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MAY 2023 | Vol. 109 No. 5

Province revamps replant program

Scope expands
to address
weather losses,
disease

PETER MITHAM



KELOWNA – A new and expanded replant program geared to perennial crops is in the works following the end of several sector-specific programs last year.
The new perennial crop renewal program will be part of a \$200 million food security package the province announced March 7.

Province could link ▶



Steady hand

BC Fruit Growers Association general manager Glen Lucas marks 25 years with the organization this month, a career that has seen his steady, unflappable manner keep day-to-day business in hand and the industry looking forward despite challenging conditions. An agricultural economist by training, his love for hands-on work with producers is part of what inspires him. Read his story on page 11. MYRNA STARK LEADER



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Groundwater penalties coming

PETER MITHAM

VICTORIA – Groundwater users who have fallen afoul of the new water licensing regime that debuted in 2016 could start facing monetary penalties next year.
On March 27, the province announced work on a new regulation under the Water Sustainability Act setting forth administrative monetary penalties (AMPs) for non-compliance.
“Violations under the WSA are an issue across multiple sectors including residential

development, agriculture and industrial,” the province states. “Currently, the WSA relies on violation tickets, orders and prosecution through the courts. AMPs bridge the gap between tickets and prosecution.”
Violations include, among other things, drawing groundwater without a licence from unregistered wells. The province invited all existing well users in the province to register their wells and secure their historic water rights by applying for a groundwater license by March

1, 2022. However, of an estimated 20,000 wells in the province, licence applications were received for just 7,600.
While agricultural well owners led the charge, accounting for the largest number of applications, some have also reported aggressive visits from compliance and enforcement officers. In January, an officer visited two farms on the Sunshine Coast following reports from neighbours of violations.
“We are hearing from

Province sharpens ▶

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