

*British Columbia*

# Organic Grower

*In this issue: The 2011 COABC Conference, Vancouver  
Island Bees, Organic Labeling & Notch Hill Organics*



**Journal for the Certified Organic Associations of BC - Winter 2011**  
*Volume 14, Issue 1*

  
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Susan Moore

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[www.CertifiedOrganic.bc.ca](http://www.CertifiedOrganic.bc.ca)

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**Next Issue Deadline:**  
**March 18, 2011**

# President's Letter By Brad Reid

I'm writing this as I look out on the new falling snow here in the Fraser Valley, drinking a cup of earl gray tea and contemplating the past year and what is in store for the COABC and the organic industry in BC. We have a great industry that is working in harmony with the earth to provide great food for the peoples that live here. Our numbers are growing and if we speak with one voice we will be heard.



During the last year, time has been spent working out how to operate in this new environment of no government funding and little government support for the organic industry. The BC Ministry of Agriculture has dropped all funding for Extension and audits. This puts BC far behind our colleagues in the USA and in other provinces where organics is seen as the growing sustainable agriculture sector that it is.

This new funding reality is exacerbated by the instability in our provincial government. The biggest loss has been in extension. Rochelle Eisen has provided excellent work for our industry over the past number of years and will be missed. We wish Rochelle all the best. Our Administrator Sarah Clark also moved on to a new opportunity. We wish Sarah great success in this new adventure. By the time you read this, we will have a new administrator working with us.

This is my last President's Letter, as my term is up and the Board will move on with new members and, I hope, fresh ideas to move the COABC and the industry forward in 2011. We have a great group on the Board of Directors, and over the past 3 years they have worked hard to make COABC operate in a professional and effective manner.

Thanks to all those people that I have worked with over the last few years and good luck to everyone in the new growing season. Remember organic food is all about a healthy environment, healthy animals, healthy people, and healthy economies.

See you all on Vancouver Island for the gathering. 

## Achieving success through involvement!

At the 2009 COABC Board Retreat the following committees were identified to help move the organization forward. Which one speaks to you? Where do your skills fit in?

**The Capacity Development Committee:** The Capacity Development Committee will be responsible for finding and securing funding sources to ensure the sustainability of COABC.

**The new BCCOP Campaign Committee:** The BCCOP Campaign Committee will primarily be responsible for implementing BCCOP branding strategies and acquiring the funding to support these specific initiatives.

**The Advocacy Committee:** The Advocacy Committee can be convened to deal with issues such as regulating the term Organic in BC. This would include preparations for meetings with Ministers and government officials.

Interested in helping out? Contact the COABC administrator at [admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca)



### Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processor) Program Education and Funding for Food Safety

British Columbia food and beverage processors are aware of the importance and economic advantages of implementing food safety systems in their operations. The FSSI (Processor) Program offers small businesses education and funding support to prepare and implement food safety plans. This program is managed by the Small Scale Food Processor Association.

**FOOD SAFETY WORKSHOPS** – Regional one-day workshops for all food processors. Learn basic HACCP theory and hands-on monitoring procedures.

**ON-SITE CONSULTATIONS** – FREE one-on-one consultations with a food safety consultant to help eligible businesses interpret food safety regulations and develop a BC HACCP plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS** – Financial assistance for eligible businesses that want to implement a food safety plan.

For more information on the program and workshops, visit

**[www.ssfpa.net/foodsafety](http://www.ssfpa.net/foodsafety)**

Program Information  
Toll free 1-866-473-7372  
fssi\_manager@ssfpa.net

Workshop registration  
Toll free 1-866-610-7372  
fssi\_outreach@ssfpa.net

# Administrator's Report by Karen Fenske

## *Report from the Interim Administrator*

In recent months COABC and the BC Organic sector had to come to a poignant and unfortunate reality that due to funding issues, the BC Organic Extension Agent position would not continue. We have greatly benefited from Rochelle Eisen's expertise and dedication for over 3 years. She was a significant part of our team and will be dearly missed.



