

Report for 2024 BCVMC Strategic Planning Industry Survey

Response Statistics

	Count	Percent
Complete	36	78.30%
Partial	10	21.70%
Disqualified	0	0.00%
Totals	46	

Which survey group do you belong to? Please select the one group you most relate to.

Value	Percent	Count
Producer	75.70%	28
Agency	13.50%	5
Wholesaler	5.40%	2
Other	5.40%	2
Totals		37

Which category group do you primarily belong to?

Value	Percent	Count
Storage Crops	55.60%	20
Greenhouse Crops	38.90%	14
Processing Crops	5.60%	2
Totals		36

Where is your business located? Select all that apply.

Value	Percent	Count
Vancouver Island	13.50%	5
Lower Mainland	70.30%	26
Interior	16.20%	6

Northern BC

2.70%
Totals 38

Other - Please specify	Count
Totals	0

SECTION 1: TRUST AND INTEGRITY

When responding to each question in this section, consider the activities of the Commission that took place over the past 12-18 months.

1.1 Over the past 12 to 18 months, would you say your trust in the BCVMC has:

Value	Percent	Count
A. Increased	24.30%	9
B. Decreased	18.90%	7
C. Stayed about the same	56.80%	21
Totals		37

Comments
The BCVMC has established a team that is quick to respond to agency requests and is carefully considering new licenses
Conflict with larger grower/agency managers influencing Commission decisions
The BCVMC looking to expand their "control" over other parts of BC was very disappointing. We should be looking to deregulate things, not make it worse.
The way the BCVMC is treating the bcgga.
needed some information/guidance but response was slow
Have always had reasonable confidence in the BCVMC.

Changes to the composition of the Commission's board, including the addition of independent members has increased the perception of trust. Additional transparency on Commission matters would increase trust further. Time will ultimately tell how these impact matters.

1.2 How have the BCVMC's regulatory improvements impacted your business?

Value	Percent	Count
A. These changes have positively affected my business.	10.80%	4
B. These changes have negatively affected my business.	5.40%	2
C. These changes have had no impact on my business.	51.40%	19
D. I am not aware of any regulatory improvements.	32.40%	12
Totals		37

Comments

Last minute changes to GO's impact already confusing regulatory guidelines.
 keeping agencies in line. More thorough in decisions
 Each application has been carefully thought out and industry feedback has been requested prior to making a decision
 More on the Agency side of the industry than the producer side.

1.3 Have the changes to the composition of the Board (i.e., change to general greenhouse and storage crop positions and the addition of Independent Members) given you more confidence in the integrity of the BCVMC?

Value	Percent	Count
A. Yes, this has been positive and has increased the integrity of the BCVMC.	24.30%	9
B. No, it still seems like the same Commission.	29.70%	11
C. Too early to tell, need more time to see results.	45.90%	17
Totals		37

Comments
I don't follow the activities of the commission.
The Commission and FIRB must be acutely aware of the shrinking pool of producers eligible to qualify as directors and how their policies have negatively impacted the availability of qualified candidates.
Same concerns of conflict as noted above
Having independent members is a definite plus. There is still the integrity of the overall program that needs to be assessed. Senior Staff members need to be assessed to increase confidence
Having independents brings a different view to the group
I'm aware of storage crop members primarily deal with and vote on greenhouse matters. In some cases they are not really aware of some issues. I'm sure it's the same for greenhouse members. All members need to be consulted on all producer issues. Why have a member that knows his or her business very well but not be consulted.
Response time from the commission has been faster and more informative than previous years

1.4 The BCVMC understands and is responsive to my needs as an industry stakeholder.

Value	Percent	Count
A. Always, the BCVMC understands my needs and delivers good value to my business.	29.70%	11
B. Sometimes, there are times when the BCVMC could better understand my specific needs.	54.10%	20
C. Never, the BCVMC does not understand my needs as a stakeholder.	16.20%	6
	Totals	37

