

Canada Organic Initiative Project

Progress Report for July/August 2004

Prepared by Paddy Doherty COI Co-ordinator 2004/08/31
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Summary of Activities

Firstly, I'd like to thank the funders of COI Phase 2, which began July 1, 2004 and will continue for 18 months:

- Canadian Organic Growers
- Capers Community Markets
- Cawston Cold Storage
- Nature's Path Foods
- SunOpta Inc.
- Organic Sector Development Program (AAFC/BCMAFF)

I'd like to thank Gunta Vitins, who volunteered her time to do the difficult job of fundraising for this project.

I spent much of July trying to get the funding and OSDP application organized for COI Phase 2. I worked with the CGSB to try to ensure the Canada Standard Part 1 received a positive vote. This meant sending a letter to all the voting members of the standard committee.

Meeting with CFIA

On July 15 I met (via teleconference) with Dick Fadden, President of the CFIA, along with Greg Orris, Director of the Bureau of Food Safety and Consumer Protection and Daniel Deserendeanu, Director of Food of Plant Origin Division. The call was brief. Dick began by stating that he understood I was anxious that the regulatory process appeared to have stalled. I replied that we had a short window until Dec. 2005 and that my industry funders like to see results.

The short story from the CFIA was that they were waiting to see what the new Minister of Agriculture wanted to do. Concerning the EU deadline, Dick stated that Industry Canada is working on a plan for an interim equivalency agreement. He committed to calling me the next week to provide an update. He also committed to letting me know what they are doing about the cost/benefit analysis as I had asked about that.

Dick Fadden sent me a message on August 8th:

This is a further update. We have agreed with AAFC on the funding of the cost-benefit analysis and we are proceeding with this as soon as is practicable. There is also agreement that we should proceed to put into place the regulation drafting team and we are moving now to do so. Once a project manager is in place, I will ask him/her to touch base with you. Hope this is helpful. Rgds. Dick Fadden

Regulation Options

The issue of different options for an organic regulation came up within the ORC. As a result of this discussion I developed a regulatory options paper. This paper is a brief overview of different places the organic sector could look for a national organic regulation.

Response to this exercise from the ORC was mostly negative. The committee (those who responded) did not see the need to deviate from the course we had spent the last year developing and made it clear that they wished to go forward, not backward.

I drafted and sent a letter to the new Minister of Agriculture, Andy Mitchell (attached).

Meeting with Michael Presley

On August 9 I met with Michael Presley, Director General Food Value Chain Bureau, AAFC and Mark Zeigler, Deputy Director Horticulture and Special Crops Division, AAFC, along with Tracey Inness, Marketing and Trade Officer, AAFC. The meeting was in the new COABC office in Vernon.

I provided the AAFC with a brief update of the organic regulation initiative and suggested that the ORC was feeling that the government was losing interest in the issue. Michael replied that there was lots of work going on behind the scenes. He said that the AAFC has committed over \$500,000 towards the development of an organic regulation over the next 18 months. AAFC will develop a position at the executive level with authority for an organic regulation team within the AAFC and the CFIA. AAFC will also create two administrative positions that will be devoted (fulltime) to the organic regulatory effort.

ORC Teleconference

The ORC met via teleconference on August 10. The committee members were pleased to hear the result of the meeting with Michael Presley and the positive vote on the Canada Standard. We discussed the next steps and set meeting dates for September 24 at the Canadian Health Food Association Show in Toronto: www.chfa.ca/expoeast.php and the Organic Connections Conference, November 8th, 2004 in Saskatoon: www.organicconnections.ca

Canada Standard

The ballot for the Canada Standard Part 1 passed as follows:

- 33 of 41 ballots returned
- 24 votes yes
- 7 votes no
- 1 abstention

According to CGSB policy, the Canada Standard Part 1 (Organic Principles) has been approved by vote. All the comments must still be acknowledged and editorial changes (where needed) made. After this is accomplished, the Standard will be approved.

