

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

February 9, 2018



BCFGA Convention Next Week!

February 15 (1 pm), February 16 (8 am), Coast Capri, Kelowna

The [Annual Convention Agenda](#) is finalized - we are pleased to announce that Minister Popham is speaking after lunch on Friday, February 16.

Included in this newsletter are biographies for the candidates who responded to our invitation. Candidates will also have 3 minutes to speak to BCFGAs members before the election on the afternoon of February 16.

Two late changes for the Convention:

- Resolution 45 "Summerland Varieties Corporation (SVC) Governance Resolution" is withdrawn by the sponsor.
- Rana Sidhu has withdrawn his name from nomination for Vice President.

Candidate Biographies

BCFGA Board of Director election

We invited Candidates to provide a short biography for publication in this edition of the BCFGAs Friday File. The biographies as submitted are attached, in the order received, categorized by President, Vice-President, South-elected Directors and North-elected Directors.

Agriculture Minister Popham In Kelowna meets with Tree Fruit Growers

Hon. Lana Popham met with about 15 growers for a roundtable discussion in Kelowna on February 5. BCFGAs President Fred Steele, Vice President Pinder Dhaliwal and Glen Lucas attended the meeting for the BCFGAs. Here is the [government press release](#).

Market Returns for 2017

Dedicated effort for BCFGAs

Average returns for growers are down for 2017, significantly. The BCFGAs is committed to working for growers to get help from government programs.

One of the key government programs, AgriStability, has been enhanced. The province has also committed to one-on-one help for growers. This is also a year when AgriInvest funds should be accessed if you are in need of operating funds.

BCFGAs is participating in BC Tree Fruit Cooperative grower sessions to promote the use of these programs, and invites feedback from growers on whether the programs are helping. Further action will be considered based on grower feedback on how the programs work.

Convention Documents

February 15-16, Coast Capri Hotel, Kelowna

The Portfolio, 2017 Convention Minutes, and 2018 Resolutions are available on [our website](#), with more reports and documents being added as they are completed.

Bee Survey

There is no free lunch, but there is free coffee

We've recently had discussions with researchers from York University in Toronto regarding pollination in apple orchards. This survey will increase understanding about how apple growers use pollination services and potentially inform policy and programs that will help growers diversify pollination strategies in the future.

In order to aid this research and earn a Tim Horton's e-giftcard, please provide click on the link provided below to participate in an *anonymous* survey (15-20 minutes) about bees, pollination services and land management.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/pollination_CAapplegrowers

Workshop on Emergency Preparedness

Develop a plan for your farm - there is a free lunch after all

A workshop is being held for interested growers in Penticton on February 13. For growers who live in an 'interface area' where forest fire is a concern, the workshop will help you address your concerns and have a plan to deal with the risks of forest fire to your operation.

This is a **hands-on workshop where producers will have an opportunity to develop an Agricultural Wildfire Emergency Plan for their operation.**

The workshop is open to all Okanagan producers and during the workshop participants will have an opportunity to work through an agriculture specific preparedness template and begin to develop their own farm-level emergency preparedness plan with the help of a provincial wildfire risk expert. There is also newly developed module on agri-tourism for farms that have to consider the logistics of tourist evacuations. A session for tree fruits/vineyards/field crops is being held Feb 13th. From the workshop organizer:

At the workshop we will walk through a step-wise planning process using this planning tool. Some of the topic areas will include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Understanding wildfire hazards</i>• <i>Developing site and asset maps</i>• <i>Reducing combustible materials</i>• <i>Using fire resistant materials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Sprinkler protection equipment and use</i>• <i>Livestock protection decisions</i>• <i>Visitor protection/evacuation</i>• <i>Insurance/recovery information</i>
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You will also have an opportunity to provide input on these planning tools and key considerations relevant to your operation and/ or commodity sector.

When

Tuesday February 13th, 2017 [vineyards & horticulture/field crop producers]

8:30am – 2:00pm

Morning coffee and lunch provided

Where

Penticton Lakeside Resort and Conference Centre

[21 Lakeshore Drive West, Penticton](#)

RSVP Please RSVP to harmony@bcagclimateaction.ca or call [250-215-5589](tel:250-215-5589). There are a few space left and there is no cost to attend!

“Revitalization of the Agricultural Land Reserve”

Input sought

On Monday, the Minister of Agriculture announced that the [Minister’s Advisory Committee on the “Revitalization of the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission”](#) has published a consultation paper and is seeking feedback before April 30.

Recent comments from BCFGAs members indicate that the highest priority is to ensure growers have access to ALR land that is currently not productive. These unproductive lands are not being farmed commercially by the current owner, so that the lands are tied up and not leased out to people who wish to farm the land.

A second area of importance that has been expressed by growers is the regulation of farm practices by municipalities. The BCFGAs is seeking your input on the following proposal:

- That municipalities regulate farms for their impact on regional government services (i.e. garbage collection, sewer availability, fire protection, traffic), and that the ALC regulate farm practices (i.e. agri-tourism, farm worker housing).

This would bring more consistency to bylaws on agritourism and farm worker housing, and remove the impact of “Not In My Backyard” groups regarding farming in the ALR.

Other areas in which the BCFGAs proposes to comment include:

- Making the ALR into a single zone.
- Consideration of elimination of regional panels.
- Bringing greater levels of government support to increase the viability of agriculture in the ALR.

We plan to develop a survey to get your feedback on the ALR review. We will be presenting more information in a future newsletter.

Mexico SAWP Delays?

Gathering information

If you are getting the runaround on your application from Service Canada, please send [Bunvir an email](#) with details.

BC Minimum Wage - phased in

Breaking News

The minimum wage in BC will be changing. Here is the schedule

- June 1, 2018: \$12.65 an hour (\$1.30 increase)
- June 1, 2019: \$13.85 (\$1.20 increase)
- June 1, 2020: \$14.60 (\$0.75 increase)
- June 1, 2021: \$15.20 (\$0.60 increase)

Minimum wage in other apple growing regions Ontario is \$14.00 as of Jan. 1, 2018, and US\$11.00 per hour in Washington State, which is \$13.92 in Canadian funds. The provincial announcement adopted the recommendation of the [Fair Wage Commission’s recommendations](#).

SAWP Employer Meetings

Mexico and Caribbean countries are hosting an information session on SAWP

- Feb 21, Kelowna: Coast Capri Hotel, 9:15 am - 3 pm
- Feb 22, Osoyoos: Watermark Beach Resort, 9:15 am - 3 pm

Unfortunately, the sessions are full, so no further registrations will be taking place.

For more information on the SAWP program, check out [Labour on the BCFGA website](#), and [Labour on the BCAC website](#).

SAWP Housing Inspectors

Inspector	Location	Phone		Inspector	Location	Phone
Hugh Cairns	Kelowna	250-808-5777		Keith Suftin	Kelowna	250-317-3349
Mike Bradshaw	Kelowna	250-870-8340		Brad Pears	Kelowna	250-717-6434
George Giannotti	Summerland	250-809-6804		Bob Hamm	Kelowna	250-470-8467
Craig Hostland	Kelowna	250-862-6400		Barry Chickloski	Penticton	250-490-1118

Meetings and Events - check the [BCFGA Calendar](#) on our website for more information

Date	Meeting	Attending for the BCFGA
Feb 15 and 16	BCFGA Annual Convention, Coast Capri Hotel, Kelowna	BCFGA members and guests

BCFGA Office 250-762-5226 Toll free -1-800-619-9022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda Jorde, Member Services and BC Tree Fruit Replant Program, local 1. • Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2. • Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, local 4.
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BCFGA Board of Directors

Name		Telephone
Fred Steele - President	Kelowna	Cell/text: 250-801-1968
Bhupinder (Pinder) Dhaliwal - VP	Oliver	Cell/text 250-490-7198
Ravinder Bains	Keremeos	Cell 250-499-0512
Sukhdeep (Deep) Brar	Summerland	Cell/text 250-462-5687
Surjit Nagra	Kelowna	Cell 250-863-6801
Sukhdev Goraya	Kelowna	Cell 250. 859.1229
Peter Simonsen	Naramata	Cell 250. 488--.0363
Harnek (Tony) Nijjar	Vernon	Cell 250-938-1820

Biographies for BCFGA Board of Directors Candidates

(provided in the order received, categorized by President, Vice-President, North-elected Directors, South-elected Directors)

Pinder Dhaliwal; for position of President

BCFGA Experience

BCFGA Vice-President for the last 5 years. Chair BCFGA Labour Committee.

