



## THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

### SHORT NEWS

July 2010

**....Standards Interpretation Committee: Funding not renewed...** In spite of the fact that the work of the Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC) has proven to be both effective and efficient - one in-person meeting and one monthly teleconference resolved over 65 questions posed by stakeholders - funding for the work of the Committee was not renewed for 2010-2011. Other CFIA issues such as public safety and pure enforcement of government policies have taken priority. A result, the organic sector must apply a standard that is sometimes unclear without interpretative assistance. Furthermore, the SIC is a source of information for the CGSB Committee on Organic Committee; when a standard is unclear or open to several interpretations, and the SIC is unable to reach consensus, it will recommend a revision to the standard. The Organic Federation of Canada has solicited funding under an AAFC program (CAAP) for the ongoing work of the SIC.

**In the meantime, Canadian organic stakeholders may express their support for the SIC by sending a message to [info@organicfederation.ca](mailto:info@organicfederation.ca), asking the Canadian government to allocate funding to the interpretation of the Canadian Organic Standards. (The first set of draft Q&As can be found at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/comqueste.shtml>)**

**....Equivalency Agreements...** The COO has audited the EU system in June; audit reports will be exchanged soon. There is no further news from the US. In June the COO posted copies to its website of the letters exchanged by the CFIA and USDA when the agreement was originally signed a year ago. However, a number of issues such as NOP certification for Canadian products, or the application of the agreement to processed products, are still waiting for clarification.

**...The Organic Value Chain Round Table...** met in Quebec City June 28-29. The agenda included interesting topics as the development of the export market, the lack of statistics about the Canadian organic sector, the branding of the Canadian organic products (are there too many logos on the labels of organic products? How can a Canadian consumer identify clearly an organic product grown in Canada?) and the challenge of GMOs. The OVCRT working groups are dynamic and work is progressing. The minutes of this meeting will be published on the [AAFC website](#).

**....Amendments to Canada Organic Standards ...** Comments from the public and those collected on OFC Blog have been treated and translated and the ballot has been circulated to voting members of the CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture. Votes must be cast by August 30<sup>th</sup>. Revision of standards is a serious business; after the ballot results are compiled, the CGSB staff, Kelly Monaghan, the Chair of the Committee, and the Conveners of the working groups will respond to all negative votes and comments; positive ballot results and proposed action to resolve negative votes will be forwarded back to the full Committee. After consensus is reached, the amendments, based on decisions taken at the 11<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting, held 18, 19 and 20 of January 2010 will be advanced for second level approval. This second level of approval is an internal CGSB audit to verify that all revision procedures have been respected and to confirm the overall quality of the proposed revision. After that, amendments will be translated and submitted to the Standards Council of Canada before publication. That is the way organic farming is standardized!

**...Meeting about extension services for the Canadian organic sector...** Keri Sharpe from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Alberta invites Canadian organic extension agents and managers of national and provincial organic associations to a national meeting in Banff, August

9-10, "to develop the framework of a national platform for delivery of extension services to the Canadian Organic Sector". This meeting is a real boost for the sector because extension work is vital to kits development. The OFC will follow-up on this meeting in future communiqués.

**...Organic week...** COG and OTA are preparing a national Organic Week event. if you have ideas or if you are interested in organizing an event in your area, [visit COG home page](#)

**...Summer reading...** OACC is mandated is to disseminate the knowledge and science of organic to the organic stakeholders and has created a series of articles that are easy to read and informative on various aspects of organic farming; it is always interesting to read about the organic approach to tillage, animal welfare, the basic role of insects, or about the deeper organic movement. The articles are short, lively and get right to the point. So have a fresh organic beer or lemonade, relax and click on [http://www.oacc.info/NewspaperArticles/na\\_welcome.asp](http://www.oacc.info/NewspaperArticles/na_welcome.asp) to discover more about the riches of the organic approach.