

June24 2013

## The News about the Canadian Organic Standards

### Report from the Standards Interpretation Committee

The Standards Interpretation Committee has meticulously analyzed all comments received under the two last comment periods and produced a report (attached) presenting revised and unrevised answers. All the Q&As listed on this report are being transferred to the SIC Final Q&As section posted [on OFC website](#).

From the 190 questions received from the Canadian industry, the SIC has transferred 44 questions to the CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture (Organic Technical Committee-OTC) for further investigation.

### COS Review

#### Not officially launched yet, but prioritization of the Work Lists' items is underway

The Canadian General Standards Board is finalizing with the Standard Council of Canada the workplan for the complete review of the Canadian Organic Standards. In the meantime, the 400 items of the work lists that are to be addressed by the working groups are sorted out and submitted to a first prioritization by the [SIC members](#). This first exercise will help determine the workload for each working group that will submit amendments to the COS at meetings of the voting members of the OTC.

OFC application under the AAFC Agri-Marketing program to fund 75% of the cost of the review is still waiting for approval. Many interesting exchanges of information have taken place with AAFC officers about the nature and the budget of the review project. In the meantime, OFC is organizing the fundraising campaign to match AAFC potential funding; 25% of the cost review has to be covered by industry.

#### Are you interested in continuing your participation on a COS Review Working Group, or are you interested in applying to join a WG?

If yes, please contact the OFC, at [info@organicfederation.ca](mailto:info@organicfederation.ca), 514-488-6192. We are still recruiting!  
The basic Work Groups are:

- **32.310 Organic Standard:** Crop WG, Livestock WG, and Processing WG
- **32.311 Permitted Substances List:** PSL Crop WG, PSL Livestock WG, and PSL Processing WG

#### Organic related skills and expertise wanted:

- Organic farming or processing
- Materials/Chemical substances
- Veterinary medicine/nutrition and supplements
- Apiary
- Environmental
- Animal welfare

Participation in Working Groups is voluntary and not paid; the WG meetings are held by toll-free teleconference.  
Time commitment: Up to one 2hour call every second week, depending on need.

The Chairs of the WGs will coordinate the work and agenda of the meetings and CGSB will provide secretarial assistance. Working Group Chairs selection will be finalized for each WG once funding is secured. Payment of honorarium for WG Chairs is currently depending on the approval of an OFC application for funding under an AAFC program. More info coming soon.

You don't have to be a member of the OTC to participate to the WG meetings. The CGSB is responsible for re-establishing the Technical Committee and will do so once the review workplan will be finalized.

# OFC Fundraising Campaign for the COS Review in Progress!

## The standard is at the base of the organic value chain

- ✓ In Canada, 4,120 farmers and 1,200 processors are certified and inspected annually to offer products compliant with the Canadian Organic Standards, on local, national and global markets.
- ✓ The Canadian organic market is valued at \$3.7 billion.
- ✓ 58% of all Canadians are buying organic products every week.
- ✓ Organic cereals are grown on 207,191 hectares of land in Canada.
- ✓ Canadian producers have access to 96% of the current global organic market, due to organic equivalency agreements with the USA and the EU.
- ✓ Canada ranks third in the world for organic oilseed production.
- ✓ Canada has an organic equivalency agreement with Switzerland, the country with the highest per-capita organic consumption in the world.
- ✓ Canada is currently negotiating an equivalency agreement with Japan, where organic sales were worth approximately \$1.4 billion in 2009.
- ✓ In spite of the slowdown in the global economy, international sales of organic products continue to rise. Organic Monitor estimates that global organic food & drink sales reached almost \$63 billion USD in 2011.

To remain competitive and continue to grow,  
the Canadian organic sector is reviewing the organic standard that governs  
the daily work of Canadian certified operators.

## The revision of the standard is led by the industry.

Contribute to the fundraising campaign  
of the Organic Federation of Canada  
to support the review of the Canadian Organic Standards.

Objectives: CAN/CGSB-32.310-2015,  
CAN/CGSB-32.311-2015  
and a regenerated and  
expanding organic market



For more information,  
Visit OFC website  
[www.organicfederation.ca](http://www.organicfederation.ca)  
or contact OFC by email  
[info@organicfederation.ca](mailto:info@organicfederation.ca)  
Or by phone – 514-488-6192



## GM Alfalfa ready to be grown in Canada – Write your MP

In 2013, Gold Medal Seeds Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Forage Genetics International LLC, submitted an application for variety registration to the CFIA. The application was assessed and the [variety was registered on April 26, 2013](#). Variety registration enables Roundup Ready® alfalfa seed to be commercially sold in Canada.

Crop Kind/ Variety	Product Designation	Exp. no.(s)	Registration Status	Date Registered/ Reinstated	Canadian Representative
WL 373HQ.RR	J101	FG R47M318	National Registration	2013-04-26	Gold Medal Seeds Ltd.

CFIA reports that “Since alfalfa does not outcross to wild relatives in Canada, with the possible exception to feral alfalfa populations, there will be no transfer of novel traits to related species in unmanaged environments. In addition the novel trait was determined to pose minimal risks to non-target organisms. The CFIA has therefore concluded that the potential impact on biodiversity of alfalfa events J101 and J163 is equivalent to that of currently commercialized alfalfa varieties.”

The CFIA report ignores the potential impact of GM alfalfa on organic alfalfa. CBAN (Canadian Biotechnology Action Network) is organizing opposition to the marketing of GM alfalfa. [Visit their website](#) and write to your MP!



**Inspiring!**

## **Connecticut passes first GMO food labeling law in US**

The state of Connecticut has become the first to successfully enact a law requiring food containing genetically modified ingredients to be labeled as such, though it comes with the unusual requirement that four other states must pass similar legislation. [Read more.](#)

### ***Summer readings...***

[BC Organic Grower](#) – Interesting articles about the BC organic sector

[COABC GMO Statement](#) - The COABC demands that labeling be mandated at the federal level in Canada to indicate the use or possible presence of GMO ingredients in foods meant for human or livestock consumption

Diverse and Resilient - [The Ontario’s Organic Food System](#) – A series of reports published by the Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) about the future of Ontario’s organic system

The [Organic Value Chain Round Table Bulletin](#) – To learn that a public outreach organic campaign will be launched, of which the National Organic Branding Strategy will be a key component. The campaign slogan, *THINK before you eat*, is supported by the tagline, *Think Canada Organic*.

The Equivalence Tracker: Canada is currently comparing the Japanese organic system (regulations & standards) with its own regime. Which countries are accepting other countries system for certification of organic products based on equivalency? Consult the [Equivalence Tracker](#) where you will observe that Japan is already recognizing US and EU organic regimes.

### **Canadian Organic Inputs Directory**



[Visit](#) the Canadian Organic Inputs Directory (COID) and **give it a try!**

A database of brand name inputs for organic operators in Canada administered by [Peppersoft Inc.](#)



**Have a great farming season  
so that we could buy good organic food!**

