

Board Report to the 2008 Cranberry Commission AGM

Our role as Commissioners is to uphold and enforce the provisions of the General Orders, the Scheme, Act and the Regulations and to establish the policies and programs to fulfill that mandate. Our focus is growers but we also have responsibilities to the other sectors of our industry, the public and to the Farm Industry Review Board. This may sound pretty straight forward but involves navigating through an increasingly complex maze of laws, interests and reporting requirements.

As our Chair mentioned part of our mandate includes issuing annual licenses to Growers, Producer Vendors and Agencies. A Grower license permits a Grower to market his production to an Agency; a Producer Vendor License permits the Grower to market his production himself pursuant to a plan approved by the Commission. No Grower or Producer Vendor may transport the regulated product unless he holds a valid license and no Agency may receive fruit from a Grower unless it holds an Agency license issued by the Commission.

About 75% of our budget is directed towards projects in the Development Plan. This is how we fund the production and health research projects, carry out the foreign and domestic market development programs and provide grower services such as the Congress, the Field Day and the Newsletter. As the Investment Agriculture Foundation provides some of the funding we must work closely with them and comply with their requirements and formats to make things happen.

Some of our programs and services to growers during the past year were guided by advisory committees chaired by a member of the Commission. Todd May chairs the Research Committee, Jeff Hamilton lead the group that planned and ran the Congress, and I have served as Committee Chair to plan and operate the Field Day.

The Research Committee, including growers and professionals, establishes priorities, solicits proposals from the research community aimed at providing solutions for some of the priority issues, makes funding decisions on those proposals and awards contracts when projects are approved, monitors progress and receives and approves project results. The Committee appreciates the generous contribution from Dr Sheila Fitzpatrick, Dr Kim Patten and Brian Mauza.

Our second Cranberry Congress held two weeks ago was attended by almost 100 people. We see the Congress as the way growers can learn of the best production information available and plan to continue to hold it annually.

We thought the Field Day for growers last summer was a good first effort and was very well attended. Speakers, equipments displays and research project results highlighted the event. The planning committee assessed the results, felt it was a

worthwhile effort and recommended it be held every two years. The Commission accepted that recommendation with the next Field Day planned for the summer of 2009.

Our policy is to establish and maintain a close working relationship with our US counterparts. Jeff Hamilton attends CMC meetings, health research funding is co-ordinated by the Association with the Cranberry Institute, we are providing funding for foreign market development with the CMC and several personal relationships have been developed. We see this as a long term priority and we will continue to apply the necessary resources to it.

We are required to have a written and FIRB approved Election Policy and to review it periodically. 2007 was a review year and we renewed the current policy with one change, that providing for the Association to propose further changes at any time. FIRB and the Council of Marketing Boards are reviewing Election Policies in general which may result in the need for further changes in 2008.

We continue to work with FIRB, and the Provincial and Federal Governments to strengthen the legal framework in which we operate. Progress is painfully slow but we are continuing to inch towards completion of the changes. At some point in the future when the Cranberry Scheme is amended we will be required to establish an industry advisory committee and when this happens we intend to consult with the Association on its structure and objectives.

At our first Commission meeting after last year's AGM Jeff Hamilton was elected as Vice Chair and I was elected as the Secretary of the Board. Board terms are three years staggered to provide for continuity.

As Commissioners we are encouraged to participate in education programs offered periodically by the Council of Marketing Boards. A series of one-day seminars focus on the laws, and responsibilities and duties of members of marketing boards and commissions in BC. We find these quite helpful and intend to continue to participate in the future.

Finally all Commissioners want to thank the Government of BC for re-appointing John Savage as our Chair. We think there is ample evidence of what John's leadership has done for the Commission.

Allen May, on behalf of the
BC Cranberry Marketing Commission