



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

February 2014

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COS Review

Upcoming public review after the second Technical Committee meeting

The second meeting of the [Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture](#) (TC) will be held in Vancouver, from April 14th to 16th. The 43 voting members of the TC will continue assessing recommendations made by the Working Groups in an effort to modernize the Canadian Organic Standards. The [first meeting of the TC](#) was held in Gatineau, in December 2013.

Following the upcoming second meeting, a 60-day public review of the proposed amendments will be launched, giving the Canadian organic sector the opportunity to review all the proposed amendments to the COS and to submit their comments.

Meeting Calendar of the COS Review	
Meeting # 2	April 14-15-16, 2014 in Vancouver
Tentative dates	
Public Review	June/July 2014
1st ballot	October 2014
Meeting # 3	December 16-17-18, 2014
2nd Public Review/2nd ballot	January / February 2015
Meeting # 4	March 24-25-26, 2015
New COS will be published on August 30, 2015	

This first public review is tentatively scheduled to take place in June and July 2014. The sector's comments will then be submitted to the TC, whose mandate includes resolving negative comments or issues submitted by the public. This first public review will be followed by the first ballot (tentatively scheduled for October 2014), when voting TC members will vote on the list of proposed amendments.

A third TC meeting (tentatively scheduled for December 2014) will be held after this first ballot, to analyze negative votes and consider new requests for modifications. This will be followed by a second ballot, and then a fourth TC meeting. Dates for these events are still to be confirmed. However, the revised standards will be published in August 2015 – this date is fixed and unchangeable.

Amendments analyzed at the meetings of the Technical Committee are prepared by the Working Groups. The list of WG participants:

Crop Production – Principles and PSL – [click here](#)

Livestock Production – Principles and PSL – [click here](#)

Preparation & Handling – Processing PSL- [click here](#)

Please note that all participants are volunteers and the lists are dynamic.



The review and revision of the Canadian Organic Standards cannot proceed without the financial support of the Canadian Organic industry.

The Canadian Organic sector must contribute \$82,000 to ensure that our interests are represented in the COS revision process and outcome.

We ask that all organic stakeholders – including producers, farmers and traders – support the review of the Canadian Organic Standards by contributing generously to the Organic Federation of Canada's fundraising campaign.

**To make your financial commitment to the review of the COS,
or to get additional information:**

Contact the Organic Federation of Canada.

info@organicfederation.ca – 514-488-6192

12-4475, Grand Boulevard, Montreal, QC H4B 2X7

[Click here](#) to see the current list of sponsors!



An interview with Ward Middleton, President of Organic Alberta

The OFC will hold its upcoming Annual General Meeting on February 28 in Barrhead, Alberta. OFC directors selected this date and location in order to attend the [Organic Alberta \(OA\) Conference](#) on March 1st, in Barrhead. Ward Middleton, the President of OA, talks about producing organic crops in Alberta.

What are you producing and how long have you been certified?

Our first field was certified in 1998, and it took a few more years for us to transition the rest of the farm. We farm about 700 acres, including an 80-acre reforested woodlot, a 160-acre silvipasture that is a combination of sea buckthorn berry trees on the 20-acre paddock boundaries and cattle custom grazing in between. The balance of the farm is grains and oilseeds with the occasional specialty crop. Our current inventory includes: Wheat, Barley, Fall Rye, Peas, Canola, Flax, Sweet Clover Seed and Milk Thistle Seed, not all of which is grown each year.

Where do you market your products?

Each year I email a spreadsheet of our inventory and grain specifications to prospective buyers. Most of these buyers can be found in the Organic Alberta business-to-business directory, and are mostly grain brokers. We also sell directly to companies that press the oilseeds, malt the barley, or mill the wheat, when possible. Farm direct sales are not a big part of our income, but we make a number of farm gate sales in small quantities of food-grade flax and milling wheat. Seed-quality grains and clover seed are marketed directly to other farmers.



Alberta's organic-sector challenges?

Logistics, insufficient local processing for our products, competing with Alberta Oil money for labour and real estate.

Ward Middleton

Why organic?

The initial decision to become Certified Organic was strictly about economics. Organic grain production offered a premium, and a lower variable cost risk exposure in each year of production, making it affordable to self-insure instead of buy crop insurance. This added more to the bottom line as well.

Once into organics, however, we were amazed how many other positive attributes there were: We became free of the large corporate food system, fertilizer and chemical companies, and became surrounded by intriguing, positive-minded people in the organic industry.

You are the President of Organic Alberta; what is your association's next step?

We would love to convince the Provincial Government that Alberta should adopt the Federal Organic Standards, and then CFIA would be authorized to enforce the standards within the province. Further to this, we have more work to do with enhancing communication between OA and federal organic bodies (OFC, COG, COTA), as well as other producer groups within Alberta.



