

# CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BC



## COABC ACCREDITATION BOARD

### BC Certified Organic Program Operator's Manual

*Organic Production Standards & the Labelling of Organic Products*

VERSION 1

# COABC Accreditation Board

## BCCOP Operator's Manual

*Organic Production Standards & the Labelling of Organic Products*

### VERSION 1

#### Published by:

#### ***Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia***

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## Preamble

The Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) is committed to representing the British Columbia organic sector in provincial, national and international forums. In order to do this, the COABC endeavours to collect information and communicate issues that affect the provincial organic sector. The British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture provides critical support to the COABC in formulation of positions to deal constructively with these issues.

Consumer recognition and support of the organic sector and the British Columbia Certified Organic Program is vital to the development of the organic sector. The COABC actively seeks out opportunities to educate consumers about what it means to be "British Columbia Certified Organic". The COABC has developed a program and promotional materials that encourage use of the Program Symbol by licensees and provides program information to consumers.

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia is the Administrator of the [BC Organic Certification Regulation](#) under the [Food and Agricultural Products Classification Act](#). In partnership with the [British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture \(BCMA\)](#), the COABC ensures compliance with organic production standards and the regulations through the process of accreditation to the British Columbia Certified Organic Program (BCCOP). The BCCOP references the Canadian Organic Standards as specified in this manual.

The COABC also acts as a Conformity Verification Body for the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)](#) with respect to the [Canadian Organic Regime \(COR\)](#). The CFIA is responsible for administering the COR which follows the [Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#) under the [Safe Food for Canadians Act](#). For information on COABC and COR refer to the COR Accreditation Manual.

## Forward

All COABC manuals, standards and policy are available to all interested parties through the [COABC website](#). The following manuals replace versions published prior to February 2020.

Information in the [COABC Operating Manual](#) covers:

- An introduction to the COABC and the BC Certified Organic Program
- Scope, structure and main policies

Information in the [COABC Accreditation Board Operating Manual](#) covers:

- Quality System administered by the COABC Accreditation Board
- Scope, structure and main policies of the COABC Accreditation Board

Information in the [BCCOP Accreditation Manual](#) covers:

- Application, evaluation, criteria and procedures for BCCOP accreditation
- Information on rights and responsibilities of applicants, accredited CBs and the COABC

Information in the [COR Accreditation Manual](#) covers:

- Application, evaluation, criteria and procedures for the recommendation of accreditation under the COR to the CFIA
- Information on rights and responsibilities of applicants, accredited CBs and the COABC

Information in the [BCCOP Operator's Manual](#) covers:

- Guidance with respect to production standards required under the BCCOP
- Standards which are not covered under the scope of the [Canadian Organic Standards](#)
- Rules for labelling organic product

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## **What is Organic Farming?**

Organic farming is an agricultural production system that promotes and enhances biological diversity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain, and enhance ecological harmony.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. BC Certified Organic Program

The BC Certified Organic Program is the system of accreditation and certification administered by the COABC under the *Organic Certification Regulation* under the *Food & Agricultural Products Classification Act*. This program is documented in two-parts - I the BCCOP Accreditation Manual and this document, the "BCCOP Operator's Manual: Production Standards and the Labelling of Organic Products."

### 1.2. Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia

- 1) The COABC is delegated authority by the regulation listed in 1.1 to accredit members and to represent members in matters relating to the Food & Agricultural Products Classification Act of British Columbia.
- 2) The COABC also has the following responsibilities:
  - a) to promote organic agriculture and to provide public education on organic agriculture and organic foods;
  - b) to develop and administer an organic certification accreditation program for members;
  - c) to grant permission for use of the phrase "British Columbia Certified Organic" on product labels by agri-food operators certified by members;
  - d) to develop and implement a verification officer training program.
  - e) to provide information to the public on behalf of the members; and
  - f) to be responsible for incidental matters related to the above-referenced activities.
- 3) The responsibility to provide organic certification remains the domain of the certification bodies that are members of COABC.
- 4) The COABC grants to the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture the right to audit the process of accreditation carried out by COABC.
- 5) The COABC is incorporated as a society in the province of British Columbia.
- 6) The COABC requires as a condition of membership in the program that its members and any licensees enrolled in this accreditation program adhere to all provincial, federal and municipal laws, regulations and standards affecting the agriculture industry.
- 7) The COABC does not require that any of the policies or standards of this program be applied to any other program that a member or licensee participates in.

### 1.3. Statement of Principles

The BC Certified Organic Program has adopted the Principles of Organic Farming as originally developed by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), see 1.4 below. In 2005 IFOAM restated their principles as the principle of health, the principle of ecology, the principle of fairness and the principle of care to inspire the organic movement, stating that:

"Principles are the roots from which organic agriculture grows and develops. They express the contribution that Organic Agriculture can make to the world. Composed as inter-connected ethical principles to inspire the organic movement -- in its full diversity, they guide our development of positions, programs and standards."

Organic operators should abide by these principles as far as possible in their interactions with human populations, domestic and wild animals, and the environment in which we live.

