



COABC toolkits help grow organic sector!

March 31, 2014 (VERNON, B.C.) – The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC) is launching a series of on-line toolkits designed to welcome new entrants to organic agriculture and support sector growth. A recent research project on certification issues and options for small-scale operators indicated that small and large organic producers throughout BC were seeking information and guidance on marketing and certification of organic products. COABC rose to the challenge and created user-friendly resources accessible to all producers through an improved website navigation system.

Producers can now access a series of downloadable resources through the new “Grow Organic Food” launch button featured on COABC’s homepage, including:

- *What is Organic Farming*: a brochure which summarizes key principles and benefits of organic agriculture;
- *Navigating Organic Certification*: a web-based guide which helps to simplify the certification process for new entrants;
- *Glossary of Organic Initialisms*: a “must have” to understand the acronymic language of the organic sector;
- *Questions and Answers on organic standards and certification from COABC’s Accreditation Board*: a useful resource for new entrants, existing farmers, and certification bodies seeking clarification on specific issues.

Resources to support the marketing of certified organic products at farmers’ markets and at retail are now available through the new “Market Organic Food” launch button on the COABC website. These include:

- *Tips for marketing to consumers, wholesalers and retailers, plus farmers’ market display tips*;
- *Think Before You Eat – Local & Organic Better Together*: ready-to-use promotional material. Originally created for Organic Week 2013, these marketing materials can be used all year round to educate consumers and promote BC organic products at retail and farmers’ markets;
- *Organic Benefits Checklist*: differentiate between natural, local, and certified organic food;
- *Organic Integrity information* to help retailers and farmers’ market managers understand the importance of maintaining integrity throughout the supply chain and its relation to consumer trust of the organic label.



“We are very pleased with the advances COABC has made to welcome new producers and support the information needs of certified operators,” said Susan Snow, co-president of the COABC. “These new on-line resources will help grow the sector and strengthen organic producers’ relationships with BC retailers, farmers’ markets, and consumers.”

This project is funded in part through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, Emerging Sectors Initiative, a provincial trust funded from money under the former federal-provincial safety nets framework. 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 the province. COABC is empowered by the British Columbia Organic Agricultural Products Regulation under the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act to implement an organic certification accreditation province-wide. COABC was incorporated under the Society's Act in March of 1993.

The certification accreditation program is an industry and government partnership program which is industry-driven and regulated, with government oversight. The main objectives of COABC are to provide consumer confidence in the organic product certification, to assist producers to increase market share, and to support regional development of organic food production, processing and marketing.

For more information:

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