

Special Strategic Planning Issue

President's Message
Draft Strategic Plan
Questionnaire
The Winter Garden in a Cold Frame
Headed for Court
IFOAM 2002
Predator Profile: Aphid Midges
Not Another Certification Body!

COABC, #8A, 100 Kalamalka Lake Rd.
Vernon BC V1T 9G1

President's Message

by Linda Edwards

Change: Exhilarating and stressful – full of possibilities and fraught with problems – inevitable and unending. The COABC and the organic industry as a whole is constantly evolving; good planning and cooperative action can make this a positive and productive experience.

Early last spring, the provincial and federal governments established the Agri-Food Futures Fund. A number of agriculture groups in the province were assigned allotments of money in the form of a Trust Fund for the purpose of facilitating their growth and prosperity. The organic sector through the COABC was assigned a million dollars. In Winfield, in June (see BCOG Vol 4 #3), the Directors from all of COABC's certifying bodies met to develop direction and details in regard COABC's future – a Strategic Plan. They identified core values and areas of interest and concern to be addressed over the next five years. While this was precipitated by the requirements of the Trust Fund, some of the areas identified as priorities will not require this funding. For example, finding a way to cover the core expenses of COABC and restructuring to meet the needs of certifying bodies who wish to export and/or no longer feel able to handle their certification needs on a volunteer basis are important parts of our overall Strategic Plan but they cannot or need not be funded by the Trust Fund.

Nevertheless, availability of the Trust does make possible many things which might not otherwise happen or which would have to be carried out at a much reduced scale. It can play an important role in facilitating COABC and its members' growth and adjustment to ever changing conditions.

To gain access to the Trust money, COABC must prepare a Strategic Plan that outlines what areas we want funded, with examples of projects and partners to help carry out those projects. The Trust money must be matched by funds from those proposing projects. This could be either the COABC or one of its member certifying bodies – or any other group or individual with a project that falls within the guidelines established. If the project is one that will mainly benefit the individual or group proposing it, it would be expected that the majority of the funding would come from them and only a small percentage from the Trust. If the project is mainly for public benefit, the opposite would be true. Overall, the contribution from the organics industry must equal that coming from the Trust Fund, i.e. 50-50.

While money will be the main component for match-

ing Trust funds, in-kind contributions will be accepted as an industry contribution required to trigger trust funds provided the following criteria are met:

1. the value of in-kind contributions can be established and verified, e.g. by comparison with standard labour, rental or contract rates for similar services or retail costs of materials.
2. in-kind contributions are made by producers participating in specific on-farm projects or suppliers donating material and/or the use of equipment for on-farm projects or producers or other industry representatives volunteering to carry out specific projects on behalf of the industry organization. Contributions for on-farm projects cannot represent more than 50% of the total industry contribution for any one project.

Work Done to Date

A Steering Committee was established to oversee the development of the Strategic Plan proposal in relation to the Trust. The persons on that committee are Bob McCoubrey, COABC treasurer and representative from NOAA, Cathleen Kneen, the COABC consumer and environment representative, Roger Breed, COABC vice-president and representative from COPA, Debra Boyle from ProOrganics and myself, COABC president and OPACK representative. We also have Jo Ann Sandhu and Kerry Clark from the provincial government and Tracey Innes from the federal government. A consultant has also been hired to actually prepare the report for the government on our behalf.

The COABC received \$50,000 to carry out the work involved with preparation of the Strategic Plan. So far it has been used to pay for the workshop, to pay the consultant and for steering committee conference calls. It is also being used to collect information needed. A survey of total acreages and/or numbers of commodities and gross sales based on the 2000 year is currently underway, and the appropriate person in each certifying body (generally a member of the certification committee for reasons of confidentiality) is being paid to carry this out. The money will also be used to enable persons to arrange the meetings described below and to prepare and submit reports from these meetings.

Content of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will have 5 sections.

It will describe **who we are**. This includes basic information about who makes up the COABC, our operating by-laws, mandates and our vision statement (developed at the Winfield workshop - see pages 5-6)

It will describe **where we are now**. The statistical

Have
your say: come to
local meetings and send
in the questionnaire in
this issue

information described above, information about the organic industry both locally and globally, and our major strengths and weaknesses as an industry will be noted.

It will outline **where we want to go**. This is the setting of achievable goals in the areas of: improved marketing opportunities for organic products, increased environmental sustainability, increased infrastructure support for organic growers and an improved knowledge base. These are all discussed in greater detail beginning on page 6.

How we get there will identify strategies and specific actions to achieve these goals. Possible programs and projects could include everything from helping a farmer diversify into different crops through research or market development, to having input into community health programs. They could range from helping to increase the production of organic seeds to establishing Speakers Bureaus for education of growers and to tell the public more about organics. They could include the establishment of supplies directories, organic apprenticeship programs, wind machines as an alternate source of energy, on-farm research projects to solve pest problems, and development of ways to gain access to land for those who wish to farm organically.

This part of the plan must also contain details about when projects would be enacted, how much are they expected to cost and where the matching funds will come from.

The final section has yet to be developed, but it will describe **how will we know when we have arrived?** It is a monitoring and evaluation plan for the work done. It will outline how the COABC and those undertaking projects will be accountable.

The Work to be Done Now

We need your help to confirm if the areas identified at the workshop and refined by the Steering Committee are indeed the areas where energy and/or funds should be directed. Do the general areas listed in **where do we want to go** (above) and in greater detail elsewhere in this issue cover your priorities and wish list? If not, tell us what you think the priorities are. Do the suggested programs, strategies and actions described in this issue meet your needs? Nothing is set in stone at this point – everything is suggestions and starting points for discussion. It is also necessary to identify possible partners and cooperators for any undertakings. Your ideas about that are also needed.

There are two main ways you can have input into the process.

1 Each director from the certifying bodies to the COABC will be arranging for a meeting or meetings to be held of members to discuss the plan to date, to tell us what you think is important and what we have missed. Someone will be hired in each certifying body to record responses etc, and report back. They will be contacting you during the month of October. If it is not possible to hold a general meeting, then there will be a series of smaller ones. In each case the person hired by your certifying body will record and report back ideas and opinions. Please come and “have your say”! It is a wonderful opportunity – probably the best opportunity we have ever had – for the whole membership to shape the future of the COABC as a whole as well as determining how the awarded funds will be spent.

