

Report to the 2019 BCFGGA Convention

From the

Environment and Water Committee

Climate Change

As noted last year, the level of activity around climate change is accelerating.

The Climate Action Initiative has delivered several projects in the Okanagan:

- The “Decision Aid System” being offered by SIR.
- Development of an irrigation planning 'tool' to assess farm irrigation needs and systems.
- Wildfire emergency planning which offered some workshops on preparation.

BCFGGA reps attended the Agricultural Climate Action Research Network (ACARN) meeting in Kamloops in December, 2018. Thank you to Adrian Arts and David Dobernigg for your participation. The network will help ensure that research will continue into mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts on agriculture.

Ag Waste Control Regulation

BCFGGA is attended a consultation on February 19, 2018 to re-emphasize our concerns about the proposed Phosphate regulation.

The provincial waste control regulation has recently been passed, although it is now called “Code of Practice”, rather than regulation. Nitrogen (N) and Phosphate (P) bring regulated. Nitrogen is not a problem for Okanagan (low risk of leaching into aquifers due to low rainfall), but Phosphate may be regulated if close to stream or lake.

Water Well Registration

The registration of Water Wells used for irrigation had an initial deadline of December 31 2017 to register without fee. The deadline is now extended to March 1, 2019. There are many reasons to register irrigation wells, and now is the time to do so. A presentation on how to register your well is taking place at teh 2019 BCFGGA Annual Convention.

Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation

BCFGGA will continue to monitor and participate in consultations.

Okanagan Basin Water Stewardship Council

Kevin Day and alternate Glen Lucas represent BCFGA on the Okanagan Basin Water Board's Okanagan Water Stewardship Committee, where we can review, analyze and have input into water planning at a regional level.

Deer Control

Damage to orchards by wildlife is a major concern. The BCFGA has identified the formation of a deer control sub-committee as a priority.

National Park

The BCFGA invited a presentation on the National Park to members attending the recent Regional Meeting in the South Okanagan. There are concerns about farming next to a national park (and for some ranchers, farming inside of the national park). At the same time, the park will increase tourism and create ag tourism opportunities. The BCFGA is monitoring the development of the proposal and providing feedback to minimize or eliminate impact on farms from the park.

Environmental Farm Plans

Everyone should consider having an Environmental Farm Plan. There is funding available for projects, for those who participate. The BCFGA is committed to getting more growers participating in EFPs.

Adrian Arts is on the planning committee for EFPS/CAI and he is working to improve the programs and make participation in the programs even more beneficial.

Thank you to everyone involved for engaging in the environmental issues.

Respectfully submitted,
Deep Brar, Chair