



THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

December 2014

**Review of the Canadian Organic Standards**

**A great meeting held in Gatineau December 15-17, 2014**

The agenda was loaded; but the Technical Committee worked seriously to listen, debate and make thoughtful decisions about the 201 items presented by the Conveners of the Working Groups.

Maureen Bostock, Convener of the PSL Crop Production Working group commented: 'I was stunned by the amount of work we accomplished this week. Congratulations to everyone for not only getting the work done, but with such an amazing sense of comraderie. It is truly rewarding work.'



The participants to the Technical Committee Meeting –  
A photo report is presented on the last pages of InfoBio

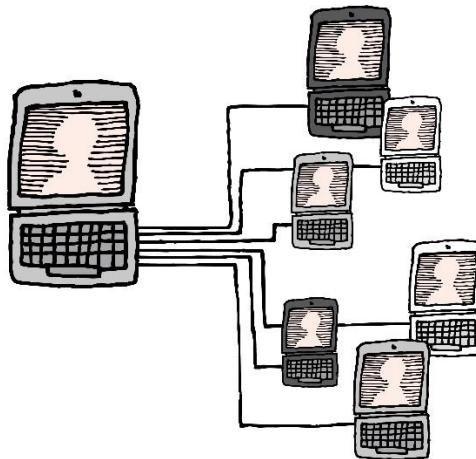
**The OFC will publish a full report early January in which we will present the complete list of TC recommendations.**

## The COS Review

# An enormous task

In order to perform the review of the Canadian Organic Standards:

- The working groups held 72 meetings since the fall of 2013; with an average of 7 participants per call of 2 hours – for a total of 1008 hours of work;
- The Technical Committee met three times; with 42 participants per meeting of 24 hours (8h per day during 3 days) – for a total of 3024 hours;
- The 8 Working Group Conveners worked over 1500 hours in leading their WG and preparing recommendations to the TC.



**5,532 hours have been dedicated  
to the review of the COS.**

A budget of \$10,000 has been spent for technical support – research, preparation of review records for substances, secretarial and editorial support. A brief report which reviewed the beneficial effects of outdoor access for poultry was prepared by Monique Bestman (Louis Bolk Institute); [click here](#) to consult this report.

Next step: A ballot will be prepared led by CGSB in order to confirm the recommendations adopted by the Technical Committee during the current review. Moving forward, a very new task will begin: merging the organic aquaculture and agriculture standards.



**The full review of the agriculture standard is a unique occasion  
to integrate the voluntary aquaculture standard created 3 years ago**

The current review of the COS was launched in 2013 after the CGSB and the SCC negotiated a memorandum of understanding to review and update the organic standards referenced by the OPR.

Under this MOU, SCC would fund the CGSB staff involved in the review, written translation of documents created to present recommendations from the sector to the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture (TC), fees for meeting rooms, simultaneous translation at the TC meetings, and coverage of travel fees for WG Conveners attending the TC meetings, etc.

The OFC then successfully applied under the Assurance Systems Stream Program from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to fund the part of the review that had to be performed by the sector: the creation of various WGs led by competent conveners that will analyze all requests for modifications to the COS and propose recommendations to the TC.

The first standard, 32.310 was developed in 1999 with assistance of AAFC. A new full-edition was then published in 2006 as well as the first edition of 32.311. These two standards served as the requirements and the framework for Organic Agriculture and were eventually incorporated by reference in the *Organic Products Regulations, 2009* under the *Canada Agricultural Products Act (CAPA)*, which are enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The standards are part of the Canada Organic Regime (COR) which provides oversight to certification and provides conditions for making labelling and advertising claims.

Organic Aquaculture was not included in these standards, as the responsibility for aquaculture was with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

Will we soon have the permission to add the Canada Organic Logo on aquaculture products?



DFO sponsored the separate, but similar standard, CAN/CGSB 32.312 Organic Aquaculture Standards (32.312), which was published in 2012. These two programs are separate entities in Canada, and may be considered a trade-difficulty to our trading partners as there are two independent federal departments and two standards. Most importantly, the Canada organic logo currently used on certified organic products under COR cannot be used in the aquaculture program.

In 2012, the *Safe Foods for Canadians Act (SFCA)* was given Royal Assent and sets the stage for the repeal of the CAPA once the relevant regulations are published. Given that the SFCA provides the authority to regulate aquaculture products, the new regulations represented an opportunity to include the aquaculture standard under COR. Furthermore, it seems that no significant changes would not be required to the agriculture standards to maintain coherence with the aquaculture standard.

The SFCA allows for organic aquaculture and organic agricultural products to be certified under the same regulations and the same certification oversight system. This is an interesting development as this could strengthen the growth of the organic sectors in Canada, further improve trade with international partners and facilitate Canadians' recognition of organic foods and confidence in the monitoring and enforcement of the regulations.

