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CFIA Extends Consultation on Safe Food for Canadians Regulations to Probe Small/Micro Businesses

As CFIA continues to fine-tune the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, they recognize the important contribution small and micro food businesses make to Canada’s economy. As such they have extended the consultation period to June 30 2015 in order to better understand the food safety challenges and costs that micro and small businesses face, and to seek their feedback on options that could reduce the burden associated with certain requirements.

A discussion paper is available at: www.inspection.gc.ca/safefood. The definition of micro and small businesses is noteworthy a micro business has been defined as a business that generates annual gross food sales of \$30K, and a small business generates \$100K.

In May and June of 2015, the CFIA will host a number of webinars and in-person sessions across Canada tailored to micro and small businesses (MSBs). They would like to hear specifically from MSBs on the types of tools, guidance resources and support that would assist them in producing safe and compliant food. Details on these sessions can be obtained by registering at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/util/listserv/listserve.shtml

This presents an opportunity for micro and small businesses to have their ideas considered before regulations come into effect. Please participate in the consultations by reviewing the proposals in the discussion paper, completing the questionnaire and attending information sessions.

More support for the Organic Sector

The federal government announced a \$785,000 investment in Canada’s organic sector to build and expand markets at home and abroad. The investment is part of the AgriMarketing Program (AMP), a federal fund that helps support Canadian companies build a strong Canadian brand and develop global market opportunities.

The Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) will oversee a four-year \$1.5 million program that will increase the visibility and positioning of the Canadian organic brand in export markets, which is projected to result in over \$20 million in international sales.

For more information visit <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=976089>

“Prepare” Toolkit Set to Launch

COABC will launch a new online toolkit for organic food processors by the end of May.

Developed to encourage BC’s farmers and small scale food processors to enter the burgeoning market for prepared organic foods, the toolkit covers everything from the basics of organic certification, to post-harvest handling tips and on-farm food safety steps.

“Prepare Organic Food” is an accessible, easy-to-use toolkit that, for the first time, puts the information that small-scale organic processors need together in one place. The toolkit is the third in a series of online guides prepared by the Certified Organic Associations of BC that explain the basics of organic certification to farmers and farmers’ market vendors.

Find all the toolkits at www.certified-organic.bc.ca

This project is funded in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.





Last meeting of the Technical Committee May 11-13 2015

Launched in the fall of 2013, the review of the Canadian Organic Standards is entering its last final phase: the last Technical Committee (TC) meeting, followed by the second ballot and public review.

The Working Group responsible for the proposed merger of the organic aquaculture and agriculture standards have been very active. However, at the meeting the aquaculture sector decided to withdraw from the proposed merger. This means that, for now, the two standards will remain separate.

This was the last meeting of the Technical Committee. Subsequent discussions following the public review and the second ballot will be addressed by the Conveners of the Working Groups, and any necessary TC approval would be done via electronic messaging.

The OFC will announce the launch of the public review soon.

EVENTS

Domestic Market Workshop: The “Inside Scoop” on a Market Driven Marketing Plan

Date: June 4, 8, 10 & 12, 2015

Location: Victoria, Creston, Richmond & Prince George

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture invites you to participate in another round of Domestic Marketing Workshops. Get the “inside scoop” on market drivers, trends and buyer requirements from experienced food industry professionals including representatives from Gordon Food Service and the Overweitea Food Group.

Please register at <http://groundedstrategies.ca/domestic-marketing-workshops/>

Organic Week

Date: September 19-27, 2015

Location: Across Canada

Canada’s National Organic Week is the largest annual celebration of organic food, farming and products across the country. Hundreds of individual events showcase the benefits of organic agriculture and its positive impact on the environment. Organic represents a vibrant alternative food system and an alternative option for clothing, personal care and cleaning products.

If you want to get involved in organic week this year check out the Organic Week website, www.organicweek.ca, or plan an event in your community.

New ALC Chair Appointed

The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council has appointed Frank Leonard as new chair of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

Leonard is a former mayor of Saanich. He was first elected mayor in 1996 after serving on council since 1986. While in public office, Leonard chaired the Municipal Finance Authority of BC, was president of the Union of BC Municipalities and a director of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Leonard will take up duties as chair of the ALC immediately. He will hold combined duties as board chair and CEO for a period of five months while he leads the search for a new CEO of the commission.

For more details visit, <https://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/new-chair-appointed-to-agricultural-land-commission.html>.



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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.

