



BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

March 24, 2017

Tree Fruit Production Guide Meetings

The March 6-10 TFPG meetings were well attended. Though we hoped for more attendance in Keremeos-Cawston and Summerland, the meetings in Oliver and Creston were packed and we even needed to get extra chairs at the Winfield meeting. Thank you to our presenters, with special thanks to Gayle Jespersen, Susanna Acheampong and Hugh Philip who work on keeping the guide up-to-date throughout the year. Lindsay Hainstock re-wrote the nutrient section this year.

The spray schedules were printed for those attending the production guide meetings. For BCFGA members who did not attend the TFPG meetings, the spray schedules will be available through BCTF field service or mailed to independent BCFGA members.

The on-line guide is available at www.bctfpg.ca, and spray schedules may be printed by selecting the print icon in the upper right-hand corner of the relevant crop's spray schedule.

Replant Update

Program offers and waitlist in place for 2017

Replant offers were delivered in January 2017 - about 90 projects were approved in this first round. The allotment for these approved projects includes an additional \$300,000 in funding from the province, part of the \$1 million in additional funding provided for the last 6 years of the program. We have also delivered decline letters to 5 projects that did not meet program requirements (e.g. replanting grapes to tree fruit, replant occurred in a prior year, or the application duplicated another application). Approximately 80 projects are on the waitlist.

City of Oliver Water Supply Enhancement

BCFGA writes letter of support

The BCFGA wrote a letter, February 19, to support the City of Oliver's proposal for a provincial grant to repair of the irrigation water supply. A very fast decision was made by the province.

On March 22, the provincial government announced a \$5 million investment in the City of Oliver water supply infrastructure. The funding will help build a new pipeline (total cost \$10 million) to reroute a pipeline that was destroyed when a rock slide occurred last Spring.

Federal Budget

March 22, 2017

The federal budget contained a remarkable number of references to agriculture.

No regulatory changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program were announced, but there will be an increase in the program budget for the next 5 years. It is not stated how this funding will be divided between operations and compliance, and if it will impact the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

There is a \$80 million investment to occur in the Sidney, BC Plant Health Centre.

Other major themes in the budget that will impact agriculture are:

- the next Agriculture Policy Framework (no specifics as fed-prov negotiations are ongoing),
- a review of innovation programs and possible centralization of innovation programs,
- clean energy and
- growth in agricultural exports.

A new Strategic Innovation Fund will be established for food processing - perhaps similar to the AgriFlex funding provided in previous Growing Forward Programs.

City of Kelowna - Seasonal Agricultural Housing Policy

BCFGA Participating

The BCFGGA was surprised to read in the press that it had been consulted on the proposed worker housing policy/bylaw. For clarity, the BCFGGA has not been part of any group or process to develop the policies. In the past the BCFGGA has been asked to provide information on the numbers of workers and growers, and was also aware that the Mexican and Jamaican government representatives provided further detail on worker numbers.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan is now entering into a consultative process on a proposed seasonal agricultural worker housing bylaw. The BCFGGA will be participating in this process. The BCFGGA's initial response to the proposed bylaw is summarized in the following table.

Proposed bylaw	BCFGA support	Comment
Regional Approach	Yes	The BCFGGA supports a common approach among municipalities and regional districts regarding regulation of ALR use.
Farm Unit	Conditional	Farm parcels that can be used for tree fruit production are typically 10 - 30 acres, with a few parcels 100 acres or more. Moving to a 'farm unit'

