



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

Short news

December 2010

...Six nominations for SIC positions... The election of three SIC members to replace members whose terms are ending is progressing well; the call for nominations generated six nominees; OFC members will vote and the results will be published January 2011.

...Survey on the impact of the OPR ... So far, OFC has received 218 responses to the Survey on the impact of the COR; responses will help to orient OFC policy and future action; a summary report is forthcoming.

...PSL working groups back to work... The PSL working group has had a conference call to organize itself for the upcoming 2011 ballot and Standards revision. Work will begin by each sub working group (crops, livestock and Processing/sanitation) prioritizing their work-list, and starting to investigate suggestions for improvement received. There is also a full review this time, so every substance will be reviewed. Stakeholders can submit their suggestions for improvement by downloading the **official forms posted on CGSB website**.

...Organic aquaculture... The development of the organic aquaculture standards is progressing. The first meeting of the Organic Aquaculture Committee, convened by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) took place in Gatineau on October 26-28, 2010. Two working groups were established, one on shellfish and one that will work on overall coherence in the standard (general working group). Justin Henry, chair of the CGSB Organic Aquaculture Committee, "anticipates that the upcoming teleconferences will be... fruitful and will result in a strong, but achievable standard for organic aquaculture in Canada." OFC attended the meeting in its capacity as a voting member of the Aquaculture Committee. Many other members of the Committee on Organic Agriculture are participating in the aquaculture meetings which helps to ensure that the aquaculture standards stay true to organic principles. Interactions between the members of the Agriculture and the Aquaculture Committees were very productive.

...New guidelines for registration of non-conventional products by PMRA... The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) invites the public to submit written comments on the new guidelines proposed for the Registration of Non-Conventional Pest Control Products. The revised PMRA approach recognizes that non-conventional products may not fit well into a registration framework that was developed for conventional pesticides. Substances eligible for review under this proposal "could include food stuff (commonly consumed food items), feedstuffs, animal products derived by simple processing, certain mechanically processed natural minerals and non-food plant parts.... plant extracts and oils...commodity chemicals that have a range of non-pesticidal uses".

This PMRA initiative will help to facilitate the registration of numerous substances included in the organic Permitted Substances Lists as ...”the PMRA considered the demand for lower risk pesticides from the organic pest management sector and residential domestic class markets...
...Low-risk biochemicals and non-conventional pesticides are a subset of reduced-risk products and **may involve both reduced information requirements and an expedited review time.**”

This consultation is available for comment from October 28, 2010, to January 26, 2011 (90 calendar days). To participate, click on http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/part/consultations/_pro2010-06/pro2010-06-eng.php

... OFC AGM held in Saskatoon... OFC met for in-person meetings and an AGM in a cold and sunny Saskatoon, November 20-21st, while organic producers and stakeholders from the Prairies were gathering for the Organic Connections conference and tradeshow. Two years had passed since OFC members and directors met face-to-face and the meetings were a rare opportunity to fraternize and strengthen good working relations. It was also an opportunity to meet participants in and members of OFC’s constituency in Saskatchewan.

The elected members of the **OFC Executive** are:

President	Ted Zettel , Organic Council of Ontario
Vice-President	Julie Belzile , Filière biologique du Québec
Secretary	Sue Cheeseman , Organic Council of Nova Scotia
Treasurer	Priscilla Reimer , Manitoba Organic Alliance
Chair	Clark Philips , New Brunswick Organic Working Group/ACORN

The OFC report presented in the appendix describes OFC activities for the year 2009-2010.

.... OFC wishes all of you a warm and healthy Christmas...



**May this Christmas be bright and cheerful
and
may the New Year begin on a prosperous note!**

APPENDIX – OFC Report on Activities – 2009-2010

Food production without the use of chemicals that impoverish the land is a fantastic accomplishment in a period where sustainability and ecological awareness are becoming the necessary base for economical development. The COR is now guiding organic production, but there is still a lot of work to accomplish. OFC's strategic planning exercise has confirmed the pertinence of its primary mandate: regulatory and standards issues, such as the permanent funding of standards revisions under the CGSB umbrella, the coordination and sustainability of the Standards Interpretation Committee, the impact of the upcoming termination of the Stream of Commerce Policy, the equivalency agreements on organic trade with other countries, GMOs, the lack of intra-provincial organic regulation (except in Quebec), the quality of CFIA enforcement of the COR and the success of the research projects being done under the umbrella of the Organic Science Cluster.

OFC Activities 2009-2010

Canadian Organic Sector Representation

- Secure funding to update the Canadian Organic Standards and for the Standards Interpretation Committee;
- Active representation and communication with AAFC and CFIA for getting the standards free of charge;
- Active representation for clarifying the meaning of the Canada/US equivalency agreement on:
 - the inclusion of processed products in the scope of the equivalency agreement,
 - clarification of the interpretation of the variances,
 - enforcement of the variances.

Standards Interpretation Committee

- Election of first **Standards Interpretation Committee**;
- Active participation to SIC activities: 2 in-person meetings and 6 teleconferences (until Dec 2010); **68 questions interpreted** and submitted to public comment period;
- Translation of answers for publication on COO website and public comment period;
- Preparation and translation of the **Veterinary Natural Health Products**.

COO Liaison Committee

- Attended 15 Canada Organic Office teleconferences and reported to the industry via Can Reg List and on **OFC Website**

Survey

- OVCRT Survey on Regulatory Impediments to the trade of organic products;
- Survey on the impact of the implementation of the OPR (Fall 2010).

OFC Blog & Website

- Consultation on **parallel production and on feed for slaughter animals**;
- Updates – presentation of current issues.

Organic Science Cluster

- Financial supervision of **the Organic Science Cluster**, an \$8,800,000 research project on organic agriculture; assisting OACC on management issues.

Canadian Organic Standards Revision

- 4TH ballot – contracted by the COO to manage technical support staff;
- 5th ballot – participation and involvement of OFC directors.

OFC Communication activities

- Report on 4th **ballot**;
- Interview with and a **Report on the work of Suzie Miller**, former Chair of the Organic Value Chain Roundtable;
- YouTube video “**An Organic Field of dreams**”;
- Regular publication of **InfoBio – Short News**.

Organic Aquaculture

Prepare comments on Draft Standards for the CGSB Working group and participate in CGSB meeting on organic aquaculture.

Organic Value Chain Round Table

- OFC is present at the **OVCRT meetings**;
- Participates to the GE task group.