

## **Summary of CHC AGM Ottawa March 5-8, 2008**

First a special thank you to each of you for sending me to Ottawa to experience the March 9<sup>th</sup> blizzard in the Ottawa and Toronto airports.

- the CHC members in Ontario contribute over 140,000 dollars, SFGA membership is approximately \$1500.
- The Canadian Horticulture Council (founded in 1922) is an organization that is chiefly comprised of horticultural associations across Canada. Their members grow some 120 different crops.
- Many of the members I met had been attending the conference for 20 years. Saskatchewan has 4 votes; Ontario has 28. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta are viewed as a “prairie region” and thus met as a group or caucus to discuss issues. Membership is based on production currently. There is considerable problem is getting accurate statistics.
- Membership fees are being reviewed by the Finance Committee. A resolution was passed that would increase fees by 6% next year so that the proposed budget would not deficit.
- CHC represents fruits and vegetables across Canada grown under a number of scenarios, including greenhouses. The issues include such things as:
  - Food safety (OFFS)
  - Product labelling
  - Minor Use Chemical registrations
  - Importation of foods and seasonal dumping by other nations
  - Traceability
  - Labour
  - Globalization of fruits and vegetable & their processing
  - Branding Canada
  - Safety nets/Business Risk Management
- There were about 43 resolutions before the meeting; some were withdrawn, some were amalgamated, some were amended. The process was that some were referred to committees that made recommendations

to the Committee of the Whole on disposition. The committee meetings were open to all members. Some key resolutions approved were:

- Membership fees to increase 6%
  - Regional committee to determine if there is a more equitable way
- OFFS program to proceed
  - Five representatives (one from each region)
  - Wayne Rempel, MB for prairie region
  - Buy-in (to the CHC OFFS project) necessary from CFIA and industry (Costco, Safeway, McCains, etc)
  - Separate entity will be set up to manage under CHC direction
  - Third party contracted to approve and conduct audits
  - Regulations likely to only affect “fresh” produce for now, but larger suppliers will likely enforce requirements for all food they purchase.
- Foreign dumping
- Need for increased enforcement staff
- Compensation when quarantine results from invasive species
- Grading standards
- Need for AAFC pathologist
- National issues survey
- AAFC research positions
- Domestic use of GF120
- Changing the date of CHC AGM (defeated)
- Foreign traveller work visas
- Zero tolerance at Canadian border
- Labelling issue – a CHC priority
- Promotion of Table Potato Safety and Quality standards for international and domestic acceptance
- Fast tracking of Regent (fipronil) insecticide for potatoes

I have come to believe the CHC plays an important role in Canada in attempting to represent its members on national and international matters. They seem to have a strong lobbying voice with key players; governments and regulatory bodies, on issues that often affect SFGA members.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- SFGA needs; however, to participate to gain any benefit.
- SFGA should also expect representatives to report back on issues being discussed.
- SFGA should prepare resolutions from their AGM for submission to CHC on national issues
- SFGA should distribute/offer CHC materials to SFGA members
- SFGA should inform members of the CHC website members' area passwords and encourage members to consult with SFGA on CHC issues.

=====

The 2009 CHC AGM is being hosted in Calgary (2010 in Quebec City). I have suggested SFGA would assist where we can with the Western conference. To that end I have volunteered our Provincial Fruit Specialist to being the piper in full regalia (including kilt) to pipe in the head table at the formal banquet. I also suggested white Stetsons would be appropriate to be included in the registrations. Also I suggested, that Alberta should consider strongly local food for their meals. I did ask where the Alberta beef was at their event in Ottawa.

If any members have questions or want more details do not hesitate to contact me at [b.hill@sasktel.net](mailto:b.hill@sasktel.net) or go the CHC site (members username & password available to SFGA members).