

South Regional Meeting

November 12, 2019

Oliver Parks and Recreation, Oliver, BC

Mohinder Dhaliwal, Chair

Pinder Dhaliwal, President

Peter Simonsen, Vice-President

15 BCFGA members

BCFGA Staff:

Glen Lucas

1:30 pm.

Mohinder Dhaliwal, the chairman called the meeting to commence.

1. Agenda:

Motion: To approve the Agenda.

Moved / Seconded: Ravinder Bains / Steve Brown

Carried.

2. Minutes from previous meeting:

Motion: To approve the South Regional Meeting minutes of November 15, 2018.

Moved / Seconded: Ranbir Kambo / Denise MacDonald

Carried.

3. President's Report:

Pinder Dhaliwal presented the president's report. An update was provided on the following items:

- Noted the difficult (rainy) weather throughout the season, especially at cherry and apple harvest. Climate extremes of drought and cool rainy seasons indicate climate change is here.
- The Pest Management Regulatory Agency review of products is a problem, and finding new solutions to pests and invasive pests is a problem.
- Labour has been an area of continuing activity for the BCFGA
 - Main activities are resolving problems and making the system more responsive
 - Piece rates: government study had great cooperation from tree fruit growers and employees. Conclusion is that piece rates are important to the tree fruit sector.
 - Problems of delays and expense of annual housing inspections (for unchanged housing). National proposal for experienced farms in good standing, to ease program requirements.
 - BCFGA helped organize grower information sessions.
 - New for 2020 will be more fire department and building code attention to interconnected smokefire alarms, as a result of a worker housing fire in Abbotsford. The requirement is not new, but in anticipation of fire department audits, the systems are added to the housing inspection.
 - BCFGA is advocating common sense on housing inspections and forms.
 - Migrant Worker Support Network (MSWN) provides \$2.6 million to a 2 year (2018/19-2019/20) BC pilot project, involving immigrant resettlement groups, unions and labour activists, government representatives, and employer representatives (if in place).

- SAWP is a strongly supported program, so MSWN is not as critical as in under-served programs such as restaurant, hotel, and nanny programs.
- SAWP housing deduction is a focus. Mexico consulate 'push-back' on an increase due to perceived concerns with housing quality. Plan to do an independent study and meet with Service Canada to take steps towards next year's SAWP review meetings.
- Tourist workers available for work. For Mexican youth attending on tourist visas, it is recommended to encourage Mexico students to apply for a work visa under the International Experience Canada program.
- The provincial government is introducing regulations that impact bonafide farmers: ALR Bill 52, Agriculture Environment Management - Code of Practice, Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation, possible changes to the Work Camp Regulation, and the upcoming Temporary Foreign Worker Registry.

Glen Lucas provided an update on Replant and the Environmental Farm Program.

There was discussion of the ALR, with growers noting that ALR regulations should not restrict the activities of bonafide farmers. It was suggested that the threshold for a bonafide farmer be increased to be greater than \$2,500 now required for property tax purposes. There was discussion of requiring Production Insurance and AgriStability registration to establish bona fide farmer status. Foreign ownership of farm land and ALR enforcement issues were also discussed. It was noted that the public input on a review of ALR (especially Bill 52) has a deadline of November 15 and all growers are encouraged to respond to an on-line survey.

Apple prices were discussed. Industry actions to increase the prices of apples were discussed. It was noted that the Light Reflecting Materials Program provides a grant and use of the materials can enhance product colour and better ensure harvest maturity.

It was noted that BCFGAs could seek to increase the loss coverage from a 30 % drop to a 15% drop for AgriStability, and that Replant Program renewal is important. It was suggested that the program move to an on-line application form.

Open Burning Smoke Control Regulations were a concern, with one grower noting a cost of thousands of dollars to transport stumps and trees to the garbage dump. More funding for grinding programs, and fire burning workshops were discussed as possible solutions.

