

## BCFGA Drought Policy

August 19, 2015



### Introduction

- The year 2015 in the Okanagan Similkameen is classified as a level 4 drought by the province, the highest level possible.
- Any water shortage issues this year could be amplified in 2016 if the drought continues.
- At this time, water purveyors have not implemented water use restrictions on agriculture in the Okanagan.
- Climate change is placing new stresses on the water supply systems in the Okanagan.

### Drought Policy

The BCFGGA endorses the following policies to protect orchards during drought and will promote the policies to the municipalities and other water purveyors in the Okanagan.

1. There should be common drought policy between all Okanagan water purveyors for agricultural irrigation. Common policy between water purveyors makes it easier to promote the policies. Common policies will receive greater support from the farm community if there is input from agricultural associations.
2. Agriculture water rationing should be implemented only after extreme water restrictions have been implemented for landscaping and recreational use.
3. If implemented, agriculture water rationing should take into account the large, intensive investment in perennial crops (ie. tree fruit).
4. Agricultural irrigation should not be rationed using pricing. Extension of irrigation during drought should not initiate higher pricing providing irrigator does not exceed allocation for the year.
5. The BCFGGA supports the continued adoption of technology for greater irrigation efficiency.
6. Food security (maintaining and expanding local agricultural production) should be a major consideration in allocating water.
7. The BCFGGA will support the municipalities in seeking provincial and federal funding to expand water storage reservoirs.

8. BCFGA supports collaboration, communication, education and outreach to irrigators and irrigation districts to move the tree fruit industry to a environmentally sustainable, food secure and profitable position.