Info-bio
THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

June 2015

A 4th and last TC meeting

Agriculture standard's review almost completed without merging with organic aquaculture

The last meeting of the CGSB Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture (TC) was held May 11-13 in Gatineau to finalize the review of the agriculture standard by addressing comments received during the 1st ballot held in February 2015, assessing new items such as the use of biodegradable mulches, and analyzing the merger of organic aquaculture and agriculture standards.

The Technical Committee reviewed all of the recommendations issued by the Working Groups, which were responsible for the analysis of comments issued by the voting members of the TC who were not satisfied with some of the proposed modifications to the Canadian Organic Standards. The main decisions are presented here.

The OFC will soon post on its website the 32.310 and 32.310 drafts that will go to ballot.

Contrary to what had been planned, there will not be a public review, as the merger of the aquacultural and agricultural standards was not successful. After a full day of discussion between the representatives of the aquaculture sector and the TC members, the aquaculture representatives concluded that the aquaculture standard was not enough well understood and that it was preferable to continue sharing information and concerns before merging the two standards.

The main concerns expressed by the agriculture sector were mainly about fish farming in net pens, the difficulty of feeding fish with 100% organic feed, as organic aquaculture is a new production system with potential supply difficulties, and the introduction of aquaponics under the organic umbrella.

Nonetheless, the organic aquaculture representatives are maintaining the validity of their ecological production system and are looking forward to the integration of their standard into Organic Products Regulations when the Safe Food Act is enforced.

Exchanges will continue between the two sectors that share organic branding and are aware of the importance of maintaining organic integrity for all Canadian product sold as organic.

The Organic Aquaculture Standard became a national standard under the supervision of CGSB in 2012. It is currently a voluntary standard not regulated by the Canadian government.
The certified organic Canadian operators produce

- Mussels (9 companies),
- Trout (3 companies),
- Salmon (2 companies),
- Sablefish (1 company),
- Caviar and sturgeon (1 company),
- Feed (2 companies).

7 companies are processors of organic aquacultural products.

Link to additional information:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8RSD45d0ZdYejRTLWZlZmdNQWc/view?usp=sharing

The main TC recommendations

Drafts referenced:
32.310 - http://www.organicfederation.ca/sites/documents/B-0032-0310-000-E-NE0012.pdf
32.311 http://organicfederation.ca/sites/documents/B-0032-0311-000-E-NE0012.pdf

- Clause 1.4 is clarified and simplified'.

- Definition of homeopathy is removed.

- Definition of nanotechnology is improved:
  Nanotechnology (Nanotechnologie) Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter at atomic, molecular, or macromolecular dimensions typically between 1 and 100 nm to create materials, devices and systems with fundamentally new properties and functions. Nanoscale chemical substances, or nanomaterials, behave differently from their macroscale counterparts, exhibiting different mechanical, optical, magnetic or electronic properties.

- Petrochemicals added to the definition of synthetic substances;

- Parallel production finally prohibited: though the balloted draft was proposing to accept parallel production in Canada, the numerous negative comments issued by the sector made it impossible to establish a consensus over that management practice;

- The need for isolation distances to protect crops from GE contamination through cross-pollination is confirmed. Mitigation strategies, such as physical barriers, border rows or delayed planting, would help reduce isolation distances. Isolation distance (GE) is defined in Section 3 (Terms and Definitions).

- The organic plan will have to include the operator's risk management plan to prevent GE contamination.

- The size of layer flocks will be limited to 10,000 birds; more than one flock can be in the same building if they are separated and have separate outdoor runs; if major renovations are required, there will be an extension of 2 years to come into compliance; size of broilers is not limited.

- Pullet rearing will have to be done under conditions existing in layer barns until they are fully immunized. Outdoor runs are not required when flocks are undergoing immunization program.

- Birds will have sufficient exits to ensure they have ready access to outdoors: exists will be distributed evenly along the line of access to outdoor range; size of popholes will be proportional to number of hens/birds.

Poultry	Pophole Space	Min Width	Min Height	Minimum #
Layers	2m/1000 hens	50cm	35 cm	2
Broilers	1m/1000 birds OR all birds within 15m of an exit	50cm	35 m	2
Turkeys	2m/1000 birds	150cm	75 cm	2

- Existing barns not meeting these requirements will have to demonstrate that 25-50% of the birds are on range when age and weather conditions are met. Use of photographs with date and weather records are recommended as evidence.

