

COABC: Keeping You Up-to-Date

Prepared by Karen Fenske, Administrator ♦ May 28th, 2008

From the President

Hello COABC organic producers and licensees,

"Licensees" is an awkward word, but each of us certified organic by a Certification Body that belongs to COABC is "licensed" to use the British Columbia Certified Organic phrase and logo - the "checkmark". The Certification Bodies are the members of COABC.

The COABC board of directors is working to deal with the many issues that affect all organic producers in BC, and has begun to restructure from a hands-on working board to a policy board. We have been making progress, but all of the directors are now fully engaged in their organic production (or handling or processing), and time and energy for COABC board work is at a premium. I think we are all looking forward to November, when most of us will have more time to read and consider issues. Until then, we will carry on as best we can.

I encourage you to get engaged in COABC, or your own Certification Body, or in some other group working for high-quality food produced in a responsible, sustainable manner. You can learn a lot by looking around the COABC web site.

I also encourage you to engage with your CB's COABC director(s). If you have questions or concerns, please ask them, or let them know what you think.

*I wish you good weather and good fortune. Thanks for your involvement and caring.
Peter Johnston, COABC President*

What's New

- ✓ Do you want to get more involved with COABC? Being involved on a COABC committee is a great way! The list on page 2 & 3 includes those committees who are seeking more participants. If you are interested contact me, Karen Fenske, COABC Administrator at 250-260-4429 or admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca and I will pass your name along to the right contact.
- ✓ COABC has received \$225,000 from BCMAL to provide continued funding for the Organic Extension Agent for 2 more years and other related development of the organic sector in BC
- ✓ You will find a Canadian Organic Standards Update attached
- ✓ The Canada Organic Regime (COR) is being developed by the Government of Canada in partnership with the organic sector to regulate organic agricultural products produced and sold within the country. The Organic Products Regulations will define specific requirements for organic products to be labeled as organic that move across provincial and international borders or that will bear the Canada Organic Logo. The Regulations will come into force on December 14, 2008. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is accountable for the monitoring and enforcement of the Regulations. In BC all COABC accredited Certification Bodies are responsible for verifying the application of the National Standard for Organic Production Systems. Visit the following link on the COABC website for updates: <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/cor.htm>. Also check out the Organic Federation of Canada's website <http://www.organicfederation.ca/index.html>
- ✓ VO Training is happening as we speak at Kwantlen College in Langley
- ✓ The EFP (Environment Farm Plan) program will continue to be provided through COABC
- ✓ Bell Laboratories, the last remaining Technical Representative for Canada, confirms that as of Sept 30, 2008 Canadians will no longer be able to purchase any type of Qunitox (Vitamin D3) products, and as of Dec 31, 2008 it will be illegal to use any form of Qunitox in Canada/ by Rochelle Eisen, BC's Organic Extension Agent, April 29, 2008

In the Works

- Once we have received word that it is a good time to print the new National Standard (most of the amendments are done) we plan to print copies for COABC members. We hope that you can appreciate that it is not cost effective to print something now and then add amendments. In the mean time visit on-line links for the most recent versions:
http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/032_0310_2006-e.pdf
http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/032_0311_2006-e.pdf
- COABC expects to create standardized forms for CBs to use if they choose by Dec 14th, 2008.
- A database upgrade is in progress. This has been an ongoing project which is now at the point where CB Administrators enter their data and the COABC office imports and exports the set of data to the website. This means that if there are problems with the data please contact your CB Administrator directly.
- IFOAM will be holding their annual General Assembly meeting June 22-24, 2008 in Italy. Accreditation Director, Anne Macey, will be our representative at this event.
- The Organic Sector Strategic Plan project has started and we expect it to be complete by Nov 20, 2008. The Investment Agriculture Fund is funding the majority of this project which will result in strategic goals for the next 3-5 years. The previous plan was done in 2002 and it is time evaluate what has been accomplished and plan for the future.
- The **BC Organic Grower 2008-09** themes and submission schedule is below:

	Theme	Content Deadline	Distribution Date
Summer 2008	Harvest - Storage capacity - Mulching	June 2	1 st week July
Fall 2008	Seeds	Sept 2	1 st week Oct
Winter 2009	New Members & People	Dec 1	1 st week Jan
Spring 2009	New Techniques, New Technology	March 15 th	Mid-April

Keep In Mind

- Cyber-help is a great source for on-line information <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.html>



Do you need prizes for a company BBQ or team shirts for an event? Check the promotional items list in the Grower & on the website for prices. To order, complete the order and fax it to the COABC office.

The following COABC committees are seeking participants:

The **Capacity Development Committee** will research and participate in implementing options which will ensure the sustainability of COABC. Such as:

- Finding ways to increase the number of people who are producing organics which would result in an increased amount of organic product available for consumers i.e. through technological change and building infrastructure
- Defining ways to increase the number of people making their living as organic growers and producers
- Investigating the CVO program, Corporate Sponsorship Program, and government relations options

The **COABC Events Committee** will provide support to COABC events.*The 2009 Annual Organic Conference and AGM will run concurrent with the Pacific AG Show in Abbotsford in mid-Feb 2009 therefore the committee will need some **local people** to work with the Event Contractor and COABC Administrator.

The **Communications & PR Committee** will support COABC communication and PR activities.

The **Advocacy of Operators Committee** will review advocacy issues that are brought to their attention by licensees to determine, if and, how COABC will proceed.

The **Regional Standards Review Committee** will work to provide input into the National Standard.