#### **1.4. Principles of Organic Farming**

- 1) To produce food of high quality in sufficient quantity.
- 2) To interact in a constructive and life-enhancing way with natural systems and cycles.
- 3) To consider the wider social and ecological impact of the organic production and processing system.
- 4) To encourage and enhance biological cycles within the farming system, involving microorganisms, soil flora and fauna, plants and animals.
- 5) To develop a valuable and sustainable aquatic ecosystem.
- 6) To maintain and increase long term fertility of soils.
- 7) To maintain the genetic diversity of the production system and its surroundings, including the protection of plant and wildlife habitats.
- 8) To promote the healthy use and proper care of water, water resources and all life therein.
- 9) To use, as far as possible, renewable resources in locally organized production systems.
- 10) To create a harmonious balance between crop production and animal husbandry.
- 11) To give all livestock conditions of life with due consideration for the basic aspects of their innate behaviour.
- 12) To minimize all forms of pollution.
- 13) To process organic products using renewable resources.
- 14) To produce fully biodegradable organic products.
- 15) To produce textiles which are long lasting and of good quality.
- 16) To allow everyone involved in organic production and processing a quality of life which meets their basic needs and allows an adequate return and satisfaction from their work, including a safe working environment.
- 17) To progress toward an entire production, processing and distribution chain which is both socially just and ecologically

## 2. Definitions

The definitions below apply to the BCCOP process and are in addition to the definitions provided in the COS.

### 2.1. Certification References

#### **British Columbia Certified Organic Program (BCCOP)**

Refers to the accreditation program administered by the COABC under the *Organic Certification Regulation* and the *Food & Agricultural Products Classification Act*

#### **Certificate**

Document issued by the CB that describes the organic status of an operation. This document identifies at least the name and address of the enterprise certified, effective date of certification, certification number, categories of organic operation, name and standards to which the enterprise is certified.

#### **Certification**

The procedure by which a third party gives assurance that a clearly identified process has been methodically assessed such that adequate confidence is provided that specific products conform to specific requirements.

#### **Certification Body (CB)**

The body that conducts certification.

#### **Certification Committee (CC)**

A group of persons delegated by the membership of the CB the responsibility of assessing applications for certification.

#### **Certified Organic Product**

A product that has been produced and handled in accordance with organic standards by a certified organic enterprise as verified by a valid organic certificate.

#### **Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC)**

The administrator of the Organic Certification Regulations following the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act (BC). A competent body for accreditation to ISO 17065 compliant standards.

#### **Contaminant**

A residue of a prohibited substance that persists in an organic product or the environment.

#### **Contamination**

The introduction of prohibited substances to organic products, ingredients, production areas, handling processes, or to the environment.

#### **Conversion (transition)**

The act of establishing organic management practices in accordance with organic standards.

#### **Conversion period (transition period)**

The time between the start of organic management and qualification of the crop or livestock production system or site as organic.

**Drift**

The physical movement of pesticides, fertilizers, genetically engineered organisms, or other materials onto a certified organic field, farm, or facility.

**Field**

An area of land identified as a discrete and distinguishable unit within a farm operation.

**Food and Agricultural Products Classification Act** of the British Columbia legislature to which the COABC subscribes.

**Handling (handler)**

Any operation or portion of operation that receives or otherwise acquires agricultural products for resale, except that such a term shall not include final retailers of agricultural product, who do not process and substantially transform, repack, or re-label such products.

**Ingredient**

Any substance used in the preparation of a food or fiber product that is still present in the final product as used or consumed, even if in a modified form.

**Inspection**

On-site visit to premises for the verification of compliance with standards.

**Labelling**

Any written, printed or graphic representation that is present on a product, accompanies the product, or is displayed near the product. or on a website.

**Licensee**

The person or operator that is in possession of a valid certificate.

**Operator**

Any person, firm, or organisation that produces, prepares or processes with a view to the subsequent marketing thereof, products referred to as BC Certified Organic. In general, an operator describes a person; an operation describes an entity.

**Preparation**

Includes, with respect to an organic product, post-harvest handling, manufacturing, processing, treatment, preservation and slaughter.

**Processing**

Cooking, baking, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, extracting, cutting, fermenting, slaughtering, eviscerating, preserving, dehydrating, freezing, drying, sewing, or otherwise manufacturing, including packaging, canning, jarring, or otherwise enclosing in a container, other than normal post-harvest packing of crops performed by producers.

**Processor**

An operator or operation that conducts processing.

**Primary Producer**

An operator or operation that produces crop or livestock.

**Regulation**

Organic Certification Regulation under the BC Food & Agricultural Products Classification Act.

**Standards**

Organic production, and preparation standards.

**Third party**

Means the decision-maker has no direct financial interest in the affairs of the member being certified, including an interest in the marketing of that member's products.

**Transition**

The act of establishing organic management practices in accordance with this standard.

**Transitional Product**

A product from an operation that has completed one or more years of the transition period towards becoming a certified organic operator and is in a COABC recognized certification program.

