

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

September 8, 2017



Liberal Caucus

Putting the Okanagan on the Map

The September 5-7 federal Liberal Caucus meeting was held in Kelowna. This meeting of government MPs gave local business and constituents an opportunity to showcase the Okanagan.

Kelowna-Lake Country Liberal MP Stephen Fuhr helped to make sure that the voice of agriculture was heard at the meetings. Mr. Fuhr, BCFGA President Fred Steele and BCFGA Corporate Secretary Bunvir Nijjer had a very productive and positive meeting with Hon. Lawrence MacAulay on September 7. Mr. Fuhr also ensured that BCFGA President Fred Steele was in attendance at two sessions that provided access to government MPs and helped BCFGA place its positions and proposals in the limelight.

New Tax Rules Proposal

Income Splitting and Capital Gains Tax Exemptions under review

New tax proposals were an issue that received a lot of discussion at the September 5-7 Liberal Caucus meeting.

The BCFGA based its position on the *Canadian Horticultural Council* and *Canadian Federation of Agriculture's* analysis and their participation in the *Coalition for Small Business Tax Fairness*.

Members may wish to send an email to their local MP to stress the importance of income splitting and capital gains - our position is that these benefits as growers invest all available resources into their businesses, effectively deferring contributions to pension funds and health care which eventually come from the tax rules on income splitting and capital gains exemption.

Drought

Level 2 declared - Lake Country issue tackled

Despite the recent Spring flooding in the Okanagan, a drought alert level 2 has been declared for the area by the province. At this level, "very dry conditions" could have "serious ecosystem or socioeconomic impacts". Be water wise.

The District of Lake Country has implemented a requirement that growers planning to irrigate past September 15 must notify the District. BCFGAs have written a strongly worded letter requesting that the new process be re-considered and that a grower advisory group be formed and consulted prior to making new irrigation rules.

The BCFGAs will be seeking a valley-wide approach to irrigation rules which are based on sound assessment of drought conditions and an understanding of horticultural practices.

2018 Replant Program

Application deadline is November 15, 2017

The 2018 Replant Program is now open for applications. [Information may be viewed on the BCFGAs website.](#)

Minimum Wage change

Heads up for September 15

Minimum wage increases from \$10.85 per hour to \$11.35 per hour on September 15. Vacation pay (minimum 4%) is also paid on top of the hourly wage. Piece rates will also increase on September 15, although industry previously requested that there be no change in piece rates. Here is a [summary of employment standards that regulate pay](#), but the the new piecework rates are not yet included in this document as of date of this newsletter date.

Fair Wages Commission

Future Direction on Minimum Wage

The provincial government has indicated its intent to form a Fair Wages Commission to study minimum wage, and recently the government modified the terms of reference for the committee the condition that 'minimum wage will be \$15 per hour by 2021', so there is no target or timeline for the Commission. Once the Commission gets started, it will be important for farms and small enterprises to put forward their views on minimum wage. The BCFGAs will be collecting information from you the members in a survey in the near future.

BCFGAs Golden Apple Award

Nominations open

Nominations are open for the prestigious Golden Apple Award. Nominations for the 2017 season may be forwarded to Charlotte Leaming (cleaming@bctree.com) or Carl Withler (Carl.Withler@gov.bc.ca). If you know of a deserving neighbour or friend to nominate, contact Carl or Charlotte with their name and address.

Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP)

The Next Agricultural Policy Framework

The new name of what was previously known as Growing Forward programs, is the “Next Agricultural Policy Framework”. Many national risk management programs are expected to remain very similar to what is in place (funding is at the same level as before). For example, Production Insurance (under Agrilnsure), the Advance Payments Program, and AgriInvest are not expecting significant changes at the federal level. Some programs may change at the request of the provinces, especially the AgriRecovery program being aimed at disaster areas that are not province-wide impact. Finally, the federal government seems intent on making some changes to the reference margin in AgriStability. The Western Producer has just [published an excellent exposé](#) on the newly announced program.

Other programs are negotiated between the province and the federal government and may face more change. Programs in this category include Environmental Farm Plans, Food Safety and Traceability and a new set of programming for Public Trust.

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

Date	Meeting	
Sept. 5-7	Federal Liberal Caucus, Kelowna	
Sept. 19	SAWP Housing Standards review	Pinder Dhaliwal
Oct. 6	SIR Board Planning Session	
Oct. 23-25	Mexico SAWP Annual Review Meeting	
Oct. 25	BCTFC Annual Meeting	
Oct. 30	BCFGA Crop Protection Committee	
Nov. 3	BCFGA Labour Committee	
Nov. 7	BCAC Agriculture Day	
Nov. 14	BCFGA Executive	
Nov. 16	BCFGA Bylaw Review	
Nov 19-25	Caribbean SAWP Annual Review Meeting	
November 28	BCFGA South Regional AGM	
November 30	BCFGA North Regional AGM	
December 4	BCFGA Executive	

January 25-26	BCFGA Annual Convention	
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BCFGa Office - 250-762-5226 Toll free -1-800-619-9022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda Jorde, Member Services and Replant Admin, local 1. • Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2. • Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, local 4.
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The BCFGa Labour Orientation and Safety Program

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