

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**A Step Forward for Certified Organic
BC Ministry of Agriculture Commits to Clearing Up Organic Confusion**

Vernon, BC (September 21, 2015) – Big news for organic farmers, processors, and consumers alike this week as BC's provincial government solidifies their commitment to regulating the term organic with an intentions paper outlining the regulation and its scope.

This is an important step forward for the organic sector. COABC supports the introduction of mandatory organic certification, and would like to extend great thanks to BC's Ministry of Agriculture for recognizing the importance and value of this action. COABC is working with the ministry to support this move, and look forward to future developments that help the growth of the organic sector.

"I'm so grateful that the government has taken this step," says Carmen Wakeling, owner of Eatmore Sprouts and COABC Co-President. "As a producer that sells and distributes throughout Western Canada, I see a lot of value in identifying ourselves as British Columbian and certified organic, and I think there's a place for all producers, if they're interested in sustainability, to take up the cause."

Canada introduced a national certified organic label in 2009, but under the current system, any farm can use the word "organic" to describe their product within BC. "It's been really hard on consumers not knowing what's going on in the marketplace – what organic means, and what's certified organic. This will definitely reduce the murkiness in the waters around the word organic in British Columbia," Wakeling says. With the new regulations, BC consumers can be confident knowing that certified organic is a choice that's healthy for people and the planet.

COABC invites all producers to explore certification, and the wealth of support available to them in the certified organic community. COABC offers online toolkits to guide producers through the certification process. This Organic Week, farmers can learn about Certification 101 at a number of Organic Roadshow events also sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture throughout the province.

About COABC

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC) is an umbrella association representing organic certifying agencies in BC. The organization aims to provide consumer confidence in the organic product certification, assist producers to increase market share, and support regional development of organic food production, processing and marketing. COABC strives to ensure high quality organic products are produced in sufficient quantity and in a manner that nurtures healthy soil, biological diversity and ecological harmony.

For more information and updates, as well as Organic Certification Toolkits, please visit certifiedorganic.bc.ca and the Ministry's release at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015AGRI0061-001557>.

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