



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

October 2014

Review of the Canadian Organic Standards

Comments from the Public Review now being assessed by the Working Groups

Hugh Martin, the Chair of the Technical Committee, is very pleased with the number of comments submitted by the organic sector during the recent Public Review held from July to September 2014.

“As the Public Review had to be held during summer due to our tight schedule, we appreciate people who took time to comment on the proposed modifications to our national standard during the farming season.”

CGSB policy requires that, during the review of a draft standard, all concerned parties be given the opportunity to be heard and all comments and negative votes are given careful consideration. “Comments are now being looked at by the Working Groups (WGs) and that will guide how we write a better standard and help clarifying many of the issues,” added Hugh Martin.

Each standard shall be written in a clear, concise, logical, unambiguous manner so that users of a product, process or service addressed by the standard are not misled.

CGSB Policy and Procedures
Manual for the
development and
Maintenance of Standards

The WGs are currently meeting by teleconference, and they will then propose their recommendations to the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture (TC), which will meet in mid-December in Gatineau. Following this third meeting of the Technical Committee, the ballot process will be launched.

The voting members of the TC will vote on the technical content of the draft standard, with three possible voting choices:

- Affirmative (acceptable as presented)
- Affirmative with comments (technical content of the draft is acceptable and editorial or clarifications are proposed)
- Negative with reasons (a negative vote without reason shall be counted as not cast).

Ballots marked “abstain” shall be considered not cast.

A second public review will be held concurrently in early 2015, to present the modifications to the organic standard as recommended by the TC during the December 2014 meeting.

Short news...

....A Sprout-Shoot-Microgreens Working group has been created to clarify section 7.2 of the Canadian Organic Standards

....The Standards Interpretation Committee is cooperating closely on the standards' review. The SIC has referred 58 questions to be reviewed under the current review process. Interpreting the standard is an excellent way to detect what may be unclear in a written standard.

....Ted Zettel, president of the OFC, will present at the [Organic Connections](#) tradeshow on the theme of the permanent funding for the maintenance of the organic standards.

... The Small Scale Certification Working Group will soon launch a blog about two certification processes that could be created to facilitate organic certification for small scale operators. Watch for this soon on the OFC website.

... Non-members of the Technical Committee may attend meetings, subject to the approval of CGSB and the Chair. Non-members may participate in the TC's deliberations, but may not vote. CGCB reserves the right to limit attendance at meetings of the TC.

Organic Standards Interpretation Committee

Call for Nominations

Deadline – November 3rd 2014

You are invited to submit nominations for these three positions.

The Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC) is an advisory body that has been created to assist the [Canadian Organic Office](#) (COO) in the interpretation of the Canadian Organic Standard (CAN/CGSB 32.310 and CAN/CGSB 32.311), in order to achieve uniform application of the rules to all operators through various certifying bodies.

As per the [SIC Terms of Reference](#) that outlines the function of the committee as well as the selection criteria and process of its members, the terms of two committee members, Jean Duval and Janine Gibson, are ending in November 2014 and an additional vacant seat has to be filled.

Each nomination must be accompanied by an outline of the candidate's credentials; nominees must be:

- voting members of the CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture; or,

- stakeholders having experience in the standard process as well as technical expertise in at least one aspect of organic production, or
- stakeholders having experience with any other kind of standards' drafting.

People ending their terms may run for re-election but must be nominated again. Appointments to the SIC are now for three years. Other current members of the Standards Interpretation Committee are Maureen Bostock, Rochelle Eisen, Kelly Monaghan and Ted Zettel.

We will accept nominations until November 3rd 2014.

SIC nominations should be sent to the OFC at info@organicfederation.ca. Please contact the OFC if you have any questions or require further information.

The activities of the Standards Interpretation Committee are posted on OFC Website:

- Terms of Reference - <http://organicfederation.ca/sic-terms-reference>
- Addressing a question to the SIC - <http://organicfederation.ca/addressing-question-sic>
- Final Q&As - <http://organicfederation.ca/final-qas-canadian-organic-standards>
- Q&As under Comment Period - <http://organicfederation.ca/qas-under-comment-period>



**Organic Science Cluster II
The Announcement of the
Organic Science Cluster II is on line!**

[Click here](#) to see the video!

**The Research Activity of the month
Development of sustainable
alternative sources of bedding for
dairy cows**

One important criterion in choosing an appropriate housing system for dairy cows is that the stall provides a comfortable and healthy surface for the cow to lie down.

Stall comfort is essential to promote rest and ensure health and productivity. Bedding plays a key role in stall comfort and hygiene, but it is increasingly expensive and labour intensive, and farmers have tended to reduce their use of organic bedding.

The overall goal of this research activity is, therefore, to investigate the use of switchgrass in two forms as sustainable, alternative bedding sources for dairy cows that also enhance cow welfare.



Dr. Renée Bergeron, an Associate Professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science and Director of Alfred Campus, is the activity leader.

Guelph, Laval and McGill Universities are involved, as well as the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire.

The expected benefit of this project is the identification of an alternative, cost-effective source of bedding for dairy cows. This project will lead to recommendations in terms of optimal harvest dates and drying time for switchgrass.

The industry partner is [Dairy Farmers of Canada](#). [Click here](#) to read the full activity summary

Why Organic?

Glyphosate appears to be strongly correlated with the rise in celiac disease

The use of glyphosate, the active ingredient in the broad-spectrum herbicide Roundup, has dramatically risen over the past 15 years, right in step with the use of GE crops.

According to Dr. Stephanie Seneff, a senior research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), glyphosate appears to be strongly correlated with the rise in celiac disease. [Read more](#).

Conclusions from the international Task Force on Systemic Pesticides

**Neonics impact all species that chew a plant, sip its sap, drink its nectar, eat its pollen or fruit
....and these impacts cascade through an ecosystem weakening its stability.**

In June 2014, 29 authors that make up the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides and represent many disciplines, published a report and created a website to present findings from their review of 800 scientific studies spanning the last five years, including many sponsored by industry. They synthesized the scientific knowledge of the impacts (real and potential) of systemic pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, in a 11 minute film, presented at <http://www.tfsp.info/>

The impact of the use of neonics on bees has been quite well established, but the Task Force's findings are even more dramatic: many insect species, as well as birds feeding on these insects, are contaminated by neonics and their populations are clearly declining.



It is the combination of persistence (over months or years) and solubility in water that has led to the large scale contamination of, and the potential for accumulation in, soils and sediments, ground and surface water and treated and non-treated vegetation.

A CBC report, presented at [La Semaine Verte](#) (in French), describes effects of neonics in Quebec. The growth and survival rates of young tree swallows were found to be much lower when living in corn fields than when living in an environment without pesticides. These birds feed on contaminated insects, and their population is noticeably declining. Moreover, extensive use of neonics is not having an impact on yields, as research done on 25 Quebec farms and confirmed by Italian and British research concludes that there is no increase in yields on land where neonics are used.

www.organicfederation.ca

info@organicfederation.ca

