

Canada Organic Initiative Project

Progress Report for March 2005

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Summary of Activities

After much persistent, I was able to obtain a 45 minute meeting with Minister Mitchell on April 21st. The meeting will include the Minister, AAFC and CFIA staff, and the ORC sub-committee. I spent some time dealing with media enquiries (National Post, Economist, and Western Producer), and communicating with the members of the ORC and other organic personalities. The Canada Standard has taken the bulk of my contract time.

Canada Standard

Ballot results for Part 1 were 24 yes, 9 no, and 1 abstain; 6 persons did not vote. Ballot results for Part 2 were 25 yes, 8 no, and 1 abstain; 6 persons did not vote. Ballot results for part 3 were 29 yes, 3 no, and 2 abstain; six persons did not vote.

The CGSB has asked me to chair the working group (WG7) to respond to the comments and suggest actions arising from the comments. The other members of WG7 are:

1. Anne Macey
2. Janine Gibson
3. Wally Hamm
4. Arthur Marcoux
5. Randy Preater
6. Mike Leclair
7. Gail Lynch
8. Clark Phillips

There was some concern about how we were to amend the standard at the '13th' hour (when there is no more ability to vote on it). The CGSB has provided some guidance on this issue:

1. For editorial comments, we can suggest changes.
2. For major comments (amendments), we can:
 - a. If we agree together that a major change in the standard is needed, we may suggest the change to the entire committee--send a message with an answer date. If we get more than a few negative replies, we cannot proceed. If we get positive replies, we make the change (then perhaps someone will change their ballot from no to yes, based on this change).
 - b. If we agree together that we do not agree with the comment for a major change, we reply to the commenter that we do not agree and we state our reasons.
 - c. If the comments are for standards outside the boxes in Part 1, we can either deal with the comment or reply that they had their opportunity to comment on this standard in the previous vote (since the parts in Part 1 outside the boxes did not change from the 2nd to 3rd revision) and we will not accept it.
 - d. If we do not have agreement on a major suggested change, we can put it on the work list for the next revision

There are 39 pages of comments on Part 1, 11 pages of comments on Part 2, and 16 pages of comments on Part 3. So, there is a lot of work ahead of us to try to reconcile the different opinions and different parts of the Standard. It will take some time, but time spent at this stage will be worthwhile if it results in a better Standard.

Canada Organic Partnership

Laura Telford (Canadian Organic Growers Executive Director) met with Anita Stanger (AAFC Director, Horticulture and Special Crops Division) and staff on March 24. Ms Stanger was supportive and helpful with the proposal to unify the Canadian organic community. The result of the meeting was that the Canadian Organic Partnership proposal project will be included as a portion of a much larger COG project (to ACAAF) devoted to implementing an action plan for the Canadian organic movement. We should have an answer to this proposal by the end of April.

BC Position

At the COABC "Seeds of Change" conference in Sidney on February 27th, the BC Minister of Agriculture, John Van Dongen provided formal confirmation that the BC government wishes to be fully involved in a national regulation for organic in Canada. Though we (COABC) we aware that BCMAFF wanted to play an active role in a national program, we have been waiting for word directly from the Minister, and were happy to receive it.

COABC and the BCMAFF have been working together to deal with BC issues in the context of the impending national regulation. COABC and the BCMAFF want to be involved in the development of the national regime rather than having to respond to a fully drafted regulation. We have had one meeting where we were able to identify some important issues. We have agreement on some issues:

- COABC wants to have the opportunity to deliver accreditation for the national system within the province
- COABC wants to be able to continue the Regional Accreditation for CBs whose operators do not export beyond the BC border
- COABC wants to be able to continue using the BC Certified Organic program symbol for organic products produced and sold in BC

COABC and BCMAFF are considering the possibility of delivering national accreditation beyond the provincial boundary, thus providing options for (out-of-province) CBs under a national regime. BCMAFF needs to determine if this is possible and the COABC still needs to decide if they wish to do it.

