

Chair' s Report to the 2007 Cranberry Commission AGM

Last year at this time I told you we had three priorities for 2006; to reach a funding arrangement with the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC to pursue the Development Plan, to secure amendments to the Scheme, and to receive a delegation of powers from the federal Government. While not fully completed I can report significant progress on all three fronts.

We now have an agreement with the Foundation that provides for almost \$600,000 to the Commission over a 5 year period to pursue a number of development initiatives. This is a most generous and welcome addition to our ability to provide leadership and services. Our priorities for the Development Plan include funding research to find solutions to the practical problems of growing cranberries, promoting our products at home and abroad, and providing a number of practical grower services and benefits. Details of what we did in 2006 and what we plan to do in 2007 will be provided in a separate report.

On the Scheme amendments I had hoped to be able to tell you today of their recent passage by the Provincial Government but there is a short delay. The delay is procedural only as we have agreement from all parties including the Farm Industry Review Board and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands on the amendments. At the Federal level we have filed all of the necessary documents and have approval by the administrative staff. It is a long arduous process to have a federal cabinet order passed so we need to be patient. When passed the order will strengthen and clarify the Commissions' powers on the regulated product moving to interprovincial and export markets.

Consistent with the CMC we increased the levy rate on the 2006

crop to 28 cents (USD) per barrel. Most of the money raised by the increase has been committed to foreign promotion with the CMC and in 2007 we will be contributing the same base amount per barrel as do US cranberry growers. The USDA provides additional funding which greatly extends the impact of foreign promotion initiatives. This is a rapidly expanding segment of the market and consumes 25% of all North American cranberry production. We worked closely with our US counterparts throughout the year with Jeff Hamilton attending CMC meetings.

In anticipation of the Scheme change at the Provincial level we have added Jack Brown to the Commission. Jack farmed in the Cloverdale area for many years and has broad experience in BC agriculture. Jack provides an independent voice at the Commission table and will ensure the Commission fulfils its “public interest” mandate.

Commissioners continued to upgrade their skills and knowledge by attending the educational seminars sponsored by the Council of Marketing Boards. To act effectively, responsibly, and within our mandates it is most important that we understand the Act, and all applicable regulations.

Our supervisory body, the Farm Industry Review Board, had a very busy year mostly with the national supply managed boards. We completed our annual review in November and appreciate the support and guidance we receive from them.

My term as your Chair will be completed next January – just before the 2008 Commission AGM. Chair appointments are now a government decision but I hope to be with you again next year at this time.

John Savage, Chair
BC Cranberry Marketing Commission