Like blueberries, it takes time for things to grow. For years COABC has had loyal partners who have donated to COABC events such as the annual conference. In 2006 a seed was planted to develop a sponsorship program which would provide benefits to

donors and support a wide variety of COABC activities. In 2009, COABC launched a corporate sponsorship program which currently includes more than 8 organizations donating a total of almost \$20,000 for 2011 COABC activities.

We are grateful to those who have made commitments to work with us and look forward to forging new partnerships. Blueberries can take 3 to 5 years before you have a crop to speak of and up 8 years to be established. It appears we are on course.

If you think you are having a déjà vue moment by reading the Administrator's corner written by me, it is to be expected. COABC said goodbye to Sarah Clark when she moved on to a new opportunity in October 2010. I agreed to fill the role for a couple months while her replacement is found. Your new administrator will be on board shortly. Have a great winter and get ready to join us at the annual conference in Sidney, BC, March 4-6, 2011. 🌱



## "Tough to the Coir"

*By Rochelle Eisen and Rebecca Kneen*

The coir twine used in the hop garden is a really tough material. Even after a season of use in the field, it doesn't break down well in hot compost.

The classic hops twine is made from coir – coconut fibre. It is very strong and will stretch when wet but tighten again as it dries. If composted, it will biodegrade over a year, although it sometimes takes longer to fully degrade, and can make your compost pile hard to turn (think spaghetti!).

Left Fields Farm in Sorrento has used untreated sisal twine with good results as well. Sisal does have a tendency to snap as the vines bounce in the wind (especially if the twine is not very tight), and it will biodegrade readily – sometimes a bit too readily. However, it is cheap and readily available, and can be replaced or repaired throughout the season if need be.

Coir is rarely treated with prohibited fungicides (rot) or rodenticides (rats). Untreated sisal can be more challenging to find.

Hot compost will break down coir, but you have to be composting properly. A cool pile will simply not break down the string. It's very tough and scratchy, but it doesn't break the way sisal does. Left Fields do import bulk loads of coir from the USA, get in touch with them for information on ordering.

*Greenbyte by Rebecca Kneen and Rochelle Eisen, with excerpt from Small Scale & Organic Hops Production*

# Editor's Note

by Andrea Langlois

The coming year will be the third year that Moss Dance and I have been editing and designing the BC Organic Grower as a team. As Moss farms and works up near Courtenay, and I work and garden down here in Victoria, the BCOG gives us both a great way to keep in the loop as to all the amazing news coming from the fields, greenhouses, and barns.

I think that I can speak for both of us when I say that I am looking forward to this year's conference and AGM in Sidney, BC. While having the conference so near to my home soil will give me the opportunity to see some local faces, I am over the moon about this year's conference line up. It's rare that I get to meet some of the people who write for the BC Organic Grower, and this year's conference will feature many of those whose words or research has graced the pages of this publication. There's quite the spread about the conference from pages 8-12, so be sure to check it out.

Also in this issue are a few timely updates from the past year, from Lucy Sharratt's "GMO Roundup" to an informative piece about the bee keeper's reactions to the government's lifting of the bee import quarantine on Vancouver Island. If we learn anything from these articles it is surely that the public's energy is certainly needed to continue to lobby for policies that protect agriculture and organics.

I'm pleased to introduce a new writer to our pages – Marjorie Harris – with her "Footnotes from the Field," what we hope will be a new column. Marjorie is an organic inspector and has brought very important information to this issue about ergot mold contamination in winter rye.

This issue also brings another instalment of Spring Gillard's feature "Farmer Focus." Over the past year Spring has helped to put faces to the organic industry, telling your stories, and bringing some great



Andrea Langlois,  
editor



moss dance, layout

photographs from the fields. If you have any ideas on farmers who should be profiled, drop me a line at [editor@certifiedorganic.bc.ca](mailto:editor@certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

This issue is jam packed with lots of other goodies, including some valuable information about labelling, why people buy organic, and some new research from Denmark. Enjoy your read and, as always, we welcome your feedback. 🌱



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# Farmers' Advocacy Office Opens in Dawson Creek

## To offer support around gas, oil and land Issues

By Anne Clayton

The recently opened Farmers' Advocacy Office (FAO) in Dawson Creek, BC, is independently operated by Aspen Grove Property Services and New Harvest Media Inc. as an information and advocacy office. It is funded by the Peace River Regional District and the Province of British Columbia for an 18 month contract.

