

BC FRUIT GROWERS'
ASSOCIATION

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BCFGA Bulletin



March 2010

Fellow growers:

The severe downturn in average price for the 2008 apple crop has worsened for the 2009 crop. While poor prices were expected, the first advance pool was lower than anyone expected. As a result, the BCFGa held two grower meetings, on February 10 and 11. Your frustration with producing a good quality crop and not receiving cost of production was clearly evident. The main causes were seen to be unfairly subsidized and overproduced Washington State apples and unbalanced bargaining power of consolidated retailers.

As growers, you heard about the possibility of AgriStability Interim Payments and AgriInvest withdrawals to provide some help during times of tight cashflow. Certainly, industry needs to take advantage of these programs, even though the resources provided are not adequate. If we do not take advantage of the AgriStability Interim Payment, then government will question the request we are taking forward. The deadline for requesting an AgriStability Interim Payment is March 31, 2009. The program is now administered in Kelowna, so we are expecting that the Interim payments will be made in a timely fashion – in fact, for those 250 growers who do not have 2008 AgriStability finalized, the local program administration will estimate last year's margins in order not to delay Interim payments.

Following the grower meetings, we attended Canadian Federation of Agriculture to judge the possibility of requesting a 'Kick Start' type of payment, based on a percentage of Allowable Net Sales. CFA is, however, focused on the ongoing livestock depression and development of a future-looking Food Policy. CFA, like Okanagan tree fruit growers, is tired of chasing government for programs which do not match up with those of our competitors. A new direction is to seek programs which improve food security and support for the agricultural sector, through a policy which places the food and agriculture sector first. We also attended a Canadian Horticultural Council meeting to discuss the possibility of launching a trade action against the US and seeking an orderly marketing system. The other provinces will consider an early, but not immediate, launch of a trade action after growers in those provinces get their first advance payments (they have not yet seen the market returns for the 2009 crop). Additionally, the managers of the apple associations were directed to work on alternatives for orderly marketing for consideration at a summer Apple Working Group Meeting. The group recognizes the substantial hurdles to be overcome and that there will be different but ongoing challenges for industry even with orderly marketing. Recently, on March 10, Kirpal Boparai, Fred Steele, Peter Simonsen, Glen Lucas and I met with the Hon. Steve Thomson, provincial Minister of Agriculture on March 10. We noted the importance, but inadequacy, of AgriStability Interim Payments and the possible AgriRecovery application (to provide compensation for the impact of the October 10-12, 2009 freeze). We requested that the province provide a special payment to growers of \$10 million. A special payment is needed so that all growers have the resources to grow the 2010 apple crop. The Minister and Deputy Minister agreed to work with us on an AgriRecovery application and to provide staff support for longer term trade solutions. The Minister will respond to our request for a special payment next week.

What can you do? If you are enrolled in AgriStability, make sure that you apply for an AgriStability Interim Payment by March 31. Request a full withdrawal of your AgriInvest funds. Contact your MLA (Enquiry BC 1-800-663-7867) and MP (Canada Line 1-800-622-6232) and let them know your financial situation. Finally, keep in touch with your packinghouse and BCFGa directors to let them know how you are doing. A BCFGa Executive meeting on March 23 will examine the Minister's response and our alternatives. We may be requesting your time and effort in public demonstrations of our plight. It continues to be a very stressful time for each of us, but together we must move forward on short and long-term solutions to the income crisis.

Sincerely,

Joe Sardinha
President

Farm Business Advisory Service available to BC agriculture producers

The BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands will be offering a Farm Business Advisory Service (FBAS) to BC agriculture producers. FBAS is a farm self-assessment and a consulting program designed to assist producers with business management. The self assessment component is a workbook titled "Taking Stock" which enables producers to measure current business practices and identify information, training, and consulting services that they can use to improve their use of progressive business practices. The self assessment process results in the **development of a farm action plan which is required to access program funding**. The second, follow up, component is a farm business advisory service where producers may be eligible for funding toward agriculture business consulting services for their operations. These services fall into 2 tiers:

1. Basic farm financial assessment (100% support up to \$1,900 with a \$100 upfront fee paid by producers to the Farm Business Advisor). This assessment is a basic overview of the financial position of an agriculture operation and is the foundation for future planning.
2. Specialized business planning (85% support up to \$3,000 - no fee) is for agriculture operations to adopt progressive farm business management practices and strategies in nine business management areas: Business strategy, Succession planning, Marketing strategy, Business structure, Production economics, Risk assessment, Human resources, Value-added ventures, and Financial management. More information can be found at http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmngmt/FB_Advisory_Services.html

2010 AgriStability Enrolment Notice

The BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands will be mailing 2010 AgriStability Enrolment Notices to producers. Participants in the 2009 program will automatically receive an Enrolment Notice if BCMAL has all the necessary information. If you have recently participated in AgriStability and information is missing, BCMAL will notify you. If you are unsure if you have recently participated, please contact us. Here are a few important program details:

