

January 2013



BCGA OFFICE CLOSED

The office will be closed from January 11th to January 25th inclusive. There will be service via e-mail during that time. If you need immediate assistance please send an e-mail to Norma at bcga@nethop.net.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

It's time once again for Membership renewals! Norma will be invoicing our members; however, if you don't require an invoice, you can simply complete the attached membership renewal application form with all of your information and send it into our office with a cheque for \$150 made out to the **BC Grapegrowers'** Association by post to **451 Atwood Road, Grand Forks, BC, V0H 1H9**. Alternatively, you can renew your membership online on the BCGA website (www.grapegrowers.bc.ca) using your credit card with the PayPal feature. We will be sure to send you a receipt once your payment is processed.

We will issue your new password to the BCGA website's MEMBERS' INFO tab upon receipt of your renewal. We would also like to ask all members to encourage their fellow growers who are not yet members to sign up. For this purpose, we've attached an invitation for membership that outlines some of the benefits of belonging to the BC Grapegrowers' Association.

BERT SPERLING (1928-2012)

Long time grape grower and member of the BCGA, Bert Sperling, passed away on December 26, 2012 at the age of 84 years. Bert was involved with the grape industry for many years and was a director of the Association of BC Grape Growers from 1969 until the late '80's serving as President for much of that time. He was particularly active on the Basket Committee (now known as the Fresh Market Grapes Committee). Bert supported and encouraged initiatives that had great impact on the growth & development of the grape industry – field trials of 'new' grape varieties, the Becker project, the grape breeding program at PARC that produced varieties like Sovereign Coronation & Sovereign Opal, The Climate & Soil Atlas, to name a few. He was also well known in BC agriculture as a spokesperson for the grape industry and agriculture in general, participating on various provincial boards. Our condolences to the Sperling family.



EVENTS TO WATCH FOR!

- **PRUNING WORKSHOP** – Cane vs. spur pruning. Winter injury – how to identify winter injury and what are your pruning choices? Young vine pruning. Lots of opportunities to get your questions answered! Watch for more information and registration for this workshop – it's sure to fill up quickly. The date has tentatively been set for **15 February 2013** at the **Oliver Community Centre**. Yes, it will be indoors and yes, there will be real plants that need pruning!
- **CANOPY MANAGEMENT** – this workshop is coming up in late May or early June. We will let everyone know as soon as the details are finalised

- **ANNUAL GROWER DAY AND AGM** – This popular event will be held on **09 April 2013** at **Linden Gardens** in Kaleden. A line-up of speakers will be short-listed later in January. Mark the date on your new 2013 calendars and plan to attend!
- **2ND ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF HARVEST**
Volunteers are needed! The BCGA is looking for some fun-loving, organised, “let’s get at it” people who would love to help coordinate and plan this event for grapegrowers. If you’re interested, send Connie an e-mail at bcga@nethop.net so we can get this underway!

Everyone else... be sure to put this date on your calendars and be ready to enjoy a great afternoon and evening with fellow growers on **Thursday, 12 September 2013**. Roger Hol and Jyl Chegwin at **Thee Vineglass Vineyard** in Cawston have graciously offered their farm once again however since the intent is to move this event around we are looking for other potential locations. If you have a suitable site & would be interested in finding out more about hosting this event we’d love to hear from you.

LABOUR MARKET EVALUATION

In early 2012, a BC Viticulture Human Resources Steering Committee was formed by industry to develop and implement a comprehensive BC Viticulture Sector Human Resource Strategy, focusing on employee attraction, recruitment, retention, and training, including options for a new enhanced viticulture training program. This project was funded through the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills. The final report ‘A Human Resource Strategy and Training Options for the British Columbia Viticulture Industry, September 2012’ is available for anyone wanting to receive a copy. Please forward your request to bcga@nethop.net



STARLING CONTROL PROGRAM

Thank you to all growers in the Okanagan-Similkameen who donated funds to the Starling Control Program in 2012. We collected a total of **more than \$21,000** by year end. Our annual goal is to reach \$30,000. To put this into perspective, \$30,000 represents less than 1 % of the estimated yearly economic loss to the wine grape industry from starling predation (in the absence of trapping), and far less than the \$1.5 million spent by grapegrowers on bird control annually.

Wouldn’t it be great if the annual contribution to the program could be reduced to a per acre donation far less than \$10/acre? It would be possible if every grape producer in the Okanagan Similkameen agreed to automatically contribute to the program financially each year. Unfortunately there is no provision in place at this time to be able to guarantee this kind of funding.

Along with the payments we do receive feedback from producers on the benefits of the program. A long time tree fruit and grape producer in Kelowna said that on their family farm 5 years ago they were using 13 propane cannons, 3 bird squawkers, one farm worker with a shotgun and many rounds of ammunition. Each year they have been able to reduce their bird scaring devices and controls. This past season they used 0 propane cannons, 0 bird squawkers and fired 2 rounds of ammunition – but that was at an insurance salesman – none were used for starling control! We’d love to hear your anecdotal stories about the success of the program.

And we receive feedback from producers who feel the program is lacking in benefit; that it is perhaps no longer needed; that the funding ratio is unfair with so many vineyards not contributing financially and yet benefiting from the program.

Some facts:

- Just under 500,000 starlings have been captured since the program began in 2003.
- Starlings can have up to 3 broods a year with 4-5 eggs in a brood.
- The average breeding pair has 8 surviving fledglings per year.
- If the program stopped, how long would it take before populations were back at pre-trapping levels? And what affect would that have on crop losses and increases in bird control costs to individual growers?

Plans for 2013:

In addition to the on-going trapping, the program is working towards a public awareness campaign that will encourage all home owners to actively block nesting sites on their properties. The focus for 2013 will be the Keremeos/Cawston area and Penticton. We are also creating partnership with organizations like the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance for other education programs.

We also expect to continue with another 2 year Graduate Student program at UBC-O to carry on with the work Jessi Neuhauser started on determining the origins of starlings that make up the Okanagan-Similkameen populations and to better understand the movements & population dynamics so that we can evaluate our trapping effectiveness.

Lots of exciting things happening as the program moves forward!

NEW!

GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A BC AGRICULTURE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK (Fall 2012)

Now available on the BC Ministry of Agriculture website at
http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/labour_mgmt.htm

An employee handbook is a valuable communication tool for farm employers, managers and employees. It can help explain the responsibilities and benefits of working on a farm. This guide facilitates creating a farm specific handbook in a seven steps. It includes a fillable check-sheet of topics with examples that can be edited so they are specific to your farm organization. This guide is relevant to a wide range of organizational structures from small farms employing mostly family member to very large, complex farms with hundreds of employees. It is also applicable to different kinds of operations, such as livestock, dairy or horticulture. Contact Jennifer Curtis with any questions or comments you may have about this document.



SPECIAL RATES FOR BCGA MEMBERS!

Superior Propane would like to offer BCGA members a discounted rate on propane and their services – but to do this, they need information from members who currently use propane in their restaurants, winery operations, vineyards, wind machines, etc. Specifically, they'd like to know:

- How many propane tanks (not cylinders) are you currently using?
- What size and approximately how many litres of propane do you use annually?
- Are you under contract with a current supplier? (termination clauses would have to be considered)

If you are interested in paying less for propane services, please e-mail your information to our office at bcga@nethop.net

Our best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2013 to all our members! We look forward to another successful year working together!



BC Grapegrowers' Association Board of Directors

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