



## The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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### Newsletter

March 22, 2013

#### Activity Update

BCFGA activities since our Annual General Meeting on January 19 include meetings with provincial and federal agriculture associations, attendance at budget day, and several meetings with MLAs and MPs, and participating in a roundtable with the Premier. BCFGAs reps also met with the Minister, Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture. Executive meetings were held to set priorities for the year, based on resolutions at the Annual General Meeting and input from growers.

This newsletter provides brief updates on these activities, as well as important information on upcoming Tree Fruit Production Guide meetings and agricultural program information.

Throughout, this newsletter contains links (underlined words) to information that is available on our website or on internet. When members receive this newsletter by email, they may open the newsletter and access a link by selecting the underlined words with the mouse. Growers without internet access may go to a regional library to access the internet addresses provided in this newsletter, and hopefully a librarian or short course is available to introduce you to the internet.

The newsletter is accessible on our website, [www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com)

We have shortened the newsletter to make it more readable and to save postage expense. *Only growers without email addresses will receive the newsletter by regular mail.*

#### Tree Fruit Production Guide Meetings

<b>Wednesday, April 3, 2013</b>	<b>9:00 am – 11:30 am</b>	<b>PARC, Summerland</b>
<b>Wednesday, April 3, 2013</b>	<b>2:00 pm – 4:30 pm</b>	<b>Sonora Centre, Osoyoos</b>
<b>Thursday, April 4, 2013</b>	<b>1:00 pm – 3:30 pm</b>	<b>Memorial Hall, Winfield</b>
<b>Wednesday, April 10, 2013</b>	<b>7:00 pm – 9:30 pm</b>	<b>Creston Community center</b>

#### Agenda

- Introduction and overall supplement changes– Jim Campbell
- Disease changes – Gayle Jespersen
- Insects- Susanna Acheampong
- SIR – Hugh Philip
- Semiosbios presentation – Chelsea Eby
- FARSHA presentation – Carol Reid
- Field service update at some locations
- Food Safety update

PAC Points (pesticide applicators re-certification) are available for attendance, 1 A and 1.5 for C categories. For more information on PAC point visit the [BCFGA website](http://www.bcfga.com).

Coffee and tea provided by [Growers' Supply](http://www.growersupply.com).

## **SemiosBio**

For 2013, BC has been chosen to demonstrate an area-wide deployment of the Precision Pest Management System developed by SemiosBIO Technologies. Participation is voluntary and the wireless network system will be installed on cooperating growers' orchards at no cost. In addition, growers will have free, unlimited access to real-time data from their property including weather, pest counts, mating disruption from aerosol pheromone dispensers, and spray record-keeping on a secure online database.

If you are interested in participating, please come to the Tree Fruit Production Guide meetings to hear more about the program and read the information from SemiosBio in the [Grower Collaboration Document](#)

## **Agri-Stability Deadline for Interim Payment application**

The AgriStability program can provide an interim payment on the estimated 2012 program benefit. The deadline for applying for an Interim Payment is March 31, 2012. For more information, see the AgriStability [information sheet](#) on Interim Payment.

## **In Memorium**

A belated note on the death of long time BCFGA member [Garth Oko](#). Garth died of a stroke on Thanksgiving day. He was a lifetime orchardist in Creston, a co-op shipper to the end, although only cherries for the past fifteen years or so. Past President Gerald Geen recalls that Garth was on the BCFGA Executive for all of Gerald's years at executive and drove the road from Creston to Kelowna religiously for every meeting, regardless of weather.

Garth was a gentle and generous man who will be missed by those who knew him.

## **BCFGA Golden Jubilee Bursary**

The BCFGA has awarded to Kurt Deschner, son of BCFGA members Doug and Vicki Deschner, who is studying medicine at UBC. No applications were received for the Okanagan College bursary – the BCFGA/Rob Hall award.

## **Cherry and Apple research and promotion councils**

A steering committee formed to prepare a proposal and conduct a vote on a Cherry Council has decided to withdraw the proposal. The proposal to establish a Cherry Council was initiated in response to the need to invest in gaining access to foreign markets (e.g. trade missions, foreign trade shows, etc). Research was to be transferred from the Okanagan Kootenay Cherry Growers' Association to the new Council. The BCFGA supports the formation of a Cherry Council but objected to the weighted voting in the proposal.

The BCFGA remains committed to the Cherry Council. New government programs for research and promotion, under the federal/provincial Growing Forward 2 set of programs, require matching industry funds. A Cherry Council will ensure that industry funds are available for these important projects.

The BCFGA has also advocated for access to the Chinese market for BC cherries. At the CHC Annual Meeting, President Jeet Dukhia asked federal Minister Jerry Ritz to keep pressing for access to the Chinese market, and the BCFGA is assured that this is a priority trade item for the Canadian government.

