

I. Complimentary

1. Appreciation

Board

Be It Resolved that the growers of this industry extend their appreciation through the Board to all members of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; BC Ministry of Agriculture; Canadian Horticultural Council; Canadian Federation of Agriculture; BC Agriculture Council; AgSafeBC; BC Orchard Industry Museum; Okanagan College; University of British Columbia - Okanagan; Summerland Research and Development Centre; Pest Management Regulatory Agency; BC Investment Agriculture Foundation; Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program; BC Tree Fruits Cooperative; and members of the news media and all others who in any measure have assisted the industry during the past year.

2. Municipal Support for the Tree Fruit Industry Priorities

Board

Be It Resolved that the BCFGa recognize and send appreciation to the regional districts and municipalities of the Okanagan for continued support of environmental programs for the tree fruit industry, including

- The Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program
- The Starling Control Program and
- Wood waste disposal (stump grinding) programs.

II. Financial Programs

3. To adjust Replant program for inflation and reflect increased costs

North

Whereas the cost of replanting has increased due to increased tree cost, increased labour costs, and increased irrigation and post and wire costs, the cost of water, as well as inflationary increases in cost of other inputs in general, and

Whereas the provincial Minister of Agriculture mandate letter specifies that the Minister “Establish Grow B.C. to help young farmers access land, and support fruit and nut growers and processors to expand local food production.”

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGa request the government to increase the level of replant grant to reflect inflation.

4. Extend Replant Program

South

Whereas the replant program has been very helpful in the past and we have asked for a long term program, and

Whereas the Premier and the Agricultural Minister of BC announced on November 21st, 2014 that the provincial government has committed to a seven-year replant program,

Whereas there are only three years remaining for this replant program,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGAs seek funding to extend the successful long term replant program.

5. That variety-specific and area-specific risks not be averaged in Production insurance

North and South

Whereas it is a principle of insurance to determine a risk-class that is separate and distinct for the items being insured, and

Whereas certain types and commodities of horticultural products are in separate risk-classes but currently merged into a larger risk class (e.g. tree coverage for apples and peaches), and

Whereas this results in the risks of the subclasses being averaged and reducing claims, and

Whereas there is a valid rationale for not merging the subclasses that have previously been accepted by Crop Insurance (e.g. late and early season cherries),

Therefore Be It Resolved that Production Insurance be variety-specific and that area-specific risks not be averaged in the insurance.

6. To raise the margin coverage in AgriStability from 70% to 85%

Board

Whereas AgriStability program payments were originally triggered by a 15% decline in program margin which provided adequate coverage for risk of revenue decline, and

Whereas the AgriStability program's coverage level for risk was arbitrarily reduced in Growing Forward 2 when the trigger for program payments was changed to a 30% decline in margin,

Whereas participation in AgriStability has declined since the Growing Forward 2 reduction in coverage level, and

Whereas the recent change to the program to allow 'retroactive' enrollment hides the deficiency exhibited through lack of on-time enrollment and does not address the root problem of inadequate program coverage,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the AgriStability margin coverage be reset to trigger at a 15% margin decline.

III. Trade, Taxes and Regulations

7. Mandatory Labeling of Genetically Modified Produce

North

Whereas 91% of consumers want mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods (Consumer Association of Canada, 2003), and

Whereas GMOs are not accepted in some public and production system philosophies, especially the organic sector, and

Whereas there is confusion about whether fruit and vegetable produce has been developed using advanced scientific techniques that genetically modify the product, and

Whereas there could be reduced demand and economic harm to non-Genetically Modified products due to the confusion in the public,

Whereas U.S. food companies must label products containing genetically engineered ingredients by 2022,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the CHC request the federal government to amend the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations to include mandatory labeling of all Genetically Modified fruits and vegetables sold in Canada.

8. That farmers be exempt from PST

North

Therefore Be It Resolved that the PST system provide input tax credits on all farm input purchases, and

Further Be It Resolved that the rebate system be administered by government.