The concept arose as a result of land owners in this area requesting help in getting information that would help them know what their rights were in regards to oil and gas companies. MLA Blair Lekstrom has been a strong supporter of the idea, as well as the Peace River Regional District, and they have looked forward to this opening for over 10 years. The Alberta Farmers Advocate model was considered, but it was soon realized we did not need to cover as great a scope as Alberta did, so after advertising for proposals from interested parties, the contract was awarded to the above-mentioned operators.

The FAO is here to provide a service to rural land owners with the goal of making information accessible in order to empower farmers in their negotiations with oil and gas companies. We also encourage them to share their information with other land owners so everyone benefits, which they can do by allowing us to include information in an accessible online database. By providing an effective and independent information gateway, we hope to link land owners to existing organizations with mandates relating to rural land ownership, mapping sites, legislation, case law, and most importantly we will provide an interactive map with recent sales, lease and right of way settlements. This website is currently under construction by New Harvest Media and will be functional by the end of November.

We also offer access to a meeting room, a computer for research, and we offer information through a toll-free number, which includes referral contacts. Two advisors and a research assistant are available to assist land owners in resolving problems, with an emphasis on facilitation and negotiation.

With the availability of information, both in person and through the Farmers' Advocacy Office website, our



### Farmers' Advocacy Office

1032 - 103 Ave, Dawson Creek, BC  
V1G 2G5

Phone: 250-782-1088

Toll-free: 1-877-503-2765

Fax: 250-782-1090

Email: [info@farmersadvocate.ca](mailto:info@farmersadvocate.ca)

Web site: [www.farmersadvocate.ca](http://www.farmersadvocate.ca)

hope is for a greater degree of equity and fairness in the negotiation process. Other goals of the Farmers' Advocacy Office are that the number of referrals to the Surface Rights Board will be reduced and that the relationship between rural residents and the oil and gas industry may be improved. 

*Anne Clayton, FAO Advisor, and Monica Russell, FAO Administrator and Research Assistant, co-wrote this article in an effort to present an overall picture of the opportunities available to landowners dealing with oil and gas companies.*

# My First 90 Days (not 100) on the SIC



By Rochelle Eisen

Late this summer the Organic Federation of Canada approached me and asked if I would fill a short term vacancy on the Standards Interpretation Committee until the end of this year. OFC felt comfortable in approaching me as I was on the initial 2009 short list for this newly formed, cross-country seven person committee. Sadly, in 2009 I didn't make the final cut due to an *earth-shattering-tie-breaking* decision.

What is the SIC? It is an advisory body responsible for generating interpretations of the Canada Organic Standards in response to questions submitted to the Canada Organic Office. Once draft responses are formalized, they are broadly circulated for a 60-day comment period before the final version becomes entrenched as official interpretation and posted on the Canada Organic Office webpages ([www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/comqueste.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/comqueste.shtml)).

So far, I am finding that the SIC work creates a steady flow of thoughtful discussion in response to provocative topics and varying perspectives. Currently working without funds (hopefully this will be rectified shortly), members are generous to a fault with their time. It is tough work especially when a standard is truly unclear, ambiguous or the subject area is contentious. There have been a few times where the SIC has decided to send the issue back to the Canadian General Standards



## What is the SIC?

SIC stands for the Standards Interpretation Committee. It is an advisory body responsible for generating interpretations of the Canada Organic Standards in response to questions submitted to the Canada Organic Office.

Board Technical Committee for their consideration as the question is not one of easy interpretation.

Who knows if I will be re-elected, but the first 90 days so far have been professionally gratifying. 🌱

*Rochelle Eisen has been engaged in the BC organic sector since 1989 in various capacities such as verification officer and certification committee member. At the federal level she is active on the CGSB technical committee & various working groups, a member of the Standards Interpretation Committee and a few of the Organic Value Chain Working Groups. She was BC's Organic Extension Agent for 3 years between 2007 and 2010, helping the BC organic community grow and mature.*

## Discovery Organics



In business since 1999, Discovery Organics is an independently owned Canadian distributor of certified organic produce. We serve hundreds of customers, including rural buying groups, natural foods retailers, and wholesalers across Western Canada.



