

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

June 23, 2017



The BCFGA Labour Orientation and Safety Program

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Kelowna Agriculture Plan

For Kelowna growers - your input welcome

The City of Kelowna has drafted [An Agriculture Plan](#) (a summary of actions is on page 34-38) and the growers are invited to review the draft Plan at an upcoming public information session. If you farm in Kelowna, here is [an on-line survey](#) to have input into the future direction of the City on agriculture.

Please note that you will need to create an 'account' to complete the survey, and that the password you link to your account must include an upper and lower case letter, as well as a number.

Farm Tour for Municipal Government

Communication with over 60 participants

The Ministry of Agriculture reports that, on June 14th, the SIR Program hosted a very successful on-farm field day for local government Planners, Advisors, Councillors and Mayors. On-farm experiences were reviewed by horticulturists and growers to better provide a better understanding current agricultural practices. A big thanks to all producers who shared their time & expertise during the day, particularly to the two host farms of Surinder Shergill and Sam DiMaria.

Note on RCMP Tractor Tickets

Not so fast officer!

The Strengthening Farming Unit of the BC Ministry of Agriculture has communicated with the RCMP that tractors do not require a license plate but do require insurance to travel on roads between the owners farm locations. The information in [the ICBC brochure on farm vehicle licensing and insurance](#) is current and growers should review this information.

Neighbour Complaints

Some suggestions to reduce complaints

The Ministry of Agriculture has received over a dozen complaints the past few weeks about tractors and sprayers working all night. Ministry staff receive the complaints and explain that Farm Practices Protection Act is in place to protect normal farm practices. Ministry staff also explain that for any number of reasons, it is not always possible for farming activities to occur during daylight hours. Ministry staff ask that growers be aware that you may be creating significant disturbance for your neighbour and help reduce complaints by:

1. Ensure equipment is in good repair
2. Where possible, work on areas close to residences earlier in the evening and work farther away during the wee hours.
3. Communicate with neighbours so they are prepared and have an understanding of why you are working through the night.

Employment Standards

Coming to a farm near you

The Employment Standards Branch regulates payment of wages. A team from the Employment Standards Branch will be visiting farms in the Okanagan in July and possibly August to provide information and education to growers and workers. The field team will not require records to be produced during the visit, but will follow-up by mail to request any documents so as not to interfere with growers' seasonal work.

Growers must cooperate with the Employment Standards Branch during these visits - you should examine the identification provided by the team to ensure that they are official government representatives (they will have a business card or other ID).

The items the branch will be seeking to verify through discussion with the operator and the employees include:

- Written records of hours (i.e. timesheets).
- Written receipts for payroll advances. The branch will not be monitoring the federal payroll deductions, but these should also be recorded in case federal government requires these records to be verified.
- Compliance with minimum wage or SAWP contract wage.
- Payment of wages in accordance with the Employment Standards Act. e.g. vacation pay of 4% minimum, payment at least twice a month.

[Here is a summary of the Employment Standards for Farm Workers](#), including minimum wage and piece rates. If you have questions on what records are required or what format to keep the records, contact the Employment Standards Hotline at 604-513-4604.

BCFGA Executive Meeting report

Lots happening at the June 7 meeting

Appointments and Nominations

The BCFGa nominates 3 growers to the SIR Board. A vacancy was created by the resignation of Billy Potash, the Zone 1 organic representative. If your operation is organic and you or your son/daughter/spouse are interested in serving on the SIR Board, please contact Glen Lucas.

Financial

At the previous meeting, the associate membership fee (non-grower, non-voting individual) was set at \$75 per year for 2017 and \$100 per year for 2017. Regular membership fees are being reviewed.

Flood Update: situation and financial assistance

An update on the flooding problem in the Okanagan was discussed. Several growers in the Keremeos that had been affected by the creek flooding in their orchards and were visited by the General Manager and local BCFGa director. The following financial assistance is available:

- Compensation for some property damage is available under BC's Disaster Funding Assistance Program covering about 60-80% of damages incurred.
- Production Insurance coverage is not provided by commodity but by all types of trees therefore this issue will need to be raised.
- Through the AgriStability program, the government picks up 70% of the costs on damages incurred from natural disasters.

BC Investment Agriculture Foundation

Don Low provided an update as the Tree Fruit sector representative on the BCIAF Board:

- Two new directors have been appointed to the Board:
 - One Director from the supply sector and the other from the bee sector.
- Project funding opportunities will be examined by BCFGa staff.
- There is an opportunity to partner with other Ag. associations in the industry for funds for more broader projects that will benefit the entire industry.

Bylaw update

The drafted bylaw proposals recommended by the Member Services Committee were presented to the Executive. Further analysis will be done and reviewed by our lawyers prior to presenting it to the Delegates at a Special AGM anticipated to be held in November 2017. Also it was suggested to wait and see how the government unfolds as there may be some changes to the Society Act, which itself requires some bylaw changes.

Minority government- opportunity or threat?

The lobbying alternatives for a minority government in BC was discussed:

- It was agreed to seek cross party support and treat agriculture issues as non-partisan - this is essentially the current process, continued.
- It was suggested that a higher level of engagement may be necessary.

Infrastructure Renewal

Co-operative and private packers have requested BCFGa to seek funding.

- Packinghouses are seeking funding for controlled atmosphere infrastructure improvements to their packinghouses as well as improvements to grading lines.
- The BCFGa is working with packinghouses and requesting more detail in regards to the improvements.

- “Growing the Tree Fruit Sector” is a national proposal for financing of planting and packinghouse infrastructure. Fred Steele, Glen Lucas and the Vice President of CHC are meeting with MPs June 12-13 to promote the proposal.

