



BOARD REPORT: November 26, 2021

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**Dr. Susanna
Acheampong**
*BC Ministry of
Agriculture, Food &
Fisheries*

Taras Pojasok
*Agriculture and
Agri-food Canada*

Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan Complete

The Province released *The Path Forward: A Blueprint for B.C.'s Tree Fruit Industry*. The stabilization project, led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in consultation with an external advisory committee made up of key stakeholders, was launched in February 2021. The 19 recommendations in the stabilization plan were built from the extensive feedback received during 30 consultation sessions with more than 165 individuals representing all aspects of the industry, including producers, packers, marketers, retailers, researchers and government.

The Province is now moving into the implementation phase of the stabilization process, although the momentum has been slowed by the ongoing and tragic flooding that is currently devastating agricultural operations in other areas of the province.

The plan acknowledges the sharp decline in apple acreage has caused the OKSIR Program financial challenges and put the Program in jeopardy. One of the recommendations in the plan addresses the OKSIR Program directly:

“It is recommended an assessment of the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program be conducted to determine the value the Program provides to the apple industry. If the Program is determined to be critical to the success of the industry and its viability is at risk, funding models that could be put in place to support the producer portion of Program costs should be considered.”

OKSIR to Send Letter to Minister & Partner on Program Assessment

The Board will send a letter to the Hon. Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, applauding the completion of the plan, acknowledging the recommendation related to OKSIR, and offering the support of OKSIR in the implementation-planning process. OKSIR management are working with Minsistry staff to begin the assessment, which will be completed by a neutral third party consultant. The results of the assessment may provide the support needed as OKSIR prepares to ask senior government to return as funding partners for the Program until the apple industry is able to rebuild.

Excellent Field Results in 2021

Despite the many curve balls of 2021, the field season produced excellent results, with wild codling moth captures near an all-time low and the Program meeting its operational target: over 90% of the acreage had .2% damage or less from codling moth at harvest time (fewer than 1/500 damaged fruit). The Program Entomologist walked the Board through the area-by-area results, noting the ongoing challenge posed by movement of infested wood when orchards are removed—creating codling moth “super spreader” events when old apple trees are sold as firewood rather than being burned or chipped on site.

2022 Meeting Schedule Set

Mark your calendars! The Board approved the 2022 schedule, with meetings set for the following Fridays: January 28, March 11, May 13, July 22, October 7, and November 25.

The next regular meeting of the OKSIR Board will be 9:00 a.m. on **Friday, January 28, 2022.**

