**Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project Update**

*What is the Tree Fruit Stabilization Project?*

The Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project is assessing the circumstances leading to the challenges the tree fruit industry is facing and creating a tactical plan to respond to the difficult economic circumstances facing producers.

*Who is involved in the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project?*

The Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project is led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in consultation with an External Advisory Committee. The internal (Ministry) Project Team includes several core units (e.g.: Professional Agrologists, Economists, and staff from Policy, Marketing, and Business Risk Management department(s)).

*Which industry organizations are represented by the Advisory Committee?*

The Advisory Committee represents key industry stakeholders, including the BC Fruit Growers Association (BCFGA), the BC Cherry Association (BCCA), the New Tree Fruit Variety Development Council (NTFVDC), the Sterile Insect Release Program (SIR), the BC Grape Growers' Association (BCGA), and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

*What is the role of the Advisory Committee?*

The Advisory Committee informs project direction. Members are responsible for representing their organizations, and the interests of the tree fruit industry. The Advisory Committee meets bi-weekly and is regularly updated on progress, as stated in the Terms of Reference. Information and materials are provided to Advisory Committee members, for the purpose of updating their organizations after each meeting. A project plan was developed and endorsed by the Advisory Committee in July 2021.

*Are growers equally represented on the advisory committee?*

Each industry-led organization has one representative on the Advisory Committee, except for the BCFGA, which has two members. There is no one industry association that represents the majority of growers in the different commodities that form the tree fruit sector. A combination of representation from BCFGA, BCCA and BCGA – supplemented with our consultation efforts, captures the perspective(s) of most growers.
**Who has been consulted during this process?**

There have been 30 consultation sessions with over 165 individuals representing all aspects of the industry, including producers, packers, marketers, retailers, researchers, and government.

**What has been found so far regarding the state of the tree fruit industry?**

Overarching themes repeatedly brought up by industry participants include:

- Lack of leadership or a long-term strategy in the industry, which is directly contributing to the current industry crisis.
- Access to labour, housing for Temporary Foreign Workers, and a long-term labour strategy.
- The need for targeted horticulture and extension services.
- A strategy regarding new varieties.
- A strategic, coordinated plan for marketing and sales.
- The need for consistent and reliable data to inform decisions.
- The need for a review of Government policies and programs.

**What is the status of the project?**

The Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project is on schedule as per the commitment made by the Ministry at the BCFGA Annual General Meeting on February 25, 2021. The Ministry project team drafted recommendations informed by extensive engagement sessions and the Advisory Group in July 2021. The Ministry anticipates release of a draft report to the Advisory Committee for feedback by late September 2021. The finalized plan is on schedule to be released by the end of October 2021. Implementation will be finalized and actioned following release of the report (Action Plan).

**Who will ensure recommendations made in the final report are implemented?**

The Ministry will be actively involved in working towards implementation of recommendations made in the final report alongside industry. Goals will be set, and achievement progress will be monitored on a consistent, and specified basis.

Questions? Please reach out to the Tree Fruit Industry Specialist

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