



Notes from COO Liaison Committee Meeting of June 22nd 2009

Present: Betsy Hui (CHFA), Gunta Vitins (Sunopta), Rochelle Eisen (COABC), Stephanie Wells (OTA), Sherry Casey (Loblaws), Keith Mussar (IE Canada), Dag Falck (Nature's Path), Nicole Boudreau (OFC/FBC), Julie Belzile (FBQ), Matthew Holmes (OTA), Ted Zettel (OCO/OFC), Priscilla Reimer (MOA), Arnold Taylor (OFC), John Hollinger (MAFRI), Dawn Robinson (Kraft), Deb Foote (CHFA), Mauricio Bobadilla (Sobeys), Jean Duval (Bio-Action), Stephanie Priestley, Jennifer Scott (CSI), Jim McCullagh (CSI), Sally Blackman (CPMA), Marie Vézina (FABQ), Ann Macey, Nathalie Doré (AAFC), Dwight Brown (PACS), Byron Hamm (Procert), Tracy Innes (AAFC), Michelle Neilson (McLean Organic Food), Adam Smith (AAFC), Anne MacEacheron (AAFC), Pamela Meier-Duthie (AAFC), Lorrie McFadden (AAFA), Lindsay Wakelin (AAFC), Donald Reiter (AAFC).

COO office: Elizabeth Corrigan, Michel Saumur, Valeriya Staykova, Ken Bruce

Regulations - The COO expects the Regulations will be published June 24th, and come into force June 30th; there are no significant changes, only some editorial modifications.

Labelling: The logo can be applied right away on products complying with the COR. The logo will be distributed by the CBs to the operators who are certified to the COR.

Operators with meat and processed products, with labels that must be approved by CFIA will need to submit their labels for verification that the name of the certifying CB is provided. The COO will discuss with US partners how the logo will be distributed to NOP operators complying with the Equivalency Agreement (EA).

USDA is the competent authority responsible for submitting the list of their accredited CBs. This list cannot be published before June 30th. In the meantime, operators can contact CVBs or their own CB to know if their CB will be accredited by the COO or recognized under the EA. The number of CBs that will be listed is not known but Michel declares that the 66 countries that were identified as trading partners are well covered by certification services to the COR or to the EA.

The Quality Management System manual has been broken out into two sections:

- The Operating Manual contains the information needed by the organic sector and will be posted on COO website.
- COO internal procedures, which will be available upon request.

Equivalency Agreement (EA)— The USDA-Canada equivalency agreement was signed June 18th in Chicago; the two countries recognize each other's organic programs. Without additional certification, Canadian organic products certified to the COR will be exported to US and US organic products certified to NOP will be imported into Canada.

The conditions described on the official letters issues by the two countries, including management of critical variances, are discussed. The COO declares that the NOP will follow Canadian requirements for indoor/outdoor livestock stocking rates and prohibition of sodium nitrate; NOP will confirm how they will deal with this variance about livestock management.

The COO will issue directives to the accredited CBs on protocol for meeting requirements of the agreement. The USDA will issue directives to its accredited CBs on protocol for meeting requirements of the agreement. CFIA and USDA will audit one another to verify that directives are respected by CBs on both sides. Some procedures are still to be established.

Byron Hamm asks for a clear procedure to determine whether an imported product from US is complying with the EA. The COO answers that extra documentation will not be required, but acknowledges that clarity is needed on the procedure to verify that products comply with the EA. Some clarification will be issued by the end of the week. The COO repeats that there must be mutual trust in the system put in place by the two governments.

The letters issued by US and Canada are the reference documents for the EA. No other document is defining the agreement.

Conference Calls with the COO – Michel will be away on holiday for one month. Elizabeth Corrigan and Valeriya Staykova will participate on the COO calls during the month of July.

Questions regarding;

Regulation/ Standards: Elizabeth Corrigan - Elizabeth.Corrigan@inspection.gc.ca

CBs and CVBs: Valeriya Staykova - Valeriya.Staykova@inspection.gc.ca

International issues: Ken Bruce - Ken.Bruce@inspection.gc.ca

Frequently Asked Questions on Canada/US Equivalency on the COO website:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioimporte.shtml>

Next Meeting is scheduled for 1pm EST on Monday, July 6th.

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