Info-bio
THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

August 22 2014

Review of the Canadian Organic Standards

All organic producers and processors are invited to comment the proposed modifications

Should we relax the requirements regarding parallel production during the transition period?

Should the sector accept that microorganisms grown on GM substrates be used in organic production when no other product is commercially available?

Should the buffer zone requirements for honey production be modified?

The Canadian Organic Standards is the text that defines Canadian organic production. The text is now under review, and many modifications are suggested in order to modernize and clarify organic practices. Since September 2013, many working groups have drafted modifications to the wording and practices acceptable under organic management. A public review is currently open, until September 22nd 2014, in order to gather feedback from organic operators and the public.

To consult the proposed modifications, click on the following links:

General Principles and Management Standards

- A draft version with tracked changes
- A "clean" draft version

Permitted Substances Lists

- A draft version with tracked changes
- A "clean" draft version

Here are some of the proposed modifications:

- Addition of new production units to an existing organic operation is simplified (cl. 5.1.2)
- Parallel production under the transition period is reassessed; the production of the same crop under organic and conventional management would be allowed under certain conditions, including the prohibition of any genetically modified crop; refer to clause 5.1.3.
- In animal production, the feeding of calves, lambs and kids is better covered (cl. 6.4.3.a);
- The *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals* is referenced in many clauses of the standard;
- It is suggested to allow a derogation for dairy farms when compliance to housing standards would require major renovations (such as a new construction) (cl. 6.8.9.1)

- Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for cattle are specified (cl. 6.8.8);
- Living conditions for poultry include multi-level systems and mobile units (cl. 6.8.11.10, 6.8.11.11);
- Production of organic rabbits is better defined (cl. 6.8.12);
- The buffer zone for honey production is revised (cl. 7.1.9);
- Organic mushroom production section is reorganized (section 7.3);
- Sections 8 and 9 are rewritten;
- Table 4.2 of the Permitted Substances Lists is reorganized;
- Annotations for many substances are revised in the various PSL tables.

…. And many more propositions that you can comment by consulting online documentation.

The OFC has published reports about the modifications adopted by the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture at the December 2013 and April 2014 meetings. The OFC website includes a whole section dedicated to the COS review. Do not hesitate to consult this documentation: the organic standards are applied by all Canadian operators, and all should have their say!

To submit a comment

For submitting a comment on the proposed changes to either or both CAN/CGSB-32.310 General Principles and Management Standards and CAN/CGSB-32.311 Permitted Substances Lists, please use the following form:
32-20 Comment Form - formulaire pour commentaire

A sunny announcement for the Organic Science Cluster II with Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Gerry Ritz

Minister Ritz and Tim Livingstone, ready for work in the organic field.

The sun was shining, and the outdoor amphitheatre was beautiful as the President of Dalhousie University, Dr. Richard Florizone, the Dean of the Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture, Dr. David Gray, the local MP, Dr. Scott Armstrong, Minister Gerry Ritz, Tim Livingstone, the NB representative of OFC, and Dr. Andrew Hammermeister, the Director of OACC, delivered enthusiastic speeches about the support that AAFC is granting to the organic sector: an investment of $8 million dollars, matched with $2.7 million from 65 industry partners, to fund 37 research activities related to organic production and processing. At the announcement made on the agricultural campus of Dalhousie University in Truro, Nova Scotia,Tim Livingstone, the NB representative on OFC Board, delivered a personal message:

"As a young farmer, and a new farmer, I believe organic production is not just a niche market, but it is a viable way forward into the future. It allows families like my own to start from a smaller scale while having a reasonable income with relatively low infrastructure. I also come to organic farming from the point of view of a soil biologist and the understanding that everything moves within our environment. Water that comes down on our farms ends up in the lakes, rivers and oceans. Organic agriculture deals with these issues in a very responsible and holistic manner. "

David Gray (Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture), Richard Florizone (President, Dalhousie University), Tim Livingstone (NB Representative of OFC), Scott Armstrong (MP Cumberland-Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley), Nicole Boudreau (OFC Coordinator), Gerry Ritz (Federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food), Andy Hammermeister (Director, OACC), Margaret Savard (Program Officer, OACC), Joanna Mackenzie (Website Coordinator, OACC).

