

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File



October 16, 2015

October 19, 7 am to 7 pm
Your chance to have a say

The BCFGAs Executive encourages its members to get involved and to vote. The federal election on Monday will have several impacts on agriculture. Here is a summary of the party platforms on key agriculture sector issues, compiled jointly by the CPMA and CHC:

http://www.cpma.ca/pdf/GovRelations/Party_Policies_Table-Election-2015_en.pdf

Reminder - find out about value-added
BC Cider Week- October 17-25, 2015

Summerland Heritage Cidery is planning an event on October 17th. The hosts will be pouring cider from five or six interior cideries at the tasting room in Trout Creek. This event is in conjunction with the grand opening of the tasting room and BC Cider Week.

If you are in Victoria after Thanksgiving, Sea Cider is hosting an event on October 18: <http://m.bpt.me/event/2253104> . Our next newsletter will contain more information on Cider Week events. If you hear of any, let us know!

BC Tree Fruits Cider Company will be one of several ciders featured at BNA Brewing Co. and Eatery in Kelowna. October 23, 5 pm.

For more information, visit the NorthWest Cider Association webpage:
<http://northwestciderguide.blogspot.ca/2015/10/cider-festival-bc-northwest-cider.html>

Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program
Regional Meeting with Mexico

BCFGAs Vice-President Pinder Dhaliwal and General Manager Glen Lucas attended the regional meeting to review the Mexican SAWP program.

Significant changes to the contract are not expected. Industry asked for changes to the death benefit take into account the insurance coverage provided by Cowan Insurance. We also proposed a change to meal service fees to allow for one or two meals, as well as a full meal plan (applied if an independent contractor is engaged to provide meals to workers, with the meal plan reviewed by a qualified nutritionist).

There was discussion of the excessive cost of airfare from Mexico City to Vancouver. Mitierra advised that growers may look on internet for Friday fares, and that when booking Mitierra would be able to reserve these fares. Mitierra advised caution, as some flights leave Mexico City before the Mexican Ministry of Labour is open, so workers would not be available for those flights. Mitierra also noted that if the website has a Mexican flag at the top, the airfares are in US funds, and converting to Canadian dollars adds about 30%. It was noted that the lower fares available do not allow name changes, so there is a risk of some loss, but agriculture producers responded that a small loss was better than paying more on every ticket. There is also an unanswered question on 'unnamed workers' and how to book flights on the Friday schedule - the BCFGA will be looking into this and reporting back to you.

There was discussion of the qualification requirements for housing inspection. The BCFGA is providing housing inspection forms to the inspectors, and will also be hosting an education session with the new housing inspectors. While Mexico and some others expressed concern at deficiencies in housing, others such as Worksafe BC have noted an improvement in housing quality.

Proposed Industrial Workcamp regulations were explained by Interior Health. The BCFGA is not opposed but does not support the inclusion of SAWP and tenting campsites in the proposed industrial Workcamp Regulation.

There are concerns about proposed changes in the way that visas are issued to SAWP workers, and this will be a topic of discussion at the national SAWP meetings at the end of November (also attended by Pinder Dhaliwal and Glen Lucas).

Improvements to the on-line reporting system for growers were discussed, but no resolution on ease of use is apparent (passwords expire after 3 months of non-use).

Overall, Mexico was encouraged by the growth in the program in BC compared to other provinces. A total of 4,724 Mexican workers came to BC in 2015, compared to 4,088 in 2014. About 33% are destined for the Okanagan.

More labour and SAWP information will be provided in future Friday Files over the next few weeks.

***Bursary Applications Available
University Students - apply now!***

The deadline for the BCFGA Joe Sardinha Memorial Bursary and the BCFGA Golden Jubilee Bursary (each \$1,000) is November 1, 2015. The Golden Jubilee bursary requires that the applicant be a close relative of a BCFGA member. The Joe Sardinha Memorial bursary requires a short essay. Applications are available on-line - visit www.bcfga.com and select the link on the lower right-hand corner.

How to contact the BCFGA Office

BCFGA Office
250-762-5226
or toll free 1-800-619-9022

Our new phone extensions:

Brenda Zarr, Member Services and Replant Admin, local 1

Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2

Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, local 3

Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, local 4

2016 Tree Fruit Replant Program Announcement

The updated requirements of the 2016 Replant Program are available on the BCFGa Website, www.bcfga.com. The Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Norm Letnick, announced the opening of the new program on Oct. 15. The deadline for application is Nov. 20, 2015.

The Tree Fruit Replant Program is a 7 year, \$8.4 million program, funded by the Province of BC.

Obsolete Pesticide Collection In interior BC

Collection sites will be open on the days specified from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Thanks to Clean Farms for organizing these events.

Interior Region

- October 20: Glen Dale Agra Services in Vanderhoof at 1055 Hwy 16 W
- October 21: 153 Mile Fertilizer in Williams Lake at 5101 Frizzi Road
- October 22: Foothills Regional Landfill in Prince George at 6595 Foothills Boulevard
- October 23: Quesnel Agro in Quesnel at 1280 Quesnel-Hixon Road
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Okanagan Region

- October 20: Purity Feed Ltd in Kamloops at 471 Okanagan Way
- October 21: Growers Supply Company Limited in Vernon at 1200 Waddington Drive
- October 22: Growers Supply Company Limited in Kelowna at 2605 Acland Road
- October 23: Growers Supply Company Limited in Oliver at 5911 Sawmill Road

Kootenay Region

- November 4: Truscott Farms in Creston at 3016 Hwy 3
- November 5: Top Crop Garden, Farm and Pet in Cranbrook at 2101 Cranbrook Street