

BC Farmers Encouraged to Enter Organic Prepared Foods Market New Online Guide Gives Farmers the Tools for Success

VERNON, BC June 24, 2015 — The Certified Organic Associations of BC is pleased to announce the launch of “Prepare Organic Food,” a new online toolkit for organic food processors. 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 all the information 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 to explain the basics of organic certification to farmers and farmers’ market vendors.

“BC is a hotspot in Canada for sales of organic food, and one of the fastest growing areas of the market is in prepared foods. We want to help BC farmers and small-scale organic processors to be part of that growth, and make sure that our great, organic, local BC products are available to consumers looking for prepared foods,” said Jen Gamble, the COABC’s Executive Director of Operations. “The response to the first two toolkits we developed was so positive, we knew that a third toolkit was the best way to get the information about certified organic food preparation out to farmers and food processors.”

Farmers and food processors will find tips, tools, and easy to understand answers to common questions in the toolkit, such as:

- What are organic prepared products?
- What is the demand for organic prepared products?
- What are acceptable product claims?
- How do preparation operators become certified organic?
- How can I navigate supply chain challenges?
- What are acceptable post harvesting handling procedures?

Prepare Organic Food, along with the two other toolkits, Grow Organic Food and Market Organic Food, are all available online at www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

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Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, are pleased to participate in the production of this project. We are committed to working with our industry partners to address issues of importance to the agriculture and agri-food industry in British Columbia.

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 works to maintain consumer confidence in 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 about the launch of the toolkit, please contact:

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