Mid-Project

We are now halfway through Phase II of the Canada Organic Initiative Project. We have accomplished much of our goals, though the most difficult work lies before us. As we move towards the details of a national regulation, my job is increasingly that of a facilitator/communicator and less of a technical writer, (we have government experts for drafting details). It is important at this stage that the organic community stick together through the tough decisions ahead. We have always known we will need to compromise, but actually having to give things up will be difficult and potentially divisive--it is my job to keep us together.

Budget to Date

Cost Category	Estimated Costs (9 months)	Actual costs (9 months)	Remaining Funds (next 9 months)
Contractor time	\$13,500	\$13,500	\$13,500
Travel and communications expense	\$9,000	\$7,210	\$10,789
Totals	\$22,000	\$20,710	\$24,289

The budget also includes 'in-kind' contributions from members of the ORC and others. The total required is \$15,000--at present we are well over \$10,000.

Next Steps

I'll be preparing for meeting Minister Mitchell on April 21st. The ORC sub-committee will also be meeting with the CFIA Organic Task Force that day--we will likely have a teleconference sometime before then. I'll be spending a lot of time working on the Canada Standard--trying to get it completed before the end of the month.

Please contact me directly with questions or concerns; or contact the CFIA organic Task Force through OrganicTF@inspection.gc.ca . This address reaches all members of the team. This and other material is archived at <http://licensees.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/COI/COI.htm>

Respectfully submitted,



Paddy Doherty

Attachments:
Voting results



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

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Hull (Québec)
K1A 1G6

23 March 2005

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
(Third Committee Ballot Draft, January 2005; Letter ballot No. 32/20-5)

The letter ballot tally is as follows:

Standard No.	Distributed/ Returned	Affirmative	Negative	Abstention	Not Returned
CAN/CGSB-32.310	34/40 (85%)	24 (60%)	9 (22.5%)	1 (2.5%)	6 (15%)

CAN/CGSB-32.310 – Organic Production Systems, Part 2: Guidance
(First Committee Ballot Draft, January 2005; Letter ballot No. 32/20-6)

Standard No.	Distributed/ Returned	Affirmative	Negative	Abstention	Not Returned
CAN/CGSB-32.310	34/40 (85%)	25 (62.5%)	8 (20%)	1 (2.5%)	6 (15%)

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CAN/CGSB-32.310 – Organic Production Systems, Part 3: Permitted Substances Lists (First Committee Ballot Draft, January 2005; Letter ballot No. 32/20-7)

Standard No.	Distributed/ Returned	Affirmative	Negative	Abstention	Not Returned
CAN/CGSB-32.310	34/40 (85%)	29 (72.5%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)

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.

Current members of WG 7, please indicate, **by 25 March 2005**, your ability to participate in the review of the comments and to identify the proposed actions on the recent ballots. If any other committee members would like to participate on WG 7, please inform me **by 25 March 2005**. Members will be added ensuring balanced representation, while maintaining a manageable size. The current membership of WG 7 is:

Paddy Doherty, Chair of the Working Group, Dragon Mountain Farm (information-producer)
Angela Bilkhu, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (voting-regulator)
Janine Gibson, CDN Comm. Independent Organic Inspectors Association (voting-user)
Michael Leclair, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (voting-general)
Gail Lynch, Chair of the committee and consultant (voting-user)
Anne Macey, Canadian Organic Growers National Office (voting-producer)
Arthur Marcoux, Ministère de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation du Québec (information-user)
Clark Phillips, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (voting-producer)
Randy Preater, Canadian Seed Growers Association (voting-user)
Arnold Taylor, Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (voting-general)
Wallace Hamm, OCPP/Pro-Cert Canada (voting-general)

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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Trish Dolhan
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Encl.

