



The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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News Release
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National Apple Competition Winners

Toronto, Ontario – BC apples captured several of the top spots at this year's National Apple Competition at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (RAWF) in Toronto, Ontario. The annual event attracts entries from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and BC.

"I congratulate the orchardists from across Canada who participated in the National Apple Competition," said Fred Steele, President of the BCFGA.

BC place top the Commercial categories of Red Delicious and Gala. BC also took the top places in the New Varieties categories of Salish, Ambrosia, and Aurora Golden Gala, and took top and third place in Other Named New Varieties with Nicola entries.

Finally, BC won the title with the Heaviest Apple, a Honey Crisp apple weighing in at 1.9 kg, produced by Devon Jell of Summerland, BC.

All fruit producing regions in the Okanagan-Similkameen were represented in the competition with 1st place finishes from orchards in Oliver, Okanagan Falls, Penticton, Summerland, and Kelowna.

The BCFGA is an agriculture association with a membership of 500 commercial tree fruit growers in BC. It celebrates its 129th anniversary in 2017.

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Official results:

<http://www.assistexpo.ca/results/rawf/6>

Farm Biographies attached.

Further information:

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Okanagan-Region Participant List and Brief Biography

1. Dave, Arlene, and James Sloan

Dave and Arlene Sloan, as well as their son James, of Matheson Creek Farms in Okanagan Falls have been growing high-quality produce in the area since 1978. The Sloans have successfully re-planted their orchard twice since then; promoting new apple varieties and developing a large following among local customers. They sell their fruit directly out of their on-site market. They have entered their Aurora Golden Gala, Salish, Nicola, Ambrosia, and Golden Delicious apples into this year's competition.

2. Billy and Shauna Boerboom

Billy and Shauna Boerboom of Windmill Orchards are independent growers from Summerland, BC. They operate both an on-site packing house, as well as a popular produce stand named The Apple Barn. The fruit stand is very popular among local customers where they can purchase a wide range of tree-fruits and ground-crops throughout the season. The Boerbooms have entered their Ambrosia, Salish, Golden Delicious, Royal Gala, and McIntosh apples this year.

3. Kashmir and Kulwinder Bengag

Kashmir and Kulwinder Bengag have been growing several varieties of tree-fruits in the Keremeous area since the early 1990's. They also operate the popular Mariposa fruit market, which has gained more and more popularity over recent years due to its high traffic location, as well as the top quality produce they sell there. Kashmir and Kulwinder also grow field-crops and remain as some of the top growers of novel apple varieties in the Okanagan. They have entered their Salish, Aurora Golden Gala, Nicola, Ambrosia, and Royal Gala into this year's competition.

4. Keith Johnstone and Sue Seddon

Keith Johnstone and Sue Seddon of Sedjoh Orchards in Naramata will be entering their Aurora Golden Gala into the competition this year, of which they received 1st place for in the 2014 contest. They have been growing in the area for almost 30 years, some of which were spent as members of the Born in BC program where they specifically grew top quality and new apple varieties. Keith and Sue have since focused on growing only Aurora Golden Gala and maintain an excellent job of doing so. They market their apples at the Penticton Farmers

Market during the fall where they have gained lots of popularity among customers.

5. Jack Machial

Jack Machial has been growing tree-fruits in Oliver for over 30 years. Along with his wife and family, Jack grows many top quality apple varieties and has been actively involved in the process of testing new varieties released from the Summerland Research and Development Centre. Jack will soon be retiring from farming where he has been regarded as a top-quality producer of Ambrosia apples in the past. He has entered his Ambrosia, Early-Fuji, Royal Gala, and Golden Delicious into this year's competition.

6. Gary and Suthwant Sandhar

Gary and Suthwant Sandhar of AM Sandhar Farms in Kelowna have been farming in both the Kelowna and Coldstream areas of the Okanagan since the early 2000's. They grow large amounts of specifically the Royal Gala and Ambrosia apples; both in the new high-density format and of top-quality. They also operate their own packing plant and have many acres of cherries as well. They will be entering both their Royal Gala and Ambrosia into the competition this year for the first time.

7. Michel Labelle

Michel and Eilma Labelle have been farming in the Naramata Bench area for 35 years; where they started off growing pears, prunes, cherries and older varieties of apples. Since then, Michel has honed his efforts in growing newer varieties, specifically concentrating on the apples Royal Gala and Ambrosia. He also manages a few vineyards and cherry plantings in the area. Michel received the prestigious Golden Apple Award for conducting sound horticultural practices in 2013 and will be entering both his Gala and Ambrosia apples into the competition this year.

8. Dave Machial

Dave Machial of Fairview Orchards, along with his parents Joe and Anna have grown top-quality apples, cherries and soft-fruits in the Oliver area since 1979. After receiving his Bachelor of Commerce degree, Dave took over operating the family farm in the late 2000's. He also sits on the board of directors for the Summerland Varieties Corporation, where he advises on the development and commercialization of new cherry and apple varieties for the Canadian tree-fruit industry. Dave will be entering his Golden Delicious, Ambrosia, Royal Gala, and Red Delicious apples into the competition this year for the first time.

9. Jad Nijjer

Jad Nijjer of Nijjer Family Farms has primarily been growing apples in the Kelowna area for over 20 years. With help from his two children, Bunvir and Harvir, Jad currently operates two locations of apple orchard; growing Granny Smith, Ambrosia, Nicola, Honey Crisp and Royal Gala, all of which are planted in high-density spindle system plantings. He will be entering his Nicola, Granny Smith, and Ambrosia into the competition for the first time this year.