

BC Fruit Growers' Association
Presentation to

Dan Albas, MP, Okanagan-Coquihalla



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Introduction

The BCFGGA welcomes the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the BC tree fruit industry. We represent 540 commercial tree fruit growers. Our mission is

*To create a healthy food system for the long-term prosperity
of the tree fruit industry.*

Our brief today provides a general introduction to the tree fruit industry in BC.

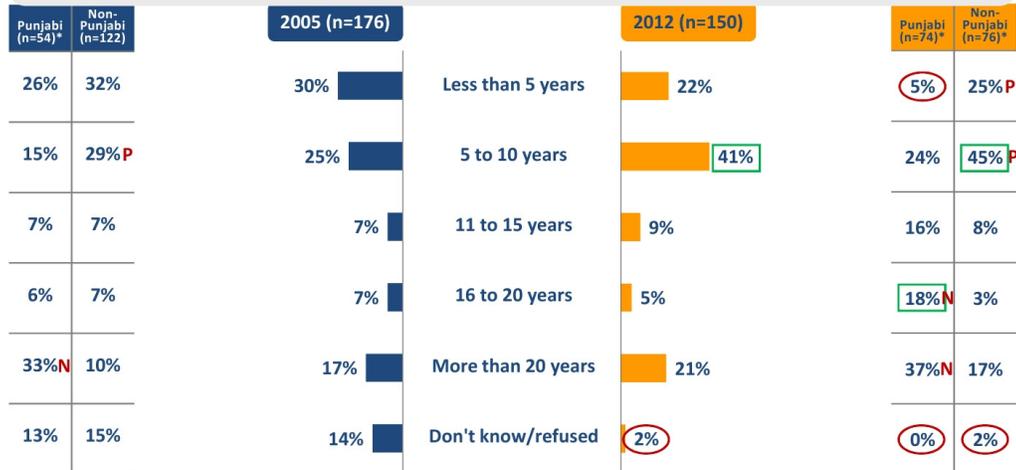
Industry Competitiveness

1. The competitive advantage of the tree fruit industry is our intensive management and the dry, northern climate.
2. New varieties of apples and cherries, developed at the federal research station in Summerland, are gaining widespread acceptance throughout the world. It is estimated that 80 percent of new cherry plantings in the world are of Summerland varieties.
3. The industry generates \$130 million in wholesale revenue with an economic contribution of \$270 million to the local economy.
4. The industry directly employs approximately 1,500 person years of employment, at the grower, packer and processor level.
5. Environmentally, our industry is advanced - we utilize highly-efficient irrigation systems to conserve and manage water, Integrated Pest Management and other innovations such as area-wide programs for codling moth and starling control. The tree fruit industry is among the lead agricultural crops in adopting Environmental Farm Plans.
6. The BCFGGA recently engaged Ipsos Reid to 'take the pulse' of our industry. After several years of downturn in the apple industry, there are encouraging signs – probably as a result of an industry shake out and consolidation of farms. Growers expect to stay in the industry longer and there is a high level of interest in replanting to more profitable varieties.



Years of Continuing in Tree Fruit Industry

- When asked how many years they plan to continue farming in the tree fruit industry, many intend to stay for the next 5 to 10 years. That said, responses are quite varied with many planning to stay less than 5 years and an equal portion planning to stay more than 20 years.
- Punjabi growers are more likely to stay committed to the tree fruit industry for a longer period of time than non-Punjabi growers – this is the same pattern that was noted in 2005.
- In future surveys, it may be useful to distinguish between personal plans and plans for the family farm operation, as well as to ask if a subsequent family generation is expected to take on the farm operation.



Base: All respondents

*Small base size, interpret with caution

Q9. How many years do you plan to continue farming in the tree fruit industry?

Punjabi (P) and Non-Punjabi (N) – Item with letter next to it is statistically significantly higher than the item designated by this letter.

○ Significantly lower than previous wave □ Significantly higher than previous wave

Ipsos Reid 19

Industry Strategy 2007 - 2012

7. The BC Tree Fruit Industry strategy was adopted in January 2007. An Industry Accord commits tree fruit industry organizations to work together on the five 'pillars' in the Industry Strategy:

- Restructuring the cooperative system,
- Quality,
- Markets,
- Labour and
- New varieties.

8. There is good progress in all of the pillars of the Industry Strategy. For example,
 - Four tree fruit cooperatives were merged into one in June 2008. Work continues in capitalizing on the opportunities and strategies related to the restructuring.
 - The Okanagan Tree Fruit Cooperative along with private packers are registering apple growers on a food safety program. Most cherry growers are registered in the GlobalGAP program, or equivalent, which was made possible by the creation of the BCGAP food safety program.
 - We are actively investigating the designation of the Okanagan-Similkameen as an Area of Low Pest Prevalence (ALPP), which is an internationally recognized scientific designation and a first for tree fruit production in the world. This is made possible by the Sterile Insect Release (SIR) Program, the first program in the world to use sterile insect technology to control pest moths.
 - A labour orientation and training certification project for cherry harvesters (mainly Quebec college students) has been conducted from 2007 to 2011. Unfortunately, in the current year the BCFGFA does not have the resources to operate the program.
 - A new variety commercialization strategy has been developed and \$2.8 million in federal investment is being accessed to fund this work.
9. In addition, we are completing work on a five year Tree Fruit Innovation Fund, which will provides \$1.5 million in federal-provincial for innovation projects.
10. About \$2.3 million in federal funding for the removal of grape vines or tree fruits was provided to assist transition, completed in March 31, 2011.

Summing Up

The BC tree fruit industry has made good progress on an industry strategy. The BC tree fruit industry continues to develop a vision for a bright future and is looking forward to developing a new 5 year strategy.

We appreciate your efforts in establishing a profitable, sustainable tree fruit industry.



