

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File



March 16, 2020

COVID-19

SAWP Impacts uncertain

Today, the Prime Minister announced that only Canadian and US citizens would be allowed to cross the border into Canada (there are three exceptions: flight crew, diplomats, and immediate family of Canadian citizens). As stated, this announcement has grave implications for the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. CHC, CFA, BCAC and BCFGa are all working to clarify the status of workers approved and in transit, as well as workers arriving in future.

Officials of the Canadian Government have been notified that this will have an impact on food security in Canada.

The prohibition on entry may start on Wednesday, but this is not confirmed at this time. There is no information on how long the travel ban will be in place.

Two flights arriving in Vancouver on March 18 with SAWP workers are being investigated as to whether the workers will be allowed to board the plane. MiTierra is working to clarify refund policies in the event the foreign workers are not permitted to board the plane to Canada.

- Please direct all media inquiries to communications@bcac.ca
- Please send any questions to us at info@bcfga.com

There have been three emergency conference calls on labour today - one with the CHC Labour Committee Executive, one with WALI staff, and one with the BCAC Labour Committee. A further BCAC emergency conference call is scheduled for Wednesday.

Unfortunately, we do not today have definitive answers to many questions. Watch this newsletter for future updates. WALI is also sending email updates to SAWP employers.

COVID-19

WALI Message: Impacts of COVID-19 on B.C. agriculture

Today the federal government [announced new measures](#) to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Please be assured that BC Agriculture Council and WALI are currently working closely with governments and industry partners on this developing issue and the impacts that these measures have on you and the rest of agriculture in our province.

As soon as official information is available, we will circulate the facts that are relevant and important to British Columbia employers, particularly those who employ and/or are expecting the arrival of temporary foreign workers through the SAWP and/or AgStream programs.

We at BCAC and WALI recognize that this is a very concerning time for the public as well as B.C's farmers and ranchers. Agriculture is committed to providing a safe, secure supply of food for Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-10

CFA Update and Links to Resources & General Information

Here is [a message from CFA President Mary Robinson](#) explaining current CFA and agriculture association activity. Included in the CFA message are links to many COVID-19 information sources.

AgriStability

Final reminder

AgriStability Program provides payments when *program margins* fall more than 30%.

If you are not enrolled for 2019 AgriStability, **you are encouraged to consider and apply for 2020 AgriStability (especially with the COVID-19 risks to farm finances)**. **Deadline to apply for 2020 AgriStability is April 30, 2020** - phone 1-877-343-2767 to enroll.

If you are registered for the 2019 program, then an Interim Payment is possible. The application for Interim payment is a fairly simple form. Workshops will not be held due to lack of interest and the COVID-19 emergency- call AgriStability 1-877-343-2767 if you need help completing the Interim Payment.

For AgriStability help, call 1-877-343-2767.

For on-line AgriStability information:

- General Information ([English](#), [Punjabi](#))
- [Enrolment Form](#)
- [Interim Payment Guide](#)
- [Interim Payment Application](#)

BCFGA Office

COVID-19 restrictions

We are limiting access to the BCFGGA office during the COVID-19 emergency. Please call (250-762-5226) or [email](#) us if you need to communicate with us. If essential, we will arrange for in-person appointments, but we prefer to assist BCFGGA members by telephone or email at this time.

 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, 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.
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BCFGA 2020 Board of Directors

Name		Cell/Text
Pinder Dhaliwal - President	Oliver	250-490-7198
Peter Simonsen - VP	Naramata	250-488-0363
Ravinder Bains	Keremeos	250-499-0512
Sukhdeep (Deep) Brar	Summerland	250-462-5687
Avi Gill	Kelowna	778-990-9737
Sukhdev Goraya	Kelowna	250- 859-1229
Talwinder Bassi	Oliver	250-485-7272
David Dobernigg	Vernon	250-550-8999

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

Date	Meeting	Details
6:30 - 9 pm April 8	Tree Fruit Production Guide annual review	Creston