



## THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

### **Vote result – Review of the Canadian Organic Standards**

## Yes to the balloted draft, with very few modifications

The members of the Technical Committee (TC) on Organic Agriculture have issued a strong majority vote and adopted the draft standard submitted to ballot in July.

84% of the TC members voted Yes to the balloted 2015 draft Principles and management standards – CAN/CGSB-32.310 and 94% to Permitted substances lists - CAN/CGSB-32.311.

Some votes included negative comments, however. As per CGSB procedures, Working Group Conveners and the Chair of the TC had to resolve these negative comments.

The OFC posted the balloted draft on its website. There was no official public consultation. In an effort to consider the opinions of the whole sector, the Conveners and the Chair have accepted to analyze comments put forward by stakeholders that are not voting members of the TC.

As per CGSB policy, the Conveners and the Chair do not have to consult the TC when solutions proposed to resolve negative comments do not change the intent of the standard.

Copies of the final versions can be downloaded from OFC– please note that these copies are will be subject to a full format editorial review by CGSB (content will not be affected).

Final draft- CAN/CGSB-32.310 - Principles and management standards (withdrawn- published in next InfoBio)

Final draft – CAN/CGSB-32.311 - Permitted substances lists (withdrawn- published in next InfoBio)

### **To be or not to be...outdoors**

The maximum size of layer flocks is maintained at 10,000.

New clauses pertaining to the requirements of outdoor access for poultry raised many comments about the required size and width of popholes, which could lead to significant renovation expenses.

The Conveners determined, however, that outdoor access had to be emphasized as a measure to protect animal welfare. Producers will be required to provide evidence that:



- either 25-50% of their flock is outdoors when there are no age or weather constraints;
- or that the distance to an exit from anywhere in the barn shall be no more than 15 m.

Producers will have an extended period of three years (rather than two) to come into full compliance with the new rules, provided that they produce a plan for any required new construction or renovation within twelve months of the publication of the standard.

Some interesting references - [Access to range for poultry](#) – from the Louis Bolk Instituut – Dec 2014

## Preventing contamination in a ‘sea of GMOs’

The establishment of isolation distances to protect crops at risk of contamination also sparked comments over a footnote specifying certain distances – 10 m for soybeans, 500 m for corn, 3 km for canola, apples and alfalfa (for seed production); these distances were compiled from a previous study led by the Organic Value Chain Round Table (OVCRT) and the Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association ([OSGATA](#)).

In response to comments, clause about isolation distances has been reworded to improve clarity, and the footnote eliminated; the relevant text now reads:

*5.2.2 If unintended contact with prohibited substances is possible, distinct buffer zones or other features sufficient to prevent contamination are required:*

- a) buffer zones shall be at least 8 m (26 ft, 3 in.) wide;*
- b) permanent hedgerows or windbreaks, artificial windbreaks, permanent roads or other physical barriers may be used instead of buffer zones;*
- c) crops grown in buffer zones shall not be considered organic whether or not they are used on the operation;*
- d) crops at risk of contamination from commercialized GE crops shall be protected from cross-contamination. If the isolation distance for an at-risk crop type is less than: 10 m for soybeans; 500 m for corn; and 3 km for canola, alfalfa (for seed production) and apples, mitigation strategies such as, but not limited to, physical barriers, border rows or delayed planting shall be implemented to protect organic crops.*

The omnipresence of GMO crops in Canada has to be addressed: the introduction of mitigation strategies to prevent contamination will help in maintaining the organic integrity of crop types that include GE varieties.

## ‘Natural’ is not organic

Some comments received were directed at the use of the word ‘natural’ in the text of the standard. The use of the term ‘natural’ is not regulated. A product is often labeled as “natural” to draw consumers’ attention without having any ‘natural’ attributes, including the potential environmental impact or other side effects. Within the organic standard, in most cases, “natural” does not refer to substances under Health Canada’s authority. The term is used to describe natural light, settings, reproduction, habitat, breeding or naturally occurring minerals. Based on this use, a decision was made to maintain the use of ‘natural’ in many clauses. Because i“Natural” was eliminated from certain annotations in Tables 4.2 (Enzymes, Biological organisms, Potassium) and 4.3 (Ascorbic acid, Treated seed) because the elimination of the term had no effect on the intent of these PSL listings.

## Coming soon....

The Organic Federation of Canada will present interviews with Conveners and the Chair of the Technical Committee where each will summarize the main changes to the section for which they were responsible.