9. On-Farm Food Safety Resolution

South

Whereas the CanadaGAP food safety program is based on scientific food safety research and practical knowledge of farm practices, and

Whereas some impractical requirements can creep into programs such as food safety, and

Whereas CanadaGAP for horticulture is under the purview of CanAgPlus, an independently managed corporation,

Therefore Be It Resolved that CHC as a shareholder request the Board of Directors of CanAgPlus to consider the following policies to return the food safety program to a practical level:

1. For every rule introduced, one rule must be eliminated;
2. A risk assessment be performed on every new rule;
3. That a risk assessment be performed on 10% of existing rules every year; and
4. That any food safety rules without a demonstrable, realistic risk to food safety be eliminated.

IV. Crop Protection

10. Improve Product Review at Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA)

North

Whereas PMRA is overwhelmed with the number and type of product reviews, and

Whereas errors could occur in product reviews due to the limited capacity of PMRA, and

Whereas growers are being left without options due to withdrawal of products after a review, and

Whereas the number of reviews will continue to increase with no additional funding for reviews,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the federal government reduce the number of reviews, and

Further Be It Resolved that reviews be prioritized according to the availability of alternative products, availability of PPE and use patterns in determining reviews.

11. Consider Pesticide Resistance in PMRA reviews

Board

Whereas it is a best management practice to rotate chemical groups throughout the year in a spray program to reduce resistance buildup in the targeted disease or pest,

Therefore Be It Resolved that, in the re-evaluation of existing registered crop protection products, the PMRA consider pest resistance to the remaining registered crop protection products prior to making its decision.

12. Deer control programs

North

Whereas deer fencing is expensive and only relocates the wildlife problem, and

Whereas without controlling the population of urban deer, fencing is one of the only protections currently available for deer damage to orchards, and

Whereas the problems associated with urban deer are increasing, including damage to orchards, damage to vehicles due to collisions with deer, and the suffering of injured and dying animals as a result of these collisions, and

Whereas the excessive rural and urban deer population is a responsibility of the government,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the provincial government implement other deer control practices (such as a new limited entry hunting program) to manage the problem rural and urban deer population.

13. Transportation Corridor Fencing for Deer

North

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGA request ICBC to provide transportation corridor or interface deer fencing in order to decrease motor vehicle incidents caused by rural and urban deer population.

14. Establish a Deer Fencing Program

South

Whereas damage caused by deer foraging and eating the new growth and tree branches in replanted orchards is devastating to the orchard operation, and

Whereas deer fencing programs helped growers to protect orchards from deer damage but are no longer funded, and

Whereas it may not be practical to hunt deer in orchard areas due to gun discharge by-laws, and

Whereas deer are not staying in rangeland and forested areas and deer are becoming habituated to settled areas,

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGA make a priority of advocating for the re-introduction of deer fencing as a Beneficial Management Practice eligible for EFP funding.

15. Support for Starling Control Program

South

Whereas Starlings are an invasive species that harm native bird populations, spread livestock disease, and consume economic quantities of feed and damage fruit through feeding, rendering it unfit for consumption, and

Whereas the Starling Control Program originated about 15 years ago for the purpose of reducing the Starling population in the Okanagan, and

Whereas there is recent research on starling movements that could further improve the effectiveness of the Starling Control Program,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGGA continue to support the Starling Control Program.

16. Support for the Sterile Insect Release Program

South

Whereas the Sterile Insect Release Program has proven to be an effective Area Wide Pest Control Program,

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGGA continue to support an efficient and effective Sterile Insect Release (SIR) Program.

17. To expand the mandate of the SIR program in cooperation with growers

South

Whereas the SIR program has developed expertise and infrastructure for monitoring, clean-up of host trees, and control measures (i.e. sterile insect release and pheromone distribution), and

Whereas these services could lead to an economic improvement in control costs and damage caused by pests other than Codling Moth, and

Whereas the use of SIR to apply area-wide IPM to other pests could realize significant economy of scope by making better use of SIR infrastructure and expertise,

Whereas there are other pests that could be controlled by SIR such as Apple Maggot, Spotted Wing Drosophila, Apple Clearwing Moth, and Brown Marmorated Stink Bug,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGGA recognize and encourage the efforts of the SIR program to expand its scope to include necessary area-wide monitoring, control and enforcement practices of other insect pests, and

Further Be It Resolved that the SIR Board develop a policy on how to obtain grower support and cooperation when considering additional pests to the program.

