

BC Fruit Growers' Association Friday File



May 24, 2018

Flooding

Regional Government accesses Provincial Emergency Program

The flooding risk continues in the BC interior and several orchards and farms have been impacted, especially in the South Okanagan.

The point of first contact for growers is the Regional District or municipal emergency services. If you have concerns or need assistance in communicating with government agencies, please contact a local Board member.



Minimum Wage Changes June 1

Piece rates changed last September

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

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 fulfil 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 (if not activated, try 250-859-7503).

Be aware of activist groups

Activity noted

BCFGa recently received two reports of individuals from radical activist groups threatening or interfering with grower operations. We are closely monitoring this situation - please contact BCFGa staff Glen Lucas 250-212-8828 if you need assistance or advice. In both of the recent instances, the activists sought to extract concessions directly from the employer. Please report issues to the BCFGa.

The BCFGa works with the provincial government agencies responsible for workplace regulation to protect workers. There are many legitimate government authorities that have a right to visit and inspect records and/or facilities on your farm, including but not limited to:

- Employment Standards Branch, BC Ministry of Labour
- Interior Health
- WorksafeBC
- Integrity Services Division, Service Canada
- Foreign Government Consulates/Liaison Offices

Growers are advised to fully cooperate with these authorities. Always verify and record the visitors' personal and business identification.

Others that growers can trust:

- BCFGA Labour Safety and Orientation staff
- Safety Consultants from industry advisor AgSafeBC are also welcomed on farms.
- Obviously, police and ambulances are permitted on the farm due to emergency.

BCFGA is seeking to work with community-based groups to provide interpretation and other services. See the previous edition of the newsletter for advice on visitor policies.

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](#) .

BCFGA Board Meeting Update

May 9, 2018


At yesterday's 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.
- BCFGA Finances were reviewed and a more positive fiscal year is expected due to several new or changed projects and the support of Summerland Varieties Corporation.
- A draft business plan for the BCFGA was reviewed for input and will be finalized at the next Board meeting.
- Projects on a UBC Fuel Cell Research (no cost to BCFGA) 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 BCFGA 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 BCFGA 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 BCFGA, 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 24	BCFGA Board meeting	
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
July 15	BCFGA Board conference call	
July 17-18	CHC mid-Summer Apple Working Group meeting, Summerland	
August 29	BCFGA Board conference call	

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, 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: BCFGA 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 BCFGA). You may call your local director so that the BCFGA 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
Sukhdev Goraya	Kelowna	Cell/text 250- 859-1229
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