

February  
2006

# Commission Report

**BC Vegetable Marketing Commission Newsletter**

Group elects  
Peter Guichon as  
Chair and begins  
extensive policy  
review

Ballot results  
show support for  
regulation but  
changes are  
needed

March 21 2006  
at the Town &  
Country

## ***Storage Crop Advisory Group***

The new Storage Crop Advisory Group (SCAG) held its first meeting, electing Peter Guichon as Chair and beginning work on the policy issues referred to it by the Commission. District boundaries, production allocation by potato type, the "Quota" bank and a new entrant policy were on the Group's agenda. The Group also decided to look at the policy of

distributing allocation after 100% of all deliveries have been made.

The SCAG is comprised of the three Commissioners elected to represent the storage crop sector; representatives from the BC Potato & Vegetable Growers Association; and representatives from each agency handling Storage Crops

## ***Results of the BC Greenhouse Industry Vote***

Results of the Greenhouse industry ballot have now been compiled and released to the industry.

- 76% of registered producers representing 93% of the total production area provided responses to the ballot.
- 86% of producers, representing 60% of total production area replied "yes" or "yes with changes" in support of a regulatory framework.

The responses provide a considerable amount of information concerning producers' support and concerns for the regulatory framework and its key functional components.

The ballot responses also indicate that:

1. The majority of producers support the regulatory framework.
2. Production area support for the regulated framework is divided.
3. Different levels of support exist between tomato, pepper and cucumber growers.
4. The most concerns and strong positions are in the areas of quota and agency designation.

The results will now be reviewed in detail by the Greenhouse Advisory Committee who may subsequently make recommendations for change to the Commission's General Orders.

## ***BCVMC 2006 AGM***

The Commission's 2006 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday March 21<sup>st</sup> at the Delta Town and Country Inn beginning at 7:00 PM. The meeting will include reports from the Chair and the

General Manager and may hear candidates standing for election to the Commission. The meeting is open to everyone -plan to attend.

Agreements reached on Cole crops, peas beans and corn contracts on the table

Farm employers eligible in 2006

Levy rates set for 2006

A new day for potato growers

## **Processing Crop Negotiations**

Contract negotiations have been completed for 2006 for the Cole Crop sector and are underway on Peas, Beans and Corn. The Strawberry contract will be negotiated in May. Both Producers and Processors are facing cost pressures and competition from foreign product offered into the local marketplace is increasing.

The Commission's General Orders provide the framework for the negotiations. Matters common to all contracts are dealt with by the Master Committee and commodity committees negotiate commodity contracts. Producers and Processors have equal voting strength on each committee and decisions are made by majority. Producer representatives are selected by the commodity associations and the Commission General Manager usually chairs the sessions. Negotiated contracts are referred to the Commission for final approval.

## **Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program**

BC agricultural employers will again be able to employ workers from Mexico in 2006. The Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) program has been well received by farm employers and is expected to expand significantly this year. In addition to a number of program conditions and

requirements employers must pay the costs of return airfare, must provide adequate accommodation and must pay approved wages appropriate to BC. To obtain an application for the program contact HRSDC at 1 888 246 7712. Successful applicants will be required to sign a contract with HRSDC.

## **Amending Order No. 3**

At its Feb 17<sup>th</sup> meeting the Commission passed Amending Order # 3 to the General Orders implementing the Levy Schedule for 2006. Levies were increased in the Greenhouse sector to

fund a portion of the costs of the Greenhouse Market Information System while all other levies and license fees are unchanged from 2005.

## **BC Potato & Veg Growers AGM**

The BC Potato & Vegetable Growers Association held its AGM on Feb 15<sup>th</sup>. Commission General Manager, Tom Demma, presented information on price history and trends on potatoes and other storage crops and highlighted some of the policy issues now under review. The meeting also heard from Dave Beesley of the United Potato Growers of America who talked about the goals and accomplishments of that new organization. A similar structure is being developed in Canada and the two organizations expect to work closely together to improve market conditions for all potato growers. There appears to be a good deal of optimism that the two new organizations will achieve "A new day for potato growers".