2 Complete the questionnaire on pages 13 & 14 and return it to the office as soon as possible.

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BC Organic Grower

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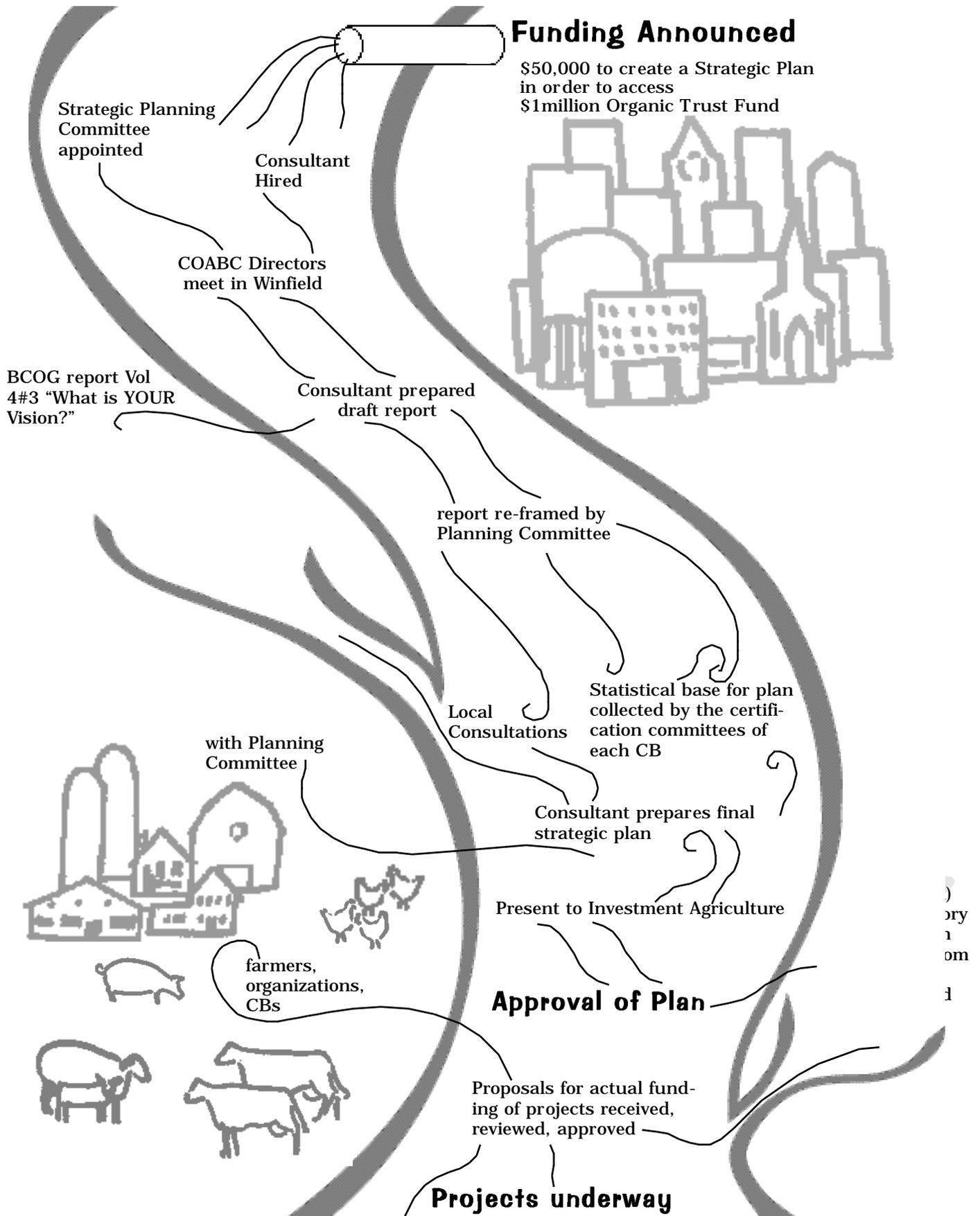
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Hold this date
the Annual General Meeting
will be held
February 9-10, 2002

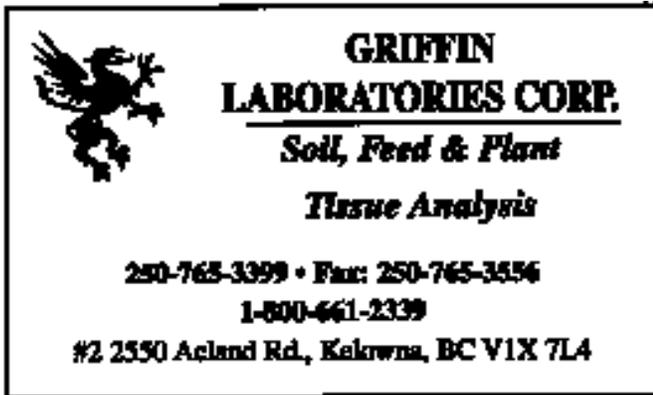
Deadline for the special AGM
Issue of BCOG will be
Dec 15, 2001

The Strategic Planning Process: a Flow Chart



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The Steering Committee needs to get all feedback by the end of October. The Committee and the contractor will then finalize the report incorporating all of the information submitted. We expect to submit it for government approval in November. After approval, a committee will be set up to receive applications for funding and oversee the projects. It is expected that this Trust will operate over 3-5 years. Hopefully by the end of the endeavour we will have made achievements we can at best only imagine now and have moved organics ahead as both an industry and a movement! ✓



Where We Are Now

by Cathleen Kneen

Organic farmers may disagree as to whether our glasses are half-empty or half-full – or threatening to run over – but we can agree that there are a variety of opportunities and challenges as we seek to establish our vision of a thriving sustainable agriculture and food system in BC. The question is, which of the challenges are critical and will require collective effort (and funds) to overcome? And on the other hand, which of the opportunities are ready to seize, which will require more work to establish, and above all, which entail the most appropriate direction for us to take?

It is important that we get at that last question. To gain access to the trust fund we have to have a Strategic Plan, and the funds will be allocated according to the priorities expressed in the Plan. The Strategic Planning Committee has begun by looking at the broad forces which are affecting organics in BC at this time.

International forces, particularly the processes of globalization, are having a profound effect on the overall context in which we do business. With sophisticated communications systems, supplies can be globally sourced and the local supplier does not necessarily have any advantage. Most BC supermarkets buy a large proportion of their products on contract from centralized warehouses outside of the province. On the other hand, there is a growing

global market for high-quality goods, including organic foods. Local markets are also becoming more sophisticated, and a proliferation of brands has developed to cash in on customer desire for quality, and for assurance of care for the environment.

A primary concern which leads consumers to organics is the belief that they are healthier. Many see the integrity of the organic standard as one of the few things they can rely on in their desire to protect themselves against a variety of diseases. Even a plague like AIDS which is not diet-related has increased awareness of the link between diet and health and well-being. There is increasing public concern about food safety, made more pointed by the refusal of the food industry and government to label foods produced through genetic engineering.

The imposition of genetically engineered crops with the danger of contamination of organic crops, along with the challenges of climate change, are affecting organic agriculture in BC and around the world. Competition from other regions (eg. China) which are exporting 'certified organic' products into BC adds to the price pressures from the general 'cheap food policy' of both Canada and the USA. Political, financial, and regulatory structures support large-scale, industrial, chemically-dependent agriculture and the erosion of the infrastructure required for local organic production.

Despite these challenges, organics in BC continues to grow at the rate of 10%-20% per year. While organic farmers continue to struggle with some of the finer points of our certification standard, it has integrity and has already been recognized by the UK as equivalent to their standard. Many organic farmers have developed innovative and effective marketing strategies which provide stability to the sector, such as customer-direct selling via box programs and farmers' markets, and small-scale processing particularly of fruits. Supermarkets are bowing to market pressure to include organic sections at least in their produce departments.

There is also a great deal of good-will within the COABC which is helping us work together to ensure that our different viewpoints and needs can all be incorporated into our collective strategic plan. This is a result of a common vision which has been stated (in draft form) as:

COABC's approach to food production is based on care for the earth. We recognize that as human beings we are one creature among many that are all inter-related and interdependent.

We are part of an organic movement that embraces a wide diversity of activities and enterprises related to the organic production of food and encompasses all sizes of operations. While one of the tools we use is a regulatory framework to

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permit exports, our priority is the establishment and maintenance of local food systems.

We accept the principles of organic farming and processing identified by IFOAM and engage in research of appropriate techniques to enable us to put them all into practice. [note: these have been published in our pamphlet "What is organic farming?"]

These are principles which resonate with buyers of organic foods, whose concerns have been expressed as: Essences (returning to basics); Hearth (growing importance of family and home); Earth (care for the environment); Whole being (a balance of body, mind, and soul); Ethics (purchasing from a socially responsible company); Safe Food (no agro-toxins, additives, genetic engineering).

Studies are showing that the heavy buyers of organic foods at present are likely to be female, well-educated, and young (25-34). They are not necessarily well-to-do, although that is a strong

market segment.