- Daylight parameters in barns are defined: it should be possible to read a newspaper in the barn

- Beak trimming will be reduced to minimal removal of sharp hook and de toeing is forbidden.

- Use of electric trainers will be allowed for an additional 5 years on existing tie-stall operations if used in compliance with Code of Practice for the care and handling of dairy cattle.

- Outdoor space for dairy cows in tie-stall barns is determined - 6.5 m^2 (70 ft^2)/head in spring & fall when not on pasture.

- Feed harvested during the final 12 months of conversion can continue to be used as organic after the land transition is completed.

- Need of colostrum for dairy young mammals is clarified; they cannot be taken away from their mothers without having received colostrum.

The participants to the 4th meeting of the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture in Gatineau, May 11-13 2015, identified in enlarged pictures in the Who's Who section.

- If outdoor access is restricted, the operator shall document the reasons for, and duration of, confinement.

- Use of any effective disinfectant used to clean housing, pens and runs in the event of a reportable disease shall be documented.

- Measures are added to prevent accidental contamination of bulk at-risk organic seed or grain, such as visible identification of organic storage bins, temporary signage when organic crops are moved, dried or roasted.

- Prohibition of pasteurization of honey is maintained but reworded: *The heating of honey for extraction shall not exceed 35°C, and the decrystallization temperature shall not exceed 47°C. If organic honey is heated above those temperatures, then it can only be used as an ingredient in a multi-ingredient product.*

- In production of maple products, requirement for biodegradability of caustic soda-based soap is removed.

- Cleaning of equipment required before or after every production season.

The architects of the review - Dag Falck, Convener of ALL PSL WG, Hugh Martin, Chair of the Technical Committee, Anne Macey, Convener of Livestock WG, Maureen Bostock, Convener of the Crop PSL WG, Janine Gibson, Convener of the Livestock PSL WG, Ted Zettel, Convener for the Permanent PSL Committee Project, Rochelle Eisen, Convener of Preparation WG, and Co-Convener for the Agri-Aqua WG, Tim Rundle, Co-Convener for the Agri-Aqua WG, Kelly Monaghan, our organic scribe, and Nicole Boudreau, OFC coordinator.

Missing: Jean Duval, Convener of Crop WG, Amy Kremen, Convener of Processing PSL WG and Tony McQuail, Convener of the Small-Scale Certification WG, Mark Schuessler, CGSB.

Permitted Substances Lists

PSL for Crop Production

- Biodegradable mulch will have to be derived from bio-based sources. Biodegradable polymers and Carbon Black from GE or petroleum sources will not be permitted – a temporary exception will allow the use of non-compliant biodegradable mulches without removal until January 2017.

- Formulant annotation revised (table 4.3):
  Formulants may be used in conjunction with substances listed in Table 4.3 as follows:
  a) For application on crops, formulants shall be classified in PMRA list 4A or 4B or be non-synthetic, and may be used with the following substances: adhesives for sticky traps and barriers, ammonium carbonate, baits, borate, boric acid, pesticides, dormant oils, hydrogen peroxide and soaps.
  b) Formulants classified in PMRA list 3 may be used with passive pheromone dispensers.
  c) Formulants used with all other substances listed in Table 4.3 shall be non-synthetic unless listed as allowed in the annotation.

- Calcium chloride and calcium silicate annotations revised:
  Non-synthetic. To address plant nutrient deficiencies and physiological disorders.

- In Composting Feedstocks, testing would be required to detect prohibited substances persistent in compost, including testing of animal manure;

- Annotation to Mined Minerals, unprocessed modified:
  A mined mineral shall not have undergone any change in its molecular structure through heating or combining with other substances and shall not be processed or fortified with synthetic chemicals unless listed in 32.311 Table 4.2
  Sodium nitrate is prohibited.
  Mined minerals include basalt, pumice, sand, feldspar, mica, granite dust and unprocessed rock dust. Rock dust which has been mixed with petroleum products, such as those from stone engraving, are is prohibited. Minerals extracted from seawater are permitted.

- Compost sources are clarified; 'Off-Farm' is defined - *Compost from off-farm sources includes every other source, for example: municipal, residential, industrial, or any organic or non-organic farm.*

- Use of Biodegradable Planting Containers clarified - may be left to decompose in the field if they only contain ingredients listed on Table 4.2 of CAN/CGSB 32.311.

