



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

Notes from COO Liaison Committee Meeting of October 19th 2009

Present: Dag Falck (Nature's Path), Stephanie Wells (OTA), Byron Hamm (ProCert), Arnold Taylor (OCIA/OFC), H el ene Bouvier (Organic Ranchers), Tiffany Priestley (OPAM), Jackie Creighton (CCGD), Julie Belzile (FBQ)

COO office: Elizabeth Corrigan, Valeriya Staykova and Ken Bruce; Gordon Henry (Bilateral Relations Officer for Asia, CFIA International Section)

Regulations

Elizabeth Corrigan said the sector should continue to submit regulations questions in writing. Answers will be posted on the COO web site as soon they are prepared.

Standards

2010 standards ballot: Elizabeth Corrigan reported the COO is working with Kelly Monaghan, the new chair of the CGSB technical committee on organic agriculture, Anne Caron at CGSB and the Working Groups convenors on the schedule for the 2010 standards ballot. The timelines are tight with the English ballot submissions required by December 1, 2009. Julie Belzile asked about funding for the standards work. Elizabeth said the funding in place includes an honorarium for the Working Group convenors, a small budget for the PSL Working Group and travel costs for voting members of the technical committee to attend the CGSB meeting. Wally Hamm may return as convenor of the Crops Working Group.

Standards amendments resulting from the 4th ballot: The amendments are with the Standards Council of Canada for final ratification. The COO had said it would circulate the amendments to the CBs, but cannot due to copyright restrictions. If a CB has concerns about a specific substance being used by clients, they should contact Elizabeth to know whether it has been addressed in the amended PSL. Dag asked whether the organic sector must pay for the amendments. There will be a fee for the amendments (as yet undetermined), based on the number of pages.

After this 2010 ballot, there will not be another opportunity to update the standards until 2011, when the required 5-year review must be conducted. In January 2010, the COO will look for funding for the 2011 full review of the standards.

International

Ken Bruce introduced Gordon Henry, from the CFIA International section, who announced that Taiwan has deemed the Canada Organic Regime as equivalent, effective August 5, 2009.

Arnold Taylor asked if the list of NOP-accredited CBs in other countries is available. Ken said this will be on the agenda when the COO meets with the NOP in December. Julie asked how the NOP controls imports. Valeriya will be able to respond after the December meeting with the NOP.

Ken reported the European Union will meet with the COO in November to discuss the potential for an equivalency agreement. Ken has asked the EU if they have found critical variances in the EU and Canadian standards, but does not yet have a response.

Accreditation

The COO will meet with the CBs October 27th in Ottawa, to discuss CGSB technical Working Groups issues, the Standards Interpretation Committee, certification procedures, the US-Canada equivalency agreement and questions from the CBs. Questions regarding standards will not be discussed, as those are now channelled to the Standards Interpretation Committee.

The COO will meet the Accrediting Bodies October 29th in Winnipeg. The questions from the CBs will be brought forward at that meeting.

Next Meeting is scheduled for 1pm EST on Monday, November 2.
Call-in Number is: 1-866-646-2080. Pass code is 2217165.