

**Report to the 2020 BCFGGA Convention
from the
BCFGGA General Manager**

COVID-19. On top of the two difficult growing seasons (2019 and 2020) for cherries and the disastrous apple prices, it was a very challenging year for growers. It is heartbreaking to see highly productive apple acreage removed.

Like other organizations, COVID-19 compounded the financial challenges of our operations. As our auditor noted, our operating expenses are 'boring' with nothing much to report in terms of changes, but our income was impacted by a reduction in administration funding and a reduction in membership revenue, so that doubled our planned deficit. We have the financial strength to weather this set-back, and we have already moved to adapt our operations and are proposing projects which will add value for BCFGGA members.

It was a tough year to lobby in 2020. The COVID-19 shutdown in March and the restriction that followed were disruptive, and the incredible focus on getting SAWP and domestic labour functioning definitely took away from the lobby effort. We had a change of personnel at the top two positions at the BC Ministry of Agriculture. Then the election was called and essentially erased the possibility of meeting with the government from September to December.

Yet a powerful lobby was launched. We met with the Minister once in person and again by Zoom. There were frequent meetings with the new BCMAFF Tree Fruit and Grape Specialist, Adrian Arts, and meetings with the new Deputy Minister Tom Ethier. The Apple Financial Crisis remained as the top priority, with the BCFGGA engaging several consultants to help us build the case.

Labour was the other big focus of the year. We engaged extra resources by extending Ron Forrest's seasonal work term and hiring a second person, Solana Wyatt, to assist. The general farm work orientation became COVID-19 safety. We assisted with the farm worker campsites that the province funded - three in all (Oliver, Summerland, Creston). The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen in particular rose to the challenge of operating the Oliver campsite, and the District of Summerland was amazing in quickly setting up a worker camp that previously did not exist.

Also on labour, BCFGGA Labour Specialist Bunvir Nijjer is a Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant and can be an official third party agent to communicate about LMIA's with Service Canada on your behalf. I continue to act as the Assistant General Manager of the Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (as a volunteer of BCFGGA). WALI negotiates SAWP contracts with the Foreign Government representatives and Service Canada. BCFGGA put on a video conference for new participants in SAWP, which was recorded and available to BCFGGA members.

The 3 year Apple Clearwing Moth pilot project, funded by federal-provincial funds delivered through the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, is completed and the final report is available and needs to be reviewed and discussed. We are proposing three smaller research

projects to find new, innovative solutions for Apple Clearwing Moth and Spotted Wing Drosophila. We retain our quarantine status as 'free of Apple Maggot'.

Programs we continue to operate and administer include:

1. Tree Fruit Replant, with the 2021 season being the last year of the current agreement.
2. Pesticide Applicators re-Certification (PAC) Program .
3. Pesticide Handlers Certification Program.
4. Export Inspection Coordination for Apples to Taiwan (not required in 2020).
5. Tree Fruit Production Guide.
6. Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund - currently suspended by the BC Ministry of Agriculture.

Communications through our Friday File continued and the newsletter is mainly delivered via email. About 2 of 30 newsletters were mailed, the rest by email.

BCFGA Staff

Brenda Jorde, Member Services Coordinator, is busy with the 2021 Replant Program applications and PAC points recording. Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary works 25% for BCFGa and 75% for Summerland Varieties Corporation. Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, is part-time on BCFGa accounting. Ron Forrest is employed seasonally and is responsible for the summer labour project.

BCFGa makes use of contractors as well. Mike Read, Sera Lean, Carl Withler, Jim Campbell and Nicole Verpaelst are contract Replant Program inspectors. Mike Sanders administers our Replant Appeal Committee. Together, our contractors are dedicated to doing a thorough and accurate job, and their work is essential to the Replant Program's success. As you can see, we engage many people in our operations to bring value to our members. The contributions of all of our staff and contractors is truly appreciated.

Financial

Last year, it was noted that the BCFGa had a substantial surplus in the year, but would fund projects out of our bank account for the next two years, but show operational deficits in those future years. Well, that funding was spent when the planned deficit doubled this year. Now, we will return to a balance between income and expense - we are "nonprofit" and exist to serve grower interests - maximizing your profits, not the association's.

The industry direction following the weakened apple returns overall are being acted on by government. While we would like to see more direct and immediate assistance, we must acknowledge that the government is placing substantial effort into a new tree fruit stabilization initiative. The staff, management and board of BCFGa are eager to make progress and work on projects that will stabilize the industry and help the industry move forward.

At your service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen Lucas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Glen Lucas
General Manager