

# BC Fruit Growers' Association

## Friday File



March 27, 2020

### COVID-19

[Here is the whole story](#)

The re-opening of the SAWP travel announced on Friday was not all that was needed for the start-up of SAWP. The start-up also requires

- the development of national health protocols. Those protocols are not in place yet, and a current concern is that there will be a delay while health protocols get established for foreign workers. The protocols are being developed by ESDC. At this time we are fighting some very costly proposals by ESDC. This will take days if not weeks to sort out.
- The development of provincial health protocols. These protocols are being developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and BC Agricultural Council. The protocols will require isolation for 2 weeks, which limits the number of people as sharing of facilities is either forbidden or requires extra sanitation steps. In fact, in the maritimes, the provincial government is looking at housing the workers in government facilities for 2 weeks.
- Travel. Regularly scheduled flights are ending on March 31 (next Tuesday). Technically, Ron LeMaire, President of CPMA is correct, that travelers should be able to get on those remaining flights. However, the Mexican consulate and Jamaican Liaison Service have stated that until Canada has protocols in place, no SAWP workers will be processed by the foreign Ministry of Labour for travel to Canada.
- Employer preparation. Employers will likely need to have plans in place as part of the health protocols.

Charter flights are being investigated by MiTierra travel agency, which currently arranges all Mexican SAWP arrivals. For this year, it is anticipated that all Caribbean arrivals will also be made through MiTierra, due to the need to arrange Charters and the additional complications of arranging travel under the new health protocols. Arranging charter flights takes time and will cause delay in starting up SAWP.

The messages from WALI are the same as before, with the addition one new item:

1. **Please do not attempt to make any travel arrangements for your SAWP workers** - more information on the start-up of the SAWP program will be shared when it is available.
2. **Do continue with your normal SAWP Labour Market Impact Assessment** (the application for SAWP). Employers may submit their LMIA without advertising: effectively immediately the advertisement requirement has been waived on SAWP and Ag.Stream applications until further notice.
3. **Do start working on farm health procedures for Covid-19.** Start with this [AgSafeBC Covid-19 Best Practices advice](#).

## COVID-19 Information

Of many sources, here are some basic, relevant sites and webpages  
[HealthLinkBC](#)- Information available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Punjabi](#)  
[Ag SafeBC Covid-19 Best Practices Advice](#)  
[AgSafeBC Covid-19 documents, signs, and procedures](#))  
[WorksafeBC](#)

These websites provide information on how to monitor, what actions to take if detected, and getting an action plan in place in advance of a COVID-19 infection.

 <b>BCFGA Office:</b> <b>250-762-5226</b> <b>Toll free:</b> <b>1-800-619-9022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brenda Jorde, Member Services and BC Tree Fruit Replant Program, part-time, Monday - Thursday, local 1.</li> <li>• Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2.</li> <li>• Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, part-time, local 3.</li> <li>• Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, part-time, local 4.</li> </ul>
--	---

## BCFGA Office

### Covid-19 restrictions

We are temporarily closing access to the BCFGGA office during the Covid-19 emergency. Most of our staff are working from home. Please call (250-762-5226) or [email](#) us if you need to communicate with us. We encourage members to contact BCFGGA staff and directors by telephone or email.

### 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
April 8	Tree Fruit Production Guide annual review <b>Cancelled.</b> We are investigating rescheduling the in-person meeting as a webinar.	Creston