



The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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July 18, 2017

New Minister of Agriculture

Kelowna – The BC Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA) welcomes the appointment of Lana Popham as Minister of Agriculture.

“The Hon. Lana Popham brings a depth of understanding as new Minister of Agriculture, both through her active MLA role as Agriculture Critic and her practical farming experience. The agriculture industry, including the tree fruit sector, is set to grow its major economic contribution to the BC economy. We will work with Minister Popham to deliver on Agriculture’s potential in the BC economy. Let’s start by getting some BC cherries to the hardworking firefighters!” said Fred Steele, President of the Association.

Steele also thanked previous Minister of Agriculture Norm Letnick for his leadership both as an MLA and Minister of Agriculture. “Norm Letnick was instrumental in renewing the Replant Program, which has helped many growers get past the financial hurdle of replanting to higher yielding, premium varieties of apples and cherries”, Steele said.

“We are anxious to meet with the new Minister so that we can get down to work on expanding the economic contribution of BC grown tree fruits to the BC economy. We are also looking forward to working with new Deputy Minister of Agriculture Wes Shoemaker, who also knows the agriculture industry well from a previous term in the Agriculture Ministry before moving to Environment”, concluded Steele.

The BC Fruit Growers' Association represents 520 family operated farms. Based on the most recent Agriculture Census in 2016, the family-owned tree fruit farms in BC generate income of \$ 118.6 million per year, with a packed value of \$218.8 million, and \$776.6 million of economic activity annually.

The family-owned farms in BC produce about 220 million pounds of apples per year and 33 million pounds of cherries. The area of tree fruit farmed is 14,700 acres, up from 13, 800 acres five years ago.

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