



December 2017

Organics in Canada Year 2018 will be decisive

To maintain and strengthen our local and international market, Canadian products must comply with clear regulations and standards that protect the organic integrity of the products.

In this respect, 2017 has been an eventful year.

The Canadian organic sector has been preoccupied with the Safe Food for Canadians Regulation, the two amendments submitted to the Canadian Organic Standards (COS), and the search for funding for the coming COS review.

The government has proposed a review of the Organic Products Regulations by moving it to [Part 14 of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulation](#) (SFCR) which was submitted to public consultation in January 2017. The proposed revisions have raised serious concerns; the organic sector has reacted by submitting [hundreds of comments](#) in order to oppose elements of the revised regulation including, amongst others, the mandatory certification of slaughterhouses, transportation, and storage of organic products. However, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has not yet published the revised version of Part 14 of the SFCR under Gazette II and we certainly hope that the arguments submitted by the sector will be considered.

The sector is still waiting for the publication of the amendments the COS proposed to organic greenhouse production, pork production and permitted substances for the cleaning of organic products and surfaces in contact with organic products. These amendments, which were adopted in 2016 by the CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture, should be published in 2018.

At last, the [Standard Funding Initiative](#) launched by COG and OFC in 2017 has rekindled the debate about the funding of the five-year review of the COS that will have to be completed by November 2020. Representatives of the sector have met many MPs who are members of the [Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food](#) (AGRI Committee), as well as Minister MacAulay, in order to persuade the federal government to fund the COS review.

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The United States and the European Union pay for the maintenance of their respective standards and Canada should affirm its support in order to offer comparable advantages to our organic operators. Furthermore, the COS belongs to the Canadian General Standards Board; they are referenced by the regulations and ensure the maintenance of organic equivalency agreements with the US and EU.

The members of the AFRI Committee understand the importance of government support for the review of the COS. At the budget meeting held November 30, 2017, Ruth Ellen Brosseau (NPD-QC) et Joe Peschisolido (Liberal-BC) have asked Minister MacAulay if the government would fund the COS review; the Minister has confirmed having met the organic farmers.

Following the meeting, the Minister stated: *'We're working with the organic farmers on that issue. It has not been resolved yet. We fully understand how important this sector is. Also, we understand that there's a*



great market for the organic farming industry. We are meeting with them, as was indicated here, on the regulatory process, to help them put it together, but that hasn't been resolved yet.

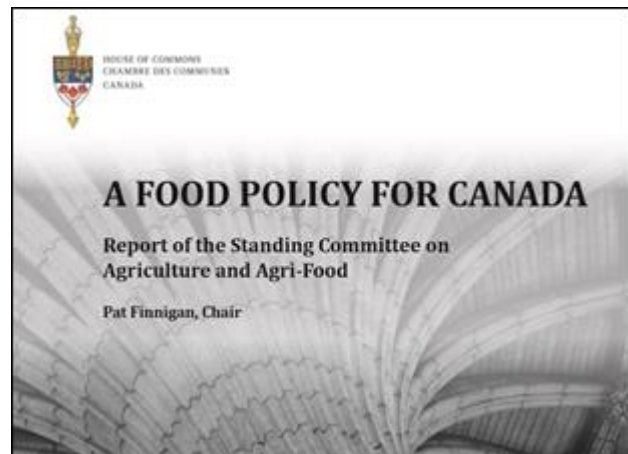
I can assure you, being a farmer, that I fully understand that you must have the regulatory process. We have to get a means of making sure that's done in an efficient way. Of course, it's not as large as some other areas, and funding is a little shorter, so we will be looking at all aspects to make sure we can put this together'.

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/AGRI/meeting-82/evidence>

The members of the AGRI Committee have approved [the requests](#) made by Jim Robbins, President of OFC, and Ashley St Hilaire, COG's Director of Programs and Government Relations, presented under the government's consultation on a National Food Policy in September 2017.

Reviewing the standards is absolutely critical for maintaining not only the Canada Organic brand, but also the government-negotiated, international organic trade arrangements that we have with 90% of our major trading partners, declared Jim Robbins. The AGRI Committee has been paying attention.

Recommendation 8 published last week in the [Committee's report](#) *'recommends that the Government support the Canadian organic sector by providing ongoing funding for the Canadian Organic Regime. The Committee also recommends that the Government support the growth of exports and ensure that the sector can meet the growing demand for organic products.*



What is in store for 2018? How will the regulatory and standardization issues be resolved? Will the programs of the concerned ministries be able to satisfy the recommendations issued by the MPs and by the organic sector?

Further talks are planned with the decision makers. The Canadian government will have to demonstrate its commitment to environmental values. The year 2018 will be crucial. And we wish it to be prosperous and ecological.

Have your say!

Write to your MP and to Minister MacAulay!

As an organic operator, consumer, or member of industry you have a stake in this.

We need you to write to your MP to let them know who you are, why funding and support for the Canadian Organic Standards matters to you, and what you want done about it.

COG and OFC made it easy for you with this [Template Letter you can download](#), customize and email to your [MP](#) and [the Minister of Agriculture, Lawrence MacAulay](#).

We've already had dozens of stakeholders write letters on their own such as **Dairy Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Canadian Health Food Association, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Canadian Produce Marketing Association, Union des producteurs agricoles**, and we need all of you taking action on this issue.

Letters are powerful - they make sure your local MP understands who their constituents are and what issues they need to stay on top of.

Organic Science Cluster II and III

A magazine to share knowledge and the next Cluster in preparation

OFC and the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC-Dalhousie University) are preparing a magazine that will describe the 37 activities of the [OSCII](#) that ends in March 2018.

Knowledge that is not shared is sterile and organic production is all about productivity. The magazine will describe each activity in a daily language, by presenting the objective, the background, the 'what was done' and the 'what was found' elements of the research.

The magazine will be published in the spring of 2018 in a digital format, which is easy to access by all producers. The English version will also be printed and inserted in the spring issue of TCOG.



Nicole Boudreau (OFC), Margaret Graves and Dr Andy Hammermeister (OACC) meeting in Truro In December 2017 to prepare OSCIII.

The success of OSCI and OSCII is inspiring and the OFC and OACC are preparing [OSCIII](#)

Thirty-five research activities will be submitted in January to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in order to strengthen research of the first Clusters and create new agricultural practices under organic management.

All these proposals have been peer-reviewed and are supported by the industry partners.

The management team of OSCIII is composed of Margaret Graves and Dr. Andy Hammermeister (Dalhousie University) and Nicole Boudreau (OFC).



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