

# E-News

July 2010

## WHAT'S NEW

### Did you read about Thomas Kamiya in the Summer BC Organic Grower

Are you interested in having Thomas visit your farm? Contact Rochelle [extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca) and she can help line up a visit from Thomas. Next regions he is visiting are the Peace, followed by the Kootenays and Southern Alberta.

### Labor Survey for farms with less than \$100,000 in gross receipts

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) is researching the labor needs on farms with less than \$100,000 in gross receipts. Applications Management Consulting has been contracted by the Council to conduct this research. We are hoping the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia can support this research.

This project is a follow-up to the work CAHRC completed in 2009 about recruitment and retention on larger farms. An important part of the current research project about smaller farms is a survey of producers requesting information about their current and future labour needs, whether they have difficulty hiring help etc. The link to the survey is posted on the CAHRC website at <http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/home.html> Survey's are available until mid-August (The previous report can be viewed at <http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/LabourMarketInfo.html>.)

### From the Organic Federation of Canada

Ted Zettel, OFC Preseident, made a presentation at the Organic Value Chain Round Table held in Quebec City June 28-29 on the funding that the sector needs to represent adequately the Canadian organic sector. Key issues are:

- **CFIA has not renewed the funding for the Standards Interpretation Committee.** So OFC is applying under an AAFC program to get the money needed to continue the SIC work. The COO is backing us on this.
- Negotiations for the establishment of a **MOU between Manitoba and the CFIA** for the implementation of Manitoba intraprovincial organic regulations are progressing very well; there is a clear hope to sign the MOU in 2010.
- Ted's presentation on the necessity to get government financial support for OFC was clearly supported by the MAPAQ (Quebec Ministry of Agriculture) representative Nicolas Turgeon and by Donna Youngdahl of MOA; Nicolas argued that **if the federal government wants to hear the "one voice" of the sector, it needs to support it.**
- The video project went well: **15 OVCRT members accepted to be interviewed**, including Jaspinder Komal, the cochair of the OVCRT, who kindly spoke about the importance of the COR. The editing still has to be done, hopefully but the end of July.
- A taskgroup on GE has been created; Nicole Boudreau was elected the chair of this taskgroup. More information to come

### EFP Advisors wanted.

For the past year, the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program has been continuing to provide technical assistance from qualified Planning Advisors to complete Environmental Farm Plans for producers in BC. Planning Advisors have also assisted producers in accessing cost-shared funds for implementing Beneficial Management Practices (BMP's) to address any issues identified in the Environmental Farm Plan.



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For more information on Expression of Interest from persons interested in becoming a Planning Advisor see [www.ardcorp.ca](http://www.ardcorp.ca), [www.bcefp.ca](http://www.bcefp.ca), [www.bcac.bc.ca](http://www.bcac.bc.ca). Deadline for receiving them at the ARDCorp office is Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup>.

## ONGOING

### From the Canada Organic Office

Please note the letters for the "Canada/US Equivalency Determination or Import/Export Agreements", have been loaded live to the Canada Organic Office's web page. <http://inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/letterse.shtml>

### British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board Egg Industry Reviews

The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) has recently updated its website with information pertaining to two issues potentially of interest to egg industry stakeholders and the general public in British Columbia.

First, BCFIRB and the British Columbia Egg Marketing Board (Egg Board) have commenced their joint review of the Egg Board's New Producer Program Lottery. Please see the following link for more information:

[http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca/bcemb\\_npp\\_lottery.htm](http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca/bcemb_npp_lottery.htm)

Second, BCFIRB has provided an update on its review of the Egg Board's policy for distributing the proposed increase in British Columbia's egg allocation. Please see the following link for more information:

[http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca/bcemb\\_allocation\\_increase.htm](http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca/bcemb_allocation_increase.htm)

If you have any questions about the two reviews, please contact us by email at [firb@gov.bc.ca](mailto:firb@gov.bc.ca) or by phone at (250) 356-8945.

### BC Certified Organic Checkmark Logo

The logo of the BC Certified Organic program is a key tool to identify certified organic products in BC. It is important that the symbol is used correctly; here is a quick reminder, especially for websites and the exclusion zone (white space.)