Other Board and Political Experience

Vice-Chair, WALI/BCAC Labour Committee. Vice-Chair, CHC Labour Committee.

Education

Bachelors in Economics/Criminology from Simon Fraser University, and a Bachelor of Education from the University of British Columbia Okanagan.

Farming Experience

I have been involved in farming from a very young age, and actively farm in Oliver, BC.

Vision for BCFGA

As President of BCFGA, I will strive to advocate positively on many important issues. We need to make programs such as AgriStability more grower friendly that function and trigger payments in years like this. We need to work with government in formulating programs/solutions when existing programs do not address the industry crisis that we are seeing for 2018.

Labour is most expensive component of tree fruit production, accounting for 40%-60% of the cost. Continued increase in minimum wage, has a ripple effect moving all 'wage scales' proportionately higher. Further, we need to address current issues in the SAWP, relating to processing times, lack of communication, integrity inspections and overall rising real costs. It is imperative labour be a high priority, in-order to remain economically viable in the quest to continue producing the highest quality fruit.

The need for long-term water certainty remains of utmost importance to sustaining a viable agricultural sector in the Okanagan. The drought conditions that have occurred in the past and through 2017 placed significant stress on water resources and onto farming operations, that water needs to be secure for agriculture.

We will continually strive to tackle the wide range of concerns; from labour, environment, crop protection, food safety, ALR, urban/rural conflict, invasive pests and diseases, Columbia River Treaty and other concerns. Above all else, as a team member, I am committed to helping our industry succeed. The BCFGA strives to serve members to the best of its ability. The challenges are countless, but together we can make a positive impact for tree fruits. I look forward to representing you.... as President of BCFGA.

Jeet Dukhia; for position of President

BCFGA Experience

Past President (2013) and Vice President of BCFGGA (2012), Canadian Horticultural Council Board of Directors for 3 years, Director BC Tree Fruit Cooperative 3 years, and Past President of BC Tree Fruit Cooperative (2017).

Other Board and Political Experience

Very active in politics. Chairman of Ethnic Diversity for Hospital Employees Union. Chief Engineer for Vernon Jubilee Hospital and 5 years in charge of plant services for Interior Health Authority.

Education

Aeronautics, Centennial College of Arts and Technology, Scarborough, Ontario, and Power Engineering from Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary.

Farming Experience

Farming since 1976, operating 50 acre orchard in the BX area of Vernon, BC. Fully contracted to BC Tree Fruit Cooperative.

Vision for BCFGGA

I will work hard to obtain financial aid for growers for the 2017 crop, due to the weather conditions (spring flood and summer drought) and historically poor prices. I will work with the Agriculture Minister to improve Crop Insurance and the Replant Program, especially for new land. As Past President of BC Tree Fruits Cooperative, I have experience with BCTF Co-op staff. I will be honest and work hard for all growers.

Peter Simonsen; for position of Vice President

BCFGA Experience

Member 31 years, BCFGAs Director for last 7 years.

Other Board and Political Experience

Alternate Director (4 years) RDOS Area E (Naramata); Naramata Water Advisory Board (9 Years); Okanagan Valley Tree Fruit Authority (3 years); SVC (6 years).

Education

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture UBC 1981 .

Farming Experience

Grower since 1982, currently operate 55 acres of certified organic apples, pears and peaches with our son who is now the 5th generation orchardist of the family.

Vision for BCFGAs

Government and financial institutions are only willing to partner with an industry that can demonstrate it has vision and competent leadership.

I believe strongly that we need the BCFGAs to work with top level marketing experts to craft a promotion and marketing plan that positively values and differentiates our fruit from our competitors to give leverage to our brokers and salespeople.

