

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- BC Organic Sector Strategic Plan
- Advance Payment Program
- New BCOG Editor
- Canadian Organic Standards Review
- Events
- Organic Week

## BC Organic Sector Strategic Plan

The proposed plan for the BC certified organic sector is ambitious. In fact, it is daunting if only a few are involved. It is game-changing, though, when the whole sector works together in different synergistic combinations of farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, policy makers, partner organizations and consumers.

A planning process for and by the sector, from farm to fork, has identified five strategic leverage points:

- Unity of the BC Organic Sector
- Branding and Education
- Advocacy and Alliances
- Capacity Building
- Standards

In combination, these five “key performance areas” tap the exciting potential of the main driver for the sector: the continued growth of consumer demand for certified organic produce and products. Concern about GMOs (genetically modified organisms) is further boosting demand. This growth is robust, supported by growing awareness of the importance of sustainable food systems and looming crises (energy, climate, degenerative diseases, environment...)

The very success of the certified organic sector has created new challenges, including:

- a dynamic premium-price market has attracted some players who label their products “organic” without meeting the standards of organic certification;
- consumer, policy maker and retailer confusion about “local”, “natural” and “certified organic”
- imports of certified organic produce from other jurisdictions where labour costs are lower.

COABC is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. This milestone is thanks to the dedication and passion of hundreds of pioneer farmers, distributors, producers and retailers whose care for the land and livestock, soil and communities has included developing clear and professionally administered certification processes.

While collaboration up and down the supply chain is not new, this plan reflects a new level of inclusivity in the COABC’s strategic planning process: bringing together COABC Directors with retailers, distributors, and processors as well as representative of the agricultural sector as a whole.

Read the plan at [www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

## Advance Payment Program

The Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA) is administering Agriculture Canada’s Advance Payments Program. It is available to BC vegetable growers and greenhouse

operators and can provide no interest and low interest loans to help finance inventory of your products.

Find full details at [www.ssfpa.net](http://www.ssfpa.net)

## COABC Welcomes New BCOG Editor

As Andrea Langlois, the current BCOG editor, puts together her last issue, COABC welcomes Marilee Peters as her replacement.

Though we are sad to see Andrea move on, we are pleased to have found such a qualified editor to take over the position.

Marilee is a BC editor and writer with over 10 years of experience planning and managing all aspects of magazine and newsletter production.

She has edited publications in the environmental sector, including the bi-weekly Environmental Dimensions magazine.

For the past six years, Marilee has worked for the BC Council of Families but currently operates as a consultant.

Watch for her first issue, Fall 2013.



# Canadian Organic Standards Review - Working Groups back to work!

The review of the Canadian Organic Standards will be launched soon. This review is a very important activity for the Canadian sector as the standard is referenced by the Canadian Organic Products Regulations. More importantly, it defines the principles and accepted practices for organic production and guides the daily work of Canadian certified operators.

Because of funding cycles, the whole review will have to be completed inside a two-year time frame. So time is precious and the sector must start organizing. The Working Groups responsible for analyzing amendment requests by the sector are now being re-activated .

Are you interested in continuing your participation on a COS Review Working Group, or are you interested in applying to join a WG?

If so, contact the OFC, at [info@organicfederation.ca](mailto:info@organicfederation.ca) , 514-488-6192.

Participation in Working Groups is voluntary and not paid; the WG meetings are held by toll-free teleconference. Time commitment: Up to one 2hour call every second week, depending on need.

The Chairs of the WGs will coordinate the work and agenda of the meetings and CGSB will provide secretarial assistance. Working Group Chairs selection will be finalized for each WG once funding is secured.

You don't have to be a member of the Technical Committee (CGSB Committee on Organic Agriculture) to participate to the WG meetings. The CGSB is responsible for re-establishing the Technical Committee and will do so once the review workplan is finalized.

## EVENTS



### BC Food System Network Annual Gathering

Date: July 5-7, 2013

Location: Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island

Theme: Food from the water, food from the land

The annual Gathering is a celebration of our food systems and a coming-together of traditional and indigenous food skills with research and new developments on the ground. We find it to be an empowering and fun way to meet some of the amazing people around BC working in the front lines of food security and food sovereignty, and we hope you'll join us on Vancouver Island this year! Find more information at <http://fooddemocracy.org/gathering/>.

### 2013 Kids Farm Camp

Dates: July 22nd to July 26th or July 29th to August 2nd, 10am to 3pm.

Location: Fraser Common Farm, Aldergrove, BC

Contact: [info@gloriousorganics.com](mailto:info@gloriousorganics.com)

Cost: \$200/camper, additional siblings \$185/week

A great opportunity for the next generation of farmers to sink their hands into the earth and learn about ecologically sound food production. We will explore soils, forests, fields, edges, and the ways in which they interact through insects, water, and weeds. Children will experience food production, from natural soil amendments, to seeding, planting, harvesting, and finally selling produce to the public.

## Organic Week Planning Underway

SAVE THE DATES! Organic Week's dates have been set for September 21-28, 2013.

Nationally, Organic Week 2012 was a huge success. The reach spread to events such as the 7th Annual Organic Okanagan Festival, and the 'Silent Spring' event at the University of Toronto, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Rachel Carson's groundbreaking book. Hundreds of events took place across the country and the organic week social media efforts took a giant leap, with over 3,300 followers on Facebook and many more on Twitter.

COTA and COG are already working toward making Organic Week 2013 the biggest yet. This year they will be hiring a Marketing and Campaigns Manager to run Organic Week.

**Help make Organic Week 2013 successful; plan an event in your community!**

Start planning now and be sure to let COABC know about your event so we can promote it and include it on the National Website.

## Husky Rebate Program

Remember: You can, at no additional cost to yourself, help COABC by using your Husky loyalty card.

The program was initiated in 2005 to provide an additional funding source for COABC.

The Husky rebate program contributes 2% of every purchase to COABC.

Need a new Card? Email [office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:office@certifiedorganic.bc.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](http://www.organicfederation.ca/newsletter)

BCSPCA:

<http://www.spc.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](http://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](http://certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php)" [www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php](http://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](http://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](http://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.

