Celebrating 20 Years Together
COABC
Certified Organic Associations of BC

Enews

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Special points of interest:

- April 9 Day of Action to Stop GM Alfalfa. Join us!
- More Questions & Answers are posted on the OFC website, www.organicfederation.ca
- Thank you to Sara Dent and Moss Dance for the photos in this issue

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COABC GMO Statement

GMO contamination has long been a concern for the organic sector. In response to member requests, the COABC board has adapted a GMO Statement.

We the members of the Certified Organic Association of BC, representing a significant and growing sector of the agriculture industry in British Columbia, hereby declare zero tolerance for contamination of our soil, water, seed, livestock feed, and food supply with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). We also reject Agriculture Canada's proposal for low level presence and we reiterate that zero means zero.

The COABC demands that labeling be mandated at the federal level in Canada to indicate the use or possible presence of GMO ingredients in foods meant for human or livestock consumption.

The COABC demands that the BC Minister of Agriculture require GMO seed providers to submit an annual report to the Ministry of Agriculture listing the number of locations per municipality, the types of GMO crops and test plots in production, the acreage cultivated and tonnage harvested. This report is to be made public promptly.

The use of genetically engineered organisms or their products are prohibited in any form or at any stage in organic production, processing or handling. For organic farmers, handlers, processors and retailers, GM contamination is utterly unacceptable as it puts our entire food system at risk.

The above statement will be sent to the BC Government and be available on the COABC website, www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca

The PST is Back

As of April 1, 2013 the PST has been reinstated.

The BC Ministry of Finance issued a PST Bulletin for Farmers to help them navigate the return of the PST.

This bulletin makes clear there are 2 ways to claim exemption to the PST.

1) Submit a completed Certificate of Exemption–Farmer form (FIN 458) to each of your suppliers

or

2)Show your current BC Farmer Identity Card. Become a registered card holder here.

Fortis and BC Hydro will also provide PST exemptions to farmers. Both require one of the documents mentioned above. Call their customers service to clarify any questions.

$600,000 Committed to Organic Standards Review

The Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) confirmed that the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) will invest $600,000 to support the full review of the Canadian Organic Standards (COS).

An agreement will be signed between SCC and the CGSB. The COS review, due every 5 years, could be launched this spring. The agreement should cover the honorarium for the Chair of the CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture and the Working Groups' Convenors, administrative support, and many other expenses.

The OFC is very pleased as the COS review is a top-level issue. Organic operators will benefit from this initiative as the COS are their day-to-day working tool.

SSFPA Website Program

The Small Scale Food Processors Association (SSFPA) aims to support small and medium enterprises in the food processing industry by providing leadership, education, marketing, networking and advocacy to foster success in a competitive global market.

To further their mandate SSFPA has a program to help members enhance their web presence.

The program, TotalSnap, offers user friendly online marketing tools for creating websites that include an instant mobile phone website and a Facebook business page app that allows users to create a custom Facebook page which will support ecommerce.

The SSFPA has posted webinars on topics like Expand your Business Using Microsites and Social Networks, and Take Full Advantage of Facebook.

Explore the SSFPA site at http://www.ssfpa.net/

BC Organic Grower Editor Leaving

COABC is sorry to announce the resignation of our current BC Organic Grower Editor, Andrea Langlois.

Andrea has been editing the BCOG for 4 and a half years with layout designer Moss Dance.

Under Andrea, the BCOG has thrived.

Andrea has said that in order to give fuller attention to other projects in her life and to spend a bit more time in the garden, rather than on the computer she has made the decision to leave the BCOG team.

Thank you Andrea for all your hard work and dedication.

Events

National Day of Action to Stop GMO Alfalfa

Date: April 9, 2013
Location: Across Canada
Time: noon-1pm
Website: http://www.cban.ca/

38 rallies are planned at MP constituencies offices throughout Canada on April 9 for the Day of Action to Stop GM Alfalfa!
Rallies in BC include Duncan, Kamloops, Kelowna, Langley, Nelson, Smithers, Vancouver, Vernon and Victoria.

Buy local! Buy Fresh! Okanagan Food Map

Date: April 19, 2013
Location: Okanagan Valley, BC
Register: www.buylocalbc.org/

Register before April 19 and receive the earlybird rate. This direct marketing tool benefits both residents and tourists alike, and provides a cost effective method for local farms and businesses to connect with consumers. This model has been successfully used for over ten years in other parts of Canada including Ontario, Newfoundland and Vancouver Island.

Slow Food Canada National Confernce 2013

Date: April 25-28, 2013
Location: Watermark Beach Resort, Osoyoos, BC
Register: slowfood.ca

The Thompson Okanagan convivium, is hosting the 2013 slow food conference. They will showcase the amazing region – its people – history – farmers – chefs and our passionate Agritourism and Culinary tourism culture. Join them for workshops, tours and good food.

Newsletters from Supporting Organizations

Every month the COABC receives newsletters from organizations with related interests

- **BC Agriculture Council** COABC is a member under the Community Agriculture seat. BC Advocate
- **OFC** http://www.organicfederation.ca/
- **BCSPCA** http://support.spca.bc.ca/site/MessageViewer?em_id=7661.0&dlv_id=24241
- **BCAFM** http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/newsletter/2012/Oct

BCAC
BC AGRICULTURE COUNCIL
Leading the way together

Reminders

Shipping in and out of Province

For certified organic operators who wish to ship outside the province (nationally or internationally) don't forget that you now must be certified under under ISO rather than the provincial BC certified organic program.

Social Media

COABC is on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Certified-Organic-Associations-of-BC/208548192519986 and on Twitter, username coabccanada. Join our online community.

Complaints Submission Form

Canada Organic Office complaint submission form can be found at http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php.
For complaints against an interprovincial traded product see the COO complaint form at http://certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php.
Complaints on this form are to be directed to the Canada Organic Office directly OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca .