

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

February 20, 2019



BCFGA Annual Convention

Held February 12-13 in Penticton

For those who braved the snow and the highway detour, the 130th Annual Convention was fairly routine, with all [resolutions](#) passing and all directors elected by acclamation. Receiving [committee reports](#) provided a focus on Board accountability and provided delegates and members with an opportunity for input. The financial statements of the association were also reviewed and received.

BCFGA Board of Directors - 2019

Name		Telephone
Bhupinder (Pinder) Dhaliwal - President	Oliver	Cell/text 250-490-7198
Peter Simonsen - VP	Naramata	Cell/text 250496-5156
Ravinder Bains	Keremeos	Cell 250-499-0512
Sukhdeep (Deep) Brar	Summerland	Cell/text 250-462-5687
Karm Gill	Kelowna	Cell 250-863-9737
Sukhdev Goraya	Kelowna	Cell/text 250- 859-1229
David Machial	Oliver	Cell/text 250-485-2636
David Dobernigg	Vernon	Cell/text 250-550-8999

BC Tree Fruit Production Guide meetings

Schedule set

The annual Tree Fruit Production Guide updates are being held in March and April. The agenda is being finalized in the next few days. Make a note on your calendar to attend a session.

9am-11:30am March 14th Oliver Recreation Center, Room #2	9:30am-11:30am March 15th Winfield Hall
2:30 - 4:00 pm March 14th Summerland Research and Development Centre	7pm-9pm April 10th Creston District Community Complex, Erickson Room

News Flash!

Province extends deadline for water well registration

The province announced today that the deadline to register water wells is extended 3 years to March 31, 2021. Full information on next page.

Water Well Registration Extended

Government has extended the water licence application transition period for those who were using groundwater on or before February 29, 2016 for any non-domestic use, including agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional groundwater uses. Applicants now have until March 1, 2022 to [apply for a licence](#).

Because of the importance of a groundwater licence in ensuring sustainable access to water, government has decided to provide additional time to apply for a water licence by extending both the transition period and the application fee waiver period.

On February 29, 2016 the [Water Sustainability Act](#) (WSA) came into force, modernizing British Columbia's legislative framework governing the allocation and use of water and protection of aquatic ecosystems. The new law brought in a requirement for agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional groundwater users to obtain a water licence.

When the WSA came into force, an estimated 20,000 users who were using groundwater up to and on February 29, 2016 were anticipated to apply for a water licence. However, the application intake has been lower than expected and for many groundwater users, recognizing the value of a licence to secure their water rights represents a significant change.

Existing use groundwater applications can now be submitted until March 1, 2022.

It is important to note that groundwater users who apply under the transition provisions of the WSA are required to pay annual water rentals retroactive to February 29, 2016 to ensure equity for those who applied early. The longer one delays application, the larger the retroactive total rental payment owed.

Applicants who were using groundwater on and before February 29, 2016 who apply before March 1, 2022 will continue to enjoy the following benefits:

- exemption from paying application fees,
- opportunity to receive a date of precedence on their water licence that reflects historic use, and
- ability to continue using water until a decision on the licence application is made.

All existing well owners who were using groundwater on and before February 29, 2016 for non-household use (e.g. agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional), are encouraged to apply for a water licence as soon as possible.

For information on how to apply or to submit an application please visit groundwater.gov.bc.ca

If you have questions about the material please contact livingwatersmart@gov.bc.ca

2019 Provincial Budget

News from the Lock-Up, February 19

The 2019 budget of the agriculture ministry increases by 5.4 percent from 2018. Most of the increase is to fund the Grow-Feed-Buy BC initiatives, including 'regional food hubs' and enhancement of the Buy BC program. A small increase to BC Farm Industry Review Board and the Agricultural Land Commission relates to the additional regulation costs for Cannabis and two new enforcement positions.

The province is matching the accelerated capital cost allowance announced by the Federal government, so that provincial and federal taxes on this item are in sync.