- Producers who have never participated in AgriStability must request a New Participant Package. The packages are available on our website at www.agf.gov.bc.ca/AgriStability or by calling Toll Free 1-877-343-2767 or emailing AgriStability@gov.bc.ca to have the package mailed to you.
- Producers have until April 30, 2010 or 30 days from the issue date on their Enrolment Notice to pay the fee without penalty or opt out. If you do not opt out, you are considered enrolled. The specific deadline date is indicated on each Enrolment Notice.
- A penalty of 20% will be added to the fee for producers who miss the deadline. They will have until December 31, 2010 to pay the fee.
- Producers who submit their fees after the December 31, 2010 deadline will be unable to participate for 2010.
- Producers who do not wish to participate in the program must advise us prior to the deadline or you will be considered enrolled for the program year.

Minimizing smoke pollution from the agricultural industry

Our valley communities have frequent temperature inversions which act like a lid, trapping smoke pollutants in the valley bottoms. Not only can this impact those that are burning, but neighbours and others that live some distance from the actual burning site are also affected. Temperature inversions are frequent year round in the mornings, but can last all day, especially from November through March. It is also safe to say venting is rarely good in the mornings, all year long.

Why the concern over wood smoke?

Science has increased our knowledge about wood smoke. We now know smoke has significant public health effects, even at very low concentrations. In fact, exposure to levels previously thought to be "GOOD" is now known to be dangerous to our health. Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM_{2.5}) is one of the hundred known toxic substances found in wood smoke. Because PM_{2.5} is tiny, these particles stay in the air longer; travel further than larger particles and can penetrate indoors. They also travel deep into the lungs, and then into the bloodstream, causing irritation and disease to the lungs and the heart!

The British Columbia Air Action Plan identifies fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone as the two most harmful contributors to air pollution.

What can you do as a grower?

Burning garbage used to be a long standing practice but we now understand there are serious health concerns. It is also against the law to burn garbage. The Provincial Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation states you must recycle, reuse or dispose of at your local landfill or other approved disposal locations, the following prohibited materials:

Tires	Household waste
Plastics	Pesticide and other agricultural containers
Treated lumber	Lubricant and fuel containers
Railway ties	Asphalt and asphalt products
Drywall	Demolition waste
Paint	Manure
Hazardous waste	Rubber
Tar paper	Biomedical waste

Important note: Please check with your local government regarding items that are accepted for disposal at landfills and options for disposing of items that are not accepted. Agricultural chemical containers cannot be recycled at the landfill and must be returned to your dealer cleaned, with caps and booklets removed. Visit www.croplife.ca for more details.

Wood waste disposal options

Growers will have a variety of wood wastes left over from their operations; prunings, stumps, and whole trees. There are several options available to deal with this waste.

- Wood salvaging
 - Sell wood to outside markets or keep it for firewood
 - When salvaging wood, tell the tree salvager to leave enough of the tree stump on to enable the excavator to pull the roots efficiently
- Chipping
- Hauling to landfill for chipping
 - Trees need to be cut to 6 foot lengths or shorter
 - Keep stumps separate (remind excavator operator to remove dirt and rock from roots)
 - Self haul, rent a 40-60 yard, and/or hire a contractor to haul
- Burning (check with your local fire authority regarding pre-burning inspection and permit requirements)

- Hotter burns equal less smoke
- Pile to allow for good air flow
- Dry wood waste for 6 months and stumps for 1 year before burning
- A combination of the above – salvaging, chipping, hauling, burning
 - All wood waste disposal options require the removal of dirt and rocks

Ventilation Index

The Ventilation Index is an estimate of how well smoke will be carried away from the surface. The higher the Ventilation Index, the better smoke will disperse from the valley bottom. The Provincial Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation states the Ventilation Index must be 55 or greater to conduct a burn; however the Regional District of Central Okanagan bylaw is more stringent (65 or greater). Nevertheless, it is recommended for all Okanagan and Similkameen valley communities that open burns are conducted on days when the Ventilation Index Forecast is at least 65. Also, even when the ventilation is forecast to be good, the earliest recommended start time for burning is 10:00 a.m. in the spring and 12:00 p.m. in the fall, since morning venting is rarely good. This will help prevent a visit from a Bylaw Officer or the fire department, or complaints from your neighbours.

For more information on Wood Waste Disposal Options, Chipping Programs, Agricultural Plastic Recycling, and Air Quality Programs, please contact:

In the RDOS: www.rdos.bc.ca or 250-490-4212 or toll free 1-877-610-3737 (ext 4212)

In the RDCO: www.regionaldistrict.com or www.kelowna.ca or 250-469-8408

Golden Jubilee Bursary

The BCFGGA annually awards up to \$1,000 to a student who is a close relative of a BCFGGA member and who has successfully completed the first year at a recognized college or university, and who is enrolled in a second or subsequent year of study.

Applicants are evaluated based on course relevance (35%), their marks (25%), farm experience (20%), and work experience (20%).