The Program Symbol is enclosed by a black border. The border ensures that the appropriate white space or exclusion zone is provided around the composite mark. The Program Symbol must be enclosed by the border if the Symbol is applied against colored or complex backgrounds. However, if the background is white or off-white, it may be desirable to omit the border while ensuring the appropriate exclusion zone.

### CHC OFFS Manuals

On Farm Food Safety Manuals are available on the CHC member website.

If you do not have the CHC member password for COABC please contact Kristy at [office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

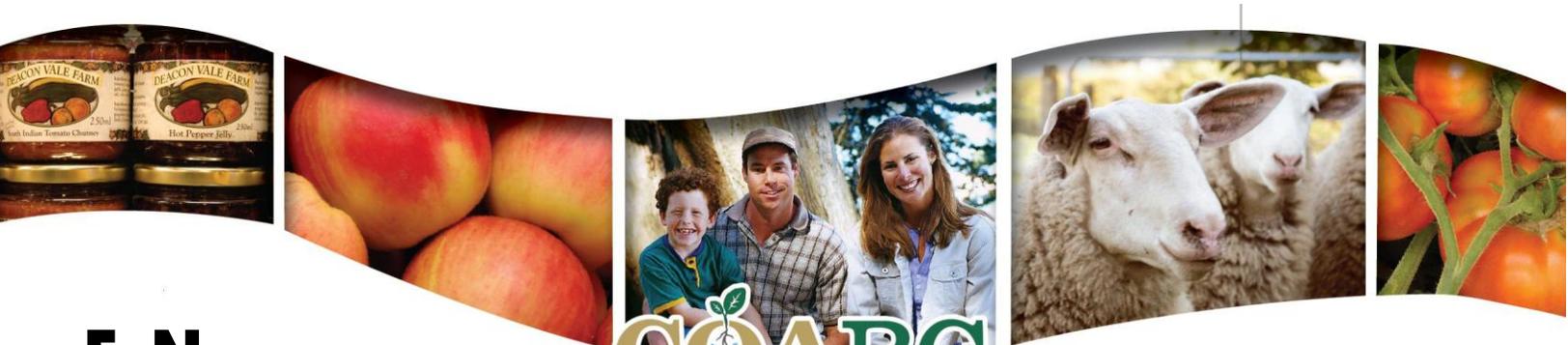
### Complaints Submission Form

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](mailto:OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca).



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## **Reminder – 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.

## **Sponsorship Program**

Who do you connect with in your daily life that may be interested in sponsoring the COABC? Health professionals, organisations that want to make an environmentally friendly statement, distributors etc...If you or a contact is interested in supporting the COABC contact Sarah Clark at [admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca) or (250) 260-4429.

## **INTERESTING**

### **Saving Fuel on the Farm by Making Hay**

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/05/100503-energy-saving-fue>

A new look at crop rotation could cut energy use for agriculture.

Farmers can slash their fossil fuel use, while still growing bumper crops and turning a profit—all with the help of a little more crop rotation, concluded the team of researchers from Iowa State University after a six-year study. In tests on a research farm in Iowa, the team mixed oats, alfalfa, and other crops into the rotation along with corn and soybeans, the two mainstays of the U.S. Corn Belt. With a more diverse set of crops, the farms needed only a fraction of the normal amounts of synthetic fertilizers and herbicides, both of which are typically manufactured from natural gas. One key was using alfalfa, which captures nitrogen from the air and stores it in the soil. Thanks to this natural fertilization, the fields planted with alfalfa needed only about one-quarter the usual amount of nitrogen from chemical fertilizers. Agronomy professor Matt Liebman and a team of researchers at Iowa State University found that a farm could cut its fossil fuel use in half by shifting to a four-year cycle—adding a year of another grain, such as oats, and a year of alfalfa, a legume, to the typical corn-soy rotation. These low-energy fields produced as many calories worth of crops, and generated about the same amount of money. "Our interest was not just how much corn we might be able to produce, but how much income might be generated on the farm," Liebman said.