Parts 2 (Guidance to Part 1) and 3 (Permitted Substances List) of the Canada Standard have been sent out for comment. The comments have been received and must be acknowledged and changes made. Then Parts 2 and 3 will go out to ballot.

Next Steps

I will be attending an International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) and Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) Organic Networking Summit on Skagit Bay (near Seattle) on September 17th.

I will be attending the CHFA Expo East organic sessions and participating in Organic Day (September 24). The morning and afternoon sessions are open to the public and are free. As lunch is included you must register before the event (by September 10th) with Anne Wilkie: awilkie@chfa.ca Please attend if you can as this will be an opportunity to speak with both the ORC and government. I'll be spending much of September preparing for the three events I will be participating in.

I have been appointed to the CGSB organic standard working group so I will be working with the other members to resolve the errors and come up with an approved standard.

Respectfully submitted,



Paddy Doherty COI Co-ordinator

Attachments:

Letter to Andy Mitchell
CFHA Expo East Organic Program
CGSB Vote Results

Organic Regulatory Committee

The Honourable Andy Mitchell
 Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
 Parliament Buildings Ottawa, ON
 K1A 0A6
 July 28, 2004

Dear Mr. Mitchell,

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Canada's organic farmers and agri-food handlers are pleased that you have been selected to lead this ministry and optimistic about the future relationship between the Canadian organic sector and the government of Canada.

The Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) is a group of 18 leaders of the organic farming and handling sector in Canada. The ORC was appointed by the Canadian organic sector meeting, at the Guelph Organic Conference in January 2003. The mandate given to the ORC is to "...develop and ensure implementation of a mandatory system for organic in Canada that meets the needs of the stakeholders".

The Canada Organic Initiative Project (COI) supplies co-ordination for the ORC. The organic industry and government have provided funding for the COI:

- Canadian Organic Growers
- Capers Community Markets
- Cawston Cold Storage
- Natures Path Foods
- SunOpta Inc.
- Organic Sector Development Program (AAFC/BCMAFF)

During the past 18-months, the ORC has brought the organic industry together towards a common goal - involved all regions and aspects of the sector in the process. We have identified the need for an organic regulation:

- Consumers are confused by unclear labelling
- Trade is being affected
- Organic imports are not controlled
- No control of fraudulent designations in the Canadian market

The ORC has worked closely with AAFC, the CFIA, and International Trade Canada to develop a model for an organic regulation, provide stakeholder consultations across the country and to begin assessing the costs and benefits of a regulation. The organic industry is united on the need for an organic regulation and there is clear incentive for this project as the deadline for trade access to the EU (Dec. 31, 2005) approaches.

The development of a Regulation is necessary for the expansion of the organic sector in Canada. We urge you to support the initiative for an organic Regulation and we look forward to a successful collaboration with your Ministry in the process. In this regard, we ask for the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Paddy Doherty, Co-ordinator

This pan-Canadian project is sponsored by the Organic Sector Development Program (Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada/BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) and generous financial support from Canada Organic Growers, Capers Community Markets, Cawston Cold Storage, Nature's Path Foods, SunOpta Inc.

****Organic Regulation & Its Implementation **National Strategic Planning on Organic Food & Marketing Issues**

Dear Organic Colleague,

You are invited to attend open meetings on the organic regulatory environment and the national organic strategy. These meetings are being sponsored by the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) and are being held in conjunction with their Expo East Conference & Trade Show.

When:

Friday, September 24, 2004 9:00am- 5:00pm

Where:

Niagara Room, InterContinental Hotel (adjoins Metro Toronto Convention Centre) 225 Front Street West, Toronto, Ontario

Agenda:

9:00 am -12:00 pm -*Organic Regulatory Meeting*

Chair: Paddy Doherty

This technical meeting is open to the public -public participants are those traders, growers or officials with an interest in an organic regulation and some understanding of the issue. The Organic Regulatory Committee will be discussing components of the proposed organic regulation and strategies for implementation. The status of the Canadian organic standard will also be on the agenda.