**Verification Officer (VO)**

A person contracted by the certification body to gather information relating to an operator's application for certification. A verification officer must be a member in good standing of the International Organic Inspectors Association

### 3. Production Standards

COABC has adopted as the production management standards of the British Columbia Certified Organic Program, the Canadian Organic Standards as detailed in CAN/CGSB 32-310 and CAN/CGSB 32-311 & 32-312. Additional guidance for Certification Bodies and operators is provided in the following Clauses. When a new or revised version of the standard is published, certifiers may allow operators up to 12 months to make the appropriate changes to their production system.

#### 3.1. Transition to Organic

##### 3.1.1. Certification Status

- 1) A Certification Status or category applies to specific plots of land, production units, or processing/handling facilities, not to the farm, farmer, processor, or handler.
- 2) An operator is “in transition” from the time of its initial application to the BC Certified Organic Program, until the operator receives a certificate. There are no provisions for the marketing of “transitional” product within the BC Certified Organic Program, but individual Certification Bodies may develop procedures to allow for the marketing of transitional product on their own and must adhere to COABC Policy #15.

**See Additional Policy:**

COABC Policy #15: Use of the claim “Transitional” and the BCCOP

- 3) British Columbia Certified Organic status may only be granted if the appropriate transition period (as set out in CAN/CGSB 32-310 5.1.1, 6.2. & 6.3 for each type of operation) has been completed and the land, product or herd or flock of sheep is being produced in accordance with the standards. This must be verified on a yearly basis by a recognized certification body accredited by the COABC. Transition periods may have been completed under another certification body if the body uses the Canadian Organic Standards and is accredited either by COABC or under the Canada Organic Regime.

##### 3.1.2. Transition Period

- 1) Soil-based crops:
  - a) The period of transition is 36 months from the last application of a prohibited substance during which time the implementation of an appropriate soil management plan must be documented. Products from a certified operation may be stamped 'transitional' after the first 12 months of transition are completed, when approved by the Certification Body.
  - b) If the applicant can provide documentation that the land and crops have been managed in accordance with these Standards, but were not verified by a certification body, a certification body may accept documentation rather than 'certification' as a verification of compliance with these Standards. An applicant must apply to a certification program body program recognised by the COABC at least 15 months before the day on which the first certified product is expected to be marketed. This also applies to syrup production. The operator must receive at least two inspections before a certificate can be issued.
  - c) If a certified operator is adding land to the production unit producing the same crops as already certified and records demonstrate compliance to the standard, the 15-month requirement is waived.

- d) Non-organic perennial transplants must go through a year (from the date of planting) transition period before the crop may be sold as certified organic. All other standards for soil-based crops must be complied with. Non-organic perennial transplants can only be used if it has been clearly substantiated that organic sources of equivalent quality and quantity, are not commercially available.
- 2) Transplants and plants in containers – Operator has received appropriate inspections sufficient to verify compliance to the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All other crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued.
  - 3) Mushrooms – Operator has received appropriate inspections sufficient to verify compliance to the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All relevant crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued.
  - 4) Sprouts – Operator has received appropriate inspections sufficient to verify compliance to the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All relevant crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued.
  - 5) Meat animals (excluding poultry) – Animals must be maintained by an operator that has been certified under the BC Certified Organic Program (or an equivalent and recognised program). When a herd or flock of sheep is being converted to organic production, these conditions apply from beginning of third trimester of in-utero development. Pastures must be certified organic. Provisions for transition of pastures are the same as those required for crops grown in the ground.
  - 6) Eggs – Birds must be maintained by an operator that has been certified under the BC Certified Organic Program. Poultry must be raised under organic management beginning no later than the second day of life. Outdoor areas shall be free of prohibited substances for 36 months prior to their use. Provisions for transition of pastures are the same as those required for crops grown in the ground.
  - 7) Meat poultry – Birds must be maintained by an operator that has been certified under the BC Certified Organic Program (or an equivalent and recognised program). Poultry must be maintained under these conditions beginning no later than the second day of life until slaughter. Outdoor areas shall be free of prohibited substances for 36 months prior to their use. Provisions for transitions of pastures are the same, as those for crops grown in the ground.
  - 8) Milk – Animals on a farm undergoing transition or purchased from a conventional source must be managed according to the BC Certified Organic program standards (CAN/CGSB 32-310 & 32-311) for 12 months before they can be certified organic. Pastures must be certified organic or when a whole herd is being transitioned, in 3rd year transition to satisfy this requirement. Provisions for the transition of pasture are the same, as those required for soil-based crops.
  - 9) Honey – Colonies must go through a 12-month transition from the last application of prohibited inputs before honey can be harvested as certified organic.
  - 10) Preparation – Operator has received appropriate inspections sufficient to verify compliance to the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program.

### **3.1.3. Split Production**

- 1) Maintenance of a non-organic management system on a farm (split operation) enrolled in an organic certification program may be allowed if adequate distinction is provided. Approval of the certifying body must be obtained. The producer should be able to demonstrate that appropriate soil building

techniques are used to maintain organic matter content and to reduce erosion of the soil on the non-organic portion of the farm, and that only inputs are selected that have the lowest possible environmental impact. The producer must have available for review input and production records for both portions of the farm to the certification body on a yearly basis.