## **Organic Value Chain Roundtable Co-Chair, Susie Miller, hands over the reins**

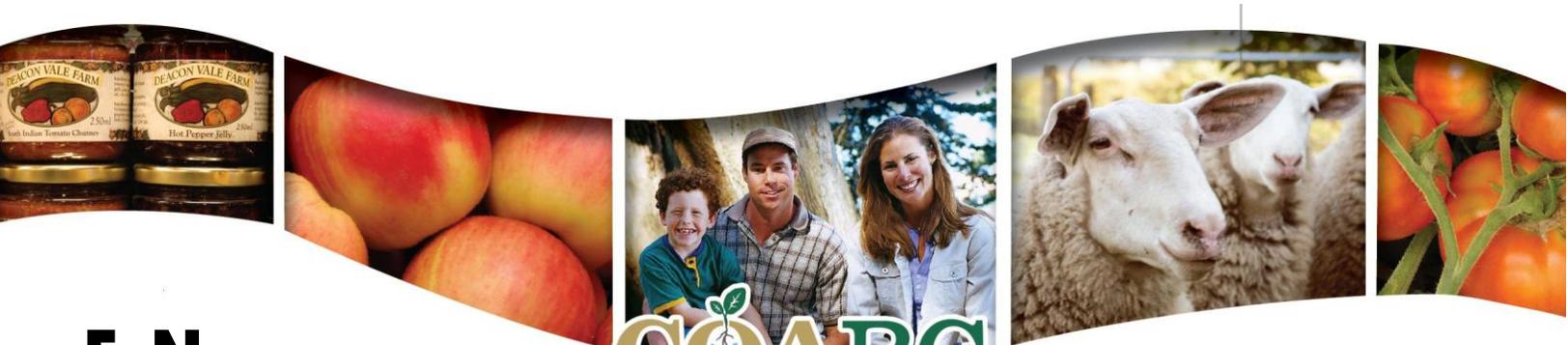
**by Priscilla Reimer June 2010**

*Forty percent of what she eats, estimates Susie Miller, Co-chair of the Organic Value Chain Roundtable, is organic. As much as possible, she shops at local farmers markets and describes herself as "a buy Canadian freak. I check every label of every product I buy," she says, "and I want my chickpeas to come from Swift Current."*

*Miller is stepping down as co-chair and generously agreed to an interview, prior to upcoming OVCRT meetings in Quebec City, 28-29 June, with Priscilla Reimer, Manitoba director of the Organic Federation of Canada.*

Susie Miller, a Director General of AAFC's Food Value Chain Bureau, grew up on the farm and always wanted to be a farmer.

To this day, whenever she visits another country, whether it is on business or on vacation, she always finds a way of visiting a farm. "I like the field of agriculture because it is critical to life; it is a fundamental life force," she says, "and it is undervalued. The reduction in the number of farmers . . . the distance between urban and rural has increased . . . most people don't know the challenges of being a producer." "But I could never afford the farm," she says, laughing.



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Instead, Miller has channeled her love of agriculture into more than 35 years of leadership and service to Canada's agricultural sector at both the provincial and federal levels. She holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Guelph.

Before assuming a leadership role at the Bureau, Miller spent twelve years in Saskatchewan where she was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food in 1997. At the time, she suggests, the organic sector was a small and seemingly insignificant player on the larger agricultural stage and was not taken seriously by its conventional counterpart. "But as government we made a real effort to ensure that the organic sector got the same consideration as the conventional sector, whether it was access to research funds, whether it was having the extension people on the ground that could help them meet their challenges, whether on the regulatory side, the export side, the market development side." And it was during Miller's tenure, that Saskatchewan appointed its first organic sector specialist.

Perhaps this explains why the organic sector, while not the first to be invited to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture's table, never-the-less received an invitation only three years after sector value chain roundtables were introduced in 2003, as a mechanism to take Canada's *Agricultural Policy Framework* (APF) to a new level. With an inaugural meeting in Toronto in December, 2006, the Organic Value Chain Roundtable (OVCRT) became the eighth of nine value chain roundtables related to beef, grains innovation, horticulture, organics, pork, seafood and special crops. *Roundtables bring together leaders from all points along the value chain—retailers, producers, processors, exporters and others—to build a shared understanding of their competitive position, create consensus on how to improve it, and put plans into action. They are sector-specific and able to focus intently on exactly what their individual value chains need to do to achieve long term global success for all players.*

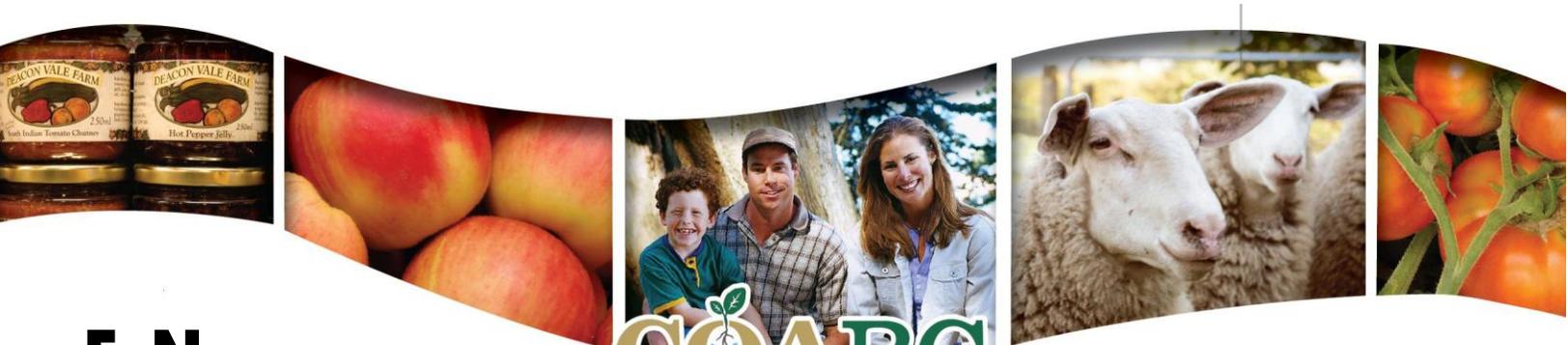
While AAFC organizes meetings and provides expertise and financial support to help roundtables develop and implement their action plans, it does not set the agenda. Industry leads the process and, in turn, federal officials ensure that roundtable priorities drive the planning and decision making of the department. An organic presence at the table, along with everyone else—roundtable co-chairs, federal and provincial staff and colleagues—increased the visibility and raised the profile of the organic sector, Miller says. "For me that was a strong signal to the Department and within the Department that we took the organic industry seriously, as it should be taken. I have brought my philosophy [that I developed in Saskatchewan]," she goes on to say, "as much as I've been able to, to my current job. I try to be part of the solution. Some say, 'I'm from government. I'm here to help you.' I actually try to do that," she says, laughing.

***"And what the organic roundtable did much sooner than everybody else was to put those [tensions] aside and look for collective solutions that would add value to everybody. And I think that that is a continuing strength. The strength is the people around the table. The strength is the dedication, the commitment and the vision."***

Overcoming its marginal status was the organic sector's first challenge, according to Miller. A second challenge is the almost unmanageably broad scope of the industry. Where other groups have a single focus like beef or eggs, or even a specific crop disease, the organic sector captures all commodity groups and their individual needs and concerns within the larger "certified organic" net. "In order to move an industry forward, whose priorities do you address first," Miller asks. "When you're talking about a range of every agricultural product that's produced across the country, the scope is so broad that to find common . . . or ways that you can work together is much more challenging."

But a group's liability can also be its greatest strength and the strength of the organic roundtable, according to Miller, is its willingness to work together for the good of the whole. "When you have a supply chain or value chain approach," she elaborates, "there's always the tension between buyers and sellers, because that's the nature of business. And what the organic roundtable did much sooner than everybody else was to put those aside and look for collective solutions that would add value to everybody. And I think that that is a continuing strength. The strength is the people around the table. The strength is the dedication, the commitment and the vision."

**The strength of the organic vision, however, has always been stronger than the financial resources available for promotion, research and development**



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Miller identifies this as a third challenge for the sector. The organic sector does not have access to the same kind of funding as other commodity organizations, she points out. Other groups have the check-off. "In some ways it is a miracle itself that [the organic] industry has been able to bring the successes that it has had both inside and outside the roundtable."

