

BC Fruit Growers' Association Friday File

November 10, 2017



BC Agriculture Day

Programs and Reviews highlighted

BC Agriculture Day is an annual event where farm leaders and young farmers meet with provincial MLAs and government staff to advocate for agriculture. BC Agriculture Day was held on November 7, 2017 in and around the Legislature in Victoria, with Fred Steele, Sukhpaul Bal and Glen Lucas attending for the tree fruit sector. About 66 agricultural representatives attended in all. Topics were wide-ranging, but renewed emphasis is being placed on “Public Trust”, the Fair Wage Commission review, and sustainability and growth of agriculture and its role in rural communities. Here is the [BCAC Press Release](#). Here is the [government press release on Ag Day](#).

BCFGA reps met on November 6 with Agriculture Minister Lana Popham to discuss the Replant Program, Columbia River Treaty, “GrowBC, BuyBC, FeedBC” programs, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and Site C. BCFGA reps also met with Minister Responsible for Columbia River Treaty Katrine Conroy.



Fred Steele (BCFGA Pres.), Hon. Katrine Conroy and Glen Lucas (BCFGA GM)

New, Improved BCAC Website

BCAC has recently launched the first phase of its new website. [CHECK IT OUT NOW at bcac.ca!](#) Apart from the new look and feel, you'll see new video content, industry newsfeed, a Weekly Member Profile section on the homepage and more. Give us your feedback by emailing us at: communications@bcac.ca

SAWP Housing Update from Service Canada

Interim Changes to Housing Requirements for Primary Agriculture

FALL 2017

BACKGROUND

- In the fall of 2017, the Government of Mexico raised concerns regarding a number of employers in British Columbia (BC), where the housing provided to temporary foreign workers was found to be below the acceptable standard.
- As a result of the Government of Mexico's multiple site visits to BC employers, which revealed alleged major housing deficiencies, Mexican workers were immediately removed by the Government of Mexico, and these cases were referred to the Integrity Services Branch for immediate action.

- The Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program has committed to conducting a national housing study as part of the Primary Agriculture Review to specifically address concerns about the inadequacy of housing standards and to ensure that qualified housing inspectors are available to assess housing provided to temporary foreign workers.
- This study is expected to be completed early 2018 and we will be working very closely with Provinces/Territories throughout the entire process to ensure that jurisdictions are respected.

CURRENT STATUS

To address the immediate concerns about housing in Primary Agriculture, effective December 1, 2017, the Department will implement the following changes to enhance housing standards for foreign workers while in Canada:

LMIA Application Process

- When applying for a Labour Market Impact Assessment,
 - All employers must submit a housing inspection report completed no more than eight months prior to the submission date for the initial LMIA application for that season.
 - The inspection report must indicate the maximum number of workers permitted per approved accommodation.
 - For the 2018 Season, all BC employers must use the BCAC approved housing inspection form, and the inspection must be completed by a BCAC sanctioned inspector housing inspection report.
- Failure to meet the above requirements for the housing inspection report without justification will result in the LMIA application being considered incomplete and the system file closed.
- Employers will be required to retain a copy of all housing inspection reports for six (6) years, in the event of a compliance inspection.
- If the initial LMIA is granted, the corresponding housing inspection may be used for subsequent LMIA's within that calendar season.

LMIA Assessment Process

- To determine whether an employer may employ a foreign worker under the TFW Program, Service Canada officers should review the submitted housing report to determine its rating, completeness, and whether any housing deficiencies have been identified.
- If the TFW housing **passes** the inspection:
 - The LMIA application process may proceed to determine whether the employer may receive a positive LMIA.
 - The maximum number of TFWs per approved accommodation must be indicated with the decision.
- If the TFW housing inspection report indicates **follow-up conditions**:
 - Processing will be suspended for any and all LMIA applications submitted by that employer until such time as Service Canada receives an attestation from the employer that the condition(s) identified in the housing inspection report have been corrected - substantiated with invoices and/or receipts and/or photos.

Note: For employers in BC, any elements of the BCAC approved housing inspection form that receives a "No" response constitutes a condition, and must be addressed before the LMIA application can continue.

- If the attestation and supporting documentation are not received, in a timely manner, this could result in the cancellation of the LMIA application.

- The Department may initiate an employer inspection at a later date to verify that concerns identified on the original housing report have been resolved. Failure to meet this verification requirement may result in the employer being found non-compliant with the Program, which may result in the same consequences as a housing inspection with a FAIL decision, in addition to a possible monetary penalty or ban from the Program.
- If the TFW housing **fails** the inspection:
 - The employer will receive a negative LMIA and will be assessed as “high-risk,” which may trigger the following consequences:
 - the suspension of processing for any pending LMIA application;
 - the suspension of any positive LMIA that has already been issued with remaining unused positions; and
 - for employers who have employed a TFW in the last six years, the launch of a compliance inspection as soon as possible.

Housing Inspectors

Below is a list of housing inspectors available for the required SAWP housing inspection. In previous years, growers sent in ‘conditional’ housing inspections, in which the grower would send in missing information later (i.e. a receipt for batteries for a smoke detector). We are recommending that growers send in completed housing inspections, with all conditions resolved (i.e. attach the receipt for batteries for the smoke detector, if required as a condition of the inspection). Also, the turn around time on application is getting longer, so it is recommended to send in your SAWP application 10-12 weeks in advance.