PSL for Livestock Production

- Annotation to pre-mixes modified - *Concentrated mixture of minerals and vitamins. From organic sources if commercially available. All ingredients in pre-mixes shall be essential for animal nutrition, and listed in Table 5.2. Non GE fillers for example rice hulls, may be non-organic.*

PSL for Processing

- Annotation to micro-organisms in Table 6.4 is revised - *Includes starter and dairy cultures and other preparations of micro-organisms normally used in product processing.*
  Ingredients used in conjunction with micro-organism preparations: non-synthetic substrates (e.g. milk, lactose, soy, etc.) are permitted. Other ingredients used (such as carriers, anti-caking agents and fillers, etc.) shall be listed in Tables 6.3 or 6.4.
  Operators shall obtain documentation from the manufacturer identifying any synthetic substances (such as preservatives, cryo-protectants, etc.) included in micro-organism preparations

- Commercial availability requirement removed or revised for many substances (Ascorbic acid (6.3), Vitamins and mineral nutrients (6.4), Flavours (6.4), Alcohol, ethyl and Vinegar (7.4).

- Fortification on voluntary basis if legally permitted for plant-based beverages, products resembling cheese and butter substitutes.

- Clause 7.1.2 is clarified - *Substances listed on Safety Data Sheets (SDS) shall be listed in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 To be eligible for use without a removal event, the ingredients of a product used to clean, disinfect or sanitize shall be listed on Table 7.3 if they appear on a SDS and/or a product label.*

- Collagen casings permitted for poultry sausage. *Collagen shall be derived from animals. If derived from cattle, collagen shall be guaranteed free of specified risk materials including the skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia (nerves attached to the brain), eyes, tonsils, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia (nerves attached to the spinal cord) of cattle aged 30 months or older; and the distal ileum (portion of the small intestine) of cattle of all ages.*

  Other ingredients (such as, but not limited to: cellulose, calcium coatings, glycerin, etc.) added to collagen casings during their manufacture which remain in the collagen casing when it is used shall respect the requirement provided in Subsection 1.4 a) of CAN/CGSB-32.310.

- Cornstarch annotation modified - *Starch from rice and waxy maize—Shall be derived using substances listed in Table 6.3 Extraction solvents, carriers and precipitation aids, where applicable. Starch shall not be modified by chemicals. Starch may be modified using physical or enzymatic methods.*

  Cornstarch—May contain substances that are plant-derived and/or listed in Tables 6.3-6.5

4th Meeting of Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture

Who's who

From left to right: Dag Falck, Small Scale Food Producers Association
Mark Schuessler, Canadian General Standards Board
Linda Edwards, BC Organic Tree Fruit Association,
Arnold Taylor, Saskorganics
Hugh Martin, Chair of the Technical Committee (ON)
Thierry Chopin, Canadian Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Network (UNB)
Cathleen Kneen, consultant
Ted Zettel, Organic Council of Ontario

First row:

Kelly Monaghan, AshStreet Organics (ON)
Rola Yehia, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
Sally Blackman, Canadian Produce Marketing Association
Priscilla Reimer, Manitoba Organic Alliance

Second row:

Janine Gibson, Organic Food Council of Manitoba
Maureen Bostock, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario
Brad Hicks, Canadian Organic Aquatic Producers Association (BC)
Jacques Dallaire, Farmer (QC)
Benoit Dubé, CFIA- Canada Organic Office
Ron Hamilton, Organic Alberta

Third row:

Marvin Dyck, Canadian Horticultural Council
Bill Barkley, organic inspector (ON)
Tim Rundle, Canadian Organic Aquatic Producers Association (BC)
Andy Hammermeister, Organic Agriculture Center of Canada (NS)

First row:
Anne Macey, Canadian Organic Growers
Jenny Hillard, Consumer Interest Alliance
Gérard Bouchard, Fédération d'agriculture biologique du Québec
Nicole Boudreau, Organic Federation of Canada

Second row:
Joyce Kelly, PEI Organic Producers Coop
Shannon Jones, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network
Nicolas Turgeon, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec
France Gravel, Filière biologique du Québec
Annie St-Onge, Fédération des producteurs acéricoles du Québec
Serge Lefebvre, Egg Farmers of Canada

Third row:
François Labelle, Valacta
Rochelle Eisen, consultant (BC)
Matthew Holmes, Canadian Organic Trade Association
Justin Henry, Land-based Aquaculture Association of Western Canada