

BC FRUIT GROWERS'
ASSOCIATION

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BCFGA Bulletin



February 2010

BCFGA Holds Emergency Meetings in Reaction to Acute Income Crisis

BCFGA President started and ended the Special grower meetings on February 10 and 11 by recognizing the financial pressure on growers created by the very low apple price situation. Throughout the meeting, it was noted that all growers are suffering financially. It was also noted that cherry and pear producers are suffering from the same market depression. Growers at the meeting appreciated the opportunity to discuss their situation and bring ideas to the table.

As a result of the input from growers, the BCFGa will continue to work on possible short to medium term help from government, including:

- Developing an AgriRecovery application for the October 10-12, 2009 freeze-related losses.
- Requesting a special payment, by asking the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to take a lead role.
- Requesting a special payment from the province of BC, tied to the ALR.

It was noted that growers can access some cash from:

- **AgriStability advance payments.** It was noted by BCMAL Risk Management Branch staff that the deadline date for an advance payment application is March 31, 2010. Contact 1-877-343-2767.
- **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.

Over 200 people attended the meetings held in Oliver and Kelowna. Growers attending agreed the meetings were worthwhile and that we are all in this together. The BCFGa will be actively following up on the consensus which emerged from the meetings.

MORE of AgriStability and AgriInvest on page 7

2010 BCFGGA Annual Convention

A new BCFGGA Executive team for 2010

During this year's annual convention, BCFGGA members got to vote for the 2010 BCFGGA Executive. The new Executive met on February 16th and welcomed new members Peter Simonsen, Nirmal Dhaliwal and Fred Steele. We would also like to thank the outgoing Executive members Rod Hollett, Fred Danenhower and David H. Geen for their work. (see the new Executive contact list on page 8 of this newsletter)

BCFGGA Annual Convention Resolutions

A report on the BCFGGA resolutions considered at the January 29th-30th Annual Convention will be made available in our next newsletter and on the BCFGGA website, which is currently being redesigned.

Awards presented at the 121st Annual BCFGGA Convention

An Award of Merit was presented to **Allan Patton** for his outstanding contribution to the future of the tree fruit industry.

The Life Member Award for 2010 went to **Ron Vollo** for his vital contribution and work for the industry over the years.

Phil Johnson from AM 1150 was awarded with the BCFGGA Press Award, recognizing his support for the agricultural sector and tree fruit industry, as well as his involvement in the BCFGGA 2009 Horticultural Forum.

Sponsors for the 121 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:

*BASF
Bayer Crop Science
Engage Agro
Farmco
Interior Savings
Sterile Insect Release Program (SIR)
Sun-Rype
Syngenta*

Oyama Fruit Grower and BCFGAs Executive Wins Award of Excellence for Agricultural Innovation



The BCFGAs would like to congratulate the recipient of the 2010 Award of Excellence for Innovation in Agriculture and Agri-Food. Roger Bailey of Kalwood Farms in Oyama, is this year's award recipient. He was recognized for his mobile work platform that creates safer and more efficient working conditions in B.C. orchards.

The Investment Agriculture Foundation Award of Excellence for Innovation in Agriculture and Agri-Food celebrates ideas, products, projects and programs generated by the agriculture and agri-food industry that deliver economic, environmental or social benefits to British Columbia. The award is open to individual B.C. residents and Canadian-based organizations and businesses operating in B.C. This year's award was announced on January 27th at the BC Agriculture Council's Agri-Food Industry Gala in Abbotsford.

Tree Fruit Production Guide Meetings

It is the time of year to mark your calendar for the month of *March Tree Fruit Production Guide* meeting scheduled in your area. In addition, a revised and "re-vamped" edition of the production guide will be available for purchase. We appreciate the assistance of the many professional staff involved in updating the new production guide.

March 23rd, 2010	9:30am	Cawston Hall
March 23rd, 2010	1:30pm	Oliver Parks and Recreation Centre
March 24th, 2010	1:30pm	PARC
March 30th, 2010	9:30am	Winfield Memorial Hall
March 30th, 2010	1:30pm	Rutland Centennial Hall
April 8th, 2010	7:00pm	Creston Downtowner Motel

PLEASE NOTE: the Tree Fruit Production Guide Meeting agenda will be available in the March edition of the BCFGAs Bulletin.

