



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Coming in 2020: Online Organic Certification

**Vernon, B.C. (July 11, 2019)** – If you're a BC farmer who would like to become certified organic through one of the COABC's accredited Certifying Bodies, you'll soon have the option of completing your application or annual renewal online! The COABC received \$118,000 in funding from the *Canada-British Columbia Agri-Innovation Program* Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) and \$221,080 from *Sector Development* CAP programming to be put towards a new online certification tool that will streamline the certification process and encourage more producers to follow up with organic certification.

A beta version of the tool was released in 2018 for testing and feedback and many modifications and improvements are currently being worked on throughout 2019. The new program will assist with much of the administrative workload involved with tracking and reviewing the required information for organic management verification and will help keep costs down for everyone involved, including operators, administrators, inspectors and certification committee members.

The addition of standardized record keeping sample documents, made available throughout the new program, will let operators know just what information needs to be tracked in order to help their inspections run smoothly and avoid additional inspection fees. As well, historical documents will be stored safely on COABC's own servers for easy retrieval and review when needed so you never have to worry about misplaced documentation. And with updates to the aesthetics and functionality of the beta version, even those farmers who can't stand sitting at a computer will find the process straightforward and easy to use, so they can complete their renewals quickly and get back outside.

In order to help encourage organic farming in BC, all of the COABC's Certifying Bodies are working together to ensure this system functions for all the varied types of Enterprises found throughout BC: large or small, simple or complex. By working together to improve the certification process, we can strengthen organic farming in BC as a whole!

Training sessions are planned for the fall of 2019 and will continue through 2020, along with a comprehensive video library of user guides for those who like to learn at their own pace.

#### Highlights:

- Built-in task reminders to help you stay on track with CB requirements and due dates
- Check the status of your file anytime by logging in to your account
- Download a digital copy of your completed application
- Save your progress and return to your file anytime
- Download needed forms right at the question that asks for it
- Ability to update your Enterprise profile anytime, keeping your contact info current online

- Input Approval Requests can be made any time throughout the year with approved product documentation automatically attached to your digital file, ready and accessible for inspectors to review
- Many answers to questions will be automatically filled in to the online renewal so operators don't have to type the same information in year after year for aspects of their operations that have not changed.
- Easily add or remove items from your Certification Scope so that your certificate is always accurate

*Funding for this project has been provided by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The program is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.*

### **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.

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