COMMITTEE ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (32/20)

C/CGSB-32.20 Organic Production Systems**

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

Negative Ballots from:

Beauchemin, Robert, Table filière biologique du Québec (V/G) – Parts 1 and 2
Bouchard, Gérard, Fédération de l'Agriculture Biologique du Québec (V/P) – Parts 1 and 2
Bouffard, Denis-Paul, Conseil des Appellations Agroalimentaires du Québec (V/G) – Parts 1 and 2
Gravel, France, Certification Garantie Bio (V/G) – Parts 1 and 2
Hamblin, Gordon, Hamblin's Organic Farm Milling (V-P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Hamm, Wallace, OCPP/Pro-Cert Canada (V-G) – Part 1
Hymers, Ken, Canadian Organic Livestock Association Inc. (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Leclair, Mike, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (V-G) – Parts 2 and 3
Nodge, Gordon, Canadian Organic Certification Cooperative Ltd. (V/G) – Parts 1 and 2
Scott, Alex, Organic Producers Association of Manitoba Cooperative 1 – (V-P) Part 1

Affirmative Ballots With Comments from:

Beauchemin, Robert, Table filière biologique du Québec (V/G) – Part 3
Bouchard, Gérard, Fédération de l'Agriculture Biologique du Québec (V/P) – Part 3
Bouffard, Denis-Paul, Conseil des Appellations Agroalimentaires du Québec (V/G) – Part 3
Buchler, Hans, Park Hill Vineyards (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Chrapko, Victor, Organic Crop Improvement Association - Alberta (V/G) – Part 2
Eisen, Rochelle, Rare Entreprises (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Gibson, Janine, CDN Comm. Independent Organic Inspectors Association (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Gravel, France, Certification Garantie Bio (V/G) – Part 3
Hamm, Wallace, OCPP/Pro-Cert Canada (V/G) – Parts 2 and 3
Leclair, Michael, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (V/G) – Part 1
Lynch, Derek, Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (V/G) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Macey, Anne, Canadian Organic Growers National Office (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Nodge, Gordon, Canadian Organic Certification Cooperative Ltd. (V/G) – Part 3
Preater, Randy, Canadian Seed Growers Association (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Scott, Alex, Organic Producers Association of Manitoba Cooperative Inc. (V/P) Parts 2 and 3

Affirmative Ballots Without Comments from:

Andres, Lawrence, Dairy Farmers of Canada (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Bushnell, Lucienne, Consumers Council of Canada (V/U) – Parts 1, 2
Boyle, Debra, Pro Organics Marketing Inc. (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Calhoun, Rolf, Canada's Association for Fifty-Plus (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Chorniak, Marlene, Food Processors of Canada (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Chrapko, Victor, Organic Crop Improvement Association - Alberta (V/G) – Part 1 and 3
Cruikshank, Jeanne, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
De Valk, Robert, Further Poultry Processors Association of Canada (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Edwards, Linda, Organic Producers Association of Cawston & Keromeos. (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Kneen, Cathleen, BC Food Systems Network (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Lynch, Gail, Consultant (V-U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Miller, Debbie, Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (V/G) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Nimmo, Thomas, Quality Assurance International Canada (V/U) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Phillips, Clark, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (V/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Semmelhaack, Richard, Organic Crop Improvement Association Quebec (V/G) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Taylor, Arnold, Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (V-G) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Wells, Stéphanie, Organic Trade Association (V/G) – Parts 1, 2 and 3

Abstention Ballots With Comments from:

Barry, Carla, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (V-R) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Bushnell, Lucienne, Consumers Council of Canada (V/U) – Part 3

No Ballot Return:

Fréchette, Julie, Organisme de Certification Québec Vrai (V/G)
Graham, Richard, Sunopta Organics (V-P)
Hennigar, Laurie, The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (V-P)
Redden, John, Viriditas Herbal Products (V/U)
Sinkevich, Yvonne, Peace River Organic Producers Association (V/P)
Smillie, Joe, Quality Assurance International – Canada (V-G)

Comments from Information Members:

Bernard, Micheal, Health Canada (I-R) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Bruulsema, Tom for Harold Blenkhorn, The Canadian Fertilizer Institute (I/G) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Callow, Kristen, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetables Growers – Parts 1 and 2
Clay, Heater, Canadian Honey Council (I/P) – Part 3
Dean, Michael, Gaia Green Products Ltd. – Part 3
Doherty, Paddy, Dragon Mountain Farm (I/P) – Parts 1, 2 and 3
Urton, Geoff, BC SPCA – Part 2
Winn, Pete, Hedley Technologies inc. – Part 3