



March 18, 2020

Re: COVID-19 COABC response

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, we are receiving updates from the BC Ministry of Agriculture (BCMA), [BC Agriculture Council \(BCAC\)](#), [BC Farmers Markets Associations](#) and other organizations.

BC Ministry of Agriculture

The COABC is in regular contact with the BCMA Organic Specialist, Karina Sakalauskas, and is receiving updates when available. Karina is summarizing and sending updates to the Ministry executive every day, while working diligently to help and find answers. During this time, the BCMA is also working with the organic sector to determine what the anticipated impacts are. We have had inquiries about compensation but the BCMA hasn't heard anything yet.

Temporary Foreign Workers Program

Please see the BCAC website for updates that relate to the Temporary Foreign Workers program. Farms and businesses that might be impacted can sign up for email updates on the BCAC website. Please note that the travel ban will impact other workers such as WWOOF.

Audits

Certification Body (CB) Administrators: Please refer to the memo (March 16, 2020) sent out by the Accreditation Board (AB) regarding audits. The AB recommends CBs discuss their contingency and communication plans as inspections may be affected.

COABC

COABC office staff will be working from home. The office is in transition with new staff on board and we will try our best to continue working from home and respond to inquiries in a timely manner. As it is an evolving situation and the effects on agriculture and the agriculture industry are unclear, please be aware we will try our best to keep you informed.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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Good for You, Good for the Environment