

Report to the 2022 BCFGGA Convention

From the

BCFGGA General Manager

There were several States of Emergency in BC in 2021. Impacting our sector were emergencies due to COVID-19, extreme June heat, and indirectly the November floods. Labour mobility and crop production suffered:

- An estimated 900 production insurance claims are related to the 2021 heat dome at the end of June, and total indemnities may reach \$17 million.
- Going back just three years to February 2019, I reported: *“Labour - particularly the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program - has been relatively smooth in the past year and, it is anticipated, for the coming year.”* This year about 85% of expected SAWP workers arrived, and the ratio is lower for Quebec backpackers and International backpackers were all but absent.

Many things have changed in the past two years, causing anxiety and financial losses for growers. Some of the changes will be irreversible: the declining availability of youth workers is economy-wide. It will be difficult for agriculture to compete with urban-based employers. Several new initiatives, described in the Labour Report, are proposed to deal with the emerging labour market issues.

Programs we continue to operate and administer include:

1. Pesticide Applicators re-Certification (PAC) Program .
2. Pesticide Handlers Certification Program.
3. Export Inspection Coordination for Apples to Taiwan.
4. Tree Fruit Production Guide.

But we no longer administer the following programs.

1. Competitiveness Fund: shared administration is now solely done by IAFBC - as soon as the fund is unfrozen by the province.
2. Tree Fruit Replant: the BCFGGA withdrew from the last 6 months of the 7 year program, and there is no tree fruit replant program for 2022.

We have a project to modernize our database and website, and will be developing an App for members to use on their cellphones. Communications through our Friday File continued and the newsletter is mainly delivered via email.

During the pandemic, we held our Conventions on-line. However, the BCFGGA elections require in-person voting. Since we did not have an Annual Convention site to anchor the voting, we were free to move to multiple voting sites - 3 in 2021 and 6 in 2022. Multiple sites makes it more convenient for growers and encouraged participation of about 50% - which is high by most standards. Perhaps moving to on-line voting, if we can be secure and comfortable with this change, would make participation levels higher.

Some activities are important to continue as the BCFGGA seeks support for new and improved government agriculture programs:

- We continued our usual annual presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the provincial budget review committee).
- We participated in BCAC's Agriculture Day and CHC lobby days.

BCFGA Staff

Ron Forrest is retiring this year. Rather than have the BCFGa look for a replacement, we are planning to ask that AgSafeBC take on youth farm worker training, as part of the realignment of our business model.

With Ron's retirement, our sector will need to move to new models of promoting agricultural jobs to youth, and here again we have proposed to transfer this responsibility to the BC Ministry of Agriculture Labour Unit.

BCFGA Labour Specialist Bunvir Nijjer is a Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant and can be an official third party agent to communicate about applications (LMIAs) for Seasonal Agricultural Workers from Mexico and the Caribbean. I continue to act as the Assistant General Manager of the Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (as a volunteer of BCFGa). Bunvir works 25% for BCFGa and 75% for Summerland Varieties Corporation.

Sheila MacGregor, Accountant, committed to work part-time hours for the BCFGa. Our annual audit is always very efficient with few adjusting entries due to Sheila's diligence and expertise.

Brenda Jorde, Member Services Coordinator, is no longer with the BCFGa as of September 2021. The connection Brenda had with many growers is missed, as we have received many comments on Brenda's compassion for the tree fruit sector.

BCFGa makes use of contractors as well. We have engaged Don Magnusson to help with crop protection research projects and the Tree Fruit Production Guide. We have engaged Carl Withler, George Geldart and James Calissi to assist with economic analysis and help with on-farm management needs. Our Information Technology consultant at Csek Creative is helping us modernize our IT. We appreciate the efforts of our contractors and consultants - they provide BCFGa with expertise and flexibility.

Also during the year, we employ student research assistants on various industry research projects, with salaries fully or partially recovered from the project funding. As you can see, we engage many people in our operations to bring value to our members.

The Board has authorized the hiring of a Project Manager to help with the new direction set out in the Business Model.

While we are frugal, the statement that there is a capacity issue is absolutely and categorically false, as anyone can tell by our highly productive efforts. I am proud of BCFGa's achievements and our stature in the agriculture sector - of course, after 133 years we should be 'getting it right'! The contributions of all of our staff and contractors to BCFGa's success is truly appreciated.

Financial

Overall, we aim for a balance between income and expense - we are "nonprofit" and exist to serve grower interests. The new business model refocuses us on providing value to members.

The BCFGa Research and Development Orchard and Summerland Varieties have provided BCFGa with financial security from dividends. We are able to focus on providing growers with incentives and discounts and there is more to come.

At your service,



Glen Lucas

General Manager