BC Grapegrowers’ Association (BCGA) Update
April 20, 2020

These are difficult times. It is hard to know where to look to have your questions answered, and it is even difficult to know what questions to ask.

You are not alone! Our goal at the BCGA is to help you find the information you need as best we can. Unfortunately, there is so much going on that there is no single source. This is our latest update to help you find the information you need.

GENERAL RESOURCES

- The BC Agriculture Council has compiled a list of resources for all aspects of your vineyard. Their [home page](#) is a great place to start.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROGRAM

- The first flights of SAWP workers arrived in Vancouver last week and the first group of workers is in quarantine in Richmond. View the accompanying [announcement](#) from the provincial government.

- The present goal is to receive 1000 SAWP workers in BC by the end of April. Circumstances in Mexico and BC will determine travel conditions. Please be patient and sign up for the [WALI newsletter](#) as your best source for accurate updates.

- The provincial government was present as part of the YVR receiving party. On April 16, the BCWI hosted a [webinar](#) with the Minister of Agriculture, Lana Popham which includes an update on her office’s role.

- If you are expecting seasonal workers, the [BC Ministry of Agriculture](#) will be conducting farm site inspections before your workers arrive.
  - AgSafe has put together a number of [employer resources](#) to help you prepare in case of infection in your workforce. They are also working on a quick guide to prepare for the SAWP worker preparation site visits, you can expect the guide soon.
  - WALI has outlined a list of the [pertinent documents](#) to get you started.

- [Employment and Social Development Canada](#) has now confirmed that temporary foreign workers (TFWs) can be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) or the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

- In both cases, temporary foreign workers are subject to the same eligibility criteria as Canadians and permanent residents.
El sickness benefits are available to people who are unable to work due to illness, injury or quarantine.

The recently announced CERB will provide temporary income support to workers who have temporarily stopped working, lost their job, are sick or in quarantine, or need to care for a child or a family member.

HUB Connect App - a new app - info for employers and seasonal workers to instantly access regional information in English and Spanish. Development of the app has been fast-tracked to help with the dissemination of information due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The information on the app is applicable to all aspects of employing seasonal workers, including many of the resources listed above.

INSIGHT ON FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF COVID 19 CRISIS

- The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) is reaching out semi-weekly to Canadian farmers to identify any issues being caused by the COVID-19 outbreak to farm businesses. Fill out the latest survey.

- The BCWI is conducting a monthly survey of members sales – Here are the survey results collected from responses up until March 31, 2020:
  - 30% have experienced a revenue loss of more than 50%
  - 50% are open to both curbside pick up & DTC shipping with 40% open to public retail sales
  - 70% are experiencing higher online sales than the previous week
  - 60% have laid off temporary staff with 20% having laid off a mix of temporary and permanent staff

IN THE NEWS

- Canadian Federation of Agriculture Warns Domestic Food Supply Needs to be the Biggest Government Priority, following Healthcare, in Fight Against COVID-19
- Or watch the video.