In labour, the Employment Standards Branch will receive \$14 million in funding for Employment Standards transformation and the implementation of a Temporary Foreign Worker Registry. The transformation will likely eliminate the "self-help kit" which required employees to fill out a form and consult with the employer prior to proceeding with an Employment Standards complaint. Also, Employment Standards compliance teams may be implemented for other industries. Compliance teams visit the workplace to examine records and interview employees to ensure that Employment Standards regulations are being followed. Up until 2019, the agriculture sector is the only sector with a compliance team approach.

Establishing a Food Security Task Force was announced in the Throne Speech, but no funds were allocated to the Task Force in the 2019 budget.

The budget surplus is pegged at \$374 million.

In other budget measures,

- Rural internet will receive a \$50 million budget allocation to provide service to rural areas that are not currently served. The program is under Network BC / Connecting BC and administered by the Northern Development Trust, where prospective internet providers (private sector and community-based) submit or bid on projects.
- A Community Resiliency program will help reduce wildfire risk.
- A Child Opportunity Benefit will replace current child benefits and provides an increase of \$1,600 to \$3,400 per year for 1 to 3 children, starting next year (2020).
- MSP premiums continue at half-rate for 2019 and will be eliminated on January 1, 2020.
- Interest on BC student loans is eliminated, saving an estimated \$2,300 in interest charges over 10 years repayment on the provincial \$11,200 portion of a \$28,000 student loan.

General budget comments:

- The budget keeps business taxes at the same level (with the important exception of the Payroll Tax to offset the elimination of individual premiums for health coverage and the Carbon Tax increase).
- The increased funding for social programs is provided by an expanding BC economy.
- The focus on natural resource sectors stays level, with some minor investment in the coastal forestry sector.
- The operating debt is eliminated "for the first time in 40 years".
- Debt:GDP is 15.0%, increasing to 16.1% in two years, which is generally seen to be a reasonable ratio of debt:GDP.
- Debt: Government Revenue is 78.4%, increasing to 89.6% in two years, which is generally seen to be fiscally prudent.

SAWP Contacts

Here are some important contacts for the SAWP Program

<p>Service Canada Employer Contact Centre: Ph: 1-800-367-5693</p> <p>Fax for SAWP LMIA's: 1-855-221-1601 (519 number is not active!)</p> <p>Fax for Ag. Stream LMIA's: 1-866-720-6094</p>	<p>BCAC/WALI info@walicanada.ca Veronica Moreno, BCAC Labour Manager vmoreno@walicanada.ca</p> <p>Mi Tierra Holidays info@mitierraholidays.com</p>
<p>WorkSafeBC Kira Berntson, Occupational Hygiene Officer Ph: 1-250-979-4175</p>	<p>Reid McIntyre, Occupational Safety Officer Ph: 1-250-717-4329</p>

SAWP

Mexico Consulate contacts

<p>For arrivals, transfers or Cowan Insurance Carolina Nunez- 604-684-1859 ext.3060 cnunez@consulmexvan.com</p>	<p>For any issue related to housing and bullying Karla Enriquez- 604-684-1859 ext. 3055 kenriquez@consulmexvan.com</p>
<p>For any health related issue Sandra Martinez- 604-684-1859 ext. 3040 smartinez@consulmexvan.com</p>	<p>For info regarding the TFWs' CPP, Pension, Paternity and Maternity Hipolito Reyes- 604-684-1859 ext. 4015 hreyes@consulmexvan.com</p>
<p>For any info regarding the TFWs' TD1, TD4, payments, payroll Beatriz Almada- 604-684-1859 ext. 3135 balmada@consulmexvan.com</p>	

SAWP

Caribbean contacts

Caribbean SAWP Source Country	Country Population	Contact	Phone	Email
Eastern Caribbean States (7)	438,000	Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662	charmaine.williams@oecs.int
Barbados	287,500	Shirley Wall-Mayers	416-464-2997	swall-mayers@foreign.gov.bb
Jamaica	2,790,200	Donna Adams Kelowna Office	250-869-6288 250-762-4219	jamlowna@telus.net
Trinidad and Tobago	1,332,700		416-435-7048	

*Eastern Caribbean Liaison Service includes the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Monserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines

SAWP

Question of the week

What are the piece rates and wage rate for 2019?

