

Questions and Answers Regarding National Standards for Organic Agriculture

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Organic Federation of Canada, has developed the Organic Standards Interpretation Committee (Agri-SIC).

The objective of the Committee is to provide to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency interpretive guidance on issues related to the National Standards for Organic Agriculture (CAN/CGSB-32.310 and CAN/CGSB-32.311).



Below are proposed answers to questions raised by organic stakeholders, regarding the National Standards for Organic Agriculture. The proposed responses are subject to a 30-day comment period. All comments regarding these answers should be sent to cfia.opr-rpb.acia@canada.ca.

Public Comment Period –August 22 to September 22, 2022

Table of contents

SPECIAL NOTIFICATION

Corrected annotation for Flavours – Table 6.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311

Under public comment

Organic Principles and Management Standards

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| X-Rays for inspection purposes..... | 2 |
| Pollen substitute | 2 |

REWORDED Q&As

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Digester feedstock | 2 |
| Growing media for seedlings | 3 |
| Growing media for propagules | 3 |

SPECIAL NOTIFICATION

Corrected annotation for Flavours – Table 6.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311

Please be advised that the reference to Table 11 B in the annotation for Flavours in Table 6.4 of the Permitted Substances Lists (32.311) is an error; the correct reference is Table 12 B – Substance review criteria for permitted substances in processing of organic food.

The annotation should read as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Flavours | Derived from biological sources using approved methods (see Table 11 <u>12</u> B (1) & (2) Origin and mode of production of CAN/CGSB-32.310), and substances (see Table 6.3 Extraction solvents and precipitation aids). May contain permitted carriers (see Table 6.3 & 6.4 Carriers). |
|-----------------|--|

Under public comment

Organic Principles and Management Standards

X-Rays for inspection purposes

Is the use of x-rays permitted for inspection purposes, such as detection of foreign materials, during the preparation of organic products? (556)

Yes, providing it is for inspection purposes only, and does not reach levels of irradiation treatment.

Pollen substitute

Does 32.310 7.1.11.1 (a) allow for the use of bee pollen substitute comprised of organic soy and yeast? (572)

No. The only alternative food source permitted in the event of a regional or seasonal shortage of forage and for winter feeding of colonies, are honey and sugar as described in 7.1.11.1.a).

REWORDED Q&As

Digester feedstock

When manure was a feedstock of an anaerobic digestate, can the requirement of manure land application specified in 5.5.2.5 be waived if the digestate is dried or heat treated before being applied to land? (526.2)

No. Unless it can be demonstrated that the best practices known to eliminate human pathogens during the treatment have been used. (Table 4.2 Animal manure, processed).

Growing media for seedlings

Can annual seedlings be grown in a soilless media, even for the initial phase of propagation (1-2 weeks), and comply with organic standards? (204.1)

It depends. Hydroponic and aeroponic production are prohibited, meaning that any plant nutrition must take place in a soil-based media that is compliant with 7.5.2.1 (per 5.3.3). However, initial propagation of annual seedlings, when no plant nutrition takes place, can happen in a soilless media.

Growing media for propagules

7.5.2.1 describes acceptable soil composition for container systems. However, layering and cutting propagation techniques may require an initial soilless rooting medium that provides no nutrition to propagated plants (water, moist air, perlite, vermiculite, sand, peat moss). Can soilless media be used for cutting and layering plant propagation? (204.2)

Plant nutrition must be based on soil as defined in 3.73 and 7.5.2.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. This nutrition cannot be brought through hydroponic or aeroponic production methods. However, when a propagule needs no nutrition (cutting, layering, initial seed sprouting stage), it is possible to use a medium that does not meet criteria of 7.5.2.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.310 as long as it does not contain prohibited substances (see 1.5) and it is composed only of substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311.