Keeping all of these considerations (and more) in mind, the Strategic Planning Committee has outlined several areas where our energies might be focused in the next three to five years. Within each category, we have suggested some projects which might be undertaken to pursue the general goals. **Please note that these are just ideas at this point!** This is the time for additions, deletions, and structural changes in the whole framework.

In every area, and for every project, there are partners both in and outside agriculture. Working with these partners enables us to use our resources (and theirs) effectively and wisely – and sustainably.

Following input from members of the Certifying Bodies that make up COABC (including processors, handlers, and retailers as well as producers) a Strategic Plan will be formulated to guide our collective work and to enable the distribution of Trust funds. ✓

Draft Strategic Plan

Infrastructure

For the purposes of the Strategic Plan, we are considering infrastructure to include all the tools and the frameworks required to put our plans and projects into action. Our Organic Standard itself, seen from this perspective, is part of our infrastructure, as is the process whereby we review and alter its provisions. Our communications (the BC Organic Grower, the office telephone, our publications, the website and listserv, and the Organic Advisory Service) are also part of the infrastructure. Core funding for the organization is certainly part of infrastructure, as is the proposed Organic Trust Fund which could assist young people to gain access to land to farm organically. The loss of local processing plants all over BC and the restrictive regulatory framework are major infrastructure challenges for organic producers of a variety of crops. For many growers the limiting factor in extending their operations, increasing their productivity, and in many cases just selling the produce they already grow, is the lack of industry infrastructure. Lack of slaughter facilities for organic livestock, of reliable trucking and storage systems, of businesses or equipment to carry out further processing, etc. are very serious limiting factors. Just compare the positive impact of a developed infrastructure in the tree fruit industry with the situation in the Peace, where most of the beef raised organically is sold conventionally.

Processing Facilities: Organic farmers need acceptable facilities for slaughter and processing of their animals (including birds). Development of such facilities may

require changes in the regulatory framework to enable small-scale processing for a local market with less capital investment than for long-distance export markets. Facilities for processing other crops (cold storage, quick-freezing plants, kitchens) are also needed.

Regulations: There is a need to work with allies such as the Farmers Market Association to ensure that regulations governing direct-to-consumer selling are appropriate and helpful.

Organic Trust Fund: A couple of COABC Directors are investigating the potential for a trust fund which could hold money to be used for the development of organics in BC. One possibility is to work with established Land Trusts to purchase and hold land to be farmed organically by lifetime tenants. Another is a mortgage fund which could attract 'ethical' investors willing to accept a lower rate of return in order to make money available to farmers for land purchase.

Restructuring: BC organic producers who are currently exporting require that the BC organic program be brought into compliance with the international standards. This is currently in process, with several elements:

- ISO 61/65: Decide on appropriate designation (ISO 61 as an accreditation agency or ISO 65 as a certification agency). Restructure to meet desired criteria and apply for appropriate ISO designation in order to facilitate continued exporting of BC organic products. Decide whether to accredit through the Standards Council of Canada or another agency, and how to address the issue of the COAB.

Draft Strategic Plan

- **New Certification Body:** A number of existing B.C. certification agencies would like to contract out their certification process and other agencies are interested in having access to an experienced certification system. The Pacific Agricultural Certification Society has been established to certify to international standards (see pg 23).

Conversion from Conventional to Organic (this could also fall under Promotion): There is a growing market for organic products both domestically and export and evidence exists that greater volumes of organic products are required. Encourage conventional farmers to switch to organic production methods.

Organic Materials Review: How best can we analyze, approve and publish information on existing and new materials for organic production and processing?

Food Safety: A variety of food safety issues continue to arise. Should these be addressed through the farm verification process or some other vehicle?

Labour Code Standards: Organic producers should meet or exceed the current labour code requirements. Investigate whether this can be facilitated through member agency education programs and implemented through organic advisory services, producer management clubs or farm verification visits.

National Organic Standard: The lack of a National Organic Standard leads to some confusion in the marketplace. Should COABC be working to develop one?

Distributor and Retailer Certification: A number of organic product distributors and retailers in BC do not have organic certification which also leads to confusion in the marketplace. What is the best way to work on this?

Relationships

There are a number of organizations that represent agriculture in different areas, as well as organizations that represent viewpoints and engage in policy and advocacy work which are close to the COABC vision and mission.

The BC Agriculture Council is comprised of most of the commodity groups in BC and is seen as the voice for agriculture by federal and provincial governments. F.A.R.M. is a member of the BCAC, representing small-scale farmers, the Institutes, etc., and COABC is currently a member of F.A.R.M. Should we pursue full membership in the BCAC? How much money would membership be worth to us?

There are other organizations which COABC might wish to join or work with as a formal partner, or merely recognize as a potential ally in particular initiatives. For example: F.A.R.M., BC Environment Network, SPCA, Canadian Organic Growers, COAB.

Marketing and Promotion

The term 'marketing' covers a range of activities and initiatives required to ensure that the market for certified organic products continues to grow and that it is filled by BC products. At present, many growers are limited to direct-to-consumer marketing, and there is room for development of other markets for local organics.

Public Relations underlies the development of any new market (and the maintenance of existing ones). There is a solid core of customers for organics which needs to be expanded; we need to identify and focus on those customers who are most likely to respond to information about the advantages of certified organic.

Market Development

The BC organic industry needs to design an effective and cost-sensitive industry-wide publicity campaign targeting consumers and the hotel, restaurant, institutional markets.

Multi-media advertising: hire a B.C. based promotions and public relations company to design a campaign utilizing multi-media advertising tools (poster, billboards, TV radio, point of purchase, in-store retail support) to, for example, promote the use and awareness of the Checkmark.

Ifoam 2002: Ensure a strong BC Organic presence.

Resource Inventory: Investigate the network of connections between the organic supply and the retail industry. Identify strategies to strengthen and expand these connections.

Influence Head Buyer Decisions: Investigate issues of importance to head buyers, identify strategies for influencing buying decisions. Identify infrastructure needs which must be met in order to support retail relationships.

Educate Retail Handlers: Provide training and support services to retail handlers to tie profitability to handling

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and display expertise.

Retail Support: Produce point of purchase and other retail support programs to coincide with the retail market development activities.

Develop Hotel, Restaurant, Institutional Markets: Identify current supply chain linkages and research the servicing requirements for local suppliers as well as the regular distribution network. Encourage local organic producers to supply a weekly availability list to local HRI distributors.

Directories

- Compile and provide brokers, wholesalers and distributors with a listing of organic suppliers by commodity with volume ranges and seasons of availability.
- Speakers Bureau: list of willing organic industry spokespeople and a list of available topics appropriate to industry

Health

There are a number of possible projects and partners to develop community awareness of the health benefits of local organic foods. For example:

Community Health Programs (General, Pre-Natal and Disease or Condition Related): There is an increased recognition in the role of nutrition as it relates to health both within the general population and those with specific health issues. Coordinate information activities with other commodity groups in order to maintain credibility with the health profession. Provide contact information for local suppliers and spokespeople.

Community Food Security Projects: Work with local food security and food policy groups to increase access to organic foods in community food programs such as community kitchens, and organic foods in institutions such as hospitals.

School Health Programs: Focus on food programs at the secondary school level and combine with an emphasis on the relationship between health and nutrition. Coordinate teams of dietitians, nutritionists, chefs, teachers and local producers to present workshops and "before and after" diet programs which demonstrate the effects of nutrition in a meaningful way to participating teens (skin and energy).