Comments
Timelines and slow decision making by the BCVMC are not aligned with sense of urgency required by growers
I sell exclusively at Farmer's Markets so don't feel I am a stakeholder.
The BCVMC looking to expand their oversight over all of BC shows that they do not understand the needs of their stakeholders. Currently I am required to be a stakeholder and pay yearly, follow the BCVMC rules, and receive absolutely nothing in return.
No support to Organic growers

1.5 Commission decision-making is transparent, with clear rationale and explanations provided.

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	10.80%	4
2 (Strongly Agree)	8.10%	3
3 (Agree)	29.70%	11
4 (Somewhat Agree)	35.10%	13
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	5.40%	2
6 (Disagree)	5.40%	2
7 (Strongly Disagree)	5.40%	2
	Totals	37

Comments

Decisions by the board are improving, there is still bias in senior staff decisions

Although the BCVMC claim to use the SAFETI framework it appears to be of a feel-good vs reality with their decisions based on constant legal disputes challenging rulings.

The response may vary depending on the timeframe and issue.

There are too many individuals which belong to the same cooperative on the commission.
there is clear communication regarding each decision with rationale provided

1.6 The Commission responses well to issues as they arise and appears to be getting things done.

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	5.40%	2
2 (Strongly Agree)	8.10%	3

3 (Agree)	27.00%	10
4 (Somewhat Agree)	32.40%	12
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	5.40%	2
6 (Disagree)	13.50%	5
7 (Strongly Disagree)	8.10%	3
Totals		37

Comments
Very fast response time compared to previous years
Decisions are slow and seem to always require legal vs logical input which stalls the process.
issues are falling between the cracks because of non-stop litigation, turmoil and qualified
Responds to all concerns but sometimes its somewhat lengthy
The response may vary depending on the timeframe and issue.

1.7 I have trust in the Commission and believe it is working in the best interests of the industry.

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	8.10%	3
2 (Strongly Agree)	16.20%	6
3 (Agree)	29.70%	11
4 (Somewhat Agree)	24.30%	9
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	2.70%	1
6 (Disagree)	8.10%	3
7 (Strongly Disagree)	10.80%	4
Totals		37

Comments
Again, When there are too many individuals from the same Cooperative on the Commission this heavily favors that Cooperative.
I think the role of the Commission has changed significantly over the years and has impacted growth and trust. Fees are structured to cover legal vs grower interests.

It is not working on behalf of the industry, otherwise they would cooperate with the BCGGA to come to a solution.

The response may vary depending on the timeframe and issue.

Nothing is done for the organic industry

Section 2: Information and Communications

When responding to each question in this section, consider the activities of the Commission that took place over the past 12-18 months.

2.1 I receive all the information, licenses, and permits I need from the Commission in a timely manner to effectively run my business in compliance with industry regulations.

Value	Percent	Count
2 (Strongly Agree)	22.20%	8
3 (Agree)	52.80%	19
4 (Somewhat Agree)	19.40%	7
7 (Strongly Disagree)	5.60%	2
Totals		36

2.2 Who do you usually contact when you have an issue?

Value	Percent	Count
A. The Commission	32.40%	12
B. My Agency	54.10%	20
Other - Please specify.	13.50%	5

Totals 37

Other - Please specify.	Count
BCGGA	1
GM and Admin Coord	1
It depends on the issue. Going through the Commission often slows resolution of issues.	1
Other growers	1
colleagues	1
Totals	5

2.3 Have you had a need reason or need to access the Commission's policies, requirements and/or documents in the past 12 to 18 months?

Value	Percent	Count
A. Yes	35.10%	13
B. No	64.90%	24
Totals		37

If you answered 'yes' to question 2.3 above:

2.3.1 Were the Commission's policies, requirements and documents readily accessible?

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	21.10%	4
2 (Strongly Agree)	5.30%	1
3 (Agree)	52.60%	10
4 (Somewhat Agree)	15.80%	3
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	5.30%	1
Totals		19

If you answered 'yes' to question 2.3 above:

2.3.2 Were the Commission's policies, requirements and documents easy to understand?

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	10.50%	2
2 (Strongly Agree)	5.30%	1
3 (Agree)	26.30%	5
4 (Somewhat Agree)	47.40%	9
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	10.50%	2
Totals		19

