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First Ever National Organic Sector Report Highlights B.C.'s Leadership Role

July 17, 2017 — Vernon — *The State of Organics: Federal-Provincial-Territorial Performance Report 2017* analyzes the existing organic policy frameworks among Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments. As the first of its kind, the report is a benchmark, demonstrating the current state of affairs.

The report highlights that:

- With one of the longer histories of organic production and consumption, B.C. has strong market supports and production supports for organic.
- The establishment of the B.C. organic logo has been a successful marketing campaign, having gained recognition province-wide.
- The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture has announced that the provincial organic standards will become mandatory in 2018, making B.C. the 5th province in the country to have provincial regulations.
- Organic data collection systems across the country are limited and inconsistently available; B.C. is currently developing a high functioning database to provide more accurate data on the B.C. organic sector thanks to Growing Forward 2 funding.

The report is available for download from: www.ota.com/canada-ota/what-cota-does/government-relations-regulatory-affairs.

"B.C. is the strongest organic market in Canada, with 66% of consumers buying organic weekly," said Jen Gamble, executive director of operations for the Certified Organic Associations of BC. "We are excited to continue working with the Ministry of Agriculture to build a strong organic sector that promotes consumer confidence and supports farmers and food producers."

"Canadian consumers and businesses need to see more government support of the organic sector in Canada," said Tia Loftsgard, executive director of the Canada Organic Trade Association. "A consistent framework across Canada would create a level playing field for organic businesses to thrive and increase consumer confidence. We have been encouraged by the positive conversations with government leading up to this report."

The Canada Organic Trade Association has three recommendations for government.

1. Ensure that all provinces and territories adopt organic regulations.
2. Invest in expanded and improved organic data collection systems.
3. Increase organic policies and programs across jurisdictions.

About COABC: The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC) is an umbrella association representing organic certifying agencies in BC. The organization aims to provide consumer confidence in the organic product certification, assist producers to increase market share, and support regional development of organic food production, processing and marketing. COABC strives to ensure high quality organic products are produced in sufficient quantity and in a manner that nurtures healthy soil, biological diversity and ecological harmony.

About the Canada Organic Trade Association: The Canada Organic Trade Association is the membership-based association for the organic sector in Canada: representing growers, processors, certifiers, provincial farmers' associations, importers, exporters, retailers and others throughout the organic value chain. COTA's mission is to promote and protect the growth of organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy. COTA brings together the diversity of Canada's organic sector: from farmer and processor to retail, including food products, fibre and textiles, personal care, and emerging sectors such as organic aquaculture.

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