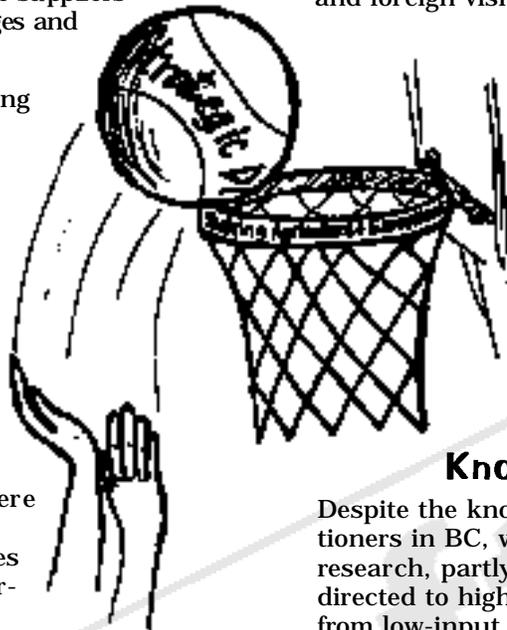
Consumer Awareness

Innovative ways of getting our message to the general public are needed. A few suggestions:

Speaker's Bureau: Compile a list of willing organic industry spokespeople and a list of available topics to organisations such as the BC Teachers Federation, local Teacher's Associations, university and college speakers bureaus, regional health units, service groups and local business community organisations.

Industry Tours: Solicit individual organic operations in every region of B.C. to act as tour hosts for a variety of people ranging from politicians, public, media, professional groups, service clubs, education groups and foreign visitors.

Teen Advocacy: Recruit and support positive role models (athlete, actor, model, other positive youth) to deliver presentations on health benefits of good nutrition and the ecological effects of sustainable production at the secondary school level. Recruit youth (university or college students) to work at career fairs representing agriculture and/or health fields.



Knowledge Base

Despite the knowledge and skills of organic practitioners in BC, we lack a solid base of practical research, partly because public funds have been directed to high-tech and biotech areas and away from low-input sustainable systems where little profit is to be made by the corporate research sponsors/partners. Several ideas for research which will serve our needs have been suggested. Also, there is a need for more practical information for growers and opportunities to 'network' and learn more about the organic movement.

Research

Organic Production System Research: on-farm, practical research which recognizes the expertise and contribution of the farmer. This could be done in partnership between farmers and researchers, perhaps supported by a College or University. There are also a number of innovative private companies who would be interested in working with organic growers in the development of new products and better ways to do things.

Organic Breeding Program and Seed Industry: the upcoming requirement for organic seeds makes the develop-

Draft Strategic Plan

ment of organic seed supplies more urgent, but there is also a need to develop breeds of animals suitable for organic production (eg. pigs that thrive on pasture). Some of the many animal associations might be potential partners.

Marketing Intelligence

- Identify and publish gaps in the supply side of both primary production and value-added processing.
- Co-ordinate access to market prices and volumes as well as market conditions, perhaps through the website.

Directories

- Compile and publish a listing of equipment, supplies and suppliers
- Compile and publish a listing of wholesalers, brokers, distributors, processors, community kitchens, custom packagers and grading and packing standards.
- Trucking - including contact information, standard pallet dimensions, bills of lading, rates and surcharges, credit application and payment terms.

- Payment procedures – credit application, packing slip and invoicing procedures, billing and collection, normal payment terms (i.e. net 15).

- Community Supported Agriculture programs – what to evaluate prior to beginning, how to set one up, economic realities, pros and cons.

- Farmer's Markets – listing of BC Farmer's Markets, rules and regulations, how to start one, resources available (already available through the BC Farmer's Market Association).

- Value-Added Processing – rules and regulations, resources available, current industry participants

Grower Education

Technical Assistance and Farm Mentorship:

- Provide technical assistance to conventional producers in switching to organic-based farming methods as well as organic farmers with production challenges through a 1-800 phone line and on-farm support. (Organic Advisory Service)

- Co-ordinate and support the formation of regional

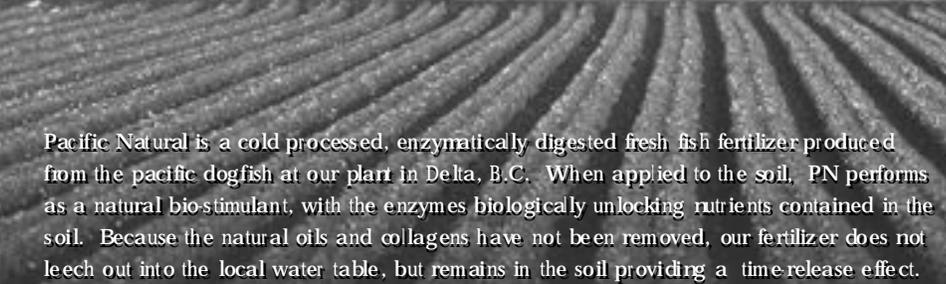
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Liquid Fresh Fish Fertilizer

Organic 2-3-0



PACIFIC NATURAL BRAND



Pacific Natural is a cold processed, enzymatically digested fresh fish fertilizer produced from the pacific dogfish at our plant in Delta, B.C. When applied to the soil, PN performs as a natural bio-stimulant, with the enzymes biologically unlocking nutrients contained in the soil. Because the natural oils and collagens have not been removed, our fertilizer does not leech out into the local water table, but remains in the soil providing a time-release effect. In addition to being a root-feeder, PN is suitable as a foliar spray and compost starter.

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“producer management clubs” or other farmer-to-farmer information sharing networks.

- Develop a training program for organic producers to host and mentor organic apprentices.

Industry information:

- Compile and publish a list of willing industry spokespeople and a list of available production and market related topics for regional farmers’ meetings. Provide contact information and fee structure.
- Identify individual organic and conventional operations (farms, distributors, processors, retailers) in every region of B.C. to act as tour hosts.

Environmental Sustainability

Care for the environment is basic to organic principles. One goal for the organic movement in BC would be to increase the amount of land being farmed according to these principles. Other goals could include the promotion of sustainability in

energy useage, waste management, and production and distribution systems:

Access to Land: Agricultural land prices in British Columbia are among the highest in North America. For new entrants into the agricultural industry, capital requirements may be restrictive. One way of facilitating access to farm land is through farm lease agreements with landowners and another way is through land trusts or conservancy covenants which protect land transfer between generations or owners

Alternative Energy: Support the development of alternative energy sources (e.g. solar, wind energy).

Waste Management: Support the development of effective and efficient waste management systems which enhance the soil fertility and maintain or improve water quality.

Plastics and Fossil Fuels: Find ways that people can find and increase environmental sustainability of their production and distribution systems (e.g. reusable packaging).

