

BC FRUIT GROWERS'  
ASSOCIATION

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# BCFGA Bulletin



March 2011

## *Dear growers;*

The recent pool returns for the 2010 apple crop has worsened from the 2009 crop. While poor prices were expected, the first advance pool was lower than anyone expected. As a result, the Okanagan Tree Fruit Cooperative (OTFC) and the BC Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA) held an emergency meeting of their Boards of Directors on February 7th to discuss the current disastrous market returns for apples. The low returns are caused primarily by a large crop size in Washington State, increasing bargaining power of retailers as further consolidation of food stores occurs, the strong Canadian dollar, a lack of competitive strategy and agricultural food policy from the federal and provincial governments, and the failure of governmental agricultural programs to protect BC apple growers from an unfairly subsidized competition. The Boards identified several short term projects, including an expansion of the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program; seeking fair trade, and local procurement policies from Hotel-Restaurant-Institutional (HRI) clients.

Furthermore, the OTFC Board of Directors is planning **grower meetings** to further discuss the market situation and direction of the industry. The meetings are being held **in early March** and will include attendance from the BCFGAs.

## *What you can do to help with your cashflow:*

- AgriStability advance payments. The deadline date for an advance payment application is March 31, 2011. Contact 1-877-343-2767.
- Request a full withdrawal of your AgriInvest funds. AgriInvest provides funding based on 1.5% of Allowable Net Sales, which is the total of farm payment and the pack and sell costs. Contact 1-877-343-2767 for further information.
- Contact your MLA (Enquiry BC 1-800-663-7867) and MP (Canada Line 1-800-622-6232) and let them know your financial situation. The BCFGAs are advocating on your behalf to achieve relief funds from government.
- Finally, keep in touch with your packinghouse and BCFGAs directors to let them know how you are doing.

It continues to be a very stressful time for each of us. Together we must move forward on short and long-term solutions to the income crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Sandhu', is written over a white background.

President

## BCFGA Meets with Minister of Agriculture

On January 10 and February 18, the BCFGGA met with the Honourable Ben Stewart, BC Minister of Agriculture to discuss the severe financial situation in the industry. At both meetings, the Minister asked that the tree fruit industry address the barriers to long-term success. A process has been urgently launched to provide this information to the Minister, with the anticipation that a long-term plan will help to promote a short-term assistance.

A working group is formed and will develop 3 proposed solutions for long-term industry viability. The solutions will then be discussed by the BCFGGA, industry organizations, and the Minister of Agriculture.

### Review of Growing Forward Programs

The current 5 year agreement on Growing Forward programs expires on March 31, 2012 (i.e. AgriStability, AgriInsure, AgriRecovery and Production Insurance). The province initiated consultations with the BC Agriculture sector in the Spring of 2010. A new round of consultation is being planned by the federal government this Spring. Fred Steele is the BCFGGA representative on the Risk Management Advisory Committee that is taking the lead on the consultations.

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## AgriStability Program Deadlines

### Deadlines for the 2010 Program Year:

March 31, 2011	Deadline to submit your interim application. Growers must be enrolled
September 30, 2011	Deadline to submit your AgriStability/AgriInvest Harmonized form <u>without</u> penalty.
December 31, 2011	Final deadline to submit your AgriStability/ AgriInvest Harmonized form <u>with</u> penalty.

***\*If you miss the September 30 deadline to submit your AgriStability program forms, you have until December 31 to submit your form with penalty. A penalty of \$500/month will be reduced from your payment to a maximum of \$1500.00.***

**For more information please contact BC MAL at:  
Toll-free number: 1-877-343-2767**

## Temporary Foreign Worker Program

The ***New Agricultural Stream*** of the Pilot Project for NOC C and C occupations, formally called Harmonization, is in effect since January 1st, 2011:

- for low skill workers from any country.
- Similar to the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP), but with slightly different rules and not restricted to Mexico and the Caribbean.

All the documentation can be found on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program website ([http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign\\_workers/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml)). We strongly encourage interested growers to consult this website to ensure a smooth transition.

## Tree Fruit Production Guide Meetings

It is the time of year to mark your calendar for the *Tree Fruit Production Guide* meeting scheduled in your area. In addition, revised and updated pages the production guide will be available to growers. We appreciate the assistance of the many professional staff involved in updating the new production guide every year.

