

Info - bio



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

Notes from COO Liaison Committee Meeting of May 30th 2011

Present: Stephanie Wells (COTA), Priscilla Reimer (MOA), Kelly Monaghan (Chair of CGSB TC & PSL WG), Dave Lockman (ProCert), Dag Falck (Nature's Path), Joanne Jackson Johnson (GoOFY/Yukon), Tomas Nimmo (Guelph Conference), Matthew Holmes (COTA), Gunta Vitins, Anne Macey, Rochelle Eisen, Arnold Taylor (SOD), Terry Sheehan (Organic Alberta), Tiffany Priestley (OPAM), Ted Zettel (OCO/OFC), Roy van Wyk (Canadian Seed Institute), Seena Chellakudam and Carl Carter (CHFA), Mark Schuessler (CGSB), Lucie Gionet (UPA), Joyce Kelly (PEI COPC).

COO – CFIA : Michel Saumur (COO), Elizabeth Corrigan (COO), Daniel Miller (CFIA).

The Canada Organic Office (COO)

The COO and some CFIA agencies will be forming a new Labelling and Claim Directorate; Daniel Miller will be the director of this new body. The decision to create a new directorate was made after a comprehensive review of the CFIA regulatory activities, with the purpose of consolidating food labelling and claims monitoring. The teams are being affiliated to this new organization in a way that will avoid interruption of current activities and keep the system running smoothly. This restructuring of the CFIA services will be strategized to determine how it will be done; communication will be sent to stakeholders. Moving to the Consumer Protection Department is a positive move for the COO that was previously managed under the Food Safety Division. The COO will have the chance to work with people who are facing similar challenges.

Ken Bruce, who was responsible for international agreements announced his early retirement a month ago. His responsibilities have been transferred to the COO Manager. All planned meetings will proceed as scheduled. Stephane O'Neil's position will be filled by July 1st.

Canadian Organic Standards (COS)

The publication of the amended standards following the 5th CGSB ballot is imminent. CGSB 32.310 and 32.311 will be dated June 2011.

International Equivalency Arrangements

Canada/US

In June, NOP representatives will visit Canada for the peer review of the Canadian system. The NOP personnel will visit the COO, some CVBs, CBs and operators. They will also meet with the Filière biologique du Québec to discuss the organic maple syrup standard and NOP certification. A working group will also discuss issues related to the US/Canada Equivalency Agreement with the NOP visitors.

Canada/EU

Both parties have agreed that their regimes are equivalent. The agreement will be finalized and made official when letters are signed. The CFIA will send a media release and a notice to the industry; this agreement will modify certification activities in Canada as operators will only need the COR certification for exporting their products to the EU.

Enforcement and the end of the Stream of Commerce Policy

Enforcement was performed under the Stream of Commerce Policy and will continue. The future announcement of CFIA enforcement actions may be perceived as negative by consumers or stakeholders, but the COO wants to spread and reinforce the message that enforcement is the proof that the system works; the COO invites all Canadian stakeholders to transmit the same “positive” message. The CFIA will follow regular enforcement procedures; operators that are non compliant will receive notifications and be given sufficient time to correct the situation; the correction plan will be reviewed. The CFIA does not take action when required corrections are made.

Next Conference Call: When Announced