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## **Number of certified operators is proportionally greater in Canada than in US**

In Canada, there are approximately 4000 certified organic operators, for a population of 33,500,000. In US, there are [17673 certified operators](#) for a population of 313,206,000. So the number of Canadian certified operators per million is twice the number of the American certified operators per million of population.

The relative size of the Canadian sector highlights the need for government investment in this growing industry. Among the items that the sector has asked for are a national database and funding to revise and maintain the Canadian Organic Standard.

## **Extract from a [short video](#) about the impact of pollution on health**

“This generation of children is the first generation in modern history that is not going to be as healthy as their parents.” John Peterson Meyers, American researcher in Environmental Health (The video is bilingual – skip the announce at the beginning)

## **First Canadian Organic Science Conference a resounding success!**

Over 160 scientists, students, farmers, government and industry representatives converged in Winnipeg for the first Canadian Organic Science Conference and Science Cluster Strategic Meetings, held from February 21-23, 2012 at the University of Manitoba. Guests hailed from across Canada, the United States and Europe, and brought with them many unique perspectives relating to the science and knowledge transfer of organic agriculture.

Dr. Andy Hammermeister, the director of OACC and co-chair of the conference, comments, “The Canadian Organic Science Conference is a key part of the deliverables of the Organic Science Cluster, a unique cross-Canada, multi-discipline cluster of researchers working in organic agriculture. It is an opportunity for researchers to learn from, and communicate with, organic researchers working in other fields of study as well as interact with industry stakeholders.”

Dr. Martin Entz of the University of Manitoba and co-chair of the conference states, “The Canadian Organic Science Conference (COSC) was a tremendous opportunity for university and government researchers, students and practitioners to strengthen collaboration in organic agriculture. This national conference is an indicator of the importance of the growing billion dollar organic industry in Canada.”

Leading scientists and students presented current advances in focused on soil fertility and biology, sustainability and organic food production systems, organic cereal production, organic greenhouse practices, the production of organic fruits and vegetables, the rearing of organic livestock, the

social aspects of organic agriculture and the transfer of knowledge. More details on the conference program can be found at [www.oacc.info/COSC](http://www.oacc.info/COSC).

The final day of the conference provided an opportunity to discuss and identify the future research needs of Canada's organic sector. With this information, generated by the diverse group of conference participants, the future of organic agriculture in Canada is looking bright.

A film produced by OFC will be presented soon to report on the Canadian organic researchers and farmers who participated to the conference.

## **US-UE organic trade agreement: use of antibiotics is a variance**

[European Union and United States](#) determined that their organic programs were equivalent except for the use of antibiotics.

The USDA organic regulations prohibit the use of antibiotics except to control invasive bacterial infections (fire blight) in organic apple and pear orchards. The European Union organic regulations allow antibiotics only to treat infected animals.

In addition, all products traded under the partnership must be shipped with an organic export certificate. This document will show the production location, identify the organisation that certified the organic product, verify that prohibited substances and methods weren't used, certify that the terms of the partnership were met, and allow traded products to be tracked.

### **Requirements for U.S. operators shipping their organic products to the EU under the arrangement**

1. Crops produced using antibiotics (streptomycin for fire blight control in apples and pears) must not be shipped to the EU under the arrangement.
2. This arrangement is limited to organic products of the U.S., either produced within the U.S. or where the final processing or packaging occurs within the U.S.

### **Requirements for EU operators shipping their organic products to the U.S. under the arrangement**

1. Agricultural products derived from animals treated with antibiotics shall not be marketed as organic in the United States.
2. This arrangement is limited to organic products of the EU, either produced within the EU or where the final processing or packaging occurs within the EU.

[Canada and EU trade agreement](#) do not have any standards variances, but, as for the EU-US agreement, the products should have been produced or processed within Canada to access the EU organic market. The use of antibiotics also creates a variance between [Canada and US](#); milk products from cows having been treated with antibiotics cannot be sold as organic in US. Canadian organic cheese producers do not feel comfortable with that variance as the handling and transportation of organic milk complying with the Canada-US trade agreement are costly to plan.

## **A US judge has ruled against US and Canadian farmers in their suit to protect themselves from being sued by Monsanto**

Organic farmers, seed companies and food safety groups sued St. Louis-based Monsanto in March 2011 seeking court protection against possible lawsuits by the company for patent infringement if genetically modified crops were mistakenly found among their yields. The growers claimed that Monsanto "aggressively asserted" its patent claims against hundreds of U.S. farmers and sought a ruling that the patents for genetically engineered seeds are invalid because they are "injurious." But U.S. District Judge

Naomi Reice Buchwald in Manhattan threw out the organic growers' lawsuit in a ruling dated Feb. 24, saying it represented no controversy and that she had no jurisdiction over the suit.

Monsanto's history of aggressive investigations and lawsuits brought against farmers in America have been a source of concern for organic and non-GMO farmers since Monsanto's first lawsuit brought against a farmer in the mid-90's. Since then, 144 farmers have had lawsuits brought against them by Monsanto for alleged violations of their patented seed technology. Monsanto has brought charges against more than 700 additional farmers who have settled out-of-court rather than face Monsanto's belligerent litigious actions. Many of these farmers claim to not have had the intention to grow or save seeds that contain Monsanto's patented genes. Seed drift and pollen drift from genetically engineered crops often contaminate neighboring fields. If Monsanto's seed technology is found on a farmer's land without contract they can be found liable for patent infringement.

"Family farmers need the protection of the court," said Maine organic seed farmer Jim Gerritsen, President of lead plaintiff OSGATA. "We reject as naïve and undefendable the judge's assertion that Monsanto's vague public relations commitment, should be a source of comfort, to plaintiffs. The truth is we are under threat and we do not believe Monsanto. The truth is that American farmers and the American people do not believe Monsanto. Family farmers deserve our day in court and this flawed ruling will not deter us from continuing to seek justice."

Plaintiff lead attorney says they will appeal.

Extract from <http://www.osgata.org/judge-sides-with-monsanto-ridicules-farmers-right-to-grow-food-without-fear-contamination-and-economic-harm>

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