



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

January 2015

Review of the Canadian Organic Standards

A ballot in February on all the recommendations adopted by the CGSB Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture

The Canadian General Standards Board is now preparing the draft of the revised Canadian Organic Standards* that will include all of the modifications recommended by the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture (TC) from the three 3-day meetings that have been held since the launch of the review, which will be balloted by voting members of the TC in February. This first ballot is a turning point: over 250 modifications will be scrutinized and hopefully well received by the voting members of the TC.

After the ballot, the Working Groups responsible for submitting recommendations to the TC will analyze the negative votes issued by the voting members to determine if they are based on valid arguments. If so, a new recommendation may be submitted to the TC, which will meet again in May 2015 to resolve all negative votes and also assess any late modification requests that may be submitted by the sector.

The agenda of the May meeting of the TC will also include the presentation of the integration of the organic aquaculture standard into the two organic agriculture standard documents (32.310 & 32.311). A new Task Force, the Agri-Aqua Task Force, is already meeting to determine how to best merge the organic agriculture and aquaculture standards.

Two conveners, Rochelle Eisen, from the terrestrial sector, and Tim Rundle, from the aquaculture sector, are leading the Agri-Aqua Task Force, which is composed of stakeholders from both sectors, and created with the financial support of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the aquaculture sector.

After the May meeting, the merged agriculture-aquaculture organic standard will be balloted a second time and undergo a public review. The CGSB hopes that the merged standard will be favourably received by the organic community, allowing the revised COS to be published in late summer.

If a situation arises where the agriculture section is well received by the community, but the aquaculture section is subject to numerous negative votes and comments, the CGSB may decide to only publish the agriculture standard, which could be amended at a later date to include the aquaculture section.

Review Calendar	
February 2015	First Ballot for the Voting Members of the Technical Committee
March-April 2015	Working Groups back to work for compilation and analysis of ballot results and preparation of the merged agriculture-aquaculture standards (agri-aqua standard)
May 2015	Meeting of the Technical Committee – to address negative votes and to analyze merged agri-aqua organic standards
June 2015	Merged agri-aqua standard under public review and second ballot
July 2015	Analysis of negative votes and comments by the Working Groups Meeting of the Technical Committee (conference call) if necessary
Summer 2015	Publication of the revised standard – the merged agri-aqua standard, <u>or</u> the agriculture standard only if there is no consensus on the merged agri-aqua standard

***Note: OFC will soon publish the revised draft that will be submitted to the ballot in order to inform the Canadian organic sector. Please keep in mind that the next public review is planned to be held in June 2015.**

After Quebec, Manitoba, New-Brunswick

BC Government projects to regulate intraprovincial organic trade
“We are going to strengthen the standards and reputation of B.C. organic products by regulating the use of the word organic and by helping farmers who want to become organic to do so,” said BC Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick.

Great news for the Canadian organic industry: the government of British Columbia “is moving to stamp out bogus organic claims being made by farmers that do not have third-party certification”.

The Ministry of Agriculture is consulting with the organic sector about developing a three pillar approach to strengthen the awareness and reputation of B.C.'s organic foods, locally, across Canada, and around the world.

The consultations involve regulating the use of the term "organic", developing transitional strategies that support farmers to become certified, creating business strategy and market development programs, and creating a brand to market B.C. organic foods.



The proposed change will require all products marketed as "organic" in B.C. to be certified under either a provincial or national certification program. Operators producing and selling their organic products strictly within B.C. will require provincial certification. B.C. companies with customers in other provinces or countries will require certification by a federally accredited certification body, just as they do today.

The provincial certification program follows the same standard as the national program, but with streamlined record keeping and documentation practices. - See more at:

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/01/plans-underway-to-grow-bc-organic-sector.html>

<http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/b-c-to-weed-out-false-organic-produce-claims-1.1741835#sthash.mDezVfve.dpuf>

A fresh start for the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate

Members of the [Saskatchewan Organic Directorate](#) (SOD) met in Saskatoon on Monday, January 19, to consider the organization's future direction. Members voted unanimously to adopt a new set of bylaws resulting in new name, membership structure and funding model.



SaskOrganics is the new name for the revitalized industry association. From this point forward, everyone who is certified organic in Saskatchewan will be a member removing the requirement to purchase a

membership fee to belong. Having all certified organic entities in the province as members will create a much stronger body and more representative voice to enable SaskOrganics to better fulfil its mission to advocate for a sustainable and thriving organic community through leadership in research, market development and communications. As an alternative to the membership fee funding model, SaskOrganics is working with Organic Alberta, Manitoba Organic Alliance and organic industry partners to establish a more sustainable funding mechanism - The Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF) - for the organic industry on the prairies.

SaskOrganics' President, Garry K. Johnson commented "The changes signal a fresh start for Saskatchewan's organic industry association. The organic industry recognizes the need for unity and collaboration from the producer through to the consumer and all of the stake holders in between. The demand for Saskatchewan organically grown products continues to be strong and the sector is poised for growth.

SaskOrganics is committed to playing a vital and responsible role in the future of organic agriculture in Saskatchewan."

OFC's Blog
To Certify or Not To Certify
The perspective of small-scale organic farmers
VISIT THE [OFC'S BLOG](#) AND LEAVE YOUR COMMENT 

Winter school for a better knowledge of the Canadian Organic Standards

[ACORN](#) presents experts from across Canada for an introductory overview of the **Canadian Organic Standards**. These webinars are for anyone interested in having a better understanding of the COS.

Part 1 - *Tuesday, February 3 - Organic Crop Production* - 8pm AST with **Rochelle Eisen** B.Sc.(agr), P.Ag - Resilient Solutions Consulting

Part 2 - *Tuesday, February 10 - Organic Livestock* - 8pm AST with **Anne Macey** - co-author COG's Organic Livestock Handbook

Part 3 - *Tuesday, February 17 - Organic Processing and Labelling* - 8pm AST with **Kelly Monaghan** - Ash Street Organics

Free for ACORN members - \$10 per webinar for non-members.

For more info or to RSVP, contact Tara Scott - ACORN's Organic Transition Coordinator at transition@acornorganic.org.



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