<b>April 4th, 2011</b>	<b>9:30am</b>	<b>Cawston Hall</b>
	<b>1:30pm</b>	<b>Oliver Community Hall</b>
<b>April 5th, 2011</b>	<b>1:30pm</b>	<b>PARC, Summerland</b>
<b>April 7th, 2011</b>	<b>9:00am</b>	<b>Best Western Vernon Lodge</b>
	<b>1:30pm</b>	<b>Rutland Centennial Hall</b>
<b>April 14th, 2011</b>	<b>7:00pm</b>	<b>Downtowner Motel, Creston</b>

## Ambrosia Growers Vote

The vote is on the extension of the mandate of the New Apple Varieties Development Council, specific to the Ambrosia variety.

Notification will be mailed out to registered growers in late February.

Vote by mail or at the BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium March 10th & 11th .

New growers can register with the Returning Officer at the Symposium

***Voting Deadline is March 31, 2011***  
[ambrosiacouncil@gmail.com](mailto:ambrosiacouncil@gmail.com)

## 122nd ANNUAL CONVENTION

### BCFGA Welcomes New Executive Members



On Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, members of the BC Fruit Growers' Association held their 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention where they got to vote for the 2011 BCFGAs Executive.

“On behalf of all BCFGAs members and staff, I am pleased to welcome to our Executive team, new members Amarjit Lalli and Madeleine Van Rouchoudt”, expressed Joe Sardinha, President of the BC Fruit Growers' Association.

“With a province going through some tough political changes that might have a future impact on our industry, this year promises to be an active one for BC's tree fruit industry. I look forward to working with the BCFGAs Executive in addressing the present challenges facing us, and those ahead; but most importantly in producing and promoting safe and high quality products for consumers.”

#### 2011 BCFGAs Executive members:

- Joe Sardinha (Summerland, BC), President
- Fred Steele (Kelowna, BC), Vice-President
- Amarjit Lalli (Kelowna, BC), Member
- Madeleine Van Rouchoudt (Lake Country, BC), Member
- Denise MacDonald (Summerland, BC), Member
- Peter Simonsen (Naramata, BC), Member
- Nirmal Dhaliwal (Oliver, BC), Member
- Sukhdev Goraya (Kelowna, BC), Member

The BC Fruit Growers' Association would also like to thank the outgoing Executive Members Roger Bailey and Kirpal Boparai for their work and dedication over the years.



Photo Credit: Jeff Martin, CHBC News



Photo Credit: John Arendt Summerland Review

## More on the 122nd Annual Convention...

### Awards presented at the 122nd Annual BCFGGA Convention

An Award of Merit was presented to **Dave and Fred Gartrell** for their outstanding contribution to the future of the tree fruit industry.

**Dr. Eugene Hogue**, was also a recipient of an Award of Merit.

The Life Member Award for 20101 went to **Jack Machial** for his vital contribution and work for the industry over the years.

**Mark Forsythe** host of the CBC radio show BC Almanac was awarded with the BCFGGA Press Award, recognizing his support for the agricultural sector and tree fruit industry throughout the year 2010.

### Sponsors for the 122nd BCFGGA Annual Convention

Thank you to the generous donations of the following companies, which helped us provide a successful annual convention to our members and guests at this year's annual convention:

*Okanagan Plant Improvement Cooperation  
DOW Agrosience  
Engage Agro  
Farmco  
Sterile Insect Release Program (SIR)*



**ENGAGE** AGRO



## **Summary of the resolutions passed at the January 27-28th, 2011 BCFGAs Annual Convention**

### **2. Municipal Support for Tree Fruit Industry Priorities**

Be it Resolved that the BCFGAs recognize and send appreciation to the regional districts and municipalities of the Okanagan for continued support of environmental programs for the tree fruit industry, including

- The Sterile Insect Release Program
- The Starling Control Program and
- Wood waste disposal (stump grinding) programs, and

Further be it Resolved that the BCFGAs recognize and support the regional districts for including agriculture as a pillar in regional growth strategies.

### **3. Affordable, Effective Production Insurance**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGAs work to maintain an affordable Production Insurance program, and

Further Be It Resolved that the BCFGAs seek to improve coverage of named perils, while keeping coverage in balance with affordable premiums for the Production Insurance.

### **4. Three Pillars – Replant, Crop Insurance and AgriStability**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the provincial and federal governments put the resources into needed Replant, Production Insurance and income stabilization programs and

Further Be It Resolved that the provincial and federal governments consult with the stakeholders to ensure the programs are effectively designed and administered.

