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Online Organic Resources

COABC has launched a series of on-line toolkits designed to welcome new entrants to organic agriculture and support sector growth. The toolkits were created as 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.

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.

COABC Vancity Project

The Organic Certification and Public Education project funded through Vancity, is well underway. The two project components are working together to increase access and awareness of certification.

The online portion of the project will increase access to organic certification by addressing paperwork and cost. Paperwork will be streamlined with online forms and storage. Which may translate to cost savings for certifying bodies. The online process will also address cost by providing additional value. Please be assured that any work under this project will align with organic certification standards.

The awareness building aspect of the project is also off to a strong start. Educational workshops and presentations about the newly created resource toolkits and the organic sector in general are being planned. Organic Week events are also being planned to celebrate the success of the organic sector.





Report on the 13th meeting of the CGSB Technical Committee (TC) on Organic Agriculture

From April 13-16, 2014, the TC met to discuss revisions proposed for 3rd Edition of the Canadian Organic Standard. Hugh Martin chaired the meeting. Nearly three-quarters of the 46 members of the TC attended the meeting in person, with 5 members participating via teleconference.

The main business of the meeting involved the presentation by working groups (WG) of 131 recommendations that covered 171 work list items. The main goals were: to improve text clarity; to better reflect or identify the intended meaning of the Standard; and to provide additional, precise guidance and requirements, notably for certain types of livestock.

Most WG recommendations passed as presented or with friendly amendments. Over the course of the two meetings dealing with standards revisions, 115 proposed changes have been accepted, with 106 proposed changes being rejected. These proposals will now be subject to public review with final balloting potentially in December 2014. Revisions that make it through this process will take effect on the publish date of the 3rd edition of the COS in August 2015.



EVENTS

Crop Scouting for Organic Farms

Date: June 2, 2014

Location: Cawston and online

Fee: \$500

This course is a 40 hour course combining on-line and on-farm instruction and is being taught in collaboration with the Organic Farming Institute of BC (OFIBC). The course will cover the basic principles needed to develop a scouting and decision making program for arthropods, diseases and weeds for organic production. The course is designed to be taken simultaneously while students are working on farms, with the aim of improving their technical skills in the area of integrated pest management (IPM). An on-farm session will be held in Cawston, BC June 13 to 15.

For more information contact: Info@ofibc.org

Organic Certification Introduction Session

Date: June 12, 2014

Time: 12-2 pm

Location: Kwantlan Polytechnic University

This session is part of the Vancity Project to increase awareness about organics and facilitate access to certification. The session aimed at young and new farmers will provide an introduction of COABC and the new online application process. There will be plenty of time for question and networking. Farmers who are currently certified are also encouraged to attend.

BC Food Systems Network Gathering

Date: June 26-29, 2014

Location: Sorrento, BC

Register: <http://bcfsn.org/2014-gathering/>

The BC Food Systems Network will host its 16th Annual Gathering in Sorrento, BC, in the traditional territory of the Secwepemc Nation. This year's Gathering theme is "Revisiting our Roots: Honouring Our Bio-Cultural Heritage."

The BCFSN supports a sustainable system that recognizes food as the basis of health and cultural integrity, and that protects and enhances the quality of land, air and water for future generations.

Organic Processing Inspector Course

Date: Nov 10-14, 2014

Location: Mississauga, Ontario

Cost: \$1750

The course includes comprehensive training on the Canadian Organic Standards and four days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus one-half day for testing. Core instruction includes: how to conduct processing facility inspections, applicable organic certification processing/handling standards, regulatory requirements, audit control, HACCP/Organic Control Points, structural pest management, sanitation, ingredients, labeling, inspection report writing, communication skills, and inspector protocols. For more information visit, www.cog.ca.



NEWSLETTER LINKS

BC Agriculture Council COABC is a member under the Community Agriculture seat:

<http://www.bcac.bc.ca/>

OFC info-bio:

www.organicfederation.ca/newsletter

BCSPCA:

<http://www.spca.bc.ca/>

REMINDERS

ISO operators are fortunate to be able to use the Canada Organic label AND the BC Checkmark side by side.

The logo of the BC Certified Organic program is a key tool to identify certified organic products in BC. It is important that the symbol is used correctly; here is a quick reminder, especially for websites and the exclusion zone (white space.)



The Program Symbol is enclosed by a black border. The border ensures that the appropriate white space or exclusion zone is provided around the composite mark. The Program Symbol must be enclosed by the

border if the Symbol is applied against colored or complex backgrounds. However, if the background is white or off-white, it may be desirable to omit the border while ensuring the appropriate exclusion zone.

Complaints Submission Form

Canada Organic Office complaint submission form can be found at www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php.

For complaints against an interprovincial traded product see the COO complaint form at certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php" www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.php

Complaints on this form are to be directed to the Canada Organic Office directly <mailto:OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca>

Social Media

COABC is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Certified-Organic-Associations-of-BC/208548192519986 and on Twitter, username [coabccanada](https://twitter.com/coabccanada). Join our online community.

Remember...

Got an Organic Question? Try Cyber-help www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.

If you change your address or contact information send it to your CB office as soon as possible so that you don't miss out on receiving a BCOG and other materials.