V. Water and Environment

18. Environmental Farm Planning - Increase Funding Caps

North

Whereas the EFP program should pay a higher percentage of project cost for environmental projects which do not provide a financial benefit (such as rebuilding a pesticide storage shed), and

Whereas the EFP program funding has been reduced, with a resultant reduction in the types of eligible projects for orchards and vineyards, and

Whereas the EFP program encourages projects that create positive environmental benefits, and

Whereas the EFP program is thought of positively and creates a cooperative atmosphere for climate change and environmental improvements, and

Whereas the alternative for government to the EFP Program is regulation and compliance activity, which come at a greater cost and increase the resistance of industry to making improvements,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCAC lobby to increase the funding caps for EFP Beneficial Management Practices.

19. EFP Funding for Soil Moisture Sensors and Irrigation Systems

North

Therefore Be It Resolved that BCAC lobby to restore funding to expand the list of projects to include items such as soil moisture sensors, and for upgrading to efficient irrigation systems.

20. Province to Put Controls on the Cost of Irrigation Water

North

Whereas the ALR requires water for productivity, and

Whereas competing agricultural producing areas have affordable irrigation costs, and

Whereas municipalities are not consistent in pricing of agricultural irrigation water and have been increasing costs at more than the rate of inflation,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the province cap the cost of agricultural water and ease the regulation of turn off and turn on dates.

21. Adequate, Affordable Water

Board

Therefore Be It Resolved that BCFGAs work with water purveyors to ensure there is adequate, affordable quality water at appropriate times for agriculture.

22. Wood Chipping Program

Board

Whereas there are new provincial Open Burning Smoke Control Regulations (OBSCR), and

Whereas regional governments provide a service to grind trees and stumps from removed orchards, and

Whereas this service reduces burning of wood waste resulting in improved air quality, and

Whereas the funding for the service is limited and not all chipping can be done as requested,

Therefore be it resolved that there be provincial government funding to fully service the chipping of all orchard wood waste, related to the OBSCR regulation.

VI. Labour

23. Settlement of Refugees to Fill Agricultural Jobs

North

Whereas the Canadian government has increased the number of refugees accepted to Canada per year, and

Whereas a significant number of government sponsored refugees are located in urban areas, and

Whereas agriculture jobs offer a pathway into the workforce,

Whereas agriculture has difficulty finding employees and the Okanagan has very low unemployment rates,

Therefore be it resolved that the federal government increase the settlement of refugees to areas where there are agriculture jobs available.

24. Halt Further Increases to Minimum Wage for Agriculture

North

Whereas the provincial government adopted nearly all the recommendations of the Fair Wage Commission and announced a timeline of increases to the minimum wage, and

Whereas the impact of minimum wage increases impacts industries differently, with the highest impact being industries with a greater amount of low-skill positions and industries that are competing with areas that provide greater support to their sectors and industries that are price takers due to retailer consolidation, and

Whereas agriculture is vulnerable on all three dimensions:

- a high proportion of operating cost is labour expense,
- other countries and provinces provide higher levels of support to their agriculture sectors, and

- there is great concentration in the retail sector of Canada, so that growers are price-takers,

Therefore Be It Resolved that government off-set the increase in minimum wage through increased funding of agricultural programs, introduction of tax credits for farming in relation to the employment of low-skill workers, and reducing regulatory costs for growers.

25. To approve more TFW-Ag Stream applications for workers from certain countries

North

Whereas agriculture requires a percentage of the workforce to work year-round, and

Whereas there are few Canadians and Permanent Residents to fill these year-round positions, and

Whereas the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFW) Agricultural Stream for certain countries such as India may be approved but the Work Permits not issued,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the issuance of TFW Ag Stream work permits for workers from certain countries be increased.

26. Increase SAWP Housing Deductions

Board

Whereas minimum wage is increasing and placing financial pressure on growers, and

Whereas labour costs are estimated to be 50-70% of the cost of producing tree fruit, and

Whereas other SAWP employment costs paid by growers such as airfare, housing, and statutory deductions are increasing, and

Whereas the SAWP program allows deduction of accommodations to a maximum of \$826 per worker per year and this rate has not changed for 4 years,

Therefore Be It Resolved that BCAC request an increase of allowable deductions for housing that reflects the rate of increase in the minimum wage over the past four years.