[www.discoveryorganics.ca](http://www.discoveryorganics.ca) T:604.299.1683 F:604.299.1673

# THE NEXT GENERATION

UBC Sowing Seeds Apprentices by Sarah Belanger

## How do we ensure that there is a next generation of organic farming in BC?

Land tenure, apprenticeship programs, soil health, financial resources, marketing, energy innovations, succession planning – these and other timely, critical topics will be explored at this year’s conference. Highlights will include:

- VO/CB/CC/CVB trainings on Friday
- Friday evening reception, hosted by IOPA
- Keynote Speaker on Saturday morning David Berge, Senior VP of Community Investment, VanCity Credit Union
- Invited guests: Ben Stewart, BC Minister of Agriculture; Alex Atamaneko, MP; and Lana Popham, MLA
- Trade Show and Poster Presentations: a marketplace of products and ideas to challenge your imagination
- Practical and interactive workshops 8:15 AM-5PM Saturday; Sunday 9AM-10:30
- AGM:10:45 AM Sunday
- Saturday evening’s banquet: delicious organic food, convivial beverage and down home music by Victoria’s JUGBANDITS. Dinner speaker Dag Falck will address the question: “Are natural claims riding the organic wave for free?”

### Don’t forget about the silent auction!

The creative wealth of our community is reflected in the range of items to be auctioned: clothing, books, art, food, wine, tools, SEEDS – endless possibilities. If you would like to donate an auction item, just bring it with you. Auction items will be on display from 6PM Friday evening until bidding closes at 9pm on Saturday.

### General Info

The Mary Winspear Centre (2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney, BC) at Sanscha is conveniently located five minutes from the Victoria International Airport and the BC Ferry Terminal at Swartz Bay, Vancouver Island. If you need other ground transportation arrangements, contact the conference office and we’ll gladly assist you. For more information on this venue visit our website.

### Accommodation

The Victoria Airport Travelodge is holding rooms at a rate of \$99.00/day (double occupancy) plus tax, held until Feb 26. When you’re booking, ask for the COABC rate. Other accommodations close to the Centre are listed on the COABC website.

# COABC Conference & AGM March 4-6, 2011, Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney, BC

## Special Needs

If you have dietary, child care or other requirements, please contact the conference office.

## Trade Show

Trade shows are a great way to showcase your products. We welcome suppliers of approved inputs, seeds, appropriate technology, marketing tools, resource materials and more! Producers, distributors, retailers, processors – **book your Trade Show tables through the Conference office.**

## Poster Sessions

We are pleased to offer free space for poster presentations related to organic production. Contact the conference office to book.

The conference workshop program (with speaker biographies and pictures); trade show and sponsorship packages; and registration form, are posted on COABC's website: [www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

## CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Conference Coordinator: Lee Fuge [leefuge@pacificcoast.net](mailto:leefuge@pacificcoast.net) Phone: 250-385-7974 Cell 250-686-2395

Conference Office: 723 Selkirk Avenue, Victoria, B.C., V9A 2T4

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# THE NEXT GENERATION

## Presentations & Workshops

*Practical and interactive workshops at the COABC conference starting Friday, March 4 until Sunday, March 6.*

For up-to-date information, please see our online schedule at: [www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

**An Information / Training Session with the Canada Organic Office (COO)** (Fri, Mar 4, 9am-12): An opportunity for CFIA Accredited Certification Bodies, VO's, along with CVB board members to hear from COO representatives on various issues related to the Organic Products Regulations and the Canada Organic Regime.

**VO/CB/CC Professional Development with your CVB(AB)**, presented by Anne Macey & Rochelle Eisen. (Fri, Mar 4, 12-6pm). This formalized training will cover feed audits, trace back audits, mass balancing (in/out audits) & expected yields (especially for intensive multi-cropping operations), compliant labelling and more. COABC certificates of attendance will be issued.