- 2) The BCCOP prohibits GE crops in the non-organic part of a split operation - see 3.2.3 below. NOTE: This is specific to the BC Standard.
- 3) Organic and non-organic production may co-exist in enclosed operations such as a greenhouse or mushroom operation especially as the operation moves through the transition period. The division between organic and non-organic must be completely clear and verifiable. The minimum requirements are as follows:
  - a) Organic production must be contained in structures separate from conventional (non-organic) production. Structures can not be alternated between organic and non-organic production.
  - b) There shall be separate ventilation systems to prevent drift of prohibited materials.
  - c) Liquid fertiliser systems in non-organic greenhouses shall be separate from organic greenhouses to prevent contamination with prohibited materials; organic fertigation lines must be separate from non-organic fertigation lines.
  - d) Each structure shall be conspicuously labelled according to production methods such as "Organic" or "Non-organic."
  - e) Soil mixing equipment and other tools shall be thoroughly cleaned before use for mixing organic potting soils. A cleaning log must be kept for such equipment. Cleaning log must contain signatures and dates of clean-outs between organic and non-organic operations.
  - f) The same crop shall not be produced organically and non-organically in an operation owned or managed by the same certified producer unless the crop varieties are visually distinguishable when in a saleable state.
  - g) Separate records must be maintained for organic and non-organic production methods. Both sets of records must be available for inspection by a verification officer.
  - h) Adequate physical facilities, (as determined by the certification body based on information provided by of the Verification Officer), shall separate organic and non-organic plants in storage or product holding areas for shipping. Distinctive shipping containers must be maintained for both the organic and conventional brands. Adequate records shall also be kept and be available for inspection.
  - i) No prohibited materials may be used in structures that are dedicated to organic production.
  - j) In cases where there is any concern about the possibility of contamination from adjacent areas, a minimum buffer zone of 25 feet, or other effective barriers, are required from the potentially contaminated area.

#### **3.1.4. Parallel Production – prohibited**

Production of the same crop or similar crops, which are not easily distinguishable, in the same crop rotation cycle on both the organic and the non-organic portions of the farm is prohibited. Exceptions are allowed in the following cases:

- a) during the transition of perennial crops and grassland;
- b) areas intended for agricultural research

### **3.2. Genetic Engineering**

- 1) Land that has previously grown genetically engineered organisms is subject to the same transition period as any other land. The certification body may require extra monitoring for contamination by transgenic organisms.
- 2) The use of genetically engineered organisms or their products are prohibited in any form or at any stage in organic production, or preparation unless specifically stated otherwise in the standard.
- 3) As the risk of cross contamination by pollination, certified organic farms which also operate conventional fields cannot use genetically modified organisms on the conventional portion of the farm.

Apiculture 7.1  
Insect 7.7

Maintaining organic integrity during cleaning, preparation and transportation 8

### **3.3. Organic Crop Management**

See CAN/CGSB 32-310, Clause 5.

### **3.4. Organic Greenhouse Management**

See CAN/CGSB 32-310 Clause 7.5.

### **3.5. Organic Sprouts, Shoots & Micro-Greens Production**

See CAN/CGSB 32-310 Clause 7.4.

### **3.6. Organic Mushroom Production**

See CAN/CGSB 32-310 Clause 7.3.

### **3.7. Organic Maple Products**

See CAN/CGSB 32-310 –Clause 7.2.

### **3.8. Organic Wild Crops**

See CAN/CGSB 32.210, Clause 7.6.

### **3.9. Organic Apiculture**

See CAN/CGSB 32-310 Clause 7.1.

### 3.10. Organic Livestock Production

See CAN/CGSB 32.210, Clause 6 and 32.311, Section 5 including Tables 5.2 & 5.3

#### 3.10.1. General

- 1) Includes cattle, swine, sheep, goats, rabbits, game and exotic mammals, for slaughter and for milk production, as well as poultry for slaughter and egg production.
- 2) Livestock producers must implement management techniques, which will establish and maintain herd/flock health emphasising the preventative health practices of proper nutrition, stress reduction, genetic selection, and farm system design. Each producer should maintain a herd/flock health management plan. A Farm System Design Plan is also recommended, which incorporate measures to minimise or eliminate environmental degradation.
- 3) The production, processing, and marketing of livestock and livestock products must comply with provincial and federal statutes regulating each industry. Producers must observe all regulatory requirements with respect to milk production and handling.
- 4) Animals from non-certified sources may be incorporated into an organic system and sold into the “conventional” or non-certified market without jeopardising the farm/ranch “certified organic” status. For example, breeding males; non-organic animals on a farm with organic crop production; or non-organic animals grazing with an organic herd. The audit trail must provide indisputable evidence of appropriate identification or segregation. When the status of an animal is in question, it must be sold as non-certified. Animals in an organic production unit (including born into the unit) that are transferred to a non-organic production unit cannot be transferred back into the organic production unit, except if this is completely beyond producers control such as a severe natural disaster; in which case the producer may apply to the certification committee for an exception.