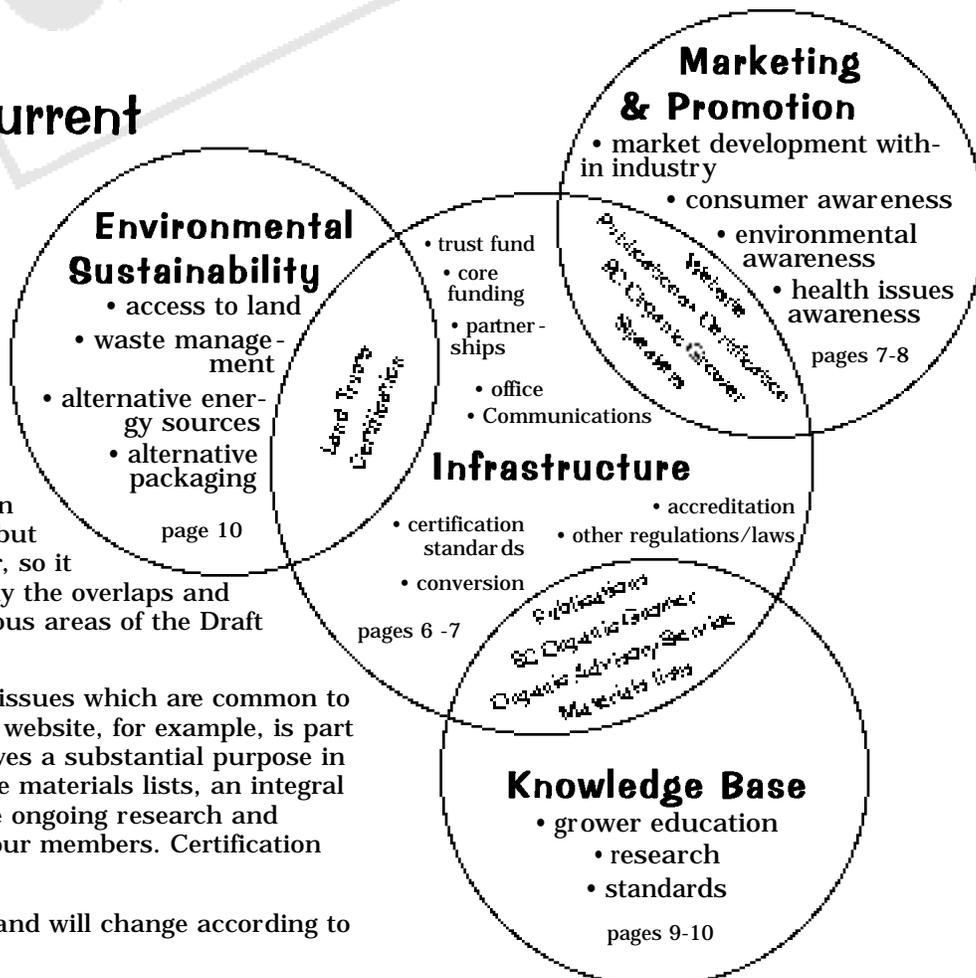
Committee's Current Vision

structure & initiatives

This diagram is another way of looking at the Draft Strategic Plan. Everything is connected to everything else in the holistic world of COABC, but BCOG is printed on flat paper, so it can only show in a limited way the overlaps and connections between the various areas of the Draft Plan.

The areas of overlap indicate issues which are common to both the circles involved. The website, for example, is part of our infrastructure, but serves a substantial purpose in marketing and promotion. The materials lists, an integral part of our Standards, involve ongoing research and increased knowledge among our members. Certification overlaps in two places.

This diagram, too, is a draft, and will change according to the input received.



To get you started thinking

by Linda Edwards

It is anticipated that individual farmers, researchers and companies as well as certifying bodies will have projects they wish to undertake. Part of this planning process is to establish the percentage of funds assigned to each project area on the basis of its priority. Projects will be funded according to the assessment of their public (as opposed to private) benefit.

For example, a group of growers in the Similkameen might put up some funds to investigate the feasibility of wind generation of electricity for the area. Since the preliminary work to establish what is necessary to do this would have no financial benefit to them, and because the information could be made available to all, the cost sharing could range from 25-75% to 50-50%. However, if they applied for funds to proceed to install such machines, they would ultimately profit from the sale of electricity, and further funding may not be provided or would be a very small proportion of the overall costs. Of course, if they were to create a pilot project using wind generation on several farms to evaluate different technologies and conditions with the results to be freely available, this could be seen as public ben-

efit. Using wind generators to power a collective packing plant might be another way to approach the idea of public benefit.

On the other hand, COABC's costs for a project being considered in partnership with the BC Ministry of Environment to prepare literature for homeowners about alternatives to pesticides might be funded 100% to pay someone to prepare the information (the MoE would take care of the printing).

Another example, the New Varieties Council: this has a mandatory levy which can be used to match trust funds for promotion of Ambrosia apples specifically and organics in general. It is a good model for other organised (or not) groups of growers with common interests to come together and collect seed money for projects that will benefit them.

Or, the would-be organic lamb producers might be able to partner with a research station to undertake research to solve the parasite problem. Ag Canada has a cost-sharing initiative through IRAP to help do this. The province also has a program to do exploratory work to see what research might be most beneficial.



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Canadian Diabetes Association
FarmFolk/CityFolk
Schools, Colleges, Universities, Technical Schools
B.C. Chefs Association
Canadian Produce Buyers Association
AgAware B.C.
Brokers

Environmental Sustainability

B.C. Certification Agencies
Canadian Certification Agencies
USA and International Certification agencies
Canadian Organic Growers Association
BC Ministry of Environment
Agriculture Workforce Policy Board
Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Assoc.
Regional Health Units
Canadian Diabetes Association
Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust
4-H Clubs
FARM
FarmFolk/CityFolk
BC Environment Network
Women's and Farmers' Institutes
All of the Livestock Breed Associations
All of the growers Associations (grapes, fruit etc.)

Knowledge Base

B.C. Certification Agencies
Canadian Certification Agencies
Organic Materials Review Institute
BC Science Council
Simon Fraser University
University of British Columbia

University of Victoria
Community Colleges throughout the province
Technical Schools throughout the province
Organic Agricultural Centre in Nova Scotia
B.C. Seed Growers Association
Sustainable Poultry Farming Group

Infrastructure

B.C. Certification Agencies
Canadian Certification Agencies
Commodity groups for meat and poultry
Commodity groups for horticulture products
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Agriculture Workforce Policy Board
Farmers Market Association
Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association
Growing with Care
S.P.C.A.

Partners for all/any areas

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food
B.C. Ministry of Health
B.C. Agriculture Council
B.C. Child Foundation
B.C. College of Teachers
B.C. Teachers Federation
B.C. Dieticians and Nutritionists Association

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Questionnaire

When we get it finished, the Strategic Plan will have a number of sections including the vision and values of the industry, a profile of the factors affecting and shaping the industry as well as participants within the industry. It will include an assessment of strengths and weaknesses and finally strategies and actions to accomplish and support the industry vision and goals. In this way, it is not unlike a business plan. The strategies need to be specific as to their actions, priorities, resources, timelines, budgets, expected outcomes and measurement.

We would like your input in assigning relative importance (urgency, priority) to the four major areas as well as to the individual initiatives. This will help in the process of formulating timelines and budgets.

Please feel free to attach your extensive notes on a separate sheet where we have not allowed enough room to respond on this form. If what you'd like to do doesn't fit in the stated categories, please create your own!

1. Please circle the appropriate level or priority and urgency, and state what percentage of the Trust should be allocated to each area.

	% of funds	Priority	Urgency
Marketing/Promotion	%	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Infrastructure	%	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Knowledge Base	%	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Environmental Sustainability	%	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Something we missed?	%	Low Medium High	Now Later Never

100%

2. Please circle the priority and urgency level for each of the following activities:

	Priority	Urgency
Infrastructure		
Processing facilities	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Regulations	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Organic Trust Fund	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Restructuring COABC	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
• ISO 61/65 Designation	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
• New Certification Body	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Conversion from Conventional to Organic	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Organic Materials Review	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Food Safety compliance	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Labour Code Standard compliance	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
National Organic Standard	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Distributor and Retailer Certification	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Certification	Low Medium High	Now Later Never

Marketing & Promotion

Market Development	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Multi-media advertising	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
IFOAM 2002	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Resource Inventory (what we have & need)	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Influence Head Buyer Decisions	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Educate Retail Handlers	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Retail Support	Low Medium High	Now Later Never
Develop Hotel, Restaurant, Institutional Markets	Low Medium High	Now Later Never