27. Introduce Agricultural Education Programs

Board

Whereas BC Agricultural GDP continues to increase about 2% per annum and

Whereas Agriculture is a significant economic driver and employer in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, and

Whereas a Viticulture Certificate program is the only agriculture education program in the Okanagan but tree fruit horticulture programs are not available,

Therefore Be It Resolved that BCFGAs work with education institutions and the provincial government to develop agricultural education programs with courses appropriate for the tree fruit sector in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys.

28. Allow International Experience Program Work Permits to be Issued in Canada after Arrival

South

Whereas many youth on holiday who travel from other countries to Canada are willing to work on farms, and

Whereas other countries enable travellers to apply for work permits after arrival, and

Whereas Canada only allows travellers to apply for work permits prior to arrival,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the International Experience Program participants be allowed to apply for work permits after arrival in Canada.

29. International Experience Program - to increase numbers of participants and add countries participating

South

Whereas the International Experience Canada program allows youth the opportunity to travel and work in Canada through work visas in the category of Working Holiday, Young Professionals, and International Co-op Internship, and

Whereas individuals with Working Holiday work permits often choose to work in agriculture,

Whereas the schedule of dates to apply and deadline to apply for the IEC program is not publicized well in advance which makes it difficult for planning,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Federal Government increase the number of Working Holiday visas issued and that the number of eligible countries be expanded.

VII. Research

29b. Apple Clearwing Moth - Solutions

Board

Whereas Apple Clearwing Moth (ACM) is an invasive pest of apple trees endemic to Europe, and

Whereas ACM detected in the Similkameen valley in 2005 and over the next few years its populations increased significantly with most growers in the Okanagan-Similkameen reporting some damage and some areas with very high and even extreme population levels, and

Whereas the infestations of ACM result in reduced tree vigour, and sometimes tree death and removal of infested orchards, and

Whereas degree day models for the pest have been developed and a 3 year pilot project using pheromones mating disruption is due to be completed in 2018-2019, with early results indicating that the treatments slow but do not prevent or reverse ACM infestation levels, and

Whereas there is currently a lack of new research on this serious pest of apple trees,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGALobby for long-term funding for research to find environmental ways to combat Apple Clearwing Moth.

30. To explore how SIR can rapidly detect and react to Codling Moth hotspots.

South

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGALobby request that a research study be conducted to explore how SIR can rapidly detect and react to Codling Moth “hotspots.”

31. Research Codling Moth Trap Effectiveness

North

Whereas Sterile Insect Release monitors traps for wild codling moths weekly in orchards throughout the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, and

Whereas growers are advised not to spray until their traps have wild moths for consecutive weeks, and

Whereas in 2018 many growers had no wild codling moths in their orchard traps but found significant codling moth damage,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the effectiveness of codling moth traps be studied.

VIII. Industry Development

32. Federal Bare Land Planting Program

South

Whereas there is underutilized farmland in the Okanagan-Similkameen, and

Whereas there are untapped export markets for Canadian apples and cherries, and

Whereas bringing new land into production will create economic value,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGA seek funding for a national 'bare land' planting program through a no-interest loan for the first five years.

33. To Explore marketing benefits of the Sterile Insect Release Program

South

Whereas the SIR Program reduces the environmental impact of farming by reducing pesticide use through the use of Sterile Insect Technology, and

Whereas demand for local production of apples and pears could be enhanced by raising awareness of this environmental program,

Therefore be it resolved that the BCFGA explore the promotional benefit of the SIR program and promote the environmental friendliness of the industry.

34. Cooperative Governance Structure

North

Whereas the Minister of Agriculture announced \$5 million for a new Tree Fruit Industry Competitiveness Fund at the 2018 BCFGA AGM, and

Whereas an independent study of the priorities of the fund identified that the "cooperative model should be assessed, [with] options identified to modernize the cooperative governance/ownership model, and changes implemented to restore stability and growth."

Therefore Be It Resolved that the BCFGA encourage BCTFC to submit a proposal to the Competitiveness fund to look at governance and structure.