#### 3.10.2. Feed

- 1) The requirement for feed to be produced in accordance with the standard is a requirement for certified organic feed. Feed and forage certified under the BCCOP are not allowable inputs for livestock certified under the COR.
- 2) Crown lands held under grazing permits or other such tenures have their admissibility as a “certified organic” input determined on a license by license basis. Each applicant must file a Questionnaire on land use/history for Crown Lands for each area under consideration. This document will provide the Certification Committee with adequate information to evaluate the parcel’s admissibility into an organic farm/ranch system.
- 3) Certified transitional feeds, or feeds of equivalent standing, or feeds guaranteed to be organic by a producer signed affidavit with prior approval may only be used in exceptional circumstances when organic feed is not available as outlined in CAN/CGSB 32-310, 6.4.

#### 3.10.3. Record Keeping and Audit Trail

- 1) Every primary producer, feedlot operator and finishing unit operator must keep detailed records for the livestock production unit. These records should be in an orderly and auditable form and include at least the following information pertaining to each animal or group of animals handled by the facility:
  - a) A complete audit trail from farm to final sale must be maintained.
  - b) Sources, purchases and sales of animals and feed.
  - c) Herd Health Management Plan (recommended – CBs may require this as part of the Organic Plan)

- d) Farm/Ranch System Design Plan (recommended)
- e) Feeding records
- f) Health care records (include all treatments whether with veterinary drugs or allowed homeopathic and botanical products).
- g) Year-end inventories of animals and supplies.

#### **3.10.4. Milk Handling**

Milk handling equipment and sanitizing agents must meet Provincial industry standards as set out in the Milk Industry Standards Regulation under the British Columbia Milk Industry Act. A rinse with clean water must follow the sanitizing rinse before milking unless the sanitizer is listed on table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB32-311. If prohibited materials must be used due to regulatory requirements, then all equipment must undergo two additional rinses or a predetermined volume of milk agreed to by the CB with the operator can be purged following the cleaning procedure and satisfy the requirements laid out in the standard. All processes and materials must be documented in detail.

#### **3.10.5. Slaughter and Processing**

- 1) Animals must be treated humanely during shipping, holding, and slaughter, see CAN/CGSB 32-31-6.6
- 2) Animals in transit longer than 24 hours must be unloaded, fed, watered, and rested at least once every 24 hours from the time of loading.
- 3) It is not compulsory that a slaughter facility be certified in its own right for meat to be labelled certified organic, but producers and certifiers must be able to verify that the organic integrity of the product is not compromised during slaughter and cutting. An organic compliance declaration may be used for custom slaughter facilities.
- 4) Slaughter, cutting, and meat packing facilities are considered to be processing facilities. The production plan, from receipt of the raw material to release of the product, must include a transparent audit trail of the following:
  - a) Inputs
  - b) Material processes
  - c) Decontamination processes and monitoring
  - d) Sanitation practices
  - e) Packaging
  - f) Storage
  - g) Product identification as defined and required by the appropriate certification and regulatory agencies
  - h) Meat or meat products from certified animals must be clearly identified to preclude confusion with non-certified meat
  - i) Pest control (in and outside the facility including fly control).

Maintaining Organic Integrity During Cleaning, Preparation and Transportation See CAN/CGSB 32.310, Clause 8 and PSL CAN/CGSB 32.311, Sections 6, 7 & 8 for allowed incidental additives, cleaning products, facility pest control and post-harvest management.

## 4. Preparation & Handling

### 4.1 Veracity of the Organic Food Channel

The integrity of organic food products must be maintained from the farm to the consumer. During this transfer, there are many points where proper care is needed to ensure that contamination does not occur. In order to certify that a food product is organic at the retail level, processors, packers, manufacturers, handlers and distributors must adhere to a program as detailed and verifiable as that required of farmers. See CAN/CGSB 32.310, 8

### 4.2 Use of Program Symbol and Labelling

Any processor, packer, manufacturer or handler who wishes to display the British Columbia Certified Organic label on product to which he/she holds legal title must be a licensee of a COABC accredited Certification Body.

#### 4.2.1 Classes of Labelling

- 1) British Columbia Certified Organic labelling guidelines recognize four different classifications of products and the claims that can be made on the labels of each classification. The classifications are:
  - a) Products made of at least 95% organic ingredients.
  - b) Products composed of 70-95% organic ingredients.
  - c) Products containing less than 70% organic ingredients.

The particular requirements for the claim, composition and labelling of each of these classifications are to be found in the chart in 4.4 of this document.

- 2) For a product to display a British Columbia Certified Organic claim on its label, excluding individual organic items cited in the ingredients list, the processing of the final product must be done by a licensee or by a co-processor with methods that conform to the standards. The actual facility and processes used must be inspected by a COABC member agency or must be certified by another certification body accredited under the Canada Organic Regime (except for slaughter as outlined in 3.9.5.3 of this document). A licensee's batch lots may be processed by a non-certified organic co-processing facility, as long as the requirements of CAN/CGSB 32-310, Clause 8 are met to the satisfaction of the certification body. The main points are:
  - a) An application is submitted to a certification body before the processing is done.
  - b) An audit trail is maintained.
  - c) A verification officer inspects the processing facility once a year at a time when products targeted for certification are being processed.
  - d) The certification body deems the processing has not compromised the integrity of the organic product.
- 3) If a non-certified facility is used to produce a BC Certified Organic product, excluding slaughter as outlined in 3.9.5.3 of this document, the licensee is responsible for submitting an application to the certification body and supplying information for certification, arranging for access to the facility for inspection and paying applicable fees. This arrangement only applies to the products of a particular licensee; it does not confer certification on the coprocessor. If more than one licensee uses a particular co-processor, the plant will need to deal with each licensee's certification separately; therefore, one plant may require several inspections in a season.

