

November 2012

Ms. Rola Yehia replaces Michel Saumur as COO National Manager

The OFC was delighted to learn that the COO National Manager position has been filled. We welcome Ms. Rola Yehia on behalf of organic operators across the country, whose businesses depend on the continuing work of the Canadian Organic Office. More information to follow.

Warm up your pencils or keyboards

As an organic stakeholder, voicing your concerns and promoting the organic way of farming matters. You are invited to comment the Q&A's issued by the Standards Interpretation Committee, remind Statistics Canada about the organic sector's needs, and comment on the proposed policy on Low Level Presence of genetically modified crops in imports.

Voicing your concerns has an impact on the development of the sector! Your three pieces of homework are described below.

Q&A's related to Canadian Organic Standards now open for comment

How should the minimum buffer zone be measured in an orchard? Can green char be used in organic agriculture? Can livestock feed harvested from the buffer zones around organic cropland be fed to livestock in transition to organic?

A list of Questions and Answers related to the Canadian Organic Standards are currently under their public comment period. The Standards Interpretation Committee is interested in hearing your comments.

[Click here](#) to consult the proposed answers to the various questions raised by organic stakeholders regarding the National Standards for Organic Agriculture. The current comment period closes December 3rd. All comments regarding the proposed answers should be sent to OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca

Statistics Canada to be reminded of the organic sector's needs

There are currently very few sources of statistical data describing the Canadian organic sector. The [2011 Agriculture census](#) included some basic data, but Statistics Canada is now planning to erase questions about organic agriculture in the Census 2016. The Statistics Canada document, showing which sections will be cut (Q 199, 200, 201 (step 35 -page 15)), can be reviewed [here](#). If you want Statistics Canada to

continue reporting on the organic sector, please download and complete [this template](#). **Deadline is November 16.**

The Low Level Presence (LLP) Policy is back to consultation

Agriculture and Agrifood Canada proposes a policy that would allow for the unintentional presence of non-authorized GMOs in Canadian imports and exports, if present at levels varying from 0.1% to 0.2% (depending on the crop variety). The LLP Policy applies to all imported grain, food and feed products which contain LLP where:

- The GM crop has been approved for use as food in at least one country; and,
- Canada has recognized that the safety assessment conducted by that country is consistent with the Codex Food Safety Assessment Guidelines.

The Policy does **not** apply to:

- Seed intended for propagation in the environment;
- Genetically modified fruits and vegetables;
- Adventitious presence, which is defined, for the purpose of this Policy, as the unintended release of research or "pre-commercial" GM crops, which have not been authorized for use in **any** country;
- Genetically modified animals and microorganisms;
- Other GM crops modified to produce plant-made pharmaceutical or industrial products unless approved for food and feed use; and,
- GM crops for which there is reason to believe that LLP may pose a risk to the safety of human food, animal feed or the environment.

The Threshold Levels, from 0.1% to 0.2%, will be set to reflect achievable levels for unintentional presence based on best management grain handling practices for each crop type, while respecting the realities of the grain handling and transportation systems in place around the world.

The organic sector does not approve the introduction of this policy. OFC [voted on a motion](#) and issued a [press release](#), CBAN issued [press releases](#), the industry members of the OVCRT "were generally critical of establishing GMO tolerances that they suspect could be relaxed in the future." (For more information, please see the full bulletin [here](#)).

To participate in the AAFC consultation, click on <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1347469689149&lang=eng>.

Updated Version of Quebec "Manuel des Intrants" on line

The updated Quebec organic input directory is now available at http://reseaubio.org/documents/mib_2012-2013.pdf

The list of the Manuel des Intrants is based on the Canadian Permitted Substances List (PSL) and is organized in accordance with the PSL tables. Inputs are detailed by their commercial name, composition, supplier, use and cost. The document is available in French only, but the classification of inputs by category also allows for easy consultation by Anglophones.

NOP Introduces Mandatory Pesticide Residues Testing

Beginning January 1, 2013, organic certifying agents in the United States must test samples from at least 5 percent of the operations that they certify on an annual basis.

Certifying agents may test USDA organic farms and processors across the United States and throughout the world for any prohibited substances and methods, including prohibited pesticides, arsenic or other contaminant metals, GMOs, synthetic hormones and antibiotics, except in organic apple and pear production per USDA organic regulations.

Canadian organic products exported to the USA could also be subjected to this testing. The NOP has published a list of the [prohibited pesticides](#). The full announcement can be reviewed [here](#).

OFC Archives easier to consult

The OFC website has been updated to include a [Communication](#) section that is composed of OFC articles, reports, evidence at AGRI Committee, films and posters. Have a nice visit!

A troubling 3 minute film to watch

You only need 3.5 minutes of your precious time to watch [this short film](#), called *Message from the Gyre* that is worth a million words.