

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 Office 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

March 17 to April 17, 2026

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Organic principles and management standards

Manure application before swathing

When the harvest method of a crop is swathing, which manure application to harvest period is required per CAN/CGSB 32.310-5.5.2.5? (661)

A period of at least 120 days is required per 5.5.2.5 b). Swathing a crop will cause edible parts of the crop to come into direct contact with the soil

Spent agricultural substrate from microbial production

Can the spent (agricultural) substrate from the microbial production of biological antibiotics such as penicillin qualify as compost and be used as such in mushroom production? (654)

No. Compost is product of a carefully managed aerobic process by which biological materials are digested by microorganisms.

Processes allowed in wine production

Is ultrasound permitted as a tool for extraction of tannins and phenolics during wine production? (667.1)

Yes. The use of ultrasound is a mechanical process permitted by 8.1.3 in CAN/CGSB-32.310.

Are the capture and isolation of aromatics during fermentation of wine using CO₂ and freezing permitted to create 'flavours' that will be re-introduced into wine after the fermentation? (667.2)

Yes. These mechanical processes are permitted by 8.1.3 in CAN/CGSB-32.310.

Permitted Substances Lists

For information – Rewording of a Q&A

Weed control for wild crops

Can salt be used for weed control on the ground where organic wild harvested crops are stored? Even if that storage area is on a rock outcrop? (367)

Previous answer

No. First, the wild harvest area is to be “relatively undisturbed” (7.6.3) so using salt as an ‘herbicide’ in the area, even on a rock outcrop, is prohibited as it would change the ecosystem. Secondly, salt is not authorized as an herbicide in Table 4.

Reworded answer

As wild crop area shall never be disturbed by substances listed in Table 4.2 or prohibited, salt is not allowed as an herbicide when harvesting or storing wild crops