### 4.3 Ingredients and Composition of Products

Organic ingredients are agricultural commodities that must be organically produced to be included in a product labelled organic and/or to be identified as organic in the ingredient panel. They must be certified organic by a COABC member certification body, or by a CB approved under the Canada Organic Regime.

The following requirements apply to products labelled in the 95% and above, and the 70-95% labelling categories.

- a) Any certified organic ingredient must have been prepared or imported by an operator subject to a regular inspection system by a certification body with standards equivalent to the Canadian Standard. Copies of organic certificates or transaction certificates for each organic ingredient must be kept on file by the processor.
- b) All processing aids must be organic or listed in the PSL Table 6.5 (CAN/CGSB 32-310, 9.2.1 & 9.2.2) and satisfy any restrictions in the table annotations
- c) Any non-agricultural ingredient must be listed in the PSL Tables 6.3 or 6.5 (CAN/CGSB 32-310, 9.2.1 & 9.2.2) and satisfy any restrictions in the appropriate PSL table annotations
- d) Any non-organic ingredient or processing aids used must not be a product of, or be derived from GE technology, or have been exposed to ionizing radiation, or be the product of cloned animals (CAN/CGSB 32-310, 1.4.1a, 1.4.1h, 1.4.1k)
- e) Operators must submit a product profile for each product for which they will make an organic claim. The product profile lists all ingredients including their percentages as well as the certification body for the organic ingredients and the sources of any non-organic ingredients. Copies of the corresponding organic certificates for each organic ingredient and product information sheets and GE status documentation for the non-organic ingredients must be attached. This information must be submitted to the certification body before an organic claim is made.
- f) The product shall not contain both organic and non-organic versions of the same ingredient (CAN/CGSB 32.310, 9.2.1 & 9.2.2).
- g) Any intermediate product used in the final product must have been prepared or imported by an operator subject to a regular inspection system by a certification body with standards equivalent to these regulations.
- h) See CAN/CGSB 9.1.3 for the method of calculating the percentage of organic ingredients.
- i) The weight of water and salt (sodium chloride) are subtracted before calculating organic ingredient percentages.
- j) Percentage calculations may be done either by weight or volume, but the same measurement system must be used for all the ingredients. The unit of measure used must be characteristic for the product type.
- k) All ingredients of a food and components of ingredients including any additives are to be included in the final calculations of percentages of organic ingredients. This includes any ingredient, mixture, or preparation that is exempt from component declaration under the Food and Drug Regulations Clause B.01.009.
- l) Multi-ingredient organic products used as ingredients in a subsequent product are calculated by using the percentage of organic ingredients actually contained in the intermediate product.
- m) Labelling requirements for animal feeds: Calcium added to animal feeds for known nutritional needs shall not be included as part of the total weight of the product when calculating percentages for organic compliance labelling.
- n) Products containing less than 70% organic ingredients do not have to be certified to make an organic claim in the ingredient list. However, if a processing facility is subject to inspection for products that are certified, the labels of products with under 70% organic ingredients should also be checked.

### 4.4 Labelling Requirements

<b>Classifications:</b>	<b>Products made with 95% &amp; above organic ingredients</b>	<b>Product made with 70 and above organic ingredients, but less then 95%</b>	<b>Products made with less than 70% organic ingredients</b>
<b>Composition:</b>	<p><i>For a certified organic claim at least 95 % of all ingredients, except water and salt, and calcium in the case of livestock feeds must be certified organic (see CAN/CGSB 32.310 para 9.1.3)</i></p> <p><i>Para 9.2.1 8.2.3, 8.2.5, 8.2.6 &amp; 8.2.7 in CAN/CGSB 32.310 and 4.3 of this document further outline requirements for &gt;95% products.</i></p>	<p><i>To make an organic percentage claim, at least 70% of all ingredients must be certified organic (see SFCR 345(1)(d))</i></p> <p><i>There are restriction on the non-organic ingredients see CAN/CGSB 32-310, 9.2.2 and 4.3 of this document.</i></p>	<p><i>To claim an individual ingredient in the ingredient list is organic it (the ingredient) must be certified organic.</i></p>
<b>Claim allowed:</b>	<p><i>Products that are certified organic may use the words “organic”, “organically grown”, “organically raised”, or “organically produced”.</i></p>	<p><i>Products with 70-95% organic ingredients are restricted to a claim of the percentage of organically produced ingredients which must be show as "X% organic ingredients". The percentage must be rounded down to the nearest whole number.</i></p> <p><i>The organic claim can be no larger or more prominent (type, style, size and colour), than the preceding words, signs or symbols that indicate the applicable percentage.</i></p>	<p><i>An organic claim may appear only as descriptors for individual ingredients in the ingredient list/panel.</i></p>
<b>Agency identification requirements:</b>	<p><i>Must include the phrase “Certified by” and identify the name of the processing certifier or the certifier of the responsible brand name holder.</i></p>	<p><i>Must include the phrase “Certified by” and identify the name of the processing certifier or the certifier of the responsible brand name holder.</i></p>	-