Guidelines and Forms for the 2010 Replant Program

The federal government has provided funds for a Tree Fruit and Grapevine Removal Program under the BC Orchards and Vineyards Transition Program. A grant is available for eligible acreage removed. BC Tree Fruit and Grape growers may apply. Projects should be inspected prior to removal.

The province of BC has provided funds for the renewal of the tree fruit sector, through the BCFGAs Tree Fruit Replant Program. The partial grant for replanting and budding/grafting projects is available to BC tree fruit growers.

2010 application forms and guidelines for both the Removal and Replant Programs are now available. For further information or to request the application forms and guidelines, contact the Replant and Removal Programs administration. Replant funds are limited and likely to be fully subscribed for Spring 2010. Growers are encouraged to apply, as a waiting list will be maintained.

For application guidelines, forms and other information on the program, contact **Deb Gibbard at 494-5021 or 1-800-665-5254.**

Orchard Elevated Work Platforms

Inspectors from WorkSafeBC have recently issued notices of non-compliance with WorkSafeBC regulations on Orchard Elevated Work Platforms (e.g. girettes and similar machines). The BCFGAs is working actively with the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA) and WorkSafeBC for a practical resolution to the issue. A February 18th meeting was attended by Glen Lucas, BCFGAs General Manager, Bruce Johnston, FARSHA General Manager, and WorkSafeBC representatives. A proposal by BCFGAs and FARSHA was discussed and an official WorkSafeBC response is expected within days. Growers will be advised by the cooperative packinghouse email list, through an item on the BCFGAs website and in our next newsletter.

Foreign Worker Programs

A brochure on the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP) for Mexico is enclosed with this newsletter. The Caribbean SAWP program is also available, with the Jamaican Liaison Office conveniently located in Kelowna. A separate program, the Low Skilled Worker Program sees about 3000 Guatemalan workers employed mainly in Quebec. Further information on all the foreign worker programs is available from the BCFGAs.

BC Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative

Agriculture is highly vulnerable to changes in climatic conditions and even small shifts could have significant consequences for food production and growers, as we've seen this past fall with serious hail and freeze conditions in the Okanagan. Adaptation in agriculture can be explored from a number of angles but the most practical approach is assessing vulnerabilities and developing appropriate risk management strategies, strengthening the ability of the industry to respond to change. Farmers can also adjust their farm practices and/or equipment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or to sequester carbon in soils. Agriculture is thought to have significant potential for mitigating climate change in the areas such as the reduction of emissions, the enhancement of removals (sequestration) and avoidance (displacement of emissions). The Climate Action Initiative, led by an advisory committee made up of agricultural producers, food processors as well as representatives from various government agencies, is a joint undertaking of BC Agriculture Council and the Investment Agriculture Foundation with funding provided by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture & Lands. It was developed to enable a pan-agriculture approach to identifying and analyzing the impacts of climate change and climate action public policy on the agriculture and food processing sectors. It also raises awareness about potential impacts on the sector and assists the industry to meet the challenges and act upon the opportunities presented by climate change.

This month, BCFGGA met with Emily MacNair, coordinator for the Climate Action Initiative, and discussed issues of specific concern to the BC tree fruit industry, including water security and affordability, cold storage and energy efficiency, carbon labels for the cherry sector, and more. In the coming months, the Initiative will be completing its primary deliverable action plan, which will be released in May 2010. Should you want more information on the program, please visit www.bcaqclimateaction.ca

Okanagan Orchardists Help Everyone Breathe Easier

Great strides have been made to protect our air quality in the Okanagan. Our air is much cleaner today than it was ten years ago at the turn of the new Millennium. But there is more we can do and valley orchardists have a key role to play in the clean air picture.

Since 2004 when the first Agricultural Wood Waste pilot project was conducted in the Central Okanagan, many growers in the Central Okanagan and Okanagan Similkameen that have replanted their acreages have also participated in the Agricultural Wood Waste Chipping Programs offered by the Regional Districts of Central Okanagan and Okanagan Similkameen. Rather than burn their debris. Participating growers have made a clean-air decision to take part in the free programs.

