



## THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

**2011 Summer News**

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### **The Organic Science Cluster in its 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of Activities - A First Canadian Organic Science Conference will be Held in Winnipeg to Disseminate Research Results**

Crops are growing and research is progressing. Officially launched in September 2009, the national Organic Science Cluster, managed by the Organic Federation of Canada and the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada (OACC), is pursuing the 30 research activities funded through the \$ 6,500,000 contribution from AAFC under the Canadian Agri-Science Clusters Initiative and with \$2,300,000 from industry and provincial partners.

“Managing the \$8.8 million program with 45 funded scientists, 19 research institutions/centres and 25 industry partners does have its challenges in administration and reporting, but the rewards have been great, perhaps most importantly strengthening the science and credibility of organic across the country” reports Andy Hammermeister, the new director of the OACC.

The Organic Science Cluster covers research in many disciplines of organic agriculture, including soil science, cereal cropping systems and breeding, greenhouse production, vegetable and fruit production, dairy livestock health and welfare, sheep parasites, environmental aspects of organic, and food processing.

“It is directed toward addressing barriers to producers, exploring new production options, and characterizing organic systems for branding purposes,” adds Hammermeister.

*Only limited research on organic farming has occurred in the USA and other industrial countries in the last several decades. This is beginning to change as more agronomists and other scientists are studying organic farming methods.*

[American Society of Agronomy](#)

And to assure transfer of organic knowledge to the sector, the OACC will hold the first [Canadian Organic Science Conference](#) in Winnipeg, February 21 to 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, where leading scientists will present current advances in the field of organic agricultural practices and plan with the participants the next Science Cluster research priorities. The finalized program will be published this fall.

### ***About the OSC...***

... View the [Canadian map](#) describing where the research activities are conducted

... The YouTube film [Organic is a science](#) presenting the OACC team that manages the OSC

... The full list of [researchers](#) and [activities](#)

## **No MOU between Manitoba and CFIA for Enforcement of Intraprovincial Organic Regulations**

The Manitoba government that is planning to implement intraprovincial organic regulations in its territory could not reach a full memorandum of understanding with the CFIA to have the Organic Products Regulations (OPR) enforced by the CFIA for products grown and sold inside the province. CFIA upper management stated that the mission of the agency was not linked to intraprovincial trade, as per [Part 4 of the OPR](#). But the Canada Organic Office would accept a provincial monitoring authority to refer to the regime that is already in place, such as the accrediting and certifying system, in order to support the management of a provincial organic supervision activity. This exchange of information would help avoiding duplication of work. Other provinces were waiting for this MOU negotiation to be successful for eventually negotiate the same MOU for monitoring their internal trade. But the CFIA will not inspect or monitor the intraprovincial market. Manitoba is not giving up and is now exploring other options, any of which would not be seriously assessed before the elections that are to be held in Manitoba in October.

## **Canada/European Union Organic Equivalency Arrangement Differs from the Canada/United States Equivalency Determination and Import-Export Agreements**

Canada and the European Union (EU) signed in June the Canada—European Union Organic Equivalency Arrangement

This arrangement will allow the import and export of certified organic products between Canada and the EU without the need for additional certification... "It's a win-win for Canada as this arrangement will also offer Canadian consumers more organic food options" commented the Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz.

**But there are differences between the Canada/EU and Canada/US agreements.**

- **The Canada/EU does not include any critical variances**; there are no restrictions that would prevent the d organic product certified to the Canadian Organic Standards (COS) to bear the EU logo and vice-versa. The Canada/US agreement is restricted by [critical variances](#) that are the use of sodium nitrate, the livestock stocking rates and hydroponic/aeronic crops.
- **The Canada/EU agreement applies to products grown and processed in Canada and to products grown and processed in the EU.** The products targeted by the arrangement should come from the countries that are signatories of the agreement, not from a third country not being a member of the EU or produced outside of Canada. So, only certified organic products to the EU standards grown in the EU countries are deemed equivalent in Canada. For example, an organic broccoli grown in Mexico and certified to the COS would not be recognized as organic in the EU as per the Canada/EU Arrangement. The Canada/US Agreement is different, because

certifying bodies accredited by the COO can provide certification to the terms of the Canada/US agreement outside of Canada to organic products exported to US. So, the organic broccoli grown in Mexico that is certified organic to the terms of the Canada/US Agreement by a Certifying Body accredited by the COO could be exported as “organic” on the US market.

- To comply with the Canada/US agreement, producers have to demonstrate that their products are certified to the terms of the agreement by getting a separate certificate issued by a Certification Body or a specific statement on the product's existing organic certificate. **To comply with the Canada/EU Arrangement, producers do not need a separate certificate because the two standards are fully equivalent;** so there are no variances to be verified by Certifying Bodies.

## **Funding for Standards Revision: Looking for Solutions**

The latest revised version of the Canadian Organic Standards (COS) is now published but the revision is not over: after Standards Council of Canada (SCC) requirements, a full and complete review is due every five years, and 2011 is the due date as the first publication of the COS was done in 2006. The sector is mobilizing itself: an Organic Value Chain Round Table Task Force, chaired by Ted Zettel, the OFC President, and composed of industry, CGSB and COO members is assessing how to get funding for the review of the standards. Many scenarios will be assessed. The OFC is involved in this essential phase of the standards maintenance. More information to come soon.