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Commission Structure and Governance – BCFIRB questions for industry

1. An effective regulated marketing system requires trust and agreement to abide by the Commission rules.

What does the Commission need to do to build that essential level of trust and to build a stronger common interest in supporting its policies and rules for the benefit of the industry as a whole?

In the greenhouse industry, there are not a lot of issues for the last 10 years.
Commission should be firm in anti boot legging

2. Does the use of panels and advisory committees result in sound decision making by the Commission? Please explain.

We have greenhouse committee and we have not been together for many, many years if we ever get a meeting. This tells you how well things are in the grhs sector.

- a) If no, what more does the Commission need to do to make sound decisions and manage perception of bias and conflict of interest challenges?
3. How could the industry benefit from the Commission adding independent member(s)?
 - a) What are the risks? The risk with an independent member is bringing that person up to speed, more bureaucrats could slow down the decision making process.
 - b) The advantage could be: new idea's since existing boardmembers are members for a long time. Getting a board member (grhs.) is already a problem.
4. If BCFIRB recommends to the Minister of Agriculture that the Scheme be changed to include the addition of an independent member(s), should the member be appointed by government or industry? Please explain.

a) What skills and expertise you think independent member(s) should have?
member should be appointed by government to avoid internal politics (storage crops)

5. Commission positions go uncontested during the annual elections and there is little turnover in membership.

What are the risks and benefits to the sector when there is a lack of board turnover?

If you see this as a problem, what are the possible solutions?

I have been a board member for 4-5 years, and I quit because 90 % of our time was spend on storage crops and processing crops. As a board member, you almost have to have a legal background to understand all the issues, potato farmers are appealing BCVMC decisions all the time. I found my time spend on the board not useful and ineffective.

Agency Accountability - BCFIRB questions for industry

1. What do you think the primary purpose of an accountability framework should be? For example:
 - Report on agency performance against marketing plan?
 - Provide up to date price and sales data?
 - Provide up to date market data?
 - Indicate “health” of industry?
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 - *Comments below are specifically for the grhs industry:*
 - The commission is not an agency, they don't have market intel, no idea about the market, where the market is going, competition etc.
 - Most important is the relation Grower-Agency. As a grower (we are with Windset) we are able to cancel your GMA within 4 months.
 - Growers (we do it all the time) can compare their Net-Grower-Return with fellow growers from an other agency. If the NGR with agency is much lower then agency B, then the grower has the option to switch to another agency.
 - For example: we have once a year a grower meeting with all growers from Windset and go over the coming year, forecasting packaging, food safety etc.
 - The growers will get the market information from the agency and fellow growers. Growers talk to growers all the time and they should be. This is not a roll for the commission. In the past we had market information from the commission and those numbers were not the numbers we saw and experienced in the “real” market.
2. Should an agency accountability framework include reporting on compliance with the Commission's General Orders?
3. Does an agency's business structure influence outcomes for producers and the industry?
4. Currently I would say NO.
5. Going forward: Mastronardi from Ontario is applying for an agency in BC. If they get an agency (I think this is the biggest thread to the grhs industry) they will undercut pricing, compete on pricing with existing agencies and will import a lot of Mexican product. If they get an agency, this will be the end of the BCVMC. The main reason (for some included us) most growers support the BCVMC is to keep agencies out of BC.
6. Growers should be involved in the decision if Mastronardi will get an agency license or not. If the commission grant them an agency, then there is no need for

a BCVMC and growers wont pay the fee. Again, I am talking about the grhs sector and not storage crops.

Storage Crop Delivery Allocation - BCFIRB questions for industry

1. Do the Delivery Allocation rules and how it is managed deliver on the purposes?
 - a) Does it deliver on some purposes better than others?
2. Is Delivery Allocation an effective tool for your business? How does it work well?
 - a) What elements could work better?
3. Do you think Delivery Allocation benefits one group over another in the vegetable industry? Please explain.
4. Do you think the Delivery Allocation rules and how it is managed offers room to grow for established growers? Please explain.
5. Does Delivery Allocation provide adequate opportunities for new entrants and renewal in the industry? Please explain.