

BC Fruit Growers' Association Friday File

August 12, 2015



Water

Last week, the province declared the Okanagan-Similkameen Valleys to be in a level 4 drought - the highest classification. We have delayed our newsletter to today to get more information.

A Level 4 classification means the area is extremely dry. People and businesses may be affected by short water supplies, as well as fish stocks in streams. The goal is voluntary reduction of water use. Water suppliers and regulators may introduce rules to conserve water.

As noted in the previous newsletter, the Okanagan Basin Water Board provided an on-line update on water supply and climate July 27, 2015.

- In the Okanagan, more winter precipitation fell as rain and the melt of snow occurred earlier in the season, so water flowed into streams earlier in the season than normal.
- Okanagan Reservoirs are currently at 60-100% of full capacity.
- Based on the water consumption curve we are currently about 50% of the way through the season.
- Aquifers, as monitored by readings from wells appear to be at normal volumes for this time of year, with the exception of the Rutland municipal water wells, which are experiencing a long-term decline.
- Natural creek flows (where reservoirs are not in place) are at 20-50% of normal, and in some places even lower. In these 'unreservoired' creeks, flows are at mid- to late-September flows.
- There was no assessment of how likely reservoirs will be filled over the coming winter.

We thought that a level 4 would not be issued for the Okanagan, but this was immediately proven wrong.

You can access some great irrigation management information and tools at Farm West, www.farmwest.com. Find out about irrigation needs and irrigation efficiency. Growers should stay within allocation so there is room to irrigate trees in Fall for winter protection.

The BCFGAs will be hearing more from the Okanagan Basin Water Board on August 13 to find out more specific information. We will therefore be delaying the next Friday File until Tuesday August 17 in order to provide you with a full report from the meeting.

Biosecurity - reminder

The national meeting of the Canadian Horticultural Association's Apple Working Group was held last week. One of the items that was notable is the concern over pests and diseases:

- following a severe winter storm two years ago, Nova Scotia suffered 'injury fireblight', where the fireblight bacteria enters a wound in the tree. Extraordinary measures were required to bring the disease under control, and many trees and a few orchards were lost to the disease.
- Several pests are present in the maritimes, which have yet to become established in the Okanagan, such as Apple Maggot.
- The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug is not yet present in the maritimes, but there is concern and planning for more intensive monitoring.

With this concern about introduced pests and diseases, we wrote about a new, voluntary biosecurity plan last week.

The standard for the fruit and tree nut industry will:

- provide guidelines for biosecurity, including prevention and integrated pest management;
- promote a nationally consistent approach to mitigating pest risks with clear guidelines for effective biosecurity;
- enhance industry's knowledge of the risks associated with pests; and
- help identify potential gaps in current biosecurity measures.

A producer guide will accompany the standard and provide additional information on approaches that can be used to achieve the biosecurity goals identified in the standard. Development of the producer guide will begin following the completion of the standard and it is anticipated that it will be available to stakeholders by the end of the 2016 calendar year

The Fruit and Tree Nut Biosecurity Advisory Committee that was established by the CFIA, AAFC and industry partners has developed a [draft of the farm-level biosecurity standard](#).

BCFGA members are invited to provide input into this initial draft of the standard to ensure it reflects the needs of the fruit producers. Forward your comments to the BCFGAs:

info@bcfga.com

The due date for this consultation is September 30, 2015. Input submitted by this date will be gathered and provided to the CFIA and Canadian Horticultural Council by the BCFGAs. Your input into *The National Voluntary Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard for the Fruit and Tree Nut Industries* is greatly appreciated.

Growers Supply - appreciation days

Fred Steele, BCFGA President, and Pinder Dhaliwal, BCFGA Vice-President are planning to attend the Growers Supply appreciation day meetings. This is an opportunity to bring any items of concern or any positive ideas to their attention.

Back to School

If you are a BCFGA member and have a son or daughter returning to University or to Okanagan College, then your son or daughter are eligible for 3 BCFGA bursaries. The BCFGA Rob Hall bursary is available through an application process operated by Okanagan College. The BCFGA Golden Jubilee and BCFGA Joe Sardinha Memorial Bursaries are available by downloading an application and sending the completed application to the BCFGA. Visit www.bcfga.com/191/Bursaries.

Replant

A second batch of replant approvals was delivered yesterday, following the release of some funds from a reserve held for potential appeals and project slippage. Mike Read and Sera Lean are currently conducting inspections of approved projects. The BCFGA is seeking further funds so that additional projects may be approved. This year, the province has instituted a 'quality program', in which the highest quality projects are approved first, rather than the previously-used 'first-come first-serve' method of approving projects. At this stage, we are ahead of schedule on inspections, compared to prior years. Watch for a further update in this newsletter.



Summerland Varieties Corporation and the BCFGA Research Development Orchard Ltd. provide funding for the BCFGA Labour Project - thank you to these BCFGA subsidiaries for supporting growers.

