

June
2006

Commission Report

BC Vegetable Marketing Commission Newsletter

Greenhouse
General Order
amendments to
go to FIRB by
mid July

2006 Strawberry
crop quality
excellent but
volumes remain
well below
historical
averages

Greenhouse General Order Changes

The Commission is progressing towards the completion of the new regulatory structure for the greenhouse industry. Commissioners have reviewed, and made changes to proposed General Order amendments that will, when completed, incorporate the directives received from the FIRB. The proposed changes warrant careful consideration as to the likely consequences. Revised amendments will be considered by Commissioners at their July 12 2006 meeting. If completed

at that time, as expected, the proposals will be forwarded to the FIRB. When approved by the FIRB the Commission will formally incorporate them into the General Orders and they will be circulated to all interested parties.

FIRB has extended its June 30th deadline to accommodate this schedule. Effective dates will be set once the final form is determined and may require some phase-in to insure a smooth transition.

The 2006 Strawberry Crop

Courtesy Henry Wiens – Secretary, Fraser Valley Strawberry Growers Association

The very short annual strawberry season is ending. Depending on which grower you talk to, it was a good and bad season.

Most growers had the best season in years. The actual harvest started late but the fruit size was generally large and the flavour fantastic. However, the end of the season came abruptly when record setting hot weather hit and berries deteriorated in the baking sun. It was particularly challenging for the fresh marketers as the demand was modest because consumers were just not coming out when the weather was cool. Then when the hot weather arrived, consumers came out in droves and the berries were much smaller and farms sold out unexpectedly. While it is still too early to have actual numbers, the anecdotal reports indicate that most farms have had a good increase in their overall fresh strawberry sales.

The processing strawberry industry also had good and not so good experience. Growers were able to maintain good quality for most of the season. The new annual volume of processing strawberries packed is in the 2.5 million pound range which is half of the recent average crop.

BC Takes Membership in UPGC

BC potato producers are joining their counterparts in most other provinces by taking membership in the United Potato Growers of Canada. The UPGC is a sister organization to United Potato Growers of America initiated last year to strengthen potato growers' incomes by encouraging a better balance between demand and production.

The Canadian organization has already initiated weekly conference calls of its members to share market information and projections and plans on developing an extensive industry data base as one of its tools to achieve objectives similar to the US organization.

UPGC membership is held by the provincial regulatory bodies thus the BC member is the Commission.

Greenhouse Litigation Resolved

On May 31, 2006 Consent Dismissal Orders were entered into the Registry of the BC Supreme Court bringing to an end all litigation involving BC Vegetable Greenhouses I, LP (BC Veg I), a producer, and the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission (BCVMC). The Consent Dismissal Orders are the natural conclusion to this litigation that resulted from a settlement agreement reached in mid-April.

The settlement agreement provided for, among other things, payment in

full of all outstanding levy amounts owing by BC Veg 1 to the Commission. The Commission, in accordance with the settlement agreement and a parallel agreement with B.C. HotHouse Foods Inc ("HotHouse"), will pay to HotHouse certain amounts to cover costs incurred by HotHouse on behalf of all tomato producers in relation to the tomato trade dispute. These amounts will be paid to HotHouse as they are received by the Commission from BC Veg 1.

Municipal Bio-Solids Banned

An amendment to the Processing Crops Master Contract prohibiting the use of municipal bio-solids in the production of crops has been approved by the Commission and is now officially applicable to all processing contracts. The Master Contract includes terms and conditions common to all commodities and is guided by a Committee of producers and processors. Commodity contracts include a clause providing for the master contracts and any amendments made thereto.

The prohibition addresses food safety concerns and gives processors the ability to provide assurance to their customers that BC producers continue to use good agricultural practices.

Canadian potato producers unite to strengthen returns

Commission and producer reach an accord to end the long standing dispute

BC process crop growers address food safety concerns