A task group made up of various stakeholders from the agriculture and aquaculture sectors will be struck to merge the three organic documents. The objective - to fully integrate the content of the aquaculture standard into the draft agriculture standards, have the merged standards reviewed by the Technical Committee and by the public and be balloted for publication in late summer.

Organic statistical data

## A New Website for the Quebec Sector



The CARTV has modernized and improved the presentation of the information on the Quebec organic sector. Their new website presents over 1300 Quebec companies that are certified organic in agricultural production, processing, handling and retail services.

[Click here](#) to visit this website (in French only).

Why organic?

### New study links glyphosate-based herbicides to chronic disease

The new study [Genetically engineered crops, glyphosate and the deterioration of health in the USA](#) was published in the [Journal of Organic Systems](#). It has linked glyphosate, the primary ingredient in Monsanto's best-selling herbicide, Roundup, to an enormous increase in chronic diseases across the country.



## The meeting of the Technical Committee – December 2014

### Photo report



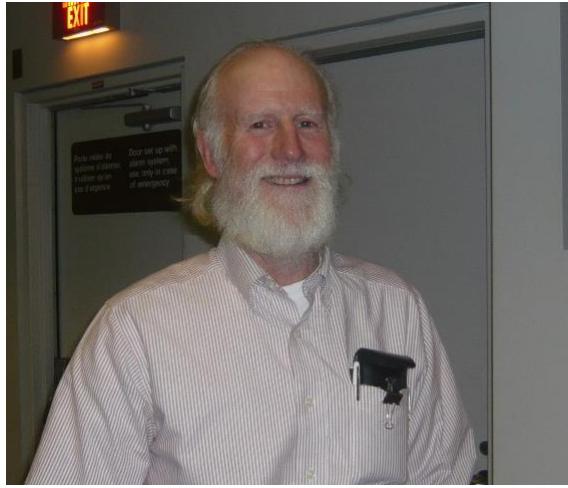
Hugh Martin, Chair of the Technical Committee, Bill Barkley, Apiculture Working Group,  
Anne Macey, Convener of the Livestock Working Group



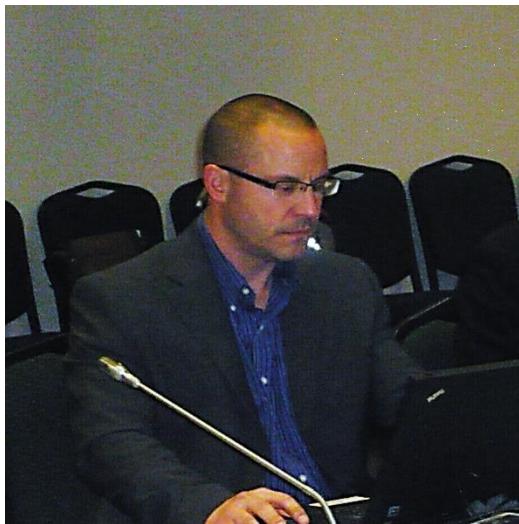
Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador, OMRI, Janine Gibson, Convener of the PSL Livestock WG,  
Maureen Bostock, Convener of the PSL Crop WG



Amy Kremen, Convener of the Processing PSL WG,  
and Francois Labelle, Valacta



Tony McQuail, Convener of WG on Small-Scale  
Certification



Nicolas Turgeon, MAPAQ



Shannon Jones, ACORN, Tara Scott, inspector, member  
of the Standards Interpretation Committee



Gérard Bouchard, President of the Organic Producers of  
Québec and Pierre Lampron, Dairy Farmers of Canada



Joyce Kelly, PEI COPC , and Andy Hammermeister, OACC



Some members of the Technical Committee :

From left to right:

Tim Rundle, Pacific Organic Seafood Association,

Mark Schuessler, Canadian General Standards Board

Rola Yehia, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Gérard Bouchard, President of the Organic Producers of Québec

Priscilla Reimer, Manitoba Organic Alliance

Amy Kremen, Convener for the PSL Processing WG

Dag Falck, Small Scale Food Producers Association,

Shannon Jones, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network

Andy Hammermeister, Organic Agriculture Center of Canada

Janine Gibson, Organic Food Council of Manitoba

Marie-Claire Hurteau, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Rochelle Eisen, Convener for the Preparation WG

Hugh Martin, Chair of the Technical Committee (behind Rochelle)

Tony McQuail, Convener for the Small-Scale Certification Working Group

Anne Macey, Convener Livestock Working Group

Susan Smith, British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Pierre Lampron, Dairy Farmers of Canada

Maureen Bostock, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario

Ted Zettel, Organic Council of Ontario (behind Maureen)

Serge Lefebvre, Egg Farmers of Canada

Annie St-Onge, Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers