



## **Have you discovered a person or company who is falsely marketing their products as organic in British Columbia? Here's what to do.**

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The term “organic” is a protected label in British Columbia. That means products marketed as organic in the province must be certified, either through a provincial or federal program. Uncertified operators whose products carry the organic label could face penalties including fines.

Consumers need to know the products they're purchasing are truly organic—that they've been grown or made according to BC's strict organic standards. BC's organic regulations are monitored and enforced on a complaint basis, so it's up to you to help us ensure the integrity of the organic label.

### **Examples of misuse of the organic label by an uncertified operator include:**

-  Using the word “organic” in marketing materials
-  Using the BCCO checkmark logo and/or the Canada Organic logo

### **Check the COABC website**

If you suspect a company is marketing their product(s) as organic without certification, first check the COABC directory. Use the search bar on the COABC homepage to view a list of certified bodies under the COABC umbrella: [certifiedorganic.bc.ca](https://certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

### **Contact AgriService BC**

If you don't find the company you are concerned about listed on the COABC website, get in touch with AgriService BC. You will be asked to provide your name and contact information, but your complaint is confidential and your personal details will not be released to the party in question. If you don't provide your details the enforcement officer won't be able to follow up with you if they have further questions, or let you know the outcome.

## What happens next?

The mandatory organic regulations are currently in a period of gradual enforcement, meaning the people and companies will be brought into compliance through education and warnings.

When an enforcement officer contacts the body in question, they will explain the regulations and the available options: stop using the organic label or begin the certification process within a reasonable timeframe. If the operator chooses neither option, they could face penalties including a \$350 fine.

Federally, use of the Canada Organic logo in contravention to the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations could be an offence under the Safe Food for Canadians Act.

## Contacts

### AgriService BC (complaints)

888 221-7141 • [AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca)

### BC Ministry of Agriculture (questions)

Karina Sakalauskas, P.Ag. - Industry Specialist, Emerging markets - Organics

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### COABC

Please let us know you've sent in a formal complaint so we can track it as well!

250 260-4429 • [info@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:info@certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