		<p>would consider separate parcels as one farm unit, and regulate the farm unit as a whole. However, the trend for industry consolidation is for mid-size operations to consolidate into large operations.</p> <p>Limiting operations to 40 temporary farm workers is unreasonable - it will put farms that exceed 20-40 acres out of business. A cherry farm typically requires 1 seasonal workers per acre. A 100 acre cherry farm requires 100-200 seasonal agricultural workers. While some of these seasonal agricultural workers may live locally in developed urban areas, that is not common and most farm workers live temporarily on farm.</p>
Forty worker limit	No.	<p>This limit could severely impact farms over 40 acres, and an expected outcome is for farms to go out of business and large parcels of agricultural land to go fallow. The BCFGAs cannot be stronger in its opposition to this limit. The limit must be proportional to the farm unit size.</p> <p>This maximum must relate to a formula, such as housing for 1 worker for each acre.</p>
Limit of 1 worker per 1,000 m ² of on-farm processing structures.	No.	<p>This limit should be based on farm unit size, not square meters of the facility. Using 1 additional worker per acre of farm unit size, for on-farm packing will limit the packing to the farm's own production, rather than making a function of the size of the building.</p>
Minimum parcel size	No.	<p>The minimum parcel size should relate to a workforce of less than 2 people, which converts to 2 acres for a cherry operation. If the minimum size is 9.8 acres, then the maximum workers per farm unit needs to be increased, as seasonal agricultural workers for small farms will stay in housing built on larger farms.</p> <p>It is not practical to force the seasonal agricultural workers to stay in municipal housing for 2 reasons: first, there is a shortage of housing and seasonal availability of temporary housing in developed urban areas in July and August (harvest season) is even more limited. Secondly, the farm workers wish to be close to the worksites.</p> <p>This minimum should be the same as the ALR 2 hectare division between commercial and hobby farms.</p>

Restrictive covenant on further building permits for on-farm worker housing	No.	The farm is already restricted by other parts of the policy.
Occupation to growing, harvesting and pruning periods	No.	This is not enforceable, since pruning can occur at any time of year. In order to simplify, it is adequate to rely on a maximum habitation period.
Statutory Declaration and 8 month maximum	Yes.	
Footprint 2,000 m2	No.	This limit does not make sense for a large farm unit. If this were a requirement, it should be a formula based on farm size; however, this is unnecessary. Farm worker housing for the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (other use campsites) is mandated by the program. Growers will seek to minimize the space, as it is expensive to provide housing. The space will almost always be at the minimum required by the SAWP. There is no need to regulate the footprint.
Must be within 50 meters of the road.	No.	The ALC noted its support for a setback of no greater than 50 m from a road, to limit long driveways and residences located adjacent to production areas. However, this concern seems to be aimed at residential permanent structures. The optimal piece of land for farm worker housing should be determined by the farmer - there are many examples where existing roads on the farm should be the determining factor, not a setback. Allowing flexibility on the setback may also minimize complaints from local non-farming residents and limit the need for vegetative buffers. Access from the road to the housing must meet safety and firefighting service requirements.
Vegetative buffer	No.	The vegetative buffer should be on the non-ALR side. Alienating agricultural land from productive use is not acceptable.
Structure types	Yes.	
Vacant for 2 consecutive seasons	Yes, with condition.	Unless successive crop failures or tree death has caused a multi-year delay in resumption of crop production.

Farm Unit Definition	Yes, but needs clarification.	Will the farm unit size include parcels in neighbouring municipalities? This seems reasonable as a Regional Approach is specified. Note that moving to a farm unit will require the ability to track multiple parcels to a single farm. It will be necessary to define a farm unit as a unit which files a single farm income tax statement. Some farm units lease land from which farm tax is split with the owner - in effect creating a separate farm unit. Regulating this exception should be considered.
On Farm Processing definition	No.	Must include “grading and packing of fresh fruit”
Temporary Farm Worker, Temporary Farm Worker Housing definitions	Yes.	

In addition, the BCFGA has requested a roundtable including representatives from local government, the BCFGA and the BC Cherry Association.

If you have further input on the proposed Seasonal Agricultural Worker Housing bylaws, please contact Pinder Dhaliwal, BCFGA Vice-President, or Glen Lucas, BCFGA General Manager.

Message From Summerland Varieties Corp. SVC launches Hort Report Podcast

Based on a desire to make tech-transfer between industry and growers more accessible and available, Summerland Varieties Corp. has launched the Hort Report podcast, hosted by SVC Horticultural Technician, Rajiv Dasanjh.