2.4 Have you had a need to access commission staff for any reason in the past 12 to 18 months?

Value	Percent	Count
A. Yes	45.90%	17
B. No	54.10%	20
Totals		37

If you answered 'yes' to question 2.4 above:

2.4.1 The staff member was able to satisfactorily resolve your issue or request?

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	4.50%	1
2 (Strongly Agree)	22.70%	5
3 (Agree)	27.30%	6
4 (Somewhat Agree)	31.80%	7
6 (Disagree)	4.50%	1
7 (Strongly Disagree)	9.10%	2
Totals		22

If you answered 'yes' to question 2.4 above:

2.4.2 The issue or request was resolved in a reasonable amount of time.

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	10.50%	2
2 (Strongly Agree)	21.10%	4
3 (Agree)	26.30%	5
4 (Somewhat Agree)	15.80%	3
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	15.80%	3
7 (Strongly Disagree)	10.50%	2
Totals		19

2.5 I find the Commission's publications and newsletters timely and informative.

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	2.70%	1
2 (Strongly Agree)	13.50%	5
3 (Agree)	48.60%	18
4 (Somewhat Agree)	18.90%	7
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	5.40%	2
6 (Disagree)	10.80%	4
Totals		37

2.6 How can the Commission improve communications?

Response
I believe that there should be monthly bulletins
In addition to the AGM, have another in person session throughout the year
Timely responses and updated information on the website
Reply on time to issues and grower needs.
Increase transparency through publishing minutes and agendas from Commission meetings for industry stakeholders to review. Redactions could be made for issues that require discussion of sensitive or proprietary information. Establish sub-committees among industry stakeholders, including agencies and growers, that include Commission representatives to foster communications.
No comment here. This is our first year being "exposed" to the commission and needing to work with them. Everything seemed to go quite alright.

Half the problem is me not getting involved One should not complain if they don't get involved. You can not complain about the government if you don't vote!!
Communications are fine from my perspective.
Speed up the process for gathering information and making decisions.
looked for information on website, did not see a search engine for the information needed
To start maybe they can respond to a stakeholders request to join a general meeting! This year I sent an email to join the commissions annual general meeting and did not get an answer to my email!
We have worked very closely with our marketing agency who has handled most of the BCVMC correspondence. All matters have been handled in a satisfactory way. Thank you
No comment
All the legal stuff is not easy to read. Most growers don't take the time to do that. Why not a one pager to explain what and why an agency was approved or disapproved.
Delivery allocation numbers should be sent out 2 weeks after every period is over now we never see anything until the following year which is unacceptable
For us, communication is fine.
no information included on the organic industry
Don't think need to. If there is an issue the commission can be contacted
unknown

2.7 The AGM and the Townhall sessions provided a good opportunity to receive information and discuss important issues.

Value	Percent	Count
1 (Not Able to Assess)	21.60%	8
2 (Strongly Agree)	13.50%	5
3 (Agree)	21.60%	8
4 (Somewhat Agree)	27.00%	10
5 (Somewhat Disagree)	5.40%	2
6 (Disagree)	10.80%	4
	Totals	37

2.8 How can the Commission improve the meetings, the AGM, and Townhall sessions?

Response
Not worried. There is clear notice and the commission stays until all questions are answered
I stopped attending sessions because they were confrontational and have no bearing on the organic sector. The commission takes our money but does not invest that money in any useful way for the organic sector. Research projects for the organic sector should be eligible to access funding they pay into with fees and levies.
N/A
There is a reluctance to ask questions by many in front of the group and suggest having questions to the Commission being forwarded ahead of the AGM or Townhalls.
Can't give an opinion here since was not present at this year's AGM
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
If I was notified of meetings I missed them. I don't think you have my email address
Better communication as to when these are taking place.
The most recent meetings were poorly attended. Encouraging participation by growers would improve the meetings.
the commission sector is to large and a lot of the info is not relevant for our industry
Was a good event We attended last one More presentations on markets and future analysis would be appreciated Perhaps a guest speaker. Thank you
Gain the trust of its growers so there is a better turnout.
Meet with sectors separately to keep issues focused.
Format overall is fine.
Everyone can attend the AGM and Townhall and bring suggestions forward
unknown

