflect its two core businesses, namely commercialization and research and development in the context of improving competitiveness of Canadian growers:

*“PICO commercializes fruit varieties, both domestically and internationally, by managing intellectual property rights and supporting product development and testing with a focus on improving the competitiveness of Canada’s tree fruit and berry growers.”*




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## New Variety Development Council

The vote was positive and it is expected that the new mandate as the "Ambrosia Council" will be ratified by the Minister of Agriculture. Look for more information from the new Ambrosia Council.

## Upcoming Meetings and Events

April 14th, 2011	Employment Standards Information Session, Penticton (see below)
April 20th, 2011	Investment Agriculture Foundation AGM, Abbotsford
May 26-28th, 2011	Rotary Okanagan International Children Festival, Penticton
June 5th, 2011	Y Healthy Kids Day, Kelowna
June 8,9th, 2011	Food ProWest, Burnaby
June 12th, 2011	Telus Walk to Cure Diabetes, Kelowna
June 12-16th, 2011	CCFCC 2011 Conference, Vancouver
July 2011	Orchard Industry Museum Cherry Fair, Kelowna
July 27-29 2011	Canadian Federation of Agriculture A Semi-Annual Meeting, Banff
August 20, 21st, 2011	Apple Triathlon, Kelowna
August 31st-September 4th, 2011	Interior Provincial Exhibition, Armstrong
October 2011	Uptown Rutland Scarecrow Festival & Harvest Market, Kelowna
October 2011	Orchard Industry Museum Apple Fair, Kelowna
October 2011	UBC Apple Festival, Vancouver
November 4-13th, 2011	RAWF & National Apple Competition, Toronto
November 21-26th, 2011	Canadian Western Agribition, Regina

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### **MEETING NOTICE**

<b>What:</b>	Info session on responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act and Regulations (including changes on minimum wage and piece rates)
<b>Who should attend:</b>	growers & farm labour contractors (available in English & Punjabi)
<b>When:</b>	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
<b>Where:</b>	Penticton Days Inn (152 Riverside Drive)

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The BC Fruit Growers' Association represents the 758 commercial orchards in BC, with a mandate "to foster a business environment for the long-term prosperity of BC tree fruit growers". The BC tree fruit industry generates over \$130 million in fresh fruit sales annually at the wholesale level, with a further \$120 million in sales from Sun-Rype, the main processor of fruit in the Okanagan

**BCFGA Executive**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Joe Sardinha (President)</b>	494-9983	Summerland
<b>Fred Steele (Vice-President)</b>	861-6641	Kelowna
<b>Madeleine Van Roehoudt</b>	864-9147	Lake Country
<b>Amarjit Lalli</b>	869-6122	Kelowna
<b>Sukhdev Goraya</b>	491-2229	Kelowna
<b>Denise MacDonald</b>	494-1347	Summerland
<b>Peter Simonsen</b>	496-5156	Naramata
<b>Nirmal Dhaliwal</b>	498-4119	Oliver

**STAFF**

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**Our Summerland Office closed March 31, 2011.**