**Canada's Organic Sector Brand Strategy**, presented by Gunta Vitins. The Organic Value Chain Roundtable has developed a brand strategy to differentiate the Canadian Organic Sector from competitors. Gunta, Chair of the Market Development Work Group, will present the brand strategy and solicit further input from the BC organic community to ensure that its needs are met.

**JA from Inulin to Feed - New Value Chain Opportunity**, presented by

Larry Whetstone. Inulin, a soluble fibre, is being added to pet food, animal feeds, as well human food allowing high fibre and improved gut microflora claims to be made. Jerusalem Artichoke is an ideal source of inulin & biomass. Larry Whetstone will speak on the opportunities provided to farmers by growing this crop.

**Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Down on the Farm**, presented by Guy Dauncey. Many farms are very dependent on diesel, and have large energy bills. With peak oil fast approaching, this is a worrying situation. Can farms become more sustainable by being more energy efficient, and generating their own renewable energy? Can they benefit from carbon farming?

**Soil Ecology and Alternative Mulches for Blueberry**, presented by Tom Forge. Actively researching the influences of alternative mulches on soil ecology, nutrient dynamics and productivity of blueberry. Tom will talk about the basics of biological interactions in the root zone of blueberry and present results from the research conducted with Wayne Temple & Art Bomke.

**Innovative Cover Cropping and Conservation Tillage Systems**, presented by John Luna. John will explore farm management practices that maximize on-farm nitrogen production and improve soil organic matter. Zone tillage and other beneficial minimum tillage systems will be described. Ecological principles will be discussed to provide rational for management decisions.

**Developing and Maintaining a Farm: Legal Considerations**, presented by Wanda Gorsuch & Robert Thompson & BC Assessment representatives. This session will explore a range of legal and regulatory fac-

tors developing and established farms need to know, including local bylaws, provincial regulation & legislation, farm classification & land use agreements.

**Growing Up Organic: The Successes, Blunders and Surprises on Salt Spring Island**, presented by Pat Reichert. COG funding gave this community the opportunity to develop a system for selling local farm food to commercial buyers. Pat will cover the challenges, from not enough farm produce, to competing with the gigantic semi-trailer trucks, price squeezing etc.

**UBC research: Grains in Eco-Friendly Crop Rotations**, presented by Art Bomke & Wayne Temple. An update on UBC's work assessing spring seeded and overwintering wheat, barley and naked oat varieties for use in organic or low input conventional farming systems appropriate for the GVRD. Yield, quality, disease resistance, lodging resistance and break crop value data will be presented.

**Passing On Market Garden Secrets**, presented by Hermann Bruns. This session will explore four areas of interest: the secrets to sing – unheated high tunnels to add weeks of quality production; weeding for profit – the right technique at the right time; two pest success stories – carrot rust fly and cabbage root maggot; and, successful post-harvest setups – efficient washing and packaging.

**Cooperating for Profit**, presented by Heather Stretch. In this session we will look at the structure of Saanich Organics, and how and why it works. She will discuss both the pragmatic, day-to-day details of cooperative growing and marketing, and also the big picture challenges and benefits of working together.

**The Value Chain Puzzle - Finding the Missing Pieces**, presented by Dag Falck & Jason Boyce. Consumers are demanding a wide variety of organic products and want to support local farmers with their purchasing dollars. Dag and Jason will discuss the challenge and opportunities that exist for farmers to provide products to companies like Nature's Path Foods.

**The 30-20 Conservation Gardening System**, presented by John Luna. This session will describe an innovative system of managing winter annual cover crops with a zone tillage system for home gardens and low-mechanized, small-scale farms. This system minimizes tillage, while maximizing cover crop contributions to soil quality and crop nutrition.

**Innovations in Wire Worm Management**, presented by Todd Kabaluk. Todd will explain the difficulties of wireworm control and summarize current and past research aimed at providing their non-chemical management. These concepts will help growers investigate their own ideas for wireworm management. He will also introduce a new organic agriculture research journal.