(Continued on page 6)



In the Central Okanagan last year, growers of 30 orchards participated in the chipping program, generating more than 7,500 cubic meters of wood chips for re-use in their orchards. By chipping instead of burning, over 120 tonnes of smoke-related pollutants were kept out of our airshed! The story is similar in the South Okanagan and just as exciting, where an unprecedented 67 growers participated!

So far in 2010, ten Central Okanagan growers have qualified to participate in the Central Okanagan FREE chipping

program. In the South, fifteen growers are on the wait list. That's 25 orchards on over 50 acres where debris won't be burned, and for that we can all breathe a lot easier! And the good news is there is room for more orchardists to take part. All you have to do in the Central Okanagan is contact the Regional Air Quality Program Coordinator Nicole Marzinik at 250-469-8408 or email nmarzinik@kelowna.ca. In the Okanagan Similkameen, contact Janice Johnson, Air Quality Program Coordinator, at 250-490-4212 or by email at janicejohnson@rdos.bc.ca. Either coordinator will be able to provide you with more details about the programs and will advise you on how best to prepare your orchard wood debris for easy access to the chipping program. Unfortunately, due to the cost associated with transporting the equipment used in the program, orchardists with small amounts of tree debris may not qualify.

Marzinik says, "If you qualify, a portable tub grinder will be brought to your orchard. It will be set up to chip stumps and large branches into 1 to 2 inch diameter sized chips. After chipping, the ground wood chips will be left behind on your property to use as you wish. These chips can provide effective mulch so it's recommended you spread them around your trees to increase the moisture retention of the soil and to control weeds and other invasive plants." Johnson adds, "Growers whose trees are mulched through this chipping program have fewer weeds to attend to within the rows and they can deal with those bothersome plants on a more flexible schedule than growers who maintain an herbicide strip in the rows. As well, documentation from the University of Minnesota shows that wood chip mulch has a positive effect on soil properties and leads to improved tree health and vigor, as well as increased yields."

The Central Okanagan Agricultural Wood Waste Chipping program is funded by the Regional District of Central Okanagan Air Quality Program and the South Okanagan program is funded by the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen.

Support is provided by the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association, the Okanagan Tree Fruit Cooperative and the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre.

AgriStability: 2009 Interim Payment

INTERIM APPLICATIONS

Producers will now be able to apply for interim benefits during the program year prior to tax filling

- The interim payment is 50% of what is estimated to be the final payment
- If a producer has applied for an interim payment, it is mandatory for them to apply for a final payment. Or else the interim payment is considered an over payment and will have to be repaid by the producer.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PROVIDE

Total farm income for all eligible commodities

- Apples: 2009 first advance from packing house
- 2009 production insurance claim amounts (including deferrals)

If your 2008 AgriStability payment has not been processed

- 2008 pool close (apples)
- 2008 income tax return

2009 crop inputs

- Total pesticides and fertilizers
- Growers supply statement
- Fuel
- Arms length labour (including foreign labour additional costs)

Total number of planted acres farmed in 2009

- Total acres for each commodity produced

TO CONTACT THE AgriStability BRANCH

To speak to an AgriStability representative you can visit one of their regional offices or call 1-877-343-2767 or visit the website at www.agf.gov.bc.ca/AgriStability

AGRIINVEST UPDATE

An extension of the deadline for making a deposit to the 2008 AgriInvest program has been agreed by the federal, provincial and territorial agriculture ministers at their last meeting. A letter to growers is to be issued shortly, as the 30-day extension was announced during the Canadian Federation of Agriculture annual meeting, held in Ottawa on February 22nd.

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The BC Fruit Growers' Association represents the 800 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

NAME	TELEPHONE	LOCATION
Joe Sardinha (President)	494-9983	Summerland
Kirpal Boparai (Vice-President)	869-9663	Kelowna
Roger Bailey	548-3513	Oyama
Fred Steele	861-6641	Kelowna
Sukhdev Goraya	491-2229	Kelowna
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