Choosing this year's Golden Jubilee Bursary winner proved to be quite challenging due to the high caliber of applicants, and the BCFGGA decided to split the \$1,000 award between two winners:

Laura Machial, daughter of Oliver growers Joe and Anna Machial

Scott Nicolson, son of Summerland growers John and Sandra Nicolson

Reminder of the Tree Fruit Production Guide meetings in your region

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

2010 BCFGAs Annual Convention

Summary of the Resolutions passed at the January 29-30, 2010 BCFGAs Annual Convention

2. Regional District and Municipal Appreciation

Be it resolved that the BCFGAs recognize and send appreciation to the regional districts and municipalities of the Okanagan for supporting 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. Agriculture Program Funding

Be it resolved that provincial and federal government immediately increase their commitment to agriculture and funding for programs.

4. Peach and Nectarine Production Insurance

Tabled to BCFGAs Financial Programs Committee.

5. Climate Change and Impact on Risk to Agriculture Production

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGAs and the Agriculture Risk Management Branch Production Insurance investigate program rules to reflect the effect of changing climate on tree fruits, and Further be it resolved that there be affordable coverage for losses due to weather disasters such as intensive summer heat, drought or early harvest freezes.

6. Development Cost Charges

Therefore be it resolved that the City of Kelowna be requested to eliminate Development Cost Charges (DCCs) on new construction of secondary farm housing and seasonal worker accommodation and that all municipalities and regional districts refrain from implementing such DCCs.

7. Septic Field Requirements for Lot-Line-Adjustments

Therefore be it resolved that the province exempt parcels in the ALR from the minimum 1 hectare for new septic fields as a requirement for infrastructure grants to municipalities subject to no increase in the total number of lots.

8. Agricultural Land Commission Resources

Therefore be it resolved that the Agriculture Land Commission employ professional Agrologists as part of its advisory staff to assess the viability of farm land.

9. Creston Grower Communication

Tabled.

10. Starling Control Partnership

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGAs encourage the regional districts to continue support for the starling control and research program.

11. Sanitary Facility funding

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government provide assistance for building on-farm sanitary facilities.

12. Accommodation Funding

Be it resolved that the federal and provincial governments provide financial support for accommodations for farm workers.

13. Farm Labour Priority

Be it resolved that farm labour be a high priority of the BCFGGA, and Further be it resolved that the BCFGGA seek to improve access to both domestic and foreign workers.

14. Minimum Piece Rates Review

Tabled to the BCFGGA Labour Committee.

15. Water Security and affordability

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.

16. Wood Waste Removal education

Be it resolved that growers applying for removal programs receive literature and information on Regional Districts' wood waste removal programs.

17. Climate Change Adaptation

Be it resolved that the BCFGGA work with government on climate change adaptation and Further be it resolved that government provide adequate funding for agricultural adaptation to climate change.

18. Marketing Strategy

Be it resolved that the BCFGGA encourage the BC Tree Fruits Ltd. to continue developing a marketing strategy to build on the success of the BC Leaf Brand, emphasizing the environmental, quality, food safety and new variety attributes of Okanagan fruit.

19. Increase Ambrosia Acreage

Therefore be it resolved that PICO be requested to investigate ways of reducing royalties on Ambrosia to BC growers that will enable expanded acreage for this variety.

20. BC Agricultural Products Promotion

Therefore be it resolved that the government help to offset the burden of regulatory requirements with programs which support the farm industry, such as the Buy BC program, the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program, institutional buying, etc.

21. BCFGGA Test Orchard

Withdrawn.

22. Institutional Purchases of BC Products

Be it resolved that the government of BC promote the use of BC agricultural products in government institutions.

23. Increase Food Security and Self-Sufficiency Through Program Funding

Therefore be it resolved that effective programs need increased government funding, and Further be it resolved that the government measure food security and food self-sufficiency to judge the success of

24. Innovation Programs

Therefore be it resolved that the province provide additional funding to the TFIDF to assist with the transformation of the tree fruit industry.

25. Market Prices

Be it resolved that the BCFGA encourage the Okanagan Tree Fruit Cooperative and BC Tree Fruit Ltd Boards of Directors to consider a new approach which establishes a minimum producer price for tree fruits.

26. Healthy Eating

Therefore be it resolved that the province of BC, through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, ensure the implementation of the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program at all schools in BC.

27. Federal Replant Program

Be it resolved that the federal government provide funding for tree fruit industry renewal, including a replant component, with funding provided by the AgriFlex Program.

LATE RESOLUTION A

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGA ask the provincial Minister of Agriculture to work with the BCFGA, together with WorkSafeBC, to reevaluate the policy to deal with safety concerns regarding elevating work platforms.

LATE RESOLUTION B

Be it resolved that the BCFGA support BCAC initiatives to secure stable funding of BCAC operations

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**1473 WATER STREET
KELOWNA, BC
V1Y 1J6**

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

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