



Notes from COO Liaison Committee Meeting of June 8th, 2009

Present: Betsy Hui (CHFA), Gunta Vitins (Sunopta), Gordon Nodge (COCC), 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), Dave Lockman (Procert), Arnold Taylor (OFC), John Hollinger (OMAFRA), Dawn Robinson (Kraft), Jennifer Jamieson (AAFC), Weronika Ziomek (Egg Farmers of Canada), John Henning (McGill University), Claire Hanlon-Smith (Nova Scotia gov.), Deb Foote (CHFA), Mauricio Bobadilla (Sobeys), Kristen Wasylenchuk (OPAM).

COO office: Elizabeth Corrigan, Michel Saumur, Valeriya Staykova
DFAIT: Louise Burden

N.B. Minutes of the COO meeting held May 25th have been revised:

The New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture (NBDAA) has been approached by the NB organic industry to develop and implement a provincial organic regulation and the NBDAA is currently studying the request.

Regulations - The COO expects the Regulations will be published within two weeks. Not likely this coming Saturday. The touchy issue of the certification of products intended for export will be addressed in the Regulation Impact Analysis Statement (RIAS). Other questions can be addressed to Michel Saumur, 613-773-6218, or to Elizabeth Corrigan 613-773-6221.

Standards and PSL – Anne Caron at CGSB sent out the 4th ballot. All voting members must send in their votes by July 2nd, closing date for the ballot. CGSB intends to tabulate the results quickly, so the deadline must be respected.

Conformity Verification Bodies (CVB) – Valeriya Staykova announces that the five CVBs – CAEQ/CARTV, SCC, COABC, IOAS and DAP – have signed their agreements; the COO plans to sign the agreement by June 22nd and publish the lists of CVBs and accredited Certifying Bodies (CBs) by June 30th.

Those CBs now accredited by the CVBs that have signed the COO agreement will be on the list of COR-accredited CBs that will be published by June 30th. The COO will work with the CVBs on implementation of the Regulations. It is difficult to predict the nature of the problems that the coming into force will raise; the COO will prepare training if necessary.

Any changes to the PSL as a result of the ballot will be accepted as soon as the ballot results are known. In the meantime, operators will have to meet the standards as they are. After June 30th, any certification in place will remain so until recertification is due.

Questions regarding various import or export scenarios must be addressed in writing and submitted to the COO.

Equivalency agreement — The NOP and COO representatives are actively cooperating and the COO will have something to announce at All Things Organic in Chicago. The final wording of this announcement is being prepared.

The COO is waiting for the EU analysis of the critical variances between Canadian and EU standards.

Conference Calls with the COO – The COO began these teleconference meetings with the sector more than two years ago. As the OPR will most probably come into force June 30th, the COO asks if the conference calls should continue to be held every second Monday. The participants are wholeheartedly in favour of continuing these meeting with the COO for at least six months, as the OPR implementation will surely raise more issues and questions. Michel Saumur wants a different procedure, asking that questions and scenarios be submitted in advance by email, to be discussed on conference calls and documented in a Q&A database to assure consistency.

The COO asks that, from now on, all issues be submitted by email or phone; the COO will address them during the next conference calls.

The logo will be allowed on products certified to the COR by COO-accredited CBs. The logo will also be authorized on the label of NOP-certified products if an equivalency agreement is reached. Products certified only under the Quebec standards are not allowed to carry the logo. The COR prevails for organic products sold on interprovincial or international markets. The graphic file of the logo will be distributed by CVBs and CBs. The operators will not have to request the logo from the COO. Michel cannot say if there will be a new logo.

Next Meeting is scheduled for 1pm EST on Monday, June 22th.

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