4. Election of Regional Executive

Nominations for regional executive were opened:

Chair: Denise MacDonald

Vice Chair: Mohinder Dhaliwal

Secretary: Ranbir Kambo

Nominations were closed and the position declared filled as nominated.

5. Election of Delegates and Alternates:

Motion: These elected members be the first 3 of the 8 delegates from the South Region.

Moved Ranbir Kambo

Seconded Parm Dhaliwal

Carried.

Election of North Region Delegates:

Delegates:

Denise MacDonald (Regional Chair)
Mohinder Dhaliwal (Regional Vice Chair)
Ranbir Kambo (Regional Secretary)
Balwinder Sidhu
Charanjit Ghuman
Kiranpreet Gill

Alternate Delegates:

Katie Sardinha
Andre Scheepers
Parm Dhaliwal
Mehar Kheira
Allan Patton
Doug Nield
David Machial
Emerson Khosa
Analisa Simonsen
Wilf Mennel

It was agreed by consensus to close the nominations for delegates and alternate delegates of the SouthRegion.

6. Nominations for the Board of Directors:

Three positions are open for nominations at the South District Council this year: President and two Southern Directors (incumbents are David Machial and Deep Brar). David Machial noted that he is not running for election.

Nominations for BCFGAs Board of Directors for the 2020 election:

President	Pinder Dhaliwal
2 South Board Member to elect	Talwinder Bassi Deep Brar

It was agreed by consensus to close the nominations for the Board.

7. Resolutions

Resolutions were proposed to present for discussion and approval at the Annual General Meeting. The following topics were put forward as resolutions:

- That a grant be provided for food safety equipment, such as hand washing stations.
- Provide programs that help farms with environmental improvements and reducing or capturing (sequestering) carbon emissions.
- To seek funding from the national tree planting program for the planting of orchards.
- To reduce pest outbreaks, such as Codling moth hot spots, and to support the SIR program,
- To investigate the risk and damage caused by bin movement and introduction of pests, and to develop and provide education on the risk of bin movement, and to introduce an enforceable protocol for the movement of bins between areas.
- To develop options for AgriStability works better for farmers with multiple commodities.
- Promote and support viable family farms, as the best way of protecting the ALR

- To support bonafide farmers by providing new alternatives and diversification alternatives and options to support the farm operation
- Ask the government to have a farm industry working group to make recommendations farming and the ALR more viable, profitable and sustainable.
- Support the first 5 years of farming for new farmers through a low interest loan (similar to Ontario).
- In order to maintain food security, regularly gather information on ALR land use, and provide programs that reduce the attrition of agriculture land for non-food use.
- To develop a project on financial and economic analysis of economy of scale and efficiency of farming, and the level and trends of capitalization (building and equipment) and diversity on farms, and to research the level of foreign ownership.
to find a way of legitimizing the tourist labour force by expanding quotas on the student work program or allowing persons qualifying for the program to apply after arrival.
- There are two Cherry Production Insurance programs - quality and gross coverage. The premiums for quality insurance are increasing, and concerns that the production insurance branch is not considering fully the industry advice on production insurance surcharge and discounts, so that the production insurance program needs to collect adequate information and ensure industry support and advice is respected.
- To allow value-added uses of the ALR for bonafide farmers.
- Infrastructure programs should be allowed for rural agricultural projects that prevent disasters and enhance water systems.
- Invasive pests require timely policies that give growers clear guidelines, which affect insurance outcomes for longterm loses, and Whereas grape producers can accumulate plant damage over several years for claims, So should tree fruits.
- EFP criteria are based on growers with larger acreages and incomes, that the program be made available and accessible to farms that are more representative of the industry.
- That there is interest in transitioning to electric farm vehicles and renewable power generation, that industry and government investigate, develop and promote the availability of electric vehicles and renewable power generation on farm, including modification/retrofitting of small machinery and implements.
- Buy BC program appreciation
- Farmers should be exempt from provincial sales tax and credit against carbon tax.

8. Adjournment **Moved:** **Ranbir Kambo 3 pm.**