Survey - Organic Certification for Small-Scale Operations

Why do some organic businesses certify, while others don't?
Are there ways that organic certification could be designed to better serve small-scale operations?

Would your business benefit from being certified organic?

We invite you to help us by answering our survey questions – [click here](#) to share your thoughts and suggestions.

Draft organic regulations under public review in New-Brunswick

Tim Livingstone, who represents the New-Brunswick Working Group/ACORN on OFC's Board, is excited: The New-Brunswick government is finally taking an important step to present the Organic Grade Regulation under the *Natural Products Act*.

"The Natural Products Act is administered by the New Brunswick Farm Products Commission", says Livingstone. "This is the same body that administers regulations in the dairy industry and other farm groups. It is completely complaint driven, but they are obliged to follow up on complaints. They have their own enforcement officer who follows up on complaints and 99% of the time the operator in violation will correct their activities after being contacted. If not, it will eventually be taken to court. The officer will be looking for a valid certificate. If that is produced, the case is closed. If not, the operator must not use the word "organic", "organically grown", "organically produced", or "organically raised".

The draft is currently [up for public comment](#). Ted Zettel, President of the OFC, believes that "this appears to be yet another innovative approach to closing the intra-provincial loophole." The rest of the Canadian organic sector must surely agree.

**The Organic Federation of Canada's
Annual General Meeting**
Friday, February 28th, 2014, from 4 pm to 6:15 pm, MST
Conference Room, [Barrhead Neighbourhood Inn](#),
6011 49 St, Barrhead, AB T7N 1A5

You can participate by phone! Join us!
Call-in numbers and agenda in appendix

Organic Directories

Two Canadian CVBs share their lists

There are [four Conformity Verification Bodies \(CVBs\)](#) in charge of accrediting Certification Bodies (CBs) who in turn ensure that operators conform to the Canadian Organic Standards. These are the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC); the Committee on Accreditation for Evaluation of Quality (CAEQ); the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS); and the Standards Council of Canada (SCC).

The COABC and the CAEQ display searchable lists by products, operators or region. Detailed information on all the operators certified by the CBs they accredit can be used to create links, share knowledge and develop organic business.

COABC's directory can be consulted [here](#). CAEQ's List, which is called LOSOC – List of Operators Subject to Organic Control – can be consulted [here](#).

The International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) plays an important role with regard to imports as it currently works with [24 CBs around the world](#), including one in Canada (Atlantic Certified Organic Ltd). Visitors have to check with each CB to get their list of operators.

The fourth CVB, the Standards Council of Canada, publishes its [list of accredited Certifying Bodies](#), but does not post its list of certified operators on its website.

USDA opens a comment period on the coexistence of organic, conventional and GM crops

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched an open comment period on the “co-existence” of organic, conventional and genetically engineered crops. According to the Center for Food Safety, “as usual, the agency’s proposal reads like it was written by the biotech industry,” and invites people to tell the USDA that their “co-existence” plan “would institutionalize an allowable level of transgenic contamination in crops across the U.S.... This is simply unacceptable. It is high time that USDA address the root causes of contamination by stopping gene flow and putting the burden for preventing contamination squarely on Monsanto and the other biotech companies.” [Read more here](#).

What does natural really mean?

This [funny video](#) (4:25 m) will answer that question, and also leave you smiling.

A historical drought is affecting California

A record-breaking drought has been affecting California for the past many months. The [California Farm Bureau Federation estimates that](#) it is going to be the worst drought in 150 years, and a minimum of 500,000 acres of land that are usually irrigated will be left out of production this year. Farmers will have to decide which crops to sacrifice. Less profitable crops such as onion, garlic and tomato may be discarded. 25% of California's land is used for agricultural activities, and 23% of that production is exported to Canada.

1200 French Physicians call for a reduction of pesticides in food production

[1200 French physicians](#) have signed a petition stating that they have seen an increase of chronic diseases in their patients (...etc), and that there is growing evidence that points to widespread chemical substances in the environment being responsible.

They also underlined that "90% of the French population is contaminated with organophosphates". A number of pesticides are endocrine disruptors, even when present at very low concentrations. The EU has not standardized a method to determine which pesticide are disrupters. The physicians are calling for the creation of charts that describe professional illnesses amongst farmers exposed to pesticides. They also ask for the end of derogations to aerial spreading, reduction of risks for populations living close to areas where pesticides are frequently used, prohibition of the use of pesticides in non-farming zones, and labeling that shows the list of pesticides used in a product. The statement emphasizes that testing of marketed pesticides should be done by independent agencies, and should take low-level and "cocktail" effects into consideration. Finally, and logically, the physicians are calling for the promotion of organic agriculture, so that people can choose pesticide-free food.