Section 3: Going Forward

3.1 What do you perceive to be the Commission/Industry's strengths?

Response
Broad spectrum of the vegetable industry
Knowledge of the industry, consideration of applications

Keeping the marketing scheme orderly which is the only way that will keep bc growers to stay in business
information portal
Monitoring delivery allocation Regulation
For the storage crop growers they play a gate keeper role but mostly what is duplicated by BC Fresh. Adherence to regulations and administering increased fees by growers
None
Currently we are not satisfied at all with the comission!
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
All the legal stuff.
Fully staffed office and commissioners with industry experience and 2 independents that can view issues from a different prospective
Local Grown should be a strength, unfortunately this is not the case due pricing structures preventing this from being a positive.
The ability to lean on people and the knowledge base within the industry. Failure to do that often gets the Commission in trouble by making poor decisions.
guidance what agencies are to conduct themselves with producers
To keep some volume guidelines set for the province
I have been involved in root maggots research committee. The research mark offs are a good way of getting growing problems solved
Without senior staffing changes the work that is currently being done will not be lasting change.
Fully staffed. Having industry stakeholders for decision making. Independent commissioners.
Support of the Province and mandatory membership.
Gathering supply available from agencies and setting prices on regulated product so that producers don't dump product on the market. Set prices on regulated product to produce buyers and wholesalers don't put grower against grower on dropping prices to the bottom.there needs to be more prices regulation and commission input on unregulated product.
T,he commission I think is very aware of and takes a regulated system very seriously which helps all producers growing whether they grow regulated product or not
For the most part all of the growers would like to continue in a regulated world.
unknown
Maintaining market price on storage crops.

Recently the Commission has indicated a willingness to address industry issues, such as taking steps to change the Board composition.

3.2 What do you perceive to be the Commission/Industry's weaknesses?

Response
People who feel that they could make more money with no regulations
Monitoring delivery allocation Regulation
Slow and litigious responses, a dated model, out of touch with other producing areas across North America and no longer required to 'manage orderly marketing". The BCVMC have yet to take action on agencies that for years have not followed the General Orders.
Self Interest. Lack of Industry support.
As a stakeholder in this industry, we don't feel like the commission is helping us improve and grow our business or frankly we don't feel that this commission is protecting us in our region
To my understanding, the commission is supposed to help regulate the market but its not like they're able to keep product from coming into the market from other provinces - therewith not really being able to regulate market prices, etc...
Arrogance. Derek Sturko's influence on the board. Keeping the BCVMC intact instead of having a good communication with the BCGGA.
The Commission is imposing regulations that aren't needed, and regulation crops that aren't needed. Industry stakeholders (small farms, organic farms, etc) have to pay and receive nothing in return. The solution is not to try come up with ways to contribute, but rather, stop imposing costs and regulations on farms all together.
Nepotism and conflicts of interest
I don't think I know enough of what the commission does
The pricing structures are a major weakness, there's no reason for local grown produce to be nearly double the price of other Provinces local grown produce.
Dysfunctional relationship with the BCGGA, Board composition perceived as conflicted in the eyes of some producers. Combination of greenhouse and storage crops together under one Commission is problematic (too dissimilar).
The loop does not get closed on far too many issues and it costs the industry money. Your authority to regulate is diminished when you do not resolve issues in a timely matter and the industry moves on without you.
The commission doesn't follow up on agency contracts that they are in line with the commissions guidelines

Perhaps not enough time spent on developing growth in the industry There is far more potential to grow more crops than n BC We could lessen imports on storage crops
Growers trust
Transparency around decision making could be improved. Industry stakeholders could receive additional updates on regular Commission meetings in addition to that provided during the AGM / Townhall sessions.
Timelines for decisions.
unknown
Lenghtly decision making
Timeliness of decision making
Funding, staff turnover
There should be board members representing each agency's in the commission.
More crops need to be regulated.