However, when the government moved from the APF, the program under which roundtables were introduced, to its new policy framework, *Growing Forward*, with its emphasis on research and research funding, the OVCRT was able to use its cohesiveness, its team spirit to full advantage.

Unlike other roundtables, researchers were part of the OVCRT team from its inception and in January 2009, at its fifth face-to-face meeting in Guelph, the Research and Innovation Working Group received concurrence from the OVCRT to proceed with developing an Organic Science Cluster Proposal.

"It was a total industry approach rather than coming from a group of researchers," Miller explains. "Organic research needs were tied into a strategic approach to develop the sector over the longer term. So the roundtable was extremely well positioned when the terms and conditions of the Canadian Agri-Science Clusters Program were announced and in fact, the applicants for the Organic Science Cluster, the Organic Federation of Canada and the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada, were the first ones to make an application." "From my perspective," she summarizes, "it is an example of how the ability to work together in a full chain fashion has led to some significant investment in the organic sector." And it is a clear sign that the organic industry has entered the mainstream, she adds.

**Miller has Co-chaired seven of the nine roundtables and is stepping down as Co-Chair of the OVCRT.**

She is handing the reins to Dr. Jaspinder Komal who brings a background in veterinary medicine and is no stranger to the organic sector. As Director of the CFIA's Agri-food Division in 2009, Dr. Komal played a key role in the implementation of the Organic Products Regulations and under the authority of those regulations he was instrumental in negotiating Equivalency Agreements with the United States and the European Union for trading of organic products.

And, he will always be remembered appreciatively, as the one who made the public announcement that Canada's organic standards would be available free of charge at the Cornwall meeting of the CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture last January.

**The OVCRT is an important link between organic stakeholders and agricultural policy makers, and an effective tool that contributes to the sustained growth of the organic sector. For more information, please visit the AAFC roundtable website at:**<http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/rt-tr/org-bio-eng.htm>.

## EVENTS

### Projecting Change Film Festival breakfast Screenings

For more information [http://projectingchange.ca/screeningblast/buyerbefair/PCFF\\_buyerbefair\\_evite.html](http://projectingchange.ca/screeningblast/buyerbefair/PCFF_buyerbefair_evite.html)

### Organic Okanagan Festival

September 26, 2010. Kelowna

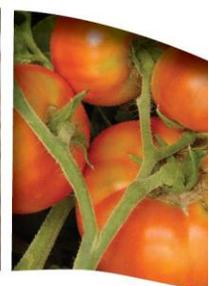
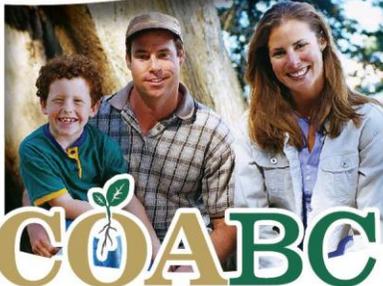
[http://www.okanangreens.ca/festivals\\_detail.php?festivals\\_id=5](http://www.okanangreens.ca/festivals_detail.php?festivals_id=5)

### 2011 Pacific Ag Show

The dates for the Pacific Agriculture Show will be January 27-29, 2011.

The move this year from our usual mid February dates was in response to the Olympics booking all the local hotels. We had intended on returning to the February dates. However, the input from many exhibitors, producers and those involved in the agriculture community, was strongly in favor of continuing with the late January dates.

We are pleased that we are able to make this move permanent and look forward to growing and improving the Show.



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For planning purposes the future dates for Pac Ag will be:

January 27-29, 2011

January 26-28, 2012

January 24-26, 2013

January 23-25, 2014



## Embrace the Future - Organic Connections

We are pleased to announce **Maria Rodale** as a keynote speaker for the *Fourth Biennial Organic Connections Conference and Trade Show* at TCU Place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, November 21 - 23, 2010.

People today are more confused than ever about organic food. Is it more nutritious? What's the difference between organic and natural? Isn't it more important to eat "locally" produced food? Why are organic foods so expensive? Doesn't the higher price make it elitist and therefore an unrealistic choice for working families? Is it possible to grow enough food to feed the world organically? With so much conflicting information, how can we possibly make the right choices?