### **5. Implement Replant Program**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGAs pursue a replant/grafting program with federal and provincial governments.

### **6. Redirect AgriStability Funding to AgriInvest**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCAC and CFA investigate the redirection of AgriStability funds (including administration) to an enhanced AgriInvest.

### **7. Genetically Modified Organisms**

Therefore be it Resolved that the BCFGAs not support the open field release of GMO tree fruits in Canada until the government can provide the assurance and indemnity to industry that there will be no impact of the introduction of GMOs on the market returns for tree fruits, and

Further Be It Resolved that the Government of Canada not approves GMOs for open field release until a protocol is in place to assure there is no impact on organic farm certification from the introduction of tree fruit and other GMOs.

**8. Request Auditor General To Investigate CFIA Testing Program of Pesticide Residues on Imported Produce**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Auditor General of Canada conducts and investigation into the pesticide residue testing which the Canadian Food Inspection Agency conducts on imported produce.

**9. Require Government to Assess the Financial Impact of New Regulations on Industry and Provide Alternatives for Mitigation**

Therefore be it Resolved that the BCAC lobby the governments to do a benefit-cost assessment of any new government regulation before it is enacted, and

Further Be It Resolved that the assessment includes alternatives to the regulation and proposals for mitigation of the cost of the new regulation to industry, as well as sources of government funding to compensate industry for mitigation.

**10. Support HST**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGA and BCAC continue to support the HST.

**11. Funding the Prevention of Invasive Pest Introduction**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the government introduce a compensation program for any losses arising from foreign invasive pest introduction, and

Further Be It Resolved that the government provides increased resources for inspection of imported produce.

**12. Establish a National Plant Health Strategy**

Therefore Be It Resolved that a National Plant Health Strategy be developed and

Further Be It Resolved that the strategy includes a Financial Compensation Policy for emergency plant removal orders and quarantines.

**13. Adequate Funding to Control SWD**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the province and federal government provide resources for programs to develop effective monitoring and control methods.

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**14. Partner with Regional Districts to Continue the Starling Control Program**

Therefore be it Resolved that the BCFGGA continue its support for the starling control program, and

Further be it Resolved that the BCFGGA encourage the regional districts to continue support for the starling control and research program.

**15. Research and Education on Controlling Pests with New, Safer, Target Pesticides**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the provincial government adequately funds extension programs for growers to adopt new, safer methods of production.

**16. Expand Grower Requested Own Use import Program to include Products with Patent Protection**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Grower Requested Own Use import Program be expanded to include Products with Patent Protection.

**17. Adequate Funding to Control Apple Clearwing Moth**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the provincial and federal governments provide adequate resources to study the control and monitoring of the Apple Clearwing Moth.

**18. Automatic Registration for SWD Sprays**

Therefore Be It Resolved that any new products registered for Spotted Wing Drosophila in the US be automatically registered in Canada.

**19. Seasonal Housing Bylaws**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the province review its Housing ByLaw Template to ensure that worker housing for large farms be allowed on one of the parcels operated by the grower.

**20. Sanitary Facility Program**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the provincial government provide assistance for building sanitary facilities.

**21. Funding for Deer Fencing Program**

Therefore be it Resolved that a funding proposal for a deer fencing program be developed jointly with other horticultural associations and submitted to BC Investment Agriculture for consideration.

**22. Protect Agriculture Water Supply (implementing laws such as FITFIR and Agriculture Water Reserve)**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGGA seek the commitment of the provincial government that

- The province has the final authority in any farm irrigation use,
- Water currently used by agriculture will remain with the agriculture industry, and
- Any reductions in water use in times of drought are calculated as a percentage of allocation with minimum functional amounts for perennial crops, and

Further Be It Resolved that the province explores methods of regulating water use to achieve these goals.

### **23. We Feed Canada**

Therefore be it Resolved that this Convention urge the Executive to make a request to BC Investment Agriculture Foundation for funding of generic advertising to be used in conjunction with tree fruit growers commodity advertising and

Further be it Resolved that the government funding be used to promote “We feed Canada” program – “Farmers feed Canada”.

### **24. Health Agencies funding for Healthy Eating Programs**

Therefore be it Resolved that the federal and provincial Ministers of Health urgently address the need to fund and expand health promotion programs such as the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program.

### **25. Institutional Purchasing Policies**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGGA press the BC government to lead by example and mandate the use of quality BC produce in all government funded institutions.