3.3 What opportunities do you see for the industry that may arise over the next 2 to 3 years?

Response
Knowledge, technology and varieties continue to improve and are positioning BC as a recognized and reliable leader for the supply of produce in Canada.
More people buying BC vegetables
Be more involved in national and international issues that affect growers
Stop viewing that BC has a wall around the production and customers as other producing areas continue to grow and service BC, western Canadian and US customers.
Separate the Greenhouse sector from Storage crop sector.
Local primary food production is likely going to become more important to government.
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
Steady demand for our products
Parsnips market can still be expanded. Need better varieties that stay white longer. Work on control atmosphere packaging
There is a separate commission for the potato grower and the greenhouse grower.
Locally grown should be an advantage and I suspect there needs to be more government support to help ease the cost to our local growers in BC.
Increased growth amongst greenhouse vegetable producers and agencies.

Hopefully more growth We would like to increase our quota
Anti dumping for potatoes
One opportunity that we could target, is to become North American players rather than just being a BC growers! We have to start thinking bigger than just BC! For example if we want to protect our market by reducing growth in our industry, we are promoting growth in other provinces, US, and Mexico!
Will there be a need with the decline in the industry.
All industry groups working together
All producers and agencies working together to strengthen the industry
Continue to strengthen the framework of our regulatory system
unknown
more to producer

3.4 What threats do you see for the industry that may arise over the next 2 to 3 years?

Response
People trying to break up the commission
Entrance into the market of external private equity funds controlling BC Growers
The threat of splitting the storage crop and greenhouse growers. I believe this would have a negative effect on both industries.
Producer's choosing to leave regulation Over production in greenhouse industry There is too much greenhouse production in BC Resulting in low prices and returns
Food security, surety of supply, impacts of weather and financial stability with private equity continuing to make short-term investments in Ag.
Decisions made by self interested individuals
Some key Agency management personnel in the storage sector are retiring and the knowledge and corporate history will be difficult to replace.
The size of gas pipeline! Increased cost prices to produce because of higher energy costs, labour costs, etc
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
Over regulation. Both by marketing commissions and more likely food safety certifications.
unknown

Need for new younger growers. I am mid seventies and don't have as much energy to grow the business
The BC market is simply uncompetitive and way behind on agricultural automation. The Government should be support initiatives for this industry.
Failure to grow.
more competition
Not enough quota given to bc growers More cheap imports
If the commission is not separated from the potato grower
Too much government regulations. Local, provincial and federal. Slow acting from governments, when grhs owners having suggestions like cogeneration. Natural gas pipe line capacity shortages. Migrant workers issues. All issues the BCVMC is not involved in but the BCGGA is doing all that.
Grower retirements, continued infighting in agencies.
Threats of deregulation
BC is becoming uncompetitive with other jurisdictions. ie. Carbon Tax, minimum wage rates, municipal/Provincial regulations.
Threat of de-regulation which i believe could be disastrous for the province
Growers going more acreage then the market needs which will drop price.
nothing

3.5 In your view, the two or three most important things the Commission could do to strengthen the industry over the next year are...

Response
Survey all growers
listen to the Growers
Careful consideration of new applicants to the market. Be more involved in national and international issues that affect our industry
rebuild lost trust with stakeholders. A split of the storage and greenhouse Commissions should be viewed as a positive for members
Foster producer growth and opportunities to expand.
Review the board members and only allow a percentage from the same organization. Gain government support for Growers.

Stop interfering with choices of growers to grow certain crops! Stop interfering with how businesses grow and market their crops in order to survive these challenging times! Try to help every stakeholders unique situations to survive and grow instead of making decisions that will be helpful to some and detrimental to others in the same industry
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
Work with the BCGGA and come to a compromise.
More communication. Advocate for more government-private partnerships for research
Accountability for your actions listen to grower concerns more than the agency as not all growers get there views expressed as the agency seems to be able to manipulate certain actions that are not fair to all growers
Address the weaknesses/threats previously mentioned.
Start getting things done. Repeated requests to take charge of issues are left unaddressed.
Look to expand new growers as many older growers are exiting the business
Separate the commission from the two commodity groups The commission needs to do a better job of representing the growers
The board members must be from different agencies and a certain term which one member can run.
?
Build the confidence of the industry. Stay focused on important issues and deal with them in a timely manner.
respect producer good marketing
support the industry as fair as possible. hold true to its regulations
I think timely decision making is key for the commission to strengthen our industry.
unknown
1. reduce the power of agencies 2. increase the power of growers to sell what they grow and not be dictated to by the agency marketing departments

