

**OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD**

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD**  
held at the RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom October 4, 2024

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**Voting Members:**

Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (virtual)
Director Rick de Jong	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Shirley Fowler	Regional District of North Okanagan
Grower Tarsem Goraya	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Director Tim Lavery	Regional District Columbia Shuswap (virtual)
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Director Rick Webber	Regional District of Central Okanagan

**Non-Voting Members:****Guests/Delegates:**

Melissa Tesche	BCFGA
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**Regrets:**

Dr. Susanna Acheampong	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Grower Joginder Dhand	Grower Representative – Zone 3
Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

**Staff:**

Michelle Cook	OKSIR General Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Andrew Farmer	RDCO Financial Analyst
Tanya Littlely	OKSIR Office Manager

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Director Fowler called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 10:35 am.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA****2.1 Adoption of Agenda**

**Moved by: Grower Makepeace**

**Seconded by: Director de Jong**

*“THAT the October 4, 2024, meeting agenda be adopted as presented.”*

**CARRIED**

**3. MINUTES****3.1 Regular Board Meeting – July 19, 2024 – For Adoption**

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Director Webber**

*“THAT the OKSIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes from July 19, 2024, meeting be adopted as*

*presented.”*

**CARRIED**

### **3.2 Business Arising from Minutes**

## **4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION**

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION**

### **5.1 Staff Report from Michelle Cook, General Manager, September 26, 2024, re: Program Update**

Ms. Cook presented the staff report to the Board in detail.

Production has now been reduced to off-season colony levels and the facility is down to one shift a day. Field Supervisors are now entering data and notes from the season into the database and preparing to make decisions about the service levels for each orchard property for the 2025 field season.

The CCLSP is just over a year into its cross-commodity work. In September, the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council endorsed five funding applications. Two of these applications included two years of ongoing operational funding for the BC DAS program, which SIR hosts, and a feasibility study for expansion of BC DAS to wine grapes.

Some renewed interest from New Zealand to receive some small shipments this coming winter was reported. Confirmation that the facility has the capacity to provide supplemental winter moth shipments without additional staff was confirmed.

**Moved by: Director Webber**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*“THAT the staff report from the General Manager be received.”*

**CARRIED**

### **5.2 Report from Evan Esch, Program Entomologist, Re: Preliminary 2024 Season Results:**

Mr. Esch presented the 2024 preliminary season results.

The cold winter did not negatively impact the overwintering codling moth population. The warm summer was conducive to pest population growth during the 2nd generation, but 3rd generation activity was limited this year.

Overall, more wild moths were captured in 2024 than in 2023. This was partly due to improvements to our traps and partly due to actual increases in wild populations. The program found codling moth increases in areas with historically very low pest populations, including Oliver, Cawston and Keremeos. Efforts to contain codling moth increases in those areas were made and will continue into 2025.

Of note, the spread of codling moth by infested bins occurred this season. Mr. Esch and the SIR field staff have worked closely with packing houses to assist them in identifying and treating infested bins to eliminate/limit the spread of codling moth.

Director Lavery expressed thanks to the SIR team for their extensive work reducing a significant codling moth infestation in Salmon Arm.

**Moved by: Director de Jong**

**Seconded by: Grower Goraya**

*“THAT the Preliminary 2024 Season Results as presented by Mr. Esch be received.”*

**CARRIED**

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****7. NEW BUSINESS****7.1 Proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule**

No scheduling conflicts were identified by the Board.

**Moved by: Grower Makepeace**

**Seconded by: Director Webber**

*"THAT the meeting schedule for 2025 for the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Board be approved as presented."*

**CARRIED**

**7.2 Proposed 2025 Tax Increase**

The proposed value tax increase of 4% was discussed by the Board.

Year-over-year increases to the value tax have been included in the five-year financial plans since 2021. Prior to that, the Board had kept a \$1.7M value tax revenue cap in place from 2010- 2021, falling behind inflation and relying on reserves to fund shortfalls. Sales revenues have been growing and contribute impactfully to covering program expenses, but tax increases continue to be needed this year and into the future to cover the full costs of the program.

**Moved by: Director de Jong**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*"That OKSIR increase the total amount requisitioned from the value tax in 2024 by 4%, for a total requisition of \$2,001,310 in 2025."*

**CARRIED**

**7.3 Interim Financials to August 31, 2024**

RDCO Financial Analyst, Andrew Farmer, presented the OKSIR interim financials. He provided a detailed explanation pertaining to line items that are either over or under their 2024 budgeted value.

**ACTION ITEM:** RDCO Finance and OKSIR to add asset management costs as an agenda item to 31 January 2025 board meeting agenda.

**Moved by: Director de Jong**

**Seconded by: Director Webber**

*"That the interim financial statements be received."*

**CARRIED**

**7.4 Memo from Melissa Tesche, BCFGA General Manager, dated September 26, 2024, re: Tree Fruit Industry Report**

Melissa Tesche, BCFGA GM, gave a brief report about the state of the tree fruit industry after the unexpected mid-summer closure of BC Tree Fruits (BCTF). All BCTF growers were directed to find alternate homes for their apple crops this year. Individual growers needed to find a new packer, achieve independent food safety certification, obtain bins to pick crops into and find a new source of horticultural support. A lack of cold and controlled

atmosphere storage for the crop and potential pricing challenges from the market added to the chaos.

It was concluded that it is too early to tell how these changes might impact apple acreages in the future but that the apple sector will undoubtedly look different next year.

Grower Tarsem Goraya, as a prior member of the BCTF Co-op, expressed frustration with the lack of government financial support and operational oversight provided to the cooperative in the years leading up to the collapse.

**Moved by: Director Webber**

**Seconded by: Grower Tarsem**

*"THAT the report from Melissa Tesche, BCFGA General Manager be received."*

**CARRIED**

**8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA**

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by: Director Lavery**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 12:28 pm"*

**CARRIED**

  
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Chair  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporate Officer