



Notes from COO Liaison Committee Meeting of August 10th 2009

Present: Betsy Hui (CHFA), Rochelle Eisen (COABC), Nicole Boudreau (OFC/FBC), Priscilla Reimer (MOA), Deb Foote (CHFA), Sally Blackman (CPMA), Dave Lockman (Procert), Jackie Crichton (CCGD), Arnold Taylor (OFC/OCIA), Jean Duval (Bio-Action), Jennifer Scott (CSI), Sherry Casey (Loblaws), Emmanuelle Verrette (VDD), Claire Hanlon-Smith (NS Govt)
COO office: Valeriya Staykova, Michel Saumur, Stephane O'Neil.

Regulations - The regulations have been in force for more than a month. The COO invites stakeholders to consult the Q&A section (<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/quest2e.shtml>) to find information on the COR. Questions are continuously compiled and the COO is preparing answers; the sector will be notified when updates will be posted on the COO website. The list of CVBs and CBs is also updated when necessary. Any CB not on that list must contact a CVB and apply for accreditation; this is a quick, efficient procedure for CBs that are already accredited or are prepared for the assessment process. Otherwise, it can take up to one year.

Questions should be sent by email to:

Valeriya.Staykova@inspection.gc.ca

Stephane.ONeil@inspection.gc.ca

Michel.Saumur@inspection.gc.ca

Standards –

The fourth ballot: CGSB has received the ballot comments from its Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture. The CGSB response is currently in translation and the ballot results should be published by the end of August.

The fifth ballot: The COO has submitted a plan for holding a fifth ballot this fall and is waiting for CGSB proposal. The funding for the Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC) is in the process of approval; Ted Zettel, the chair of the SIC, will prepare a plan of action for the functioning of the SIC.

Equivalency Agreement – The EU has sent its list of critical variances to the COO. This list has been submitted to the members of the Committee on Organic Agriculture through the CGSB website. The committee's comments should be sent by August 14th. If Canada and EU accept each other variances, an agreement can be reached, but the content of the agreement will depend on DFAIT and Agriculture Canada policies. It is not a negotiation with another country, but with a union and the form of agreement will differ from the US-Canada Equivalency

Agreement. In the meantime, CBs are accredited to certify under the COR in Europe. An agreement with EU will also be subject to the Stream of Commerce Policy.

Public Awareness Campaign – COO has attended the COG AGM. Arnold Taylor raised the issue of slaughterhouses and will address a question to the COO on slaughterhouse requirements. This will be posted on the Q&A if necessary.

On the COO website, <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/quest2e.shtml>, answer to question # 17 needs to be clarified. It is written that “ From June 30, 2009 through June 30, 2011, owners of organic products that have been certified, but not to the Canadian Organic Standard or by a CFIA accredited Certification body, will be asked to correct the violation by submitting planned corrective actions to the CFIA.” Sherry Casey asked if the corrective actions should be submitted to CFIA. Michel answered that the COO oversees the system and operators should submit their corrective actions to their CBs.

Next Meeting is scheduled for 1pm EST on Monday, August 24th.

Call-in Number is: 1-866-646-2080. Pass code is 2217165.