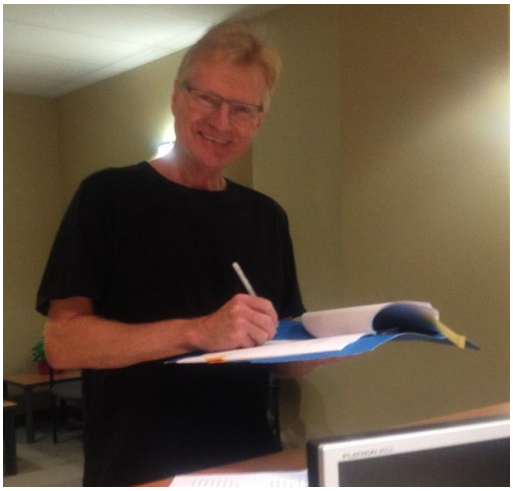
Andrew Hammermeister, Tim Livingstone, Chris Cutler et Derek Lynch (researchers).

The OSCII focuses on innovation, with the research activities targeting crop breeding for improved cultivars, reduced tillage systems under organic management, use of biological soil amendments to improve plant health, development of new management products and practices for pests of crops and livestock (diseases and parasites), technological advances in greenhouse and high tunnel production, management targeting optimization of the nutritional value of crops, the use of advanced processing techniques to develop value-added products such as nutraceuticals, improved methods of meat preservation, and utilization of waste byproducts to enhance productivity.

"This announcement is the culmination of over two years of work, identifying research priorities, screening applications for industry relevance and reviewing the proposals in a scientific peer-review process. We also wanted to make sure this research was impactful for industry, and we had industry participation throughout the process," said Andy Hammermeister.

Complete information about the 37 research activities and the 65 industry partners is now posted on the new OACC website,

Announcement on Dalhousie University Website -: click here
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada release: click here



From Organic Science Cluster I
to Organic Science Cluster II

Dr Martin Entz pursues his research on the Glenlea Project

The wonders of nature continue to inspire Dr. Martin Entz, with the University of Manitoba, who recently signed research agreements for various research activities (see picture on the left).

Entz is the leader of two research activities and is also actively involved in two additional activities. Entz leads the research activities:

- **Participatory plant breeding and seed production approaches for Canadian organic crop production**
  The main objective of this project is to enhance the development of organic crop varieties by engaging farmers directly in the breeding process.

  Industry partner: USC Canada

- **Restoring yield productivity and C sequestration in organic farming systems on the Prairies: The role of composted manure in long-term studies**

  This research seeks to better understand how nutrient depleted organically-managed soils can be restored.

  Industry partner: Western Grains Research Foundation

Dr. Entz is also participating in the two following research activities:

- **Organic oat breeding**
  This activity is about developing oat cultivars that will perform better in organic crop production systems than currently available, conventionally bred cultivars. Jennifer Mitchell Fetch is the leader of this activity.

  Industry partners: Clif Bar and Company and Grain Millers Canada Corp.

- **Optimizing green manure and fertility management for organic cereal production**
  The general objectives of this research are to develop improved agronomic strategies for green manure management and soil and fertility management for organic grain production in Eastern and Western Canada. Led by Derek Lynch.

  Industry partners: Acti-Sol Inc, Homestead Organics Ltd, Organic Valley

Click here to see the full list of researchers.

PACS and ACORN merge with Organicinputs.ca

ORGANICINPUTS.CA BECOMES THE MAIN NATIONAL LIST OF APPROVED INPUTS

In the spring of 2014, the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN) and the Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS) agreed to support OrganicInputs.ca as the main national inputs directory, in replacement of their own inputs lists. An ACORN staff member said, "S*upporting this national tool makes sense. Having a unified directory of approved inputs for organic production saves valuable time and ensures that the information stays current and relevant to the needs of the site users."*

And from the PACS Certification Committee; "*We get lots of enquiries from manufacturers interested in listing their products and we have referred all of them to OrganicInputs.ca for a long time now. We really like the website and find it easy to use."* All of the products in the OrganicInputs.ca directory are either approved for use or have been found compliant according to the Canadian organic standard by an Organic Certification Body or the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI).

The directory is more than just a list of products, it is an educational tool. By typing in a problem into the search bar, organic producers and gardeners can find solutions to a large range of production challenges. With over 700 products in the directory, including soil amendments, pest management products as well as cleaners and sanitizers, site visitors have a great selection of products to choose from. To further streamline their search, they can type in their postal code to find suppliers within their vicinity. All of the products in the OrganicInputs.ca directory are either approved for use or have been found compliant according to the Canadian organic standard.

"Producers are exuberant about this service, which comes as no surprise since we knew that in the Quebec regulatory system, their list of brand name products was the most widely consulted document. New producers especially, need to find out what products they can use and go straight to this user friendly website to search for products."- Ted Zettel, President, Organic Federation of Canada

Peppersoft Inc. is a software company that brings the benefits of technology to the organic agricultural sector. They help organic farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, and industry organizations eliminate business challenges using innovative software solutions. For more information, please contact Andrea Munk, at 1-855-646-7887 or andrea@organicinputs.ca.