## Standards Interpretation Committee - All Q & As to be revised

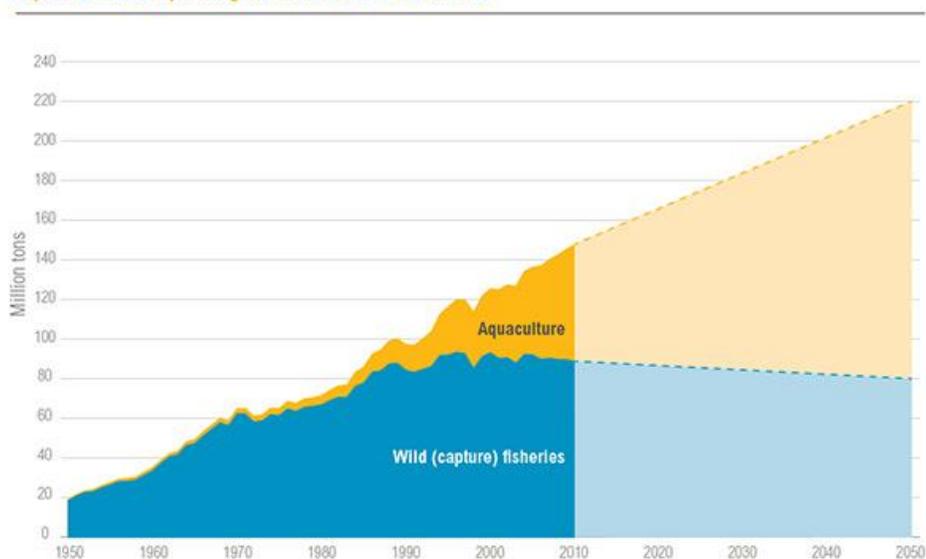
The Q & A's of the Standards Interpretation Committee already published on the OFC website will be revised when the 2015 version of the revised Canadian Organic Standards is published. This update will help producers comply with the revised standard.

## Organic Aquaculture

### The organic aquaculture sector plans for a full review of the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard

The leaders of the Canadian organic aquaculture sector plan to review the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard (COAS) in the coming year. CGSB requires to have all national standards revised every 5 years and the review of the Organic Aquaculture Standards – CAN/CGSB-32.312, (launched in 2012) was due in 2017. Work accomplished by the Agri-Aqua Committee from January to April 2015 under the COS review was productive; it enhanced incentives to complete the full review ahead of time and to align the future aquaculture review calendar with the review calendar of the agriculture standard. It will also allow the COAS to be revised before its integration to the Organic Products Regulations under the planned implementation of the Safe Food Act in 2016.

Aquaculture Is Expanding to Meet World Fish Demand



Source: Historical data 1950–2010: FAO. 2014. "FishStatJ." Rome: FAO. Projections 2011–2050: Calculated at WRI, assumes 10 percent reduction in wild fish catch between 2010 and 2050, and linear growth of aquaculture production at an additional 2 million tons per year between 2010 and 2050.

See [www.wri.org/publication/improving-aquaculture](http://www.wri.org/publication/improving-aquaculture) for full paper.

 WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

<http://www.wri.org/resources/charts-graphs/aquaculture-expanding-meet-world-fish-demand>

*The world's appetite for fish is steadily growing. (...) New research shows that aquaculture production will need to more than double again between now and 2050 to meet the demands of a growing population<sup>1</sup>.*

The Canadian aquaculture sector strongly believes that ecological aquaculture is needed to protect the environment and meet the demand for organic seafood. Their plan is to catch up with other international aquaculture standards, such as the [European Union organic standard](#), or the [Naturland](#) and [Bio Suisse](#) standards.

More to come!

## Quebec puts pressure on non-compliant retailers

CARTV, the provincial government agency that monitors intraprovincial trade in the province of Quebec,, is very serious about applying the [Act Respecting Reserved Designations and Added-Value Claims](#). CARTV set a precedent in imposing a fine of \$5052 to Bio-Bon Inc, an organic food processor from Coaticook that had pled guilty for having used the organic designation without complying to the law. CARTV has now sued a retail store in Chicoutimi named [Bizz](#), for violating the Act Respecting Reserved Designations and is claiming a fine of \$70,932. The case is expected reach the courts this coming fall.

*The Act is crystal clear: 'A person may not use a recognized reserved designation or authorized added-value claim on a product, its packaging or its labelling, in advertising or commercial documents or in the presentation of a product unless the person is registered with an accredited certification body and the product is certified by such a body as compliant with the applicable specification manual or regulation<sup>2</sup>.'*

The Act also sets fines for contravening the law: not less than \$2,000 nor more than \$20,000 and, for a subsequent offence, to a fine of not less than \$4,000 nor more than \$60,000.

CARTV supervision of the Quebec market will not end there. CARTV has added two full-time inspectors to its permanent staff.

The Quebec intraprovincial regulation of organic production has been in place since 2000. The educational approach initially used to convince operators selling 'organic' products to be certified by an accredited certification body has now been replaced with an authoritative approach. Quebec organic producers are satisfied because the legal approach sends a strong message to the industry that certification is a serious commitment and is necessary for consumers to continue to develop trust in the designation.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Waite, Michael Phillips (WorldFish) and Randall Brummett (World Bank) - *Sustainable Fish Farming: 5 Strategies to Get Aquaculture Growth Right*, June, 2014. <http://www.wri.org/blog/2014/06/sustainable-fish-farming-5-strategies-get-aquaculture-growth-right>

<sup>2</sup> Act respecting reserved designations and added-value claims - Chapter VI – Offences and Penalties - <http://www.cartv.gouv.qc.ca/en/chapter-vi-offences-and-penalties>

## Organic farming fosters biodiversity



**Biodiversity is simple;  
think about the forest; no two trees are the same;  
each tree is unique.  
If you happen to find two similar trees,  
it means that you are lost.**

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