3.6 Are there other specific regulatory or policy issues you believe the Commission needs to change or consider in next 12 - 18 months?

Response
1. Fair marketing needs to be defined and enforced. Growers should not be plowing in crops because an agency doesn't like the grower for whatever reason. Marketing is not based on personal relationships but the quality of crop that is being grown.

No
More communication and education with regards to regulation and policy
Several of the General Orders are dated and may be in the best interests of Agencies but not necessarily of the growers. Timelines for the review process and actions as a result take years vs months.
Continued work on development of processes and regulatory structure that continues to provide efficiency, transparency and a Commission that is responsive to the needs of industry stakeholders.
No
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
De-regulate.
I am tired of changes
Less is better
Agency business plans should be requested for some agencies that are going through structural and capacity changes.
Expansion of the root crop industry
They need to help the Greenhouse grower by spending more time on their issues.
No don't break something that has worked for many many years as it will collapse this industry
As stated, separate the two distinct sectors
I think decision timelines and deadlines are something the commission needs to consider.
Would like to see commission members have more input on dealings pertaining to their industry.
From a primary producer perspective, No.
nothing
no
unknown

3.7 Are there other services and/or information that the Commission should consider providing that would support your business?

Response
More transparent monthly marketing analysis
No further comments at this time.

Education sessions and perhaps one more annual information session
Compiling statistics from reports the Agency submits with payments Can be used for CITT information occurring every 5 years
Providing industry stats on production, sales, category management that align with production/quota decisions. Too much of what the BCVMC produce for data focuses only on BC and also misses retail trends.
No
No
I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here
Food safety information small unregistered growers
No, my business operated just fine without the commission.
Research committee for other crops than potatoes
No, it cannot deal with the responsibilities it currently has. Why add more onto their plate?
To have a separate commission for the greenhouse sector
Delivery allocation numbers in a timely fashion after each period
1.The commission needs to represent all sectors that they oversee. There has never been any support given to the organic sector. 2.Annual Food Safety training sessions need to be held each year.
Reassure producers that the Commission is prepared for a possible US trade action (Harris or Trump) or a phytosanitary issue at the Border
Be transparent in decision making. That will gain trust in the industry
no
i donot know
No leave that to the BCGGA. They have all the contacts with the government and industry. Commission is just for the legal stuff. Keep the cost low don't hire more staff!

Final Comments and thoughts. Is there anything you would like to share that you haven't done so already?

Comments

No

I think overall the commission is doing well. A lot of new people though at once I think takes a lot of time to get up to speed. I hope not to much time is wasted

Would be interested to see how this poll is presented back out to industry stakeholders and if no improvements were made since the strat plan was introduced what are the plans to make administrative changes.

No

I don't know enough about the Commissions involvements to share any useful insights here

My email address is. wisbeyveggies@gmail.com. Please add me to your communication list.

Bruce

There is a lot of frustration at the Agency level within our sector.

No Thank you

It is unfortunate that the current change had to come by legislated enforcement. Growers need to bury their personal agendas and work towards common goals for the produce industry as a whole. If this is not achieved in the next few years the industry on our province will be in an avalanche of decline.

I believe the commission is steering in the right direction and making progress over the last couple years.

Someone should proof read the survey questions before sending them out. Questions 1.6 and 3.6 are 2 examples.

No

5 or so years ago I was forced to become a payee of the commission. Since then I have paid my yearly dues, and have some added costs due to food safety licenses that I did not have before. As a small farm, the crops I grow are not significant and I receive absolutely nothing in return from the commission, only paperwork and fees.

no

No further comments.