### **26. Hold Vote on Provincial Apple Research and Promotion Agency**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGGA facilitate a grower vote on forming a provincial Apple Research and Promotion Agency in the first half of 2011.

### **27. Restore Provincial Funding to the National Average (% of Agriculture GDP)**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BC government increase the level of funding by \$116 million to bring the level of BC agriculture funding to the national average of 13.7% of Agriculture GDP.

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**28. Reserve Policy**

Be It Resolved that three reserves be established as follows:

Name	Purpose	Authority	Amount
Operating	Special Projects, Unanticipated shortfall in income	Joint District Council Executive	57,000 18,000
Dissolution	Dissolution or restructuring of BCFGAs operation	Executive	50,000
Market Action	Trade action / public affairs related to market depression	Executive	\$32,000
Total reserves			157,000

**Late Resolution A: Open Burning Smoke Control**

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BC Fruit Growers' Association demand the retraction of the proposed OBSCR, and

Further Be It Resolved that the BCFGAs demand that government immediately cease to impose regulations such as the OBSCR without completing an impact assessment that includes a cost-benefit analysis.

**Late Resolution B: Staffing at PARC**

Be It Resolved that the BCFGAs petition the Federal Minister of Agriculture to immediately replace the scientists and programs at PARC that have not continued because the scientists were not replaced upon retirement.

As of a meeting with Dr. Barry Grace, Science Director, PARC, and the Interior Hort Council on December 14, 2010 we learned that during the past 3 – 4 years, 8 of 34 positions at PARC were not replaced upon retirement – 6 of these positions were directly in support of horticulture. Another 25% of the 26 remaining scientists are due to retire by 2012. With interruption of scientific programs without a planned transition period, significant information is lost forever. Case in point, the Cherry breeding program director retires March 25, 2011 with no replacement identified.

The Ministry of Agriculture has announced that across Canada 39 scientists are scheduled to be hired over the next 3 years. None are scheduled to come to PARC.

Further be it resolved that the BCFGAs encourage the BCAC to carry this concern forward to the CFA and the BC Ministry of Agriculture.

## The Youth Skills BC Workplace Pilot Program

Funded through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement, the Youth Skills BC Workplace Pilot Program offers BC employers a \$2,000 Hiring Incentive when they hire an eligible youth between the ages of 15 and 29. Employers can also take advantage of a \$1,000 Training Fund to purchase training for their new employee. The Training Fund will ensure your new hire has the skills/certification required to perform their job duties. The Youth Skills BC Workplace Pilot Program is designed to provide youth participants with the skills that are required to be successful in the labour market through a combination of on-the-job training, work experience and formal skills development training. In order to address BC's current and future skills shortage challenges, we need to offer job opportunities and training to our youth and maximize their skills. Details about the YSBC program, as well as employee/employer criteria, and application forms are available at <http://www.bowmanemployment.com/ysbc/>

Please note that an original or faxed signature is required when applying.

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## Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program

The Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP) allows growers to access temporary workers from Mexico and the Caribbean during times of worker shortages. A useful guide to the program may be found at [bcac.bc.ca/index.php?page\\_id=50](http://bcac.bc.ca/index.php?page_id=50)

For growers who need help with the forms, the BCFGAs will offer assistance in filling out forms and being a third party representative for growers applying to the program, at a fee of \$40 per worker. Contact Elaine at 250-762-5226 (ext. 23).

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## Re-evaluation Results of Endosulfan Products

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has directed that new labels will be placed on existing stocks and new production of Thionex EC and 50WP. The intent is to reduce the amount of product used over the phase out period starting Dec. 31, 2011 and ending with the exhaustion of endosulfan supplies by Dec. 31, 2016. The last date of use on apple and pear is December 31, 2012; for stone fruits, Dec. 31, 2016.

Production of endosulfan and sale of pesticide products will cease by December 31, 2014. Sale of endosulfan pesticide products by others is not permitted after December 31, 2015. Check for changes on the new re-entry intervals and for pre-harvest on the label. **Source:** <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/decisions/rev2011-01/index-eng.php>.

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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**

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<b>Joe Sardinha (President)</b>	494-9983	Summerland
<b>Fred Steele (Vice-President)</b>	861-6641	Kelowna
<b>Madeleine Van Rouchoudt</b>	864-1947	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

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**Our Summerland Office is closing March 31, 2011.**