<b>Classifications:</b>	<b>Products made with 95% &amp; above organic ingredients</b>	<b>Product made with 70 and above organic ingredients, but less than 95%</b>	<b>Products made with less than 70% organic ingredients</b>
<b>Use of trademarks:</b>	<i>May use the COABC trademark, the Certification Body's seal and the term British Columbia Certified Organic on any containers, wrapping materials, advertising and promotional materials.</i>	<i>Containers, wrapping, advertising or promotional materials for products in this classification must NOT display the COABC trademark or the term British Columbia Certified Organic. The Certification Body's seal may be used.</i>	<i>Containers, wrapping, advertising or promotional materials for products in this classification must NOT display the COABC trademark or Certification Body's seal or the term BC Certified Organic.</i>
<b>Approval Needed:</b>	<i>All materials that include organic claims must receive approval for the organic claim from the pertinent certification agency before its use.</i>	<i>All materials that included 70-95% organic claims must receive approval for the organic claim from the pertinent certification agency before its use.</i>	
<b>Ingredient panel requirement:</b>	<i>Each organic ingredient in a multi-ingredient product shall be clearly identified as "organic" on the ingredient list.</i>	<i>Each organic ingredient in a multi-ingredient product shall be clearly identified as "organic" on the ingredient list.</i>	<i>Each organic ingredient shall be clearly identified as "organic" on the ingredient list.</i>

## 4.5 Audit Trail

### 4.5.1 Objectives of the Audit Trail Process

Maintenance of a complete and transparent audit trail is a crucial element in ensuring the integrity of an organic product. A well-kept audit trail will allow a verification officer or auditor to consolidate all inputs contained in a product with the total output of that product.

### 4.5.2 Required

- 1) Detailed records of any raw materials used as ingredients in a certified product, including names of suppliers or producers, names of respective certifying bodies and quantities purchased.
  - a) Detailed records of all additives and processing aids used including names of suppliers and status of the additive or processing aid (whether of certified organic origin).
  - b) Detailed records of finished products sold and on hand.
  - c) A system of lot numbers, batch numbers or product codes that will allow tracking of individual ingredients throughout the process to the final product.
  - d) The above mentioned records are to be kept at the processor's or packer's offices or place of business in British Columbia.
  - e) The processor or packer must grant permission to the certification body's verification officer and to the COABC appointed auditor to review its records.
  - f) Where ownership of the product remains with the original producer, it is incumbent on him/her to ensure that all processing standards are met.

## 4.6 Wine & Beer

The standards for maintaining organic integrity during preparation (CAN/CGSB 32-310, 8), product composition (CAN/CGSB 32-310, 9) and permitted substances lists CAN/CGSB 32-311, 6 are applied for wine and beer making.

## 5. Permitted Substances

See Can/CGSB 32.311 Organic Production Systems Permitted Substances Lists.

### 5.1 Definitions

The term "synthetic" means a substance that is formulated or manufactured by a chemical process or by a process that chemically changes a substance extracted from naturally occurring plant, animal, or mineral sources, except that such term shall not apply to substances created by naturally occurring biological processes, which may include heat and mechanical processing. However, minerals altered through chemical reactions caused by heating or burning are classified as synthetic.

### 5.2 Classifications and Categories

- 1) Substances are listed in tables according to the way they are used:
  - a) Crop production: Soil Amendments and Crop Nutrition; Crop Production Aids and Materials and Weed Management.
  - b) Livestock production: Feed, Feed Additives and Feed Supplements; Health Care Products and Production Aids.
  - c) Preparation: Ingredients Classified as Food Additives; Ingredients Not Classified as Food Additives; Processing Aids;
  - d) Food-grade cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers permitted without a mandatory removal event and Cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers permitted on organic product contact surfaces for which a removal event is mandatory
  - e) Facility pest management substances, and post harvest substances.

### 5.3 Crop Production

See CAN/CGSB 32-311, Tables 4.2, 4.3.

- 1) Soil amendments (Table 4.2) are substances applied to the soil to improve fertility and tilth.
- 2) Crop Production Aids and Materials (Table 4.3) are substances which may or may not be directly applied to the crop or soil or substances used to control weeds, disease or pests.

### 5.4 Livestock

See CAN/CGSB 32-311 tables 5.2 and 5.3.

- 1) Feed for organic animals must meet the Canadian Organic Standard and be certified. Crops grown for organic feed and pasture managed for organic animals to graze must meet certified organic production standards. The components of organic feed must be organically produced and handled.
- 2) Feed additives are substances used to fulfill a specific nutritional need in a feed ration.

- 3) Feed supplements are substances used to improve the nutritive balance or performance of the total ration. These may be mixed or offered free choice separately from the rest of the ration.
- 4) Health care products include medications, remedies, parasiticides, and other substances used to maintain or restore the well being of an animal. Many of these substances are considered farm animal drugs under the Canadian Food and Drug Act. As such, they should be used with the degree of care that animal drugs require.
- 5) Production aids include all other materials used on animals and their living areas with the exception of cleaners and disinfectants which are listed in CAN/CGSB 32-311 tables 7.3 and 7.4.

