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ALR Statement from COABC

The Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) is the voice for the organic Agriculture Sector in the province, with a membership of 650 operations across BC. COABC feels there was not adequate consultation with farmers before the introduction of Bill 24 and does not support the loss of agricultural land from the ALR, particularly in the North and Kootenays.

“The highest percentage of acreage in organic production is in the North. If we lose any of our grain producing land in Northern BC it will impact our ability as a province to have agriculture as a high income producer.” states Susan Snow, Co-Chair of COABC.

The COABC agrees with the latest statement from the BC Food Systems Network that BC must protect its Northern agricultural land for the food security of the entire province. According to BC Ministry of Agriculture statistics, the province of British Columbia is not even

producing 50% of its current food requirements. Areas in the North and in the Kootenays are the only acreages left that can be brought into more intensive production to meet the rising demand for local food.

“We believe that consumers want the cleanest, healthiest food that farmers can grow,” Snow proclaims. “Any type of non-farm activity around agriculture increases the possibility of pollution of water, land and air.”

In addition, COABC would like to see small parcels of agricultural land embraced and not marginalized. It is not fair that smaller plots of agriculture land need a higher income per acre than larger operations to receive the tax breaks. Many of our members are making their living farming small plots. We can’t afford to be giving away productive or marginally productive land. Once it’s given away, we are not going to get it back.

Soil Mate Website: Free Profiles to Producers

Soil Mate is an online tool that allows consumers to find who grows, raises and produces what in their local area. How they do it, when it’s available and where they can buy it. Farms and Farmers’ markets create a free profile so their story and products can be found. Farms can provide as little or as much information as they choose and have access to wide variety of tools within Soil Mate.

Soil Mate filters results to 160km/100mi to serve local communities but is a North American tool. Growing fast, in the 3 weeks since launch Soil Mate is already in 7 Canadian Provinces and 13 US States.

Create your free Soil Mate profile now at soilmate.com

A special thanks to Soil Mate for sponsoring the keynote speaker at the 2014 COABC conference.





Second Technical Committee meeting Vancouver

The Technical Committee (TC) on Organic Agriculture meet in Vancouver, from April 14th to 16th, to continue considering the recommendations proposed by the Working Groups (WGs). The Working Groups responsible for analyzing the modification requests submitted by the organic sector have been very active, and will be presenting 156 recommendations to the members of the TC.

All sections of the organic standard will be covered. Jean Duval will present the Crop Working Group's recommendations regarding the 27 requests to modify the crop production section. Parallel production and treated posts will be brought back to the table for further discussion. Section 8, "Preparation and Handling of Organic Products," is the subject of 12 modification requests, and the Working Group led by Rochelle Eisen will be proposing a complete rewording of sections 8 and 9.

For more information on the review, visit

The Working Groups are made up of 97 volunteer stakeholders, whose participation is essential to the review of the Canadian Organic Standard.



EVENTS

Cheese Making Workshops

Date: 9:30 am -4:30 pm, April 26, 2014

Location: Fairfield Community Centre, Victoria, BC

Hosted by David Asher Rotsztain, founder of The Black Sheep School of Cheesemaking, Lifecycles is offering two different workshops on various cheesy topics, an introductory course and an advanced course. The introductory workshop provides a basic understanding of how milk evolves during the cheesemaking process, while the second level workshop builds upon the techniques taught in the introductory workshop.

For more info you can contact Lifecycles Urban Agriculture, <http://urbanagriculturehub.ca/>

Basic Organic Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings

Date: June 16-20 (Crop), June 23-27 (Livestock)

Location: Lamont, Alberta

Registration Deadline: May 5, 2014

This IOIA Basic Organic Inspection Training course is recommended for inspector trainees, certification agency staff, and regulatory agency staff who want to better understand the organic inspection and certification process.

These basic courses includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic crop operation, plus ½ day for testing. A minimum of 15 participants is required for the course or it will be canceled.

For more information visit www.ioia.net.



ThinkCanadaOrganic

Think Before You Eat

The National Think Before You Eat campaign has launched a new website and facebook page.

The organic 101 page of the website provides a comprehensive description of organic and other great information for consumers.

Other information on the site includes fun facts and resources for everyone including recipes.

Did you know... There are 3732 organic farms in Canada covering 825 thousand hectares of land. Find more sector numbers at thinkcanadaorganic.ca.



NEWSLETTER LINKS

BC Agriculture Council COABC is a member under the Community Agriculture seat:

<http://www.bcac.bc.ca/>

OFC info-bio:

www.organicfederation.ca/newsletter

BCSPCA:

<http://www.spca.bc.ca/>

REMINDERS

ISO operators are fortunate to be able to use the Canada Organic label AND the BC Checkmark side by side.

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.

Complaints Submission Form

Canada Organic Office complaint submission form can be found at www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php.

For complaints against an interprovincial traded product see the COO complaint form at certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php" www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php

Complaints on this form are to be directed to the Canada Organic Office directly <mailto:OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca>

Social Media

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

Remember...

Got an Organic Question? Try Cyber-help www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.

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.