- For the SAWP program, the minimum hourly wage and piece rates are now the same for SAWP and local workers:
 - Current minimum wage: \$12.65 per hour plus 4% vacation pay.
 - As of June 1, 2019 minimum wage: \$13.85 per hour plus 4% vacation pay.
 - As of January 1, 2019, piece rates are:

Crop	January 1, 2019
<i>Apples</i>	\$21.06 a bin (27.1 ft ³ / 0.767 m ³)
<i>Apricots</i>	\$24.23 a 1/2 bin (13.7 ft ³ / 0.388 m ³)
<i>Cherries</i>	\$0.277 a pound / \$0.610 a kg
<i>Peaches</i>	\$22.38 a 1/2 bin (12.6 ft ³ / 0.357 m ³)
<i>Pears</i>	\$23.72 a bin (27.1 ft ³ / 0.767 m ³)
<i>Prune plums</i>	\$23.72 a 1/2 bin (13.7 ft ³ / 0.388 m ³)

Competitiveness Fund - Can you apply?

Second intake deadline

Information on the Competitiveness Fund is provided in a link on the [BCFGA Home page](#).

A deadline for a second intake of applications has been set for March 29, 2019. However, applications may be submitted at any time.

For individual farm or business development resources, please refer to www.AgriServiceBC.ca

There you will find specific links to:

- Learn how to start a new farm
- Learn how to start a food processing business

For individual farm or agri-business marketing support, please see <http://iafbc.ca/buy-bc/cost-shared-funding/> for BC marketing assistance and

<http://iafbc.ca/funding-opportunities/market-development/> for market training, research and planning as well as export marketing funding.

Funds for the other IAFBC and provincial programs may be limited. Contact the funding program for more information or for help developing an application.

Meetings and Workshops

Ministry of Agriculture

Business Planning Workshops

- [Kelowna: March 5 2019](#): Community Futures Central Okanagan #210-1726 Dolphin Avenue, Kelowna, BC
- [Cranbrook: March 7 2019](#): Farm Kitchen | #1324 2nd Street North, Cranbrook, BC

Learn all of the requirements of a **BUSINESS PLAN**.

- Learn key **FINANCIAL** components of your business.
- Get **MARKET READY** and Position your brand to drive sales.
- Navigate **PACKAGING** compliance. Refine your recipe to scale up.
- Gain Insights into **DISTRIBUTION**. Sell at the right price.
- Learn key components to build a **DIGITAL STRATEGY**.


Have a question? Call 604-454-8806 or email info@goodtogrowproducts.com

AgriServiceBC Webinars

- [The Cherry Industry: A Made in B.C. Success Story](#)
Date: Wednesday, February 27, 2019
Time: 2 PM P.S.T.
Presenter: Carl Withler, Industry Specialist for Treefruits and Grapes,
 BC Ministry of Agriculture
 For registration,
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriservice-bc/webinars>

Meetings and Events

Date	Meeting	Details
Feb 19	Provincial budget lock-up	Glen Lucas
Feb. 20	Tree Fruit Hort Symposium	
Feb. 22	Joint BCTFC - BCFGAs Board meeting	
Feb 27-28	Canadian Federation of Agriculture AGM	Glen Lucas
Mar 5-7	Canadian Horticultural Council AGM	Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas

BCFGAs 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. ● Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, local 3. ● Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, local 4.
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Note: BCFGAs has a very small office with limited staff. With many activities undertaken on behalf of our 487 members, Members should call to make an appointment to be sure of staff being present to meet with you (staff are often away on business related to the BCFGAs). You may call your local director so that the BCFGAs Board can remain informed on how to best represent the tree fruit growers of BC.