“Through the podcast, we’re able to put growers in touch with the great resources and wealth of knowledge we have here in the Okanagan when it comes to past, present and future research being done on tree fruits,” said Dasanjh.

Listeners can expect to hear a wide variety of topics on the Hort Report, spanning all things tree fruit related.

“From pruning to marketing, the main goal of the show is to keep the subject matter relevant to what issues growers in the Okanagan are facing themselves at this very moment, and so we encourage feedback and suggestions for topics,” said Dasanjh.

Show themes will lean toward current research and upcoming tree fruit technology in the hopes of aiding growers in creating a better product.

“We here at SVC have a vested interest in seeing our varieties grown to the best of their ability

and look forward to providing another tool for our growers to use in that process,” said Dasanjh.

To stream or download the latest episodes of the Hort Report, visit:

<https://www.summerlandvarieties.com/news/>

Follow SVC on Facebook or Twitter for Hort Report updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/summerlandvarieties/>

<https://twitter.com/SVCVarieties>



Do you have a story idea for the Hort Report? Email Rajiv at rajiv@summerlandvarieties.com

BCFGA Executive Meeting

February 27, 2017

The Executive met February 27 for the first full meeting following the Convention. As usual at its first meeting, the Executive reviewed and approved governance and staff policies. The Executive also reviewed the following priorities for the year, which are in addition to regular, ongoing activities and any unanticipated events:

- i. Member Services
 - Member information brochure - develop
 - Bylaws - possible Special General Meeting
- ii. Labour
 - Federal Low Skill Worker Program changes - on budget day
 - SAWP sexual discrimination under BC Human Rights - mediation
 - Mexico SAWP workshops in April
- iii. Crop Protection
 - Apple Clearwing Moth project
 - BMSB and AM planning
 - Product reviews - PMRA
 - GROU priorities
- iv. Financial Programs
 - Export market ranking
 - Next Agricultural Policy Framework
- v. Public Relations
 - Rejuvenation proposal
 - Municipality Updates
 - Provincial election

The Executive got a start on setting committees. If you are interested serving on the Crop Protection or Labour Committees, and are willing to provide 2 or 3 days per year of your time (a small per diem is paid), then please contact an Executive member or Glen Lucas.

The Executive also reviewed and discussed [the Okanagan College strategy planning session](#) - overview (pages 1-57) and results of a workshop with industry representatives (pages 58-62).

BC Fruit Growers' Association Executive for 2017

NAME		TELEPHONE
Fred Steele - President	Kelowna	Cell/text: 250-801-1968
Bhupinder (Pinder) Dhaliwal - VP	Oliver	Cell/text 250-490-7198
Ravinder Bains	Keremeos	Cell 250-499-0512
Sukhdeep (Deep) Brar	Summerland	Cell/text 250-462-5687
Surjit Nagra	Kelowna	Cell 250-863-6801
Sukhdev Goraya	Kelowna	Cell 250. 859.1229
Peter Simonsen	Naramata	Cell 250. 488--.0363
Harnek (Tony) Nijjar	Vernon	Cell 250-938-1820

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

Date	Meeting	Attendance
Mar 13-17	Canadian Horticultural Council AGM	Fred Steele, Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas
April 4	BCAC Interior Hort Sector Annual Meeting (BCFGA, BC Cherry Association and BC Grape Growers Association)	Fred Steele, Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas
April 6	BCFGA Member Services Committee	
April 10	BCFGA Labour Committee	
April 12	BC Agricultural Council Annual Meeting	Fred Steele, Glen Lucas
April 19	Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program update, Kelowna and Oliver	
April 20	BCFGA Executive meeting	Exec
May 9	BC Election	everyone!

How to contact the BCFGa Office

<p>BCFGA Office - 250-762-5226 Toll free -1-800-619-9022</p> 	<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.
--	--