

## Summerland Varieties Corporation

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### **New Manager Hired by Summerland Varieties Corporation**

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Summerland, BC – The Summerland Varieties Corporation (SVC, formerly PICO) announced that it has hired a new senior manager to pilot the company. Michael Bechtel assumes the General Manager position at the plant breeder rights company this week.

“I plan to apply wide-ranging insight into the strategic directions that I will recommend to the Board,” said Bechtel. “I am impressed with SVC’s opportunities, and recognize the importance of forging strong relations with our customers. I will be relying on our great team to bring even greater achievements to SVC.” Bechtel concluded.

“We welcome Michael to SVC. I am confident that SVC will, under his management, continue to play an important role in supporting the development and success of the BC and Canadian tree fruit sectors,” said Nirmal Dhaliwal, President of SVC.

Bechtel has deep roots in agriculture and BC, having been raised on a Vancouver Island mixed farming operation including exposure to most BC commodities, graduating from UBC Agricultural Economics and Animal Science Genetics, and with his first job in extension at Dawson Creek for the Ministry of Agriculture. Following on this farm business management extension experience, Bechtel obtained his MBA from McMaster University majoring in Strategic Planning. Bechtel has also operated his own poultry processing and distribution facility, worked for a farm organization to develop business programs, managed a provincial horticultural marketing board, and developed knowledge of the biotechnology sector and intellectual property management in Saskatoon.

Following Michael Bechtel’s start, Nick Ibuki will resume his duties as Operations Manager after filling in as Acting General Manager. “We appreciate Nick and all of the SVC staff putting extra effort in for the past several months while we searched for the right candidate. Nick and the staff exhibited commitment in moving the company forward over the past few months, and we absolutely appreciate the effort,” said Nirmal Dhaliwal, President of SVC.

SVC was established in 1993 to be an agent for owners of new varieties of tree fruit and berries. SVC administers technical, legal and contractual items for the owners of the new varieties and assists in ensuring the commercial success of promising new varieties of tree fruits and berries. It also operates a budwood orchard that provides growers with true-to-type, virus indexed budwood for grafting and supports scientific research and development in support of the tree fruit industry.

SVC is an agent for some of the most successful varieties in the world, including the Ambrosia apple and Staccato cherries. SVC is also agent for promising new varieties such as the Salish apple (released in 2012) and the Sentennial cherry varieties.

SVC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the BC Fruit Growers' Association. The management and operation of the two organizations is independent.

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Further information:

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