

Chair's Report to the 2008 Cranberry Commission AGM

As I think most of you know, I was re-appointed last month as Chair of the Commission for a three year term. My current term as Chair runs to January 2011 and provincial government policy limits these appointments to two terms.

We have had a busy and I believe quite successful year. We have undertaken several new initiatives in the recent past and we are in the midst of a process to establish priorities and programs going forward. We have engaged George Leroux and with the kind assistance of the Association Officers and Ralph May, we are completing a strategic planning process to help us identify and deliver the most appropriate services going forward.

During the past year we undertook 25 projects in the second full year of the 5 year Development Plan. You will receive a detailed report with information on each of the projects but as a general overview we focussed on production research, health research, (with the CI), Canadian consumer education, foreign market development and specialized services to growers. Of the latter, one of our new initiatives was the August field day which was very well attended. We intend to continue the Field Day every other year.

On foreign market development, our funds are working with the CMC to introduce cranberries and cranberry products around the world. In 2007 we committed \$55,000 (USD) to market development in Korea. Our financial commitment means BC growers were contributing the same amount per barrel for foreign market development, as were US growers.

We issued 72 grower licenses, 8 Producer Vendor licenses and 2 Agency licenses in 2007. The General Orders, the Scheme and the Act describe the criteria for issuing each license and the authority and responsibilities that go with it. We have also been alerted by two parties that each intend to make application for an agency license before the 2008 harvest.

Our supervisory body, the Farm Industry Review Board, continues to provide guidance and leadership to us and to other Boards and Commissions. The powers granted to the Commission are substantial and have the force and effect of provincial law and it seems fair and reasonable that the provincial government, through the FIRB, monitors the use of those powers. It seems that the

responsibilities, level of reporting and supervisory oversight continues to increase and puts an increasing load on the Commissioners. FIRB is placing greater emphasis on Commission governance, and is looking for assurance that decisions are made fairly and that there is good consultation and information throughout the industry. Some of our work with the FIRB is carried out with the other Boards and Commissions through the Council of Marketing Boards.

The value of our currency relative to US funds is a major concern for our industry going forward. While we may not be able to directly influence that equation, we can target our programs to help put BC growers in the strongest possible competitive position. Cranberry consumption in a broad range of products is increasing and foreign markets are strengthening, which should help producer returns.

I believe our Commission is strong, functioning well and able to deliver valuable services to growers. We think we have about the right mix between regulatory enforcement and industry services.

I particularly want to thank the Association for their generous help and guidance on many occasions during the past year. We are fortunate to have so many good people willing to help. Also thank you to the growers who helped with the Field Day and with the Congress. I would also like to extend a public thank you to the Commissioners for the quality of their decisions and for the many days spent on Commission business.

John Savage, Chair
BC Cranberry Marketing Commission