In *ORGANIC MANIFESTO: How Organic Farming Can Heal Our Planet, Feed the World, and Keep us Safe* Maria Rodale—journalist, activist, and mother—cuts through the confusion and misinformation to provide an indispensable and highly readable look at why chemical-free farming unquestionably holds the key to better health for us and for the planet.

Maria is the granddaughter of Rodale founder J.I. Rodale and was named chairman of the company in 2007 and CEO in 2009. She will travel from her home in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to attend Organic Connections.

For more information: Lorraine Beaudette

Ph: 306-956-3110

[info@organicconnections.ca](mailto:info@organicconnections.ca)

[www.organicconnections.ca](http://www.organicconnections.ca)

## Building Sustainable Communities Conference

Kelowna, November 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010

<http://www.freshoutlookfoundation.org/conferences/bsc10/bsc10.asp>

Speakers include Canadian Green Party leader **Elizabeth May** will sit on the panel following presentations by Dr. Bill Rees (UBC), Mark Holland (HB Lanarc), and Tom Osdoba (University of Oregon). The panel also includes **Geoff Meggs** (author, journalist, and Vancouver councillor) and **Pamela Goldsmith-Jones** (West Vancouver mayor), and will be moderated by **David Beers** (journalist and founding editor of The Tyee). Another great addition is former BC Liberal leader **Gordon Wilson**, who will present his ideas for an Agricultural Land Trust and companion Farmstead Act. And landscape architect/planner **John Buchko** will introduce the topic of Biophilia in Urban Environments.

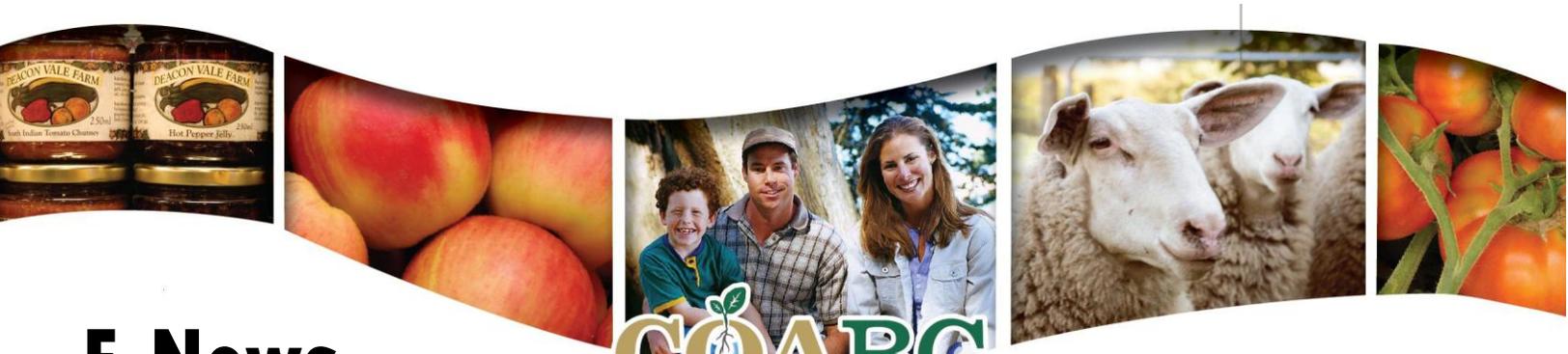


## DON'T FORGET

### Newsletters for supporting organizations

BC Agriculture Council under the Community Agriculture seat. [http://www.bcac.bc.ca/index.php?page\\_id=2](http://www.bcac.bc.ca/index.php?page_id=2)

BCSPCA Find out what is happening at the BCSPCA at [http://support.spc.ca/site/MessageViewer?em\\_id=2001.0&dlv\\_id=5801](http://support.spc.ca/site/MessageViewer?em_id=2001.0&dlv_id=5801)



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## Got an Organic Question?

Try **Cyber-help** <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.html> or contact Rochelle Eisen, BC's organic extension agent at [extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

**If you change your address or contact information send it to your CB office as soon as possible so that you don't miss out on receiving a BCOG and other materials.**