To have a vibrant industry we also need to strongly defend and maintain our access to foreign labour from varied places, create a path to citizenship for some and encourage Canadian sources as well.

We need to continue to lobby for improvements to our replant program, continue with variety development, as well as continuing work on a federally funded industry renewal program for bare land planting coupled with assistance for upgrading of infrastructure

All growers are equal and the BCFGAs must continue to, without favour, respect the laws of our nation as they apply to all.

Parmjit Patera; for position of Vice President

No Biography submitted.

David Machial; for position of South-elected Director

BCFGA Experience

Past Chair of the Southern District Council and Chair of the Southern Region. Served on Member Services Committee and Crop Protection Committee.

Other Board and Political Experience

In 2004 I was the Research Coordinator for the Oliver and District C Economic Development Society where I worked on the development of an Agricultural Area Plan for rural Oliver.

Education

Bachelor of Commerce with Honours UBC Vancouver 2005.

Farming Experience

I am a 3rd generation apple/cherry farmer who operates 20 acres in Oliver. I have been farming my parent's orchard for 12 years, but like anyone who was raised on an orchard, I have been working in the tree fruit industry my entire life.

In addition to being raised on an orchard, I was also raised in a packinghouse. In 1992 my Dad, Joe Machial, and Uncle Rick Machial, started Faiview Orchards, a packinghouse that packs fruit for approx 35 growers in South Okanagan. Currently, I help manage Fairview.

Education

Bachelor of Commerce with Honours UBC Vancouver 2005

BCFGA Vision

As the only organization that represents the political views of all tree fruit growers, I believe the BCFGAs should exclusively focus on working with governments to improve the regulatory, labour, trade, and crop protection challenges we face.

The 4 largest political challenges we need to focus on to have a strong prosperous industry are

- Access to affordable and reliable labour.
- A proactive plan for existing and invasive pests that includes access to affordable pest control products.
- Protection/compensation from unfair trade practices or higher regulatory requirements.
- Access to affordable, robust, financial support programs.

Emerson Khosa; for position of South-elected Director

BCFGA Experience

I want to be a board member for the BCFGAs so that I can help farmers on an even bigger level.

Other Board and Political Experience

Currently work at White Kennedy LLP in Penticton where I offer my clients both tax and general business advice. Many of my clients are farmers.

Between my professional work and my work on our farm I have a very good understanding of the challenges and issues that us farmers face every day.

Emerson Khosa (continued)

Education

Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA). Bachelor's degree in business.

Farming Experience

I've been born and raised in the Okanagan. My family and I farm 50 acres in Cawston. We have 5 acres of cherries, an acre of peaches and 44 acres of apples, Ambrosia being our biggest crop. We regularly participate in the both the foreign worker and replant programs.

Vision for BCFGA

No matter who gets elected I'm sure all of the board members will be great farmers but right now NAFTA is being renegotiated and might fail altogether which would result in American fruit flooding the Canadian market and the price of our fruit dropping.

The Canadian government is also changing how small businesses are taxed, this will result in many of us paying a lot more tax than we ever have in the past. With these changes coming up the board needs more than just good farmers, we need people who have a strong understanding of all of the challenges and issues farmers are facing. We need people who want to help both farmers and the agriculture industry succeed.

I want to help and I feel that my skills and experience would be a great addition to this board and that's why I want your vote on February 16th.

Sukhdeep Brar; for position of South-elected Director

BCFGA Experience

BCFGA Director for last four years. Chair BCFGA Water and Environment Committee.

Other Board and Political Experience

BCAC Water Committee. Okanagan Water Stewardship Committee (Okanagan Basin Water Board).

Education

Bachelors of Science, SFU 2009.

Farming Experience

I am born and raised in Summerland where I helped with the family farm every summer break and spring holidays. I did multiple contract jobs for the Summerland Research center on and off for 2 years, eventually taking over the family farm business full time in 2011. It was important for me to work and learn from my father and continue to be a part of the growth in the community I love and have been raised in.

Vision for BCFGA

My vision for the BCFGA includes a strong and secure association to provide all growers with a voice in municipal, provincial and federal discussions that could in anyway impact agriculture. We must also have a united front for all the growers in the province to lobby the government for changes we desire and need. We as directors must focus on maintaining and establishing strong and secure relationships with elected officials and staff. The BCFGA has helped our industry tremendously in its existence and we must have the same impact going forward and it all starts with choosing the best directors for the job.

Ravinder Bains; for position of South-elected Director

No Biography submitted.

Sukhdev Goraya; for position of North-elected Director

BCFGA Experience

I have been a member of BCFGAs since 1997, and BCFGAs Director on and off for the past 10 years.

Other Board and Political Experience

I have been Treasurer at the Okanagan Sikh Temple & Cultural Society when we built the new temple on Rutland Road. I am also Vice President on the Rutland Park society board. All this has been voluntary community work.

Education

Electronics diploma in 1985. I graduated in 1983 and I worked in this field for the next 20 years.

Farming Experience

I have been in Canada since 1978. While I went to school I worked on the farm. Our family bought the farm in 1991 on Belgo Road, Kelowna.

Vision for BCFGAs

I have been on the BCFGAs board on and off for last 10 years. We as a board have accomplished lot in those years, Federally and Provincially, bringing numerous government programs to help the growers.

As you know we are facing difficult time because of the apple price crash. If elected I will work very hard with the board to lobby the government to bring some kind of programs to help the growers. After reviewing this year's resolutions I believe that a strong and stable voices needed on the board.

Karm Gill; for position of North-elected Director

BCFGAs Experience

Served on many BCFGAs committees.

Other Board and Political Experience

Board of directors for the packing house for 6 years. Furthermore, I have very strong relationships with many political leaders on the federal, provincial, and municipal level.

Education

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Master's Degree in History, Punjabi University in India.

Farming Experience

I have been running an orchard business for 30 years and have over 120 acres.

Vision for BCFGAs

I always work hard to resolve grower issues. There are a lot of issues currently in the fruit industry and I have a strong vision and desire to assist my fellow growers in achieving success.

David Dobernigg; for position of North-elected Director

BCFGA Experience

Past BCFGAs Director. Served on many BCFGAs committees.

Other Board and Political Experience

Currently director of the Sterile Insect Release program board. Part of the North Okanagan Regional District's Drought Response Team. Volunteer Fireman.

Farming Experience

Own and operate a 40 acre apple orchard on the outskirts of Vernon. As a third-generation grower, my family has deep roots both on our orchard and in the apple industry as a whole.

Vision for BCFGAs

As a member of the BC Tree Fruits cooperative and also the owner of an independent Cidery, I will bring a strong balance of perspective to the board of the BCFGAs. With a mixed-density orchard and years of experience, I appreciate the challenges of a diverse range of growers.

Being a father of three girls, I hope to pass on a farm that exists within a vibrant tree-fruit sector; an industry supported through solid research, environmental stewardship, impeccable food-safety standards and innovative growing techniques. With these aspects working together we can assure the production high-quality apples that make consumers proud to choose BC-grown fruit, both now and in the future.

Jora Dhaliwal; for position of North-elected Director

BCFGAs Experience

Director for one year.

Other Board and Political Experience

Previously a board member for BC Tree Fruit for 3 years

Farming Experience

An orchardist that started as a picker in 1981 and became an owner in 1999 after 18 years of hard work and has continued working diligently in the 19 years since in multiple orchards with a variety of different fruits.

Vision for BCFGAs

Over the years I have gain a deep understanding of the problems orchardists suffer from and the challenges we face annually; with this knowledge I understand what needs to change in order to make life easier and better for orchardists around the Okanagan. If elected onto the board again I will help put these changes in action in order to help orchardists make more money and deal with overall less stress during the growing seasons. My main goal is to make a future that's more advantageous for not only current farmers, but for future orchardists as well, making the business of farming more attractive and productive as a whole.

Surjit Nagra; for position of North-elected Director

No Biography submitted.

Tony Nijjar; for position of North-elected Director

No Biography submitted.