

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File



June 11, 2018

Fireblight Update

Burning of infested wood waste

There are reports from some growers in Kelowna and the Similkameen about fireblight. [Here is a link to information on fireblight](#) developed in Nova Scotia and Massachusetts after a fireblight outbreak.

Burning is a recommended practice for disposal of fireblight infested wood (one report suggests that any prunings be left to dry out for a few days before moving to the burn pile). A burning permit will be required from the local fire department. Contact the BCFGa if you have trouble getting a burning permit and we will help.

Primary Agriculture Review

Service Canada is requesting input on the SAWP and TFWP-Ag Stream

As part of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program's Primary Agriculture Review, Employment and Social Development Canada, in collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, are conducting consultations to provide you with the opportunity to share your insight, ideas and experiences on four key themes:

Program Eligibility and Structure

Explore the definition of Primary Agriculture and the use of the National Commodities List in the context of the TFW Program, as well as the structure of Primary Agriculture Stream.

Wages and Deductions

Discuss the current wage structure for the Primary Agriculture Stream and how it relates to the needs of the agricultural sector.

Housing in Primary Agriculture

Explore the current requirements for housing provided to temporary foreign workers and the impact of creating a national housing standard for the Primary Agriculture Stream.

Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) Processing

Discuss the current system for processing of LMIA applications, including possible measures to improve efficiency and service standards; and the potential impacts of an LMIA fee.

In addition to the themes identified above, stakeholders can choose to provide feedback on additional topics related to the Primary Agriculture Stream of the TFW Program.

Participate in an [online survey](#):

For more information on the Primary Agriculture Review, please [contact the Sector Policy Division](#) of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

The deadline is the end of June, and BCFGA will be preparing a submission that we will make available to members.

Support Systems for High Density Orchards

2018 publication

A new publication is available on the post and wire support systems for high density apple orchards. The publication was researched and written by professors and students from the UBC Faculty of Engineering. The publication is available from BCTF horticultural advisors, in the mail for BCFGA independent members, and also at BC Ministry of Agriculture offices, Growers Supply. If you would like a copy mailed to you, contact Brenda at the BCFGA office, or you may access [the document on-line](#).

Reminder - Minimum Wage Changes June 1

Piece rates changed last September, no change this year

The minimum wage in BC moves from \$11.35 per hour to **\$12.65 per hour on June 1, 2018**. Vacation pay of 4% is added to the hourly rate, in place of paid time off.

The piece rates, put in place September 15, 2017, remain the same for 2018. The minimum piece rates include vacation pay and are:

Commodity	Minimum Piece Rate, effective September 15, 2017 until January 1, 2019
Apples	18.89 per bin
Cherries	.248 per pound
Pears	21.27 per bin
Peaches	20.07 per half bin
Prune plums	21.27 per half bin
Apricots	21.73 per half bin

Payroll Regulations

Results of last year's farm audits

Employment Standards audited several farms in the summer of 2017 and reports the following were areas of concern:

- From last summer's inspections of farms in the Okanagan, most contraventions were for not keeping proper payroll records ie: not keeping records of hours of work when paying by a piece rate (section 28 of the Act)
- *not paying wages at least twice per month* (section 17 of the Act),
- *not providing payroll records at all* (section 46 of the Regulation),
- *not issuing wage statements* that complied with section 27 of the Act,
- *not paying vacation pay* (section 58 of the Act).

Each contravention of the Act was assessed a penalty of \$500.00. A second (or repeated) contravention of the same issue will result in a \$2,500 fine, and a third contravention results in a \$10,000 fine. It pays to keep good payroll records.

The Langley-based farm labour team will likely focus its inspections in the lower mainland and Fraser valley in 2018, but the Kelowna office may do inspections of its own in the Okanagan region.

BCFGA Summer Labour Project - 2018

Contact Ron Forrest

The BCFGa summer labour project officially starts June 1. **Ron Forrest** will once again provide safety orientation sessions for your orchard labour. Sessions are held for French Canadian and local workers mainly in the Oliver area before the cherry season starts.

Ron can also attend your farm to provide sessions in French, English or Spanish and he can also coordinate with AgSafeBC (formerly FARSHA) on the training sessions. Ron will provide you with a record of the training, to help fulfill Food Safety and WorkSafeBC requirements.

Ron can also let workers know of available work at your farm - call him to let him know when you need workers.

Ron will have a college intern working with him for June and into July - her name is **Genevieve Naud**. Both Ron and Genevieve will have BCFGa business cards for identification. The BCFGa continues to strongly advise growers to ask for identification to ensure visitors are who they say, and to have all visitors sign a visitor recording sheet.

Ron Forrest's new number is 778-363-3620.

Mexico SAWP Delays?

Gathering information

Mexico is reporting that the number of delayed workers is down significantly. If you are experiencing delays, please send [Bunvir an email](#) . We have noted some ongoing problems with extremely slow processing of Service Canada audits. If you are having a problem, please contact us.

BCFGA Board Meeting Update

May 9, 2018

At our most recent Board meeting,

- The flood situation was reviewed. Of particular concern were Aeneas Creek in Summerland, the area below Fairview Golf Course where a dry creek bed started flowing that hasn't flowed in recent memory, Sportsman Bowl, and many farms impacted in the Similkameen. There was discussion of Regional District administration of Emergency Services, Production Insurance tree loss and crop loss coverage, and AgriStability.
- BCFGAs Finances were reviewed.
- A draft business plan for the BCFGAs was reviewed for input and will be finalized at the next Board meeting.
- Projects on a UBC Fuel Cell Research (no cost to BCFGAs) and Orchard Industry Museum were reviewed and supported.
- Labour issues were reviewed, of which there are many this year.
 - Migrant Worker Support Network proposed by Service Canada
 - Activist groups and the harm they cause workers and farmers.
 - Community Services that BCFGAs will seek to partner with, including those that offer Immigrant Resettlement Services
 - Input to the Temporary Foreign Worker Primary Agriculture Review - information to be supplied in a future BCFGAs newsletter.
 - LMIA issues - report is that delays are now not extended.
 - Slowdown in Worker Permits - current report is that the backlog is now much smaller.
 - The Board approved the hiring of Ron Forrest for the season.
- Replant program streamlining and improvements were approved for recommendation to the province.
- A new Replant Administration agreement was approved.
- Crop Protection topics were reviewed
 - A contribution of \$5,000 to the 2018 Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Project was approved.
 - There was direction to establish a deer/elk control sub-committee of the Crop Protection Committee.
 - Starling Control is supported again this year with a \$5,000 contribution from the BCFGAs, and the focus will be on capturing 'source' starlings in the North Okanagan livestock barns.
 - The third year of the Apple Clearwing Moth Project (2018) is proceeding.
- A National Research and Promotion Agency for Apples is being discussed at the national level.
- The Competitiveness Fund planning session of May 9 was reviewed. A report will be issued and input of participants and growers invited, possibly with a survey.

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

Date	Meeting	Details
May 30	Starling Control May 30	
May 31, June 13	CHC Apple Working Group subcommittee on National Promotion and Research Agency	Peter Simonsen, Glen Lucas
June 19	Migrant Worker Support Network	Glen Lucas, Bunvir Nijjer
June 19	BCAC Public Trust	-
July 15	BCFGA Board conference call	
July 17-18	CHC mid-Summer Apple Working Group meeting, Summerland	
August 29	BCFGA Board conference call	

<p>BCFGA Office 250-762-5226 Toll free -1-800-619-9022 </p>	<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.

BCFGA Board of Directors

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
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