Inspector	Location	Phone
Keith Suftin	Kelowna	250-317-3349
Brad Pears	Kelowna	250-717-6434
Bob Hamm	Kelowna	250-470-8467
Barry Chickloski	Penticton	250-490-1118
Hugh Cairns	Kelowna	250-808-5777
Mike Bradshaw	Kelowna	250-870-8340
George Giannotti	Summerland	250-809-6804
Craig Hostland	Kelowna	250-862-6400

For more information on the SAWP program, check out [Labour on the BCFGA website](#), or [Labour on the BCAC website](#).

Fair Wage Commission - note from BCAC

Short timeframe for response

Do you have a view to share on how B.C. can move forward to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour?

The Fair Wages Commission was established in October 2017 to work independently to advise government on how to move towards a \$15/hour minimum wage with increases that are regularly measured and predictable.

The Commission is committed to three main tasks:

1. The Fair Wages Commission will first develop recommendations for a pathway forward to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour and on a process for how the minimum wage should be regularly reviewed and increased once \$15/hour is achieved.
2. The Commission will consider and make recommendations about other wage rates under the Employment Standards Regulation, for agricultural workers, liquor servers, live-in caregivers, resident caretakers and live-in camp leaders.
3. The Commission will advise the Government on ways to begin to address the discrepancy between the minimum wage and living wages in our province.

The Commission will produce feedback from the public on this issue in the spring of 2018. The first stage of the Commission's consultations will occur in November and December. Submit your feedback by **December 7, 2017 at 4 PM**.

Regional Meetings (Beginning next week!)

It is very important that agriculture has a presence at these meetings. If you would like to appear before the Commission, please respond by email to FWC@gov.bc.ca, noting the day/location you would like to attend. A time will be allocated according to the schedule's availability. To attend and make a verbal submission, you will be provided a timeslot to present your submission. The dates for consultations are as follows:

November 21, 2017 – Kelowna

Sandman Hotel & Suites from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Written Submissions

If you would like to submit your written comments to the Commission please respond by email to FWC@gov.bc.ca. All submissions must be provided as a Word document or PDF and are limited in length to five pages. These should be received no later than December 7, 2017. BCFGA s planning to make a submission, but your individual submission will count!

For more information on the feedback process visit:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/fairwagescommission/>

Central Okanagan Regional Air Quality Survey

Proposed regulations and solutions

The Regional Air Quality Program is proposing new bylaws to reduce smoke in the Okanagan, which could see further restrictions imposed on open burning. It's looking for input from those who obtain burning permits to help shape investments in programs and alternative options that prevent local air pollution. The results from this online survey will be included in a smoke reduction strategy proposal for consideration by the Regional District of Central Okanagan.

Have Your Say online and complete [the on-line survey](#) before November 19, 2017.



2018/19 BC Tree Fruit Replant Program

The countdown is on

The 2018 Replant Program deadline is **November 15, 2017**. [Information may be viewed on the BCFGAs website.](#)

Succession Planning Workshop

Transition to the next generation November 21

Here is a local workshop to help you through the inter-generation transition process for your farm.

November 21st, 2017, 10:00am—4:00pm
Regional District of Central Okanagan, Woodhaven Rm
1450 K.L.O. Rd, Kelowna

Cost: \$25 per person or \$20 per person if more than one family member attends (+GST).
Lunch is provided. Space is limited to 30 participants.

[Register online](#) by November 14, 2017

For more information: Ph: 250-469-6280, info@investkelowna.com

Participants will gain a better understanding of:

- * goal setting
- * life interests
- * information gathering
- * methods of owning property
- * information on tax tools and issues
- * will planning and life insurance
- * business arrangements
- * security

Presenters: Chris Henderson, CPA, CA Rossworn-Henderson LLP
Melodie Lind, Lawyer, Pushor Mitchell, LLP

BCFGA Special General Meeting - notice

Bylaw changes

Date: Thursday, November 16, 2017

Time: 11 am - 3 pm

**Place: Best Western Plus Wine Country Hotel
3460 Carrington Rd, West Kelowna, BC**

This meeting is being called so that delegates may consider some proposed changes to the BCFGAs bylaws. Your input is welcome before the meeting and we invite interested members to attend the meeting - please register so we may make appropriate meeting and meal arrangements.

[A complete package of information is on the BCFGAs website.](#)

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

Date	Meeting	Attending for the BCFGA
Nov. 14	BCFGA Executive	
Nov. 16 11am-3pm	BCFGA Special General Meeting to consider bylaw changes.	Place: Best Western Plus Wine Country Hotel, 3460 Carrington Rd, West Kelowna
Nov. 19-25	Caribbean SAWP Annual Review	Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas
Nov. 28 7pm-9pm	BCFGA South Regional AGM	Place: Penticton Trade and Convention Centre, 273 Power St, Penticton
Nov. 30 7pm-9pm	BCFGA North Regional AGM	Place: Ramada Kelowna Hotel, 2170 Harvey Ave, Kelowna
Dec. 4	BCFGA Executive	
February 15-16	BCFGA Annual Convention	Place: Coast Capri Hotel, Kelowna

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. • Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, local 4.
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Job Opportunity
 Summerland Varieties Corporation



SVC is looking for an Assistant Orchard Manager.

The Assistant Orchard Manager reports directly to the Orchard Manager. As the Assistant Orchard Manager, you will ensure that all orchard related functions are executed effectively and assist in the management of seasonal employees. This is a permanent full-time position working out of our office at the Summerland Research and Development Centre in Summerland, BC. Summerland Varieties Corp. (SVC) offers a competitive salary and benefits package along with in-house training and an energetic and supportive work environment.

For more information on how to apply, [here is the link](#).