

Report to the 2018 BCFGGA Convention

From the

Member Services Committee

Communication

Communication with members is important. Apart from our BCFGGA meetings, the newsletter is an important way to get information to growers, and the newsletter generates many conversations and responses that help BCFGGA develop its programs and positions. In 2017, we published 31 Friday Files. Most were delivered by email. Two or three editions per year are delivered by mail, and we need to think about a future where we communicate almost entirely by email.

As a grower, if you are not on email, you are missing out on important information in the Friday File. As an example of the move to email delivery, the greenhouse sector requires its members to establish email communication capacity, and has done so for many years. With the advent of important web-based tools, such as the new Decision Aid System and potentially a spray records program like Crop Tracker (now in use in Ontario), there is a need to think about the value of everyone having access to these tools and participating in the “technology economy”.

Farm Practices Protection

Another area under member services umbrella is Farm Practices Protection - the province has legislated that in making a “nuisance” complaints about noise, odor and dust, a neighbour cannot sue a grower in court. However, there is a tribunal set up under the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) to hear and resolve these complaints.

As the Okanagan becomes more urbanized, there are more complaints (and more “Not In My Backyard neighbours). In an important farm noise complaint, the FIRB panel held a hearing on January 30-31. The BCFGGA supported the grower throughout the preparation and proceedings, and held intervenor status during the hearing. The decision is not expected until end of March, and growers will be informed through our Friday File (get email!).

Other Services to Members

The BCFGGA provides a variety of services to its members:

- BCFGGA bursaries: BCFGGA Rob Hall, Golden Jubilee, and Joe Sardinha Memorial (funded by Sardinha family).

- Pesticide Applicators Certificate Program: provided at a fee to non-members, *free to BCFGGA members*.
- BCTF Hort Symposium
 - BCFGGA assists with registrations of booths and independent growers.
 - *BCFGGA members are free of charge*, paid by Summerland Varieties Corporation.
- Tree Fruit Production Guide, with printed spray schedule. www.bctfpg.com
 - Now an online guide. The online version continues to evolve, with recent effort on ‘cellphone friendliness’. An eventual goal is to implement on-line spray records. We may be testing this option in the coming year. If you are interested please let us know - there is a sign-up sheet at the registration desk.
- Assistance with SAWP Applications - assistance to members, for a small fee, is provided for about 20 growers each year.
- Subscriptions to Ag. Magazines. All members receive BC Fruit Grower and Orchard and Vine magazines, *free of charge*. An Ontario horticultural publication “The Grower” has been added, *free of charge*. The Country Life in BC subscription has been added in the past year!

Public Relations

The BCFGGA continues to be involved in some public relations activities

- Activities:
 - Interior Provincial Exhibition - we are reviewing our participation and may opt out this year
 - BCAC Agriculture Day
 - All candidates meetings in the 2017 provincial election and in the 2018 by-election
 - We plan to add Summerland Fall Fair to our list of PR activities

Governance and Membership Structure

The Member Services Committee did not meet this year, as the by-law review was the key item of concern, and this work was completed in the prior year, with Special General Meeting in October 2018 passing all of the recommendations!

Thank you to the growers for your input, and we will schedule a member services committee meeting this year to consider the TFPG and a spray recording program demonstration..

Respectfully submitted,
Tony Nijjar, Chair