Questionnaire

pg 2

Directories	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Brokers, wholesalers and distributors	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Speakers Bureau	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Health	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Community Health Programs	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Community Food Security Projects	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
School Health Programs	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Consumer Awareness	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Speaker's Bureau	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Industry Tours	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Teen Advocacy	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Knowledge Base						
Research	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Organic Production System Research	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Organic Breeding Program and Seed Industry	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Marketing Intelligence	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Supply-side gaps	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Grower Education	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Market prices and Volumes	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Directories	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Equipment, Supplies & Suppliers	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Wholesalers, Brokers, etc.	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Payment	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Community Supported Agriculture programs	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Farmers Markets	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Value-Added Processing	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Grower Education	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Technical Assistance and Farm Mentorship	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Help Line	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Farmer-to-farmer information sharing networks.	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Organic apprenticeship	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Industry Information	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Spokespeople	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
• Farm Tours	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Environmental Sustainability						
Access to Land	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Alternative Energy	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Waste Management	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never
Plastics & Fossil Fuels	Low	Medium	High	Now	Later	Never

3. Something we missed?

4. Partners we missed? Please provide contact information if possible.

Mail or fax to:

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The Winter Garden in a Cold frame

by Eliot Coleman

A Second Season For the Adventurous Gardener

Like most vegetable enthusiasts I have always been interested in extending the harvest beyond the confines of "the growing season." My interest is both horticultural and culinary. Along with the extended enjoyment of puttering in the garden, I treasure the reward of continuing to eat fresh, homegrown food.

I was motivated to turn interest into serious reality back in 1981 when I took on the job of farm manager at a private school in Vermont that grew most of its own food. The Mountain School program of Milton Academy is unique. In addition to rigorous academic studies, it stresses practical experience on the school's farm as part and parcel of a student's education. But at the time I arrived, the reality of the farm experience for the students during the traditional school year (September to May) was mostly limited to livestock care. From the end of fall harvest in October when the canning, freezing, and stocking of the root cellar was completed until the start of spring planting in May, there was no production of fresh garden vegetables. I determined to remedy that omission and broaden the farm program.

But first I had to face historical fact. The school year was designed so children would be in school only during the cold winter months (non-growing season) and would be available to work on the family farm during the summer. Although this traditional schedule is modified slightly in some areas (such as the potato growing districts of northern Maine where school opens in August and then recesses for the potato harvest in September), it is too well established to tamper with. If I wished to involve students in fresh vegetable production during the school year, it would have to be winter production.

I wanted this to be a serious effort. I had little interest in providing a gardening experience that merely focussed on protecting the warm-summer crops for a few struggling, unsatisfactory weeks. Neither did I wish to limit the production to the traditional hardy leftovers of the summer season. I was keenly aware that if winter horticulture were to catch on with teenagers, it would need more charisma than a Brussels Sprout. But budget constraints dictated that a large, heated greenhouse was out of the picture. So my first choice was the cold frame. It has always been the simplest and least expensive climate moderator for the gardener of limited resources. And even though cold frames are no longer considered a commercially viable option for winter food production, that matters little in a school setting where free land, free labour, and a preference for participatory systems create a different reality.

Although I planned to harvest all winter, I wasn't interested in highly technological answers (like buried foam insulation and space age materials) because that is not my style. I have a prejudice that simpler is better, especially where simpler has been time tested. Comparative investigations of different cold frame designs back in the 1970's showed that the standard old time model — a bottomless box made of two-inch thick planks, 12 inches high at the back and 8 inches high at the front, and covered with glass frames — was still the best. Our cold frames would have been familiar to a gardener of 100 years ago, and so would the crops we grew. (Fearing Burr's 1863 classic, *Field and Garden Vegetables of America*, describes all of them and gives cultural directions.) As we progressed towards developing a successful winter harvest system, it turned out that space age thinking had little to do with it. The solution lay not in technology, but in biology — in the selection of the crops.

The vegetables that the school canned — mostly pickles and tomato paste — and froze — beans, broccoli, cauliflower, corn, eggplant, peas, peppers, zucchini — were principally the crops of summer. Most are "chilling sensitive", which is to say they do not appreciate temperatures below 50 degrees F.

For winter harvesting we obviously needed to focus on their less popular "chilling resistant" compatriots.

Many crops survive winter's freezes providing they have some protection. So we began testing the most familiar of them. Nothing scientific. Our approach was to plant selected crops and observe how long they could be harvested. The results would be judged in the dining hall.

Spinach was our first choice. I had often sown spinach in September and protected the young plants over



drawing from *The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Garden*, by Eliot Coleman

continued on Page 16...

... continued from Page 15

winter with spruce boughs. When uncovered in spring they produced an extra early crop. What would spinach do if covered with a cold frame? It would yield all winter, that's what. We also tried scallions. I remembered once chopping scallions out of the frozen ground in a sheltered spot in the garden and being surprised that they looked as good as new when they thawed. They were even better from the cold frame. I had always done my last planting of carrots on August 1 and enjoyed a delicious late harvest of tender baby carrots. Why not cover them with a cold frame? Another success. With a layer of straw as insulation inside the frame they could be pulled fresh all winter. Best yet, the cold soil storage turned some of their starch to sugar. They became known as "candy carrots". Many times I had seen Swiss chard revive in the garden during a January thaw only to succumb to the rest of the winter. When we covered the hardy cultivar 'Argentata' with a cold frame, it was still going strong in spring. Lettuce was a failure. After too many freeze-thaw cycles in the late fall, lettuce turned to mush. But that was only a minor set-back because we had discovered mache (also known as corn salad). This traditional mid-winter European salad crop is not only far hardier than lettuce, but it is also the only salad green we found (in addition to scallions) that could be harvested while frozen solid and still look beautiful after it thawed. The others, even good old hardy spinach, needed to be harvested when they were

unfrozen. But that was really no problem because the protected area of the cold frame would reach a temperature above 32 F on most average winter days, even if the sky were cloudy.

Following on the heels of the mache discovery we looked to Europe for more winter salad ingredients. Frisée endive proved quite hardy as did radicchio. Our three favourites were cultivated weeds. *Montia perfoliata*, known in the US as "claytonia," started life as "miner's lettuce," a California weed which was eagerly consumed in gold rush days. The Europeans took it across the ocean and domesticated it to what they call "winter purslane". *Plantago coronopus*, a relative of the plantain weeds in your lawn, is popular in Italy as "minutina" and occasionally known in the US as "buck's horn plantain" (so called because of the multi-branched shape of its leaves). And in the chicory family we found 'Biondissima Trieste', a cutting chicory which can be planted thickly to yield abundant quantities of delicious, tender, pale green, finely indented leaves which regrow quickly.

Not all of our attempts were successful but the eventual list is surprisingly extensive. In addition to those mentioned above we found that arugula, dandelion, escarole, mizuna, mustard greens, parsley, sorrel, and turnip greens also met the chilling-resistant criterion and contributed to the fresh larder for all or part of the winter when protected by a cold frame. Over the course of the winter the amount of



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variety available from the winter harvest depends on where you live and the severity of the weather. For gardeners in zone 6 and south, a cold frame alone will guarantee bounteous harvests. In the frigid mountains of Vermont (zone 3) only 5 crops – spinach, scallions, mache, claytonia, and carrots – were dependably harvestable all winter, and only mache during the coldest periods. However, the rest of the 18 successful crops took only a two month hiatus and most were yielding again soon enough as spring returned. Any crops that didn't bounce back were removed and the area replanted as we had been doing with empty spaces all along. For gardeners in the colder zones, a second layer of protection, such as a plastic covered tunnel over the cold frames, will make a quantum leap in climate protection and the crops you can grow. Not only in the home garden where all this started but also commercially on a large scale as we do now. But that is a tale for another time.



Gardeners and farmers in BC will be able to hear the rest of the story from Eliot Coleman in November when he will be a keynote speaker at the Northern Greenhouses conference in Smithers November 16th to 17th. For more information, contact Tracey Strong at North West Community College, Smithers, BC, phone 250-847-4461.

