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COUNTRY LIFE IN BC

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Tariff shock

Commodity leaders respond

KATHLEEN GIBSON

ABBOTSFORD – BC agriculture leaders are taking a strategic approach in response to the disruptive potential of a 25% tariff on Canada’s exports to the US.

“It’s really bringing people together,” says BC agriculture minister Lana Popham. “The amount of support for Canadian products is at an all-time high.”

That’s true not just domestically, but internationally as countries look for alternatives to US products in the face of punishing duties imposed by an inward-looking US administration.

Originally announced February 1 following US president Donald Trump’s

Tariff threats ▶



Room to grow

Provincial regulations continue to frustrate farmers and landowners trying to access water for non-domestic purposes, placing an undue burden of time and money on those trying to do the right thing. Chris Bodnar of Glen Valley Organic Farm in Abbotsford says the province is targetting law-abiding farmers without making things easier for them to do the right thing. Read more on page 7. RONDA PAYNE

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Province delivers for fruit growers

PETER MITHAM

VICTORIA – BC fruit growers watched enviously as Washington orchardists received government funding equivalent to 7 cents a pound on production in 2020 while the BC industry studied ways to stabilize the sector.

The province’s tree fruit industry stabilization initiative took note, and recommended the consideration of a one-time payment to BC growers experiencing financial difficulties.

Now, the province has

come through, announcing \$10 million for growers on February 19 that will start flowing to eligible growers on a per-acre basis this spring.

“These past years have been very challenging for BC tree fruit farmers and we want to make sure they are ready for this season and seasons to come,” agriculture minister Lana Popham said in announcing the funding.

The province expects up to 720 growers to tap into the funding, up to 70 acres per grower. Tree fruit production in the province last year

totalled 18,377 acres, according to Statistics Canada, led by apples at 8,549 acres and sweet cherries at 7,037 acres.

“This support aims to help growers recover from recent hardships, including labour shortages, production loss and increasingly competitive markets,” a provincial statement says, noting that eligible uses “include tools, training, capital for farm improvement, farm debt repayment and farm wages.”

BC Fruit Growers

Funding welcomed ▶

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