Environmental groups force Ottawa to review pesticide products

Environmental groups have forced Ottawa to review the approval of up to 383 pesticide products containing 23 active ingredients, including many with links to cancer and water contamination.

After a legal challenge by Ecojustice on behalf of Equiterre and the David Suzuki Foundation, the federal government will be examining these pesticide products, a number of which contain ingredients that are have already been banned in Europe. The government will be deciding whether to ban or restrict their use in Canada. [Read more.](#)

Agenda

Annual General Meeting of the Organic Federation of Canada

Friday, February 28th, from 4:00 pm to 6:15 pm, Mountain Standard Time,
at the Conference Room of the [Barrhead Neighbourhood Inn](#),
6011 49 St, Barrhead, AB T7N 1A5

Call-in Numbers: 1-866-613-5223 Access code: 9610448

1. Introductions – Roll call of member delegates and sector participants.
2. Adoption of Agenda- Appointment of referee for the minutes.
3. Adoption of minutes of AGM 2012-2013.
4. Report from the President.

5. AGM Special Event – The Alberta Organic Sector
 - a. Sustainability of the Alberta organic sector
 - b. Facing GMO contamination
 - c. Lack of intraprovincial rules: impact on the Alberta sector

6. Reports on Projects:
 - Review of the Canadian Organic Standards Report
 - Organic Science Cluster Report
 - Standards Interpretation Committee Report
 - Organicinputs.ca – National Organic Input Brand Name Directory

7. Resolution to amend [Bylaws](#) and [Policies and Procedures](#) with regard to representation of Nova Scotia & research project management (described below)

8. OFC Financial Report 2012-2013; appointment of the auditor.
9. Designation of directors (voting and ex-officio). Terms ending in 2014: MB, BC, ON, YK, SK

10. Domestic issues – Next AGM
11. Adjourn

Join us!

1- Resolution for representation of Nova Scotia on OFC Board

Whereas;

the member for Nova Scotia has been and is unable to perform the tasks which are necessary in representing and communicating with the sector in Nova Scotia, as outlined in “OFC Policies and Procedures; 3.3.1 a), c), d), and f),

Be it Resolved;

that the Organic Council of Nova Scotia is, as of this date, expelled as a member of the Organic Federation of Canada.

Membership Withdrawal

4.3.1. Any member or associate member may withdraw from the corporation by delivering to the corporation a written resignation and lodging a copy of the same with the secretary of the corporation.

4.3.2. Any member or associate member may be required to resign by a special resolution requiring approval of 75 percent of the members present at an annual meeting.

a) The notice of special resolution for expulsion shall be accompanied by a brief statement of the reason or reasons for the proposed expulsion.

b) The member or associate member who is the subject of the proposed resolution for expulsion shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the general meeting before the special resolution is put to vote.

Membership Criteria

3.3.1. Provincial and Territorial Organisations

1. The structure of the OFC/FBC relies on the existence of strong, democratically constituted, regional organizations. The provincial and territorial organizations provide the communications link between the OFC/FBC and organic operators across the country. The OFC/FBC has certain requirements for its provincial/territorial members. They must:

a) Strive to represent the entire organic industry—this means the producers, handlers, processors, input manufacturers, importers and exporters, retailers, and certification bodies in that province or territory. No one facet of the industry should predominate in their organisation so that all organic interests are represented in their governing council (or board).

b) Include government in their organization—either as ex-officio directors or as members. Provincial or territorial governments shall be included—federal government representatives may be included if the provincial or territorial organization desires.

c) Have the functional ability to serve their members—be able to communicate information to their members from the OFC/FBC and to communicate information from their members to the OFC/FBC.

d) Pay their membership fees.

e) Have the ability to provide an elected director to the OFC/FBC board of directors. The director must be able to fulfill their role as a responsible member of a legal board of directors. They must attend meetings and they must report the results of OFC/FBC meetings to the body that appointed them.

f) Have the ability to provide for the reasonable expenses required of a director.

2- Execution of documents: determination of overhead cost

It is proposed to add a paragraph to section 9 of OFC's Bylaws to determine allowed overhead cost when OFC signs agreements with other institutions/partners.

Justification: when negotiating agreements, most institutions (and sometimes individuals or private companies) will include an overhead charge on the contribution to cover their administrative expenses. Sometimes, this can be 40% or even higher. As some institutions will only accept O/H limitations if it is a clear policy of the funding partner, it is proposed to add the following resolution to section 9 of OFC Bylaws – named Execution of documents:

When work is being subcontracted or grant contributions are being made by the OFC to another institution or individual, overhead charges will not exceed 15% of the total amount.