Industry Marketing Strategy

There was discussion of the need to demonstrate a progressive, innovative industry in order to seek government support, such as

- Low pesticide strategy
There was some discussion for a opportunity to develop low pesticide residue program for BC Tree Fruits. It was agreed that Pinder Dhaliwal, Peter Simonsen and Glen Lucas go speak with experts to develop a proposal for Strategic Market Development, Social Responsibility and etc.
- N-S Strategy
The Northern and Southern hemisphere strategy was discussed:
 - The problem is that BC apples are sold out from June to September.
 - Instead of buying fruit from direct competitors (WA), the proposed strategy is to partner with a Southern hemisphere countries such as New Zealand and Australia to sell Southern fruit in the off-season, and possibly make better use of packinghouse infrastructure and create year-round jobs.

It was agreed that the BCFGA consider several marketing strategies to bolster our plan to seek infrastructure.

c. ARPA

The topic remains a national priority at Apple Working Group (AWG).

It was agreed to form an Industry committee to explore the feasibility of ARPA and present results to the AWG in July 2017.

Labour

- City of Kelowna Temporary Worker Housing Bylaw - Glen Lucas provided an update of the outcomes coming out from the Public hearing and various meetings with the City staff. The City proposed the following changes:
 - Definition of farm unit- definition remains but allows farmers to locate TFWH in each of 10 city sectors
 - Public Hearing threshold- 40 for parcels up to 8 hectares and 60 for parcels for 8 hectares or more for each city sector.

It was mentioned that the first council meeting will be June 19th, 2017 and any amendments will go to public hearing on July 11th, 2017. The BCFGA Executive agreed to support the current proposal after review by the BCFGA’s TFWH Bylaw Committee.

- Human Rights Tribunal update - BCAC and agriculture association reps met with the new lawyer hired to mediate the HRT complaint filed by a labour union about the under-representation of female SAWP workers.
- National SAWP video
CHC has chosen a video production company to produce an information video on the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. Several provinces are on board with the project and encouraged to gather the funds from key stakeholders. The BC share of the funds is roughly \$14,000 to \$20,000. It was suggested to contact employers who hire significant number of SAWP workers. Pinder Dhaliwal noted that Quebec is already making an video with separate videos.

- Labour Orientation and Safety- the BCFGAs summer labour project has started and Ron Forrest's contact information has been posted in the Friday File.

Regulatory

- RCMP Tractor tickets - some growers are being ticketed for driving on the road. The BCFGAs is assisting growers in disputing tickets for driving on the roads. The following rules and regulations were noted:
 - Driver must have a valid driver's license but do not need a license plate
 - Husbandry including tractors, ATVs and golf carts must be insured through ICBC if there are driven on the roads
- Food Safety - formal training
There is a new requirement that anyone handling spray must have formal training. BCTF is providing a short course and PAC points are allocated attendees. BCFGAs has been asked to provide a spray handler certification through the PAC points system.
- Nectarines- peach registered products
Nectarines are considered by scientists to be the same type of fruit as peaches, but regulators consider them to be separate and labels currently list nectarines separately from peaches. The BCFGAs is working with the Ontario Tender Fruit Association to resolve this issue.

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

Date	Meeting	
June 27	AgriWorkforce Roundtable: Evaluating Compensation Solutions	Glen Lucas
June 28	Indigenous Affairs Unit, Employment Services and Development Canada	Glen Lucas
June 29	AgGrowth Coalition Information Session	Fred Steele and Glen Lucas
July 6	Genome BC Information Session	Glen Lucas
July 10	BC Agriculture Association Managers meeting	Glen Lucas and Brenda Jorde
July 17	WorksafeBC Rate Consultation	Glen Lucas
July 25-26	CHC Apple Working Group	Fred Steele and Glen Lucas
August 28	BCFGAs Executive	
Aug 30 - Sept 2	Interior Provincial Exhibition	Visit us at our booth

Farm and Food Care - Real Dirt Photo Contest

Promoting Farming to the Public - Get your camera ready!

Farm & Food Care is launching a nation-wide farm photo contest with \$4,000 in cash prizes available for winners in six categories.

Winning photos will be used in the updated 2017 edition of The Real Dirt on Farming, a publication that answers common questions about food and farming practices in Canada. For more information on this publication and to view the 2014 edition, visit www.RealDirtOnFarming.org. Photos may also be used in other Farm & Food Care initiatives.

Categories include:

Canadian Farm Scenes – Capture the beauty of Canada’s rural landscape	Farm Innovation – Technology at work on Canadian farms
Farm Faces – Unique farm family photos, farm friends or a photo of farmers at work	Crazy about Crops – Photos of crops being grown in fields, orchards or greenhouses
All about Animals – Farm animals in the barn or field	Farm Fun – Be creative! We’re looking for photos of people having fun while farming

Prizes:

- ✓ \$350 first prize in each category
- ✓ \$200 second prize in each category
- ✓ \$100 third prize in each category

* Non - winning entries used in The Real Dirt on Farming booklet will receive \$50 per photo.

Eligibility

- ✓ All entries must be photographs taken in Canada.
- ✓ Entrants must own the rights to the photos they submit.
- ✓ The contest is open to all residents of Canada.

Submit entries to contests@farmfoodcare.org

More information: <http://www.realdirtfarming.ca/photo-contest.php>

Deadline July 14, 2017

How to contact the BCFGA Office

BCFGA Office - 250-762-5226
Toll free -1-800-619-9022



- 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.