An Apple Research and Promotion Council is being proposed by the BCFGA. The purpose of the Council is to promote consumption of apples and to conduct research on growing and storing apples. A schedule is being developed for the information sessions and vote on establishing ARPA.

### **BCFGA Annual Convention Follow-up**

There is one new member on the BCFGA Executive, as Jeet Dukhia moved from Vice-President to President and Bhupinder Dhaliwal was elected to the vacant Vice-President position ([the 2013 Executive](#)). The Executive reviewed resolutions from the Annual Convention and set priorities for the coming year.

### **Provincial Election**

The provincial election is May 14, 2013. The BCFGA also encourages its members to take an active role in the party of their choice.

Leading into an election, the BCFGA is meeting more frequently with politicians on specific program requests (see the [February 14 brief](#) to the Minister of Agriculture and Premier Christy Clark, and the [February 19 brief](#) made on Budget Day to MLAs). The BCFGA has also helped develop the BC Agriculture Council's [election document](#). We encourage members to review these items, meet with candidates to support industry requests, and attend All Candidates meetings. The BCFGA is sponsoring some All Candidates meetings, organized by the local Chambers of Commerce. In future, we will be sending an email to let members know about dates and venue.

The BCFGA has a non-partisan policy, but remains very active in lobbying for growers. Our non-partisan policy states that, except for the period between the dropping of the writ and the election, the BCFGA arranges for Executive members to meetings and events if it provides an opportunity to meet with elected representatives (MLA's and MP's). For further information, contact the BCFGA office.

### **Canadian Federation of Agriculture**

Details of the cutbacks to the AgriStability and AgriInvest Programs are being finalized. About one-quarter of the reduction in funding for these programs will be redirected to innovation programs. Further updates will be provided in upcoming newsletters and at the Annual Convention.

### **GMO Update**

The BCFGA delivered a letter to the federal Ministers of Agriculture and Health on February 28 to request a moratorium on the release of the Arctic Apple. The letter follows up on a July 24, 2012 resolution in favour of a moratorium of the Canadian Horticulture Council's Apple Working Group.

On March 12, 2013, the provincial NDP Agriculture Critic, Lana Popham, tabled a petition signed by more than 5500 BC residents, calling on the BC Legislature to "take urgent action to halt the commercial introduction of a genetically modified apple". **Replant and Budding and Grafting – 2013-2014 Applications and Guidelines**

In February, the provincial Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Norm Letnick, approved a change in the replant program rules, so that the 'like-to-like' requirement is no longer in place. This means that growers are no longer restricted to planting the same type of tree fruit as was removed. In other

words, growers can plant apples if cherries are removed (and so on) and still remain eligible for the replant program. The BCFGA has expressed its appreciation of the change in program rules.

Funding for replant is being allocated faster than expected. Growers may apply now for 2014 plantings in order to get approval and have the replant program funding reserved for an approved project.

The replant program forms and applications can be mailed upon request to the BCFGA office. Growers may also access the forms at [www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com)

### **Strategy in the Apple Sector**

Two recent reports have made suggestions on how the BC tree fruit industry should move forward. The following documents are available on the [BCFGA website](#).

*Summary of Recommendations*

*BC Apple Industry Benchmarking Report*

*Canada Apple Industry Benchmarking Report*

### **On –Line Calendar**

The BCFGA website features a [calendar of events](#). It is currently being updated with events and will be a convenient way to check on industry meetings. You may access the calendar on the front page of the BCFGA website, [www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com)

### **Federal Budget**

BC Agriculture Council has provided the following synopsis of the federal budget impact on the farm sector:

Taxation:

- Increase of \$50,000 to Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption - will help farmers manage the tax burden associated with the transfer of farm assets.
- Increase restricted farm losses from \$8,750 to \$17,500

Research

- Increasing investment in Genome Canada, supporting agriculture innovation and research.

Trade

- Continued support for Beyond the Border and work to reducing trade barriers between Canada and the US.

Clean Energy

- Incentives for clean energy generation equipment and technology development

[Read CFA's Full Reaction to the 2013 Federal Budget](#)

### **PST is Back, as of April 1, 2013**

For information on the re-introduction of PST and how it will affect your farm operation, see the government's [information bulletin for farming](#).

For information on obtaining a BCAC farmer identity card. BCAC has an [on-line application](#). Growers belonging to the BC Fruit Growers' Association will receive a \$100 per year discount in the fee for a farmer identity card. Obtaining a farmer identity card will help you receive the PST exemption for listed product purchases, as well as support the BC Agriculture Council's operations.