He will also be speaking on Friday, November 16th at lunch-time in Vancouver. For more information contact the COABC office.

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Learning Technologies in the Workplace Project

by Paddy Doherty

Rochelle Eisen who is coordinating this project has spoken to many COABC members in order to develop a "learner needs analysis". This is bureaucratic language for determining what information (and what method of distributing that information) is needed by organic farmers to enable them to better pursue their goals. The other goal for this project was to identify partners for a larger project which would take two years and a budget of \$200,00 - \$300,000. Potential partners in this would be educational and agricultural institutions around the province.

The plan is to co-ordinate the delivery of organic farming information; to further build on the Organic Advisory Service, but not to duplicate what is already being done.

Rochelle has completed the survey and reports that one priority item is the need of organic farmers (and others) for some sort of organic farming help-desk. Calls to the office for advice on technical questions are increasing and we need to find a way to answer them efficiently.

If you want input into this project, contact Rochelle at: 250-494-7980



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Headed to Court

by Fred Reid

I appreciate the opportunity to say something about my situation at this point in time. The results of our extensive mediation process with the Egg Marketing Board is that we are essentially back to the position we were in when the news first broke. We have lost a lot of valuable time in this mediation during which time the board has been developing a strategy to show that they represent organic egg production. I have read articles and advertisements from the egg marketing board where they promote the idea that they regulate and promote organic egg sales.

Olera Farms must now defend ourselves against the actions of the egg marketing board. This will be a costly battle. To date Olera Farms and In Season Farms have incurred a cost of close to \$20,000 for the mediation process and the discussions surrounding the 'Section 17' hearing in August by the Egg Marketing Board. I view the actions of the board as harassment to get me to incur these legal costs and slowly bleed Olera Farms of resources. I have had to increase the price of eggs by 40 cents a dozen as of September 1st: 10 cents to cover our own increased costs and 30 cents to go to a fund



towards legal costs of defending ourselves.

The result of the Section 17 hearing was that Olera Farms was found to owe the Egg Board a total of \$93,400.30. We have launched an appeal to the BC Marketing Board challenging the jurisdiction of the Egg Board over organic eggs, and pointing out the unfairness of their actions to target Olera Farms.

Contrary to public statements by the Egg Board, Olera Farms is not a large egg producer. I have had up to 9,000 hens, and currently am down to 6,500 hens due to interference by the marketing boards. The average size layer farm is over twice this size.

But as a totally organic operation, Olera Farms is the biggest fish in a very small pond. The marketing boards know that if the biggest fish can be fried then the pond will dry up. This is partly because of the role that Olera Farms has played in encouraging other small organic operations. Our organic standard requires that the eggs be graded at an inspected grading station. Olera Farms has provided that grading station at a cost of over \$30,000 and allowed the grading station to be used by small farms at essentially no charge. Olera Farms has also assisted a number of individual farms with the development of their own markets.

When the BC Egg Marketing Board took action against Olera Farms in February 2001, our pullet

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supplier got scared and did not supply us with the needed pullets to keep our production levels up over the last few months. We have been critically short of eggs for the last two months and this shortage will continue until the end of October. We have located another supplier and have been rearing birds to replace our old flocks. Meanwhile the Egg Board is threatening to send a letter to the Supreme Court to stop these birds from coming into production - a roundabout way of seizing our flock, I suppose.

Olera Farms and Thomas Reid Farms have been working with the BCSPCA over the last few months in order to facilitate the development of the freedom farm label. Rather than view this initiative as a competitive label to the certified organic label, we determined that it would promote the humane animal treatment aspect already present in the certified organic standards. The humane treatment of animals is being resisted by the conventional egg producers and has not been promoted by the certified organic community in the past. I am hopeful that this initiative will be off the ground by October 2001.

Consumer support on this issue has been so great the retailers have had to develop a petition asking marketing boards to leave us alone. A number of retailers both large and small had petitions in their stores over the summer and more than 20,000 peo-

ple signed them in a two month period. Also, a number of consumers wrote the government and the egg board directly. I am always greatly indebted to the public for their support. My brother Bradley was coordinating the petition but had heart surgery in June, which delayed our acting on it. We are now preparing to copy the signed petition and make a presentation of it to the Liberal government and the other parties. This will take place soon as Bradley is recovering well.

We believe we have no choice but to protect ourselves through legal action. I know the organic community supports me in so many ways and I also know that individual farms can not afford the legal battle. However the fight is not limited to Olera Farms. The fight is for the right of the small producers who have built and served the organic market to be allowed to continue without the market being hijacked by the conventional producer through the regulation of the marketing board. Olera Farms will fund the battle through the sale of its eggs and money raised from the public.

All certifying bodies within COABC will be sent a notice of the appeal to the BCMB and will be offered intervenor status by the BCMB. I urge all in the organic community to speak to the issue This is everyone's fight. You just have to choose your side.



IFOAM 2002: Cultivating Communities

14th Organic World Congress August 21-24, 2002 in BC

Plan to be in Victoria in August 2002 when Canadian Organic Growers and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements will welcome the international organic community to Canada for the 14th IFOAM Organic World Congress and the 4th Organic World Exhibition.

In choosing the motto "Cultivating Communities", Canadian Organic Growers has chosen to highlight the role of organic agriculture in sustaining healthy, vibrant communities whether they be communities of micro-organisms in the soil or rural and urban communities anywhere in the world.

The IFOAM Organic World Congress serves as a forum for dialogue, debate and the exchange of ideas and experiences. It will bring together international representatives of all sectors including farmers and farmer organizations, researchers and policy makers, trade representatives and certification agencies, NGO's and activists working in rural and community development. With a rapidly changing regulatory environment, the expansion of global and domestic markets, and the divergence in North America between the increasing industrialization of organic agriculture and local marketing initiatives, it will be a timely opportunity for participants to examine the many challenges and opportunities that accompany the evolution of the organic farming movement.

Program Themes

The Program will be structured around three main themes: "Organic production and environmental responsibilities", "Redesigning food systems", and "People and the process of change". Contributions to the program are invited until November 7, 2001. The program committee

is looking for submissions of high quality research as well as colourful and stimulating examples of organic agriculture in practice. Visit the website or contact the IFOAM 2002 office for more information.

Pre-Congress Farm Tours

The tours are designed to provide participants with first hand knowledge about organic production in Alberta, British Columbia and Washington State. If you have always wanted to see the Canadian Rockies, this is your opportunity to take the trip of a lifetime! Enjoy the spectacular scenery, visit prairie farms and cattle ranches, vineyards and orchards, meet the dairy producers and vegetable growers, learn about distribution networks and take a cruise

on BC Ferries on route to Victoria. There are also shorter tours if your time is limited. If you are interested in small-scale farming and community projects take the Vancouver Island tour, if you want to see processors, distributors and examples of large-scale operations, tours from Seattle and Vancouver will interest you. Treat yourself to a vacation and a great learning experience. Tour prices range from \$305 CDN to \$1400 CDN. (\$1.00 CDN = \$0.65 US, \$0.71 Euro) Full details can be obtained from the IFOAM 2002 office.

The 4th Organic World Exhibition

Join us to celebrate the diversity of organic agriculture around the world and showcase your products and projects at the 4th Organic World Exhibition. The finest organic food and beverages will be offered for sampling and sale and a variety of entertainment and speakers will ensure that this outdoor festival is both fun and informative. Admission is free for the general public.

Victoria, Canada is the place to be in August 2002. Details of all events, registration fees, guidelines for exhibitors and accommodation information will be available in October from the IFOAM 2002 office and on the IFOAM 2002 website.