## 5.5 Preparation

See CAN/CGSB 32-311, tables 6.3, 6.4, 6.5.

- 1) Substances in tables 6.3 & 6.4 may be used in products labelled as “organic (>95%)” or “made with X% organic ingredients (70-95%)”. They are in most cases considered non-agricultural, although some are agricultural and some may have originated from agricultural based commodities.
- 2) Substances in tables 6.3 & 6.4 may be compose 5% of an organic product and up to 30% of a product containing 70% organic agricultural content when the organic form is not commercially available.
- 3) Follow the source and use restrictions in the annotations especially pay attention to annotations that restrict the source of an ingredient or give a preference to the non-synthetic version. .
- 4) Processing aids are substances/ingredients, which are added to a food for a technological effect during processing and which are not present in the finished food product or are present at insignificant or non-functional levels.

## 5.6 Cleaners, Disinfectants, and Sanitizers (CDS)

See CAN/CGSB 32-311, tables 7.3 & 7.4

Cleaners, Disinfectants and Sanitizers are used to remove dirt, filth, and foreign matter from food and food handling operations. These materials are also used to control micro-organisms that may contaminate food. Use of these products must comply with all applicable health and food safety laws.

## 6. Environmental Protection – Guidance

Organic operators should adhere to the strictest possible management program in order to protect and enhance soil and water quality in the environment. Organic farmers, and others in the trade, have a commitment to environmental protection. This is a basic principle of the organic movement and must be respected before all other considerations.

- 1) Certification Bodies should provide education about environmental issues to their members and encourage protection of the land and aquatic environment by licensees.
- 2) For on-site sewage system users:
  - a) Sewage systems should be pumped out regularly.
  - b) Neither solids nor toxic chemicals should be put down the drain.

- c) Consider investigating alternate forms of nutrient cycling, such as bio-filters; request this information from the BC Ministry of Agriculture.
  - d) No organic crops destined for human consumption should be planted on a drainage field.
- 3) For livestock operators and other operations which handle manure:
- e) Operators must follow Manure Management Standards
  - f) Compost facilities must follow the Compost Regulations.
- 4) Livestock operators should:
- a) Control cattle access to streambanks and water bodies. Livestock grazing and loitering on streambanks for long periods can damage vegetation, deposit manure, and cause soil erosion along the banks. This can degrade water quality and destroy fish habitat. Nutrients in manure, which are carried by runoff into water bodies, can cause an increase in the growth of algae and aquatic plants. Bacteria or parasites in manure, carried by runoff to nearby surface waters, can spread diseases among herds. They can also pose a health threat to humans by making water unsafe for drinking or swimming. In some situations, greater setbacks from watercourses may be required.
  - b) When necessary, install barrier fencing to control livestock grazing on streambanks. If livestock must cross streams, operators should provide gravelled or hardened access points, in sensitive areas where damage from cattle could occur;
  - c) If necessary, provide alternate watering systems, such as troughs, dugouts or nose pumps for livestock;
  - d) Maintain or create buffer zones of vegetation along streambanks, rivers, or lakeshore and avoid planting crops right up to the edge of a water body.
  - e) Protect and preserve natural wetlands.
  - f) Use natural swales and hollows as sediment traps.
  - g) Not alter natural water bodies or shorelines or build ponds or dams without proper guidance and authorisation from the nearest regional office of BC Environment, Water Management.
  - h) Locate confined animal facilities away from water bodies. Divert incoming and outgoing runoff from these facilities.
- 5) Operators must protect watercourses from chemical pollution. Diesel, gasoline and other fuels accidentally spilled or improperly used or stored can seep down and pollute groundwater or be carried by runoff into streams, rivers and lakes.
- 6) COABC encourages all organic producers to seriously consider:
- a) the use of renewable forms of energy to meet energy supply requirements of farms, processing units and other activities;
  - b) minimizing where practical, sources of greenhouse gas emissions;
  - c) selecting crops and animals for their suitability for dealing with and adapting to climate change; and
  - d) reducing, recycling or reusing resources used in producing and processing organic products to increase the efficiency of resource use.

## 7. Other Farm Practices - Guidance

### 7.1 Irrigation Practices and Water Quality

The organic standards cover many of the elements that are critical to a food safety strategy on the farm. However, some elements are covered by regulations and guidelines that are not directly monitored by certification bodies. In those cases, operators and CBs are expected to show due diligence to ensure that organic product is safe for human consumption.

- 1) Operators should make themselves familiar with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regulations regarding water quality for washing of fruit and vegetables and other food safety requirements applicable to their commodities
- 2) Irrigation water should be monitored to ensure it is not contaminated with prohibited substance or unacceptable levels of micro-organisms that are a concern for food safety.

### 7.2 Worker safety

In greenhouses a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration ranging between 350 –1,000 ppm produces enhanced plant growth. Humans cannot tolerate levels above 5,000 ppm. CO<sub>2</sub> levels must be carefully monitored to assure worker safety.