* A light lunch will be served for participants registered as of September 10, 2004.

1:30 pm -3:30 pm -*National Organic Strategic Plan Update*

Facilitators: Paddy Doherty, Co-ordinator, Canada Organic Initiative, Laura Telford, Executive Director, Canadian Organic Growers (COG) Participating groups will provide a brief (3 minute) overview of their roles and activities in the Canadian organic sector. Presenters will then provide updates on various components of the National Strategic Plan for the Canadian Organic Food & Farming Sector, including:

- * * Canada Organic Standard
- * * Organic Regulation
- ** A National Representative Body
- ** Organic research initiatives & priorities (H. Martin, OMAF)
- * * Other regional issues as per the needs and interests of those present

3.30 pm -5:00 pm Open forum and discussions

For more information, to confirm your attendance or to add discussion items to the agenda, please contact: Paddy Doherty paddy@quesnelbc.com or Tomas Nimmo (CHF A Organics) organix@georgian.net

We look forward to seeing you! The CHFA Organic Advisory Council

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Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canadian General
Standards Board

Office des normes
générales du Canada

Place du Portage III - 6B1
Hull, Quebec
K1A 1G6

Place du Portage III - 6B1
Hull (Québec)
K1A 1G6

27 August 2004

ACG-6481-32/20-E

CANADIAN GENERAL STANDARDS BOARD

COMMITTEE ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (32/20)

BALLOT RESULTS

To Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the return of your ballot and for your comments on the revision of the following standard:

CAN/CGSB-32.310 – Organic Production Systems, Part 1: General principles
(Second Committee Ballot Draft, June 2004; Letter ballot No. 32/20-4)

The letter ballot tally is as follows:

Standard No.	Distributed/ Returned	Affirmative	Negative	Abstention	Not Returned
CAN/CGSB-32.310	33/41 (80%)	25 (61%)	7 (17%)	1 (2%)	8 (19%)

The collation of the ballots and comments from voting members is enclosed. The comments were copied as received in French or English and are currently being translated and will be distributed as soon as completed. Proposed resolutions to negative ballots and comments are currently being developed by the Committee Chairperson, the working group and Secretary, and will be distributed for your consideration as soon as they are available.

Approval of a draft standard is by consensus. Consensus is substantial agreement by concerned interests involved in the preparation of a standard. It includes an attempt to resolve all objections and implies much more than a simple majority, but not necessarily unanimity. It requires that all concerned interests are given the opportunity to be heard and to convince their fellow committee members of the validity of their case. A valid consensus also requires that, of the members entitled to vote, at least 60% return their ballots and at least 50% vote affirmatively.

.../2

The following members volunteered to participate on the comments of part 1:

Gail Lynch, Chair and consultant (voting-user)
Angela Bilkhu, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (voting-regulator)
Paddy Doherty, Dragon Mountain Farm (information-producer)
Michael Leclair, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (voting-general)
Anne Macey, Canadian Organic Growers National Office (voting-producer)
Arthur Marcoux, Ministère de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation du Québec (information-user)
Debbie Miller, Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (voting –general)
Clark Phillips, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (voting-producer)
Randy Preater, Canadian Seed Growers Association (voting-user)

The complete review of the comments of Part 2: Guidance and Part 3: Permitted Substances Lists will follow.

Thank you to all Committee Members, Working Group Members and other Participants for all of your work to date towards the development of this new standard.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Trish Dolhan if you have any questions or require additional detail about this standards activity.

Sincerely,



Manon Forget
Committee Secretary
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Fax: (819) 956-5740
E-mail: manon.forget@pwgsc.gc.ca

Trish Dolhan
Phone: (819) 956-0777
Fax: (819) 956-5740
E-mail: Patricia.A.Dolhan@pwgsc.gc.ca

Encl.