IFOAM 2002 Calendar of Events

August 16-21, 2002 Pre-Congress Tours
Organic Agriculture in Alberta, British
Columbia and Washington State, 2, 3, 4 and 7
day tours offered.

August 20-21, 2002, 7th International Congress
on Organic Viticulture and Wine, Delta Victoria-
Ocean Point Resort, Victoria

August 21-24, 2002, 14th IFOAM Organic
World Congress, Victoria Conference Centre,
Victoria

August 24-25, 2002, 4th IFOAM Organic
World Exhibition, Victoria

August 26-28, 2002, IFOAM
General Assembly, University
of Victoria

For more information about IFOAM 2002 "Cultivating Communities"

IFOAM 2002, c/o Building 20, 8801 East Saanich Road Sidney BC, V8L 1H3, Canada

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Predator Profile: Aphid Midgees (*Aphidoletes Aphidimyza*)

by Linda Edwards

the Serial Killer of the Predator World

Most predators kill and feed until satiated and then rest until they get hungry again. Not *Aphidoletes*! While a larva can get through a life cycle on as few as 6 aphids (the only food they eat), if there are more in the vicinity, it will just keep on killing! This ability to survive at low numbers but respond to high numbers is very useful. This means they don't have to leave an area when numbers drop and can therefore keep resurgences of pests (as can occur with predators like lady beetles) from occurring. It also means because of this tendency to kill as many as possible not just as many as necessary, they can bring high populations of aphids under control more quickly than most of the other predators.

Aphidoletes kill aphids by piercing their victim's leg tissues and injecting a toxin. This paralyzes the aphid, stopping it from feeding and therefore killing it. Every once in awhile, the midge larvae stop and suck out the contents of their prey, leaving behind a black shriveled body.

This is an indigenous and wide spread species. The adults are seldom seen however. They are very tiny, mosquito-like, dark brown and only fly at night. They feed on honeydew generated by the aphids. Unlike predators like lady beetles, they have wonderful searching ability. An *Aphidoletes* adult released at the edge of an acre sized field of plants with just one plant in the middle with aphids, will find that plant and lay eggs on it. This kind of knowledge is another example of how entomologists like to spend their time! The eggs – always laid near aphids – look like flecks of paprika. These hatch in 2-4 days. The larvae which grow to a maximum of 0.3 mm, are bright to pale orange. They are cylindrical and smooth. They too, are not easily seen because they are usually under an aphid, killing it. After feeding and growing for 1-2 weeks (faster in hot weather – slower when it is cool), the larvae drop to the ground and pupate for 1-3 weeks – again temperature dependent. The adults emerge, lay up to 200 eggs and the cycle starts over again. There are 3-5 generations per season which can result in very high populations. Short days in the fall triggers hibernation. They over winter as pupae in the soil and leaf litter. It has been documented

that there are at least 65 kinds of aphids that this predator will eat. Imagine if you will, years of entomologists searching out aphids and feeding them to *Aphidoletes* larvae. Yep! They eat that one too!

Such a wonderful predator! So why are there ever outbreaks of aphids anywhere? Their weakness from a growers point of view is that they don't like cool weather. Their emergence from hibernation is triggered by long day length. They do not start to emerge until around the first week in June. Unfortunately, in many cases, by that time aphid populations may already be high (a good deal if you are an *Aphidoletes* and possibly why they have selected for late emergence) and be causing damage to crops. The *Aphidoletes* will become in many cases the most important predator in bringing them under control but the higher the populations the longer it will take.

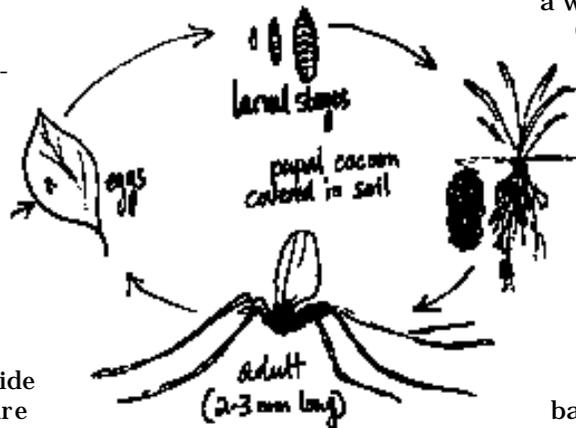
Aphidoletes can be purchased for release. They are the main predator used against aphids in greenhouses so every insectary rears them. You receive pupae in containers. Put them in a warm place out of direct sunlight. Check about every 12 hours.

When you see a number of adult "flies" under the lid, take them out and release them into the area where aphids are a problem. Do releases in the evening or very early in the morning before the sun comes up. The adults can dehydrate and die in direct sunlight.

After at least most of the adults have flown, put the lid back on, and take it back inside until more adults emerge. Repeat until there are no more. It is okay to tap the side of the container to activate them.

The number you release depends on how much you want to spend which tends to depend on how bad the situation is. Releases can be very effective especially in places where native populations of *Aphidoletes* may be low i.e. annual crops or a tree nursery. However, they will not be effective under cool conditions so early spring releases – before naturally occurring ones would emerge – are not recommended. Average day time temperatures should be above 18°C. There have also been some success with mid summer releases which reduced chronic aphid populations so much that there were very few that were left to over winter and consequently populations were much lower the following year. There have also been releases that made no difference at all. This insect also does not do well under very dry conditions. It is thought that the pupae tend to dry out.

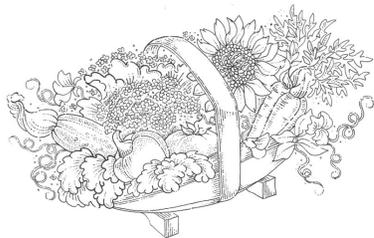
Next time: the green lace wing - a fair weather friend.



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Not Another Certification Body!

by Paddy Doherty

As part of the restructuring process for the
Certified Organic Associations of BC, a new certifi-
cation body has just been incorporated. The Pacific
Agricultural Certification Society will provide inter-
nationally recognised certification for businesses
that require this service, and will also provide BC
Certified Organic certification for Certification
Bodies whose members are tired of volunteering.

This brings to 16 the number of CBs currently
operating within BC, (not counting out-of-province
certifiers). Not surprisingly, it is understood there
will be some rationalisation of certification within
the province. Many CBs are run by the same vol-
unteers who started them in the 80s or early 90s.
These persons are looking for a break. They want
to continue promoting organic agriculture (on-farm
research, seminars, farm visits) but want out of
the bureaucratic drudgery of organic certification.

The Board of Directors of the COABC authorised
the formation of PACS in order to provide the
membership with a business-like certification ser-
vice that will enable export of organic product to
anywhere in the world. At the same time, it is
anticipated that many provincial CBs will either
give the business of organic certification over to
PACS, or contract with the PACS to provide that
service. These CBs would then retain their mem-
bership in the COABC as "organic advocacy soci-
eties" under proposed changes to the operating
structure of the COABC.

The Pacific Agricultural Certification Society has
opened an office in Vernon, is applying for BC
Certified Organic accreditation, and will be provid-
ing certification before the end of the year. By
applying some economy of scale, the fee structure
for organic certification will be reasonable. Further
accreditation will be accessed through IFOAM, the
Standards Council of Canada, or anywhere else
that is deemed to be necessary for organic trade.

Meanwhile, the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food
and Fisheries has been in contact with the USDA
Organic Program and has begun negotiations for
an equivalency agreement between the USDA and
the BC Certified Organic Program. The BCMAFF
has assured exporters that there will be no restric-
tion to the movement of BC Certified Organic prod-
uct due to the new USDA Organic Program.

BC organic enterprises can look forward to compe-
tent and recognised organic certification while con-
sumers will continue to see more and more BC
Certified Organic product on store shelves. ✓

