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 OPR-RPB@inspection.gc.ca.

Public Comment Period

October 30 to November 30, 2026

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Access to water on pasture

In Clause 6.12.7, what is the 200m distance in reference to when dairy cows are on pasture? Does it mean the water source needs to be within 200m of the pasture, or 200m of the cow? (688)

A dairy cow on pasture must have access to water within 200m at all times.

Access to enriched verandas under Influenza

Clause 6.13.1 c) allows the suspension of outdoor access when there is an imminent threat to the health and welfare of poultry. In the presence of Avian Influenza, or on the recommendation of a veterinarian, can access to enriched verandahs be suspended? (687)

No. An enriched verandah is an extension of the poultry barn; is not considered outdoor access; and is meant to offer protection and shall be used when layers do not have access to outdoors in the presence of disease as per Clause 6.13.3 a). Furthermore, any restriction to outdoor access in the presence of Avian Influenza is by directive from a CFIA or a provincial government authority, and not solely by a veterinarian or insurer.

Permitted Substances Lists

Use of lipo-chitooligosaccharide

Is lipo-chitooligosaccharide (LCO) a permitted substance in soil amendments or production aids? (684)
No. Lipo-chitooligosaccharide (LCO) is not listed in Table 4.2. While microbial inoculants containing naturally present LCOs are permitted under 'Microorganisms and microbial products', an isolated, purified or synthetically manufactured LCO active ingredient requires its own distinct listing on Table 4.2.

For information only

Number of taps per maple tree - diameter of 23.1 to 39 cm

In Table 8, what is the number of taps allowed for healthy maple trees with a diameter ranging from 23.1 to 39 cm at a height of 1.3 m above the soil surface? (686)

Due to typographical errors in the French version of CAN/CGSB-32.310, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency issued a notice on September 24, 2026, to clarify the conditions that apply to determining the maximum number of taps per healthy maple tree with a diameter of 23.1 to 39 cm. The notice describes the corrections to the text of the COS published by the Canadian General Standards Board in March 2026.

Nota bene - No correction needed to the English version of Table 8.

Diamètre mesuré à une hauteur de 1,3 m (4,3 pi) au-dessus du niveau du sol	**Nombre maximal d'entailles**
23.1 à 39 (9 à 16 po) (s'applique aux ~~nouvelles~~ exploitants qui ont appliqué pour être certifiés <u>après</u> la date de publication de la présente norme et aux agrandissements installés après la date de publication de la présente norme, et est obligatoire pour toutes les exploitations en 2035)	1

Coconut coir as soil amendment

Per CGSB 32.310 - 7.5.5.1.b), the soil shall be composed of substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311. However the listing for Coir (coconut fiber) in Table 4.2 does not indicate in Column 1 that it can be used as a soil amendment; it is only allowed as a production aid as indicated in Column 2. Can Coconut Coir be used as a growth media in potting soil? (681)

Yes. Per the CFIA Guidance document Omissions and corrections in the 2026 Canadian Organic Standards for agriculture issued on September 24, 2026. It was inadvertently not listed as a permitted soil amendment (Column 1). Coconut coir is permitted as a soil amendment (growth media) or as a production aid.