C/CGSB-32.20 Organic Production Systems, Part1: General Principles**

(Second Committee Ballot Draft, June 2004 - Letter ballot No. 32/20-4)

Standard No.	Distributed	Returned	Affirmative	Negative	Abstention
C**/CGSB-32.310	41	33 (80%)	25 (61%)	7 (17%)	1 (2%)

V – Voting member I – Information member A – Alternate member
 G – General Interest P – Producer U – User R - Regulator

Negative Ballots from:

Beauchemin, Robert, Table filièrre biologique du Québec (V/G)
 Bouffard, Denis-Paul, Conseil d'accréditation du Québec (V/G)
 Gaudet, Pierre, Fédération de l'Agriculture Biologique du Québec (V/P)
 Gravel, France, Certification Garantie Bio (V/G)
 Hamblin, Gordon, Hamblin's Organic Farm Milling (V-P)
 Hymers, Ken, Canadian Organic Livestock Association Inc. (V/P)
 Nodge, Gordon, Canadian Organic Certification Cooperative Ltd. (V/G)

Affirmative Ballots With Comments from:

Boyle, Debra, Pro Organics Marketing Inc. (V/U)
 Buchler, Hans, Park Hill Vineyards (V/P)
 Cruikshank, Jeanne, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (V/U)
 Gibson, Janine, CDN Comm. Independent Organic Inspectors Association (V/U)
 Hamm, Wallace, Pro-Cert Organic Systems (V/G)
 Kneen, Cathleen, BC Food Systems Network (V/U)
 Leclair, Michael, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (V/G)
 Macey, Anne, Canadian Organic Growers National Office (V/P)
 Miller, Debbie, Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (V/G)
 Preater, Randy, Canadian Seed Growers Association (V/U)

Affirmative Ballots Without Comments from:

Andres, Lawrence, Dairy Farmers of Canada (V/P)
 Bushnell, Lucienne, Consumers Council of Canada (V/U)
 Calhoun, Rolf, Canada's Association for Fifty-Plus (V/U)
 Chorniak, Marlene, Food Processors of Canada (V/P)
 Chrapko, Victor, Organic Crop Improvement Association - Alberta (V/G)
 De Valk, Robert, Further Poultry Processors Association of Canada (V/P)
 Edwards, Linda, Organic Producers Association of Cawston and Keromeos. (V/P)
 Eisen, Rochelle, Rare Entreprises (V/U)
 Lynch, Gail, Consultant (V-U)
 Phillips, Clark, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (V/P)
 Redden, John, Viriditas Herbal Products (V/U)
 Semmelhaack, Richard, Organic Crop Improvement Association Quebec (V/G)
 Scott, Alex, Organic Producers Association of Manitoba Cooperative Inc. (V/P)
 Sinkevich, Yvonne, Peace River Organic Producers Association (V/P)
 Wells, Stéphanie, Organic Trade Association (V/G)

Abstention Ballots With Comments from:

Barry, Carla, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (V-R)

No Ballot Return:

Hennigar, Laurie, The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (V/P)

Leniczek, Marion, Organic Crop Improvement Association - Saskatchewan (V/G)

Morin, Jean, Organisme de Certification Québec Vrai (V/G)

Nimmo, Thomas, Quality Assurance International Canada (V/G)

Powell, Susan, Canadian Food Exporters Association (V/U)

Scott, Gordon, Stake Technology Ltd (V/P)

Warman, Phil R., Nova Scotia Agriculture College (V/G)

Webber, Allan, Alberta Organic Association (V/U)

Comments from Information Members:

Bruulsema, Tom for Harold Blenkhorn, The Canadian Fertilizer Institute (I/G)

Clay, Heater, Canadian Honey Council (I/P)

Martin, Hugh, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (I/G)

Doherty, Paddy, Dragon Mountain Farm (I/P)

Rushen, Jeff, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (I/G)