

# BC Fruit Growers' Association

## Friday File



February 6, 2020

### **BCFGA Annual General Meeting**

February 11-12, 2020, Coast Capri Hotel, Kelowna

The BCFGA Annual Meeting will start at 1 pm on Tuesday, February 11th concluding in the early afternoon, and 8:30 am on Wednesday, February 12th. The meeting is being held at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna.

The [agenda](#) and [resolutions](#) are posted on the website [Convention webpage](#), with more documents being added as we approach the convention.

### **Apple Situation Critical**

**Low Returns cause financial crisis**

Returns for apples are critically low this year, after several years of low prices. Higher input costs, packing costs, impact of weather on quality, retail consolidation and other factors are putting pressure on prices. The BCFGA is hearing directly from many growers who recently received their first pool advance from BC Tree Fruits Coop. We have contacted other packers, and they indicate a general weakening of apple prices, for many of the same reasons.

Two growers approached the BCFGA yesterday to ask for help organizing a meeting of growers to discuss the poor apple returns. Given more time, the BCFGA would organize a meeting of growers for this sole purpose; however, with the Convention less than a week away, the decision is to focus on that meeting.

The BCFGA directors and staff are available to attend meetings to provide updates on BCFGA lobby activity. The BCFGA [briefs](#) and [position papers](#) are posted for viewing by growers, and we always welcome and consider the input and ideas on future presentations and requests to the government - as growers know from history, we are stronger working together than separately.

### **AgriStability**

**Good Changes, but Not All Requested**

Over the past two years of reduced apple returns to growers, the BCFGA has asked the Province and allied with other Agriculture Associations to seek changes to the AgriStability Program. The government has responded with some positive changes, which will provide meaningful help for many growers.

From the BC Ministry of Agriculture:

*The new **2019 and 2020 BC AgriStability Enhancement Program** is established by the British Columbia government. This BC-only program will help agricultural producers by offering greater income protection to farmers who have lost income due to weather, trade challenges or natural disaster. The Program includes:*

- *Increasing the AgriStability compensation rate, for all farms, from 70% to 80% on income margin losses greater than 30%.*
- *Eliminating the AgriStability Reference Margin Limit (RML) which reduced compensation for some farms.*

*Full program details are [here](#).*

*The official press release: "[More help for B.C. farmers when they need it most](#)"*

*In addition to this new program, the governments of Canada and British Columbia have agreed to increase the 2019 AgriStability interim payment percentage from 50% to 75% of the estimated final 2019 benefit for BC Farmers.*

The BCFGA will continue to pursue further significant improvements in AgriStability.

## **AgriStability**

### **Other Changes Requested**

The BCFGA is proposing changes to the AgriStability program to provide greater protection (increasing coverage from 70% to 85% of income reduction) and increase equity in the way AgriStability affects different types of growers (e.g. those with one commodity vs those with several commodities, those that supply more of their own labour versus those that hire more labour).

The BCFGA is meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and the Agriculture Critic (in separate meetings) on Thursday, February 4 to present an urgent request for change to the AgriStability Program, as well as other changes to help growers under financial stress. Here is our brief to the Minister. Grower input is welcome, and if you let us know [by email](#) your personal situation, this will help to bring home the seriousness of the situation to the Minister.

## **BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium**

### **Fee confusion**

The BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium is being held February 25, 2020  
7:30 am- 5:00 pm at the Trinity Baptist Church, 1905 Springfield Road, Kelowna.

A reduced fee is available by If you want to pay by cash or cheque at the door, pre-register by emailing [porofrechuk@bctree.com](mailto:porofrechuk@bctree.com). If you wish to pre-register and pay with credit card, call Susan Keetley 250-470-4263.

## Tree Fruit Production Guide Meetings

Please note new dates for Oliver and Summerland -

PAC pts available - please contact Brenda Jorde at BCFGGA - 250.762.5226 if you have not registered your PAC certificate for tracking points.

Time, Date	Place
9 am - noon, March 4	Meeting Room 1, Oliver Recreation Centre
1:30 - 4:30 pm, March 4	Summerland Research Centre, Summerland
9 am - noon, March 5	Winfield Memorial Hall, Winfield
6:30 - 9 pm April 8	Creston Community Centre, Creston

## SAWP

**2020 Employment Contracts (Agreements) are now available!**

[Click here](#) to download the new contracts.

## Program Funding Update

### 2020 BC Tree Fruit Replant

The 104 Replant Program applications have been reviewed and letters are being mailed to growers over the coming weeks to confirm the status and amount of funding available for individual projects..

### Light Reflecting Materials Program

The 2020 application is available to the Light Reflecting Materials Program. Deadline to apply for a [grant towards the 2020 purchase of Light Reflecting Materials](#) is July 31, 2020.

**The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program** provides grants for priority environment projects. Here is the webpage for [program applications and funding list](#). Before applying for BMP **funding**, you must [develop a plan](#). The regular, annual application process for BMP's normally opens in early April, so BCFGGA encourages you to get a plan done, if you do not yet have an EFP in place.

### Investment Agriculture Foundation Programs

[Investment Agriculture Foundation BC \(IAFBC\)](#) has a number of programs that provide funding to projects that help the agriculture sector move forward. Programs include Buy BC (to help promote BC-produced food), Agri-Innovation (to introduce new practices and equipment), and Market Development (to help access foreign markets). IAFBC is establishing deadlines for program applications, so if you have a project, call an [IAFBC program coordinator](#) to find out about timelines and program requirements.



BCFGA Office:  
250-762-5226  
Toll free:  
1-800-619-9022

- Brenda Jorde, Member Services and BC Tree Fruit Replant Program, part-time, Monday - Thursday, local 1.
- Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2.
- Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, part-time, local 3.
- Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, part-time, local 4.

*The BCFGA office has one full-time and three part time employees. Often, our staff will all be away from the office wither at meetings or on their regular day off, and the office will be closed. If you need to get in touch with us, please call to make an appointment before you come to the office.*

### BCFGA 2019 Board of Directors

Name		Telephone
Pinder Dhaliwal - President	Oliver	Cell/text 250-490-7198
Peter Simonsen - VP	Naramata	Cell/text 250-488-0363
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

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

Date	Meeting	Details
Feb 11-12	BCFGA Annual Convention	Coast Capri, Kelowna Start time is 1 pm on Feb 11 and 8:30 am on Feb 12.
Feb 25	BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium	Kelowna
9 am - noon, March 4	Tree Fruit Production Guide annual review	Oliver (Please note date change)
1:30 - 4:30 pm, March 4	Tree Fruit Production Guide annual review	Summerland (Please note date change)
9 am - noon, March 5	Tree Fruit Production Guide annual review	Winfield
6:30 - 9 pm April 8	Tree Fruit Production Guide annual review	Creston