**On the Shelf**, presented by Howard Joynt. An interactive conversation about estate preparation. The talk will cover listing the assets and liabilities of the farm, the family situation, some aspects of taxation and conclude with how to start and carry on with your estate plan with consideration to the various stages of the farm life cycle and what needs to be done at each stage.

**Bees Needs**, presented by Ted Leischner. Wild bees have been identified as an insurance policy for the loss of honey bees but with flowers blooming earlier and coming out phase with the emerge of native bee pollinators further trials lay ahead. Ted will discuss future bees needs and the critical role of organic gardeners and farmers to save natural crop pollination.



*Saanich Organics partners, employees and friends.*

**Community Farms, Land leasing and other Ownership Models**, presented by Jen Cody, Nichola Walkden & Heather Pritchard. Farm Folk City Folk, the Land Conservancy of BC and Providence Farm will co-present their experiences of community farms and promoting access to available farmland through leases and other agreements.

**Creating A Successful Farm Apprenticeship Program**, presented by Mary Alice Johnson. Are you considering hiring a farm apprentice? Mary Alice discusses the factors that should influence this important decision then guides you through the process. Topics covered include: Do I really need or want to have apprentices?, What are my obligations?, What can I reasonably expect of an apprentice? and What makes a good learning environment?

**Livestock from Field to Plate**, presented by Sheila and Ron Hamilton. Ron and Sheila of Sunworks Farm near Armena, Alberta will speaking on the aspects of being a viable farm business using diversification, the economy of scale in livestock production, marketing by meeting the consumer's needs and doing all of this while still following core values.

**Are Natural Claims riding the Organic Wave for Free?**, presented by Dag Falck. Natural label claims are now growing faster than the organic label. Organic and Natural foods marketing grew up together and no doubt this supported the growth of both in the early days. Is this symbiotic relationship still benefiting both? And how can we best safeguard the hard work gone into building organic production to where it is today?

**Slow Money**, presented by Ari Derfele. Slow Money is a response to money that is too fast, companies that are too big, and finance that is too complex. Ari Derfel will show us how Slow Money strives to connect social values to the way money is spent and invested. And building healthy, robust local food systems is that first necessary step towards building a restorative economy.

**Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standards?** presented by Ted Zettel

**Where Innovation and Impact meet** presented by David Berge from Van-city. A financial co-operative's perspectives on finance, food and farming.

**Who's Who in the COR/COS/OFC/SIC/CGSB/OTA/COG Continuum, Where Are We, and Next Steps** presented by Ted Zettel.

# THE NEXT GENERATION

## Register Now!

### THE NEXT GENERATION

**BC Organic Conference & AGM**  
 Mary Winspear Centre at Sancha, Sidney, BC  
 March 4 – 6, 2011

#### REGISTRATION FORM

On-line registration <http://www.karelo.com/coabc>

Early Registration Deadline: February 18, 2011.

Late registration is subject to \$25 additional fee.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov.: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please choose from these options:**

|                          |   |  |                 |
|--------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Full Conference:</b>   | Includes Pass to Friday night reception, Saturday and Sunday COABC workshops, tradeshow and Saturday Night Organic Feast, entertainment and Silent Auction                           | <b>\$175</b>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Saturday Conference &amp; Feast:</b>                                       | Includes pass to the Saturday COABC workshops, tradeshow and Saturday Night Organic Feast, entertainment and Silent Auction  | <b>\$125</b>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>An Information / Training Session with the Canada Organic Office (COO)</b> | An opportunity for CFIA Accredited Certification Bodies, VOs, CVB board members to hear from COO representatives on various issues related to the OPR and the Canada Organic Regime. | <b>No fee</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>VO/CB/CC professional development with your CVB(AB):</b>                   | Special session with Ann Macey and Rochelle Eisen from 1-6 Friday. Lunch at 12:00 included. Informal discussions will begin during the lunch hour.                                   | <b>\$ 45</b>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>COABC AGM</b>  | Sunday 10:45am   | <b>No fee</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Late Fee</b>   | Registration postmarked after February 18 <sup>th</sup>  | <b>\$ 25</b>    |
|                          | <b>TOTAL</b>  |  | <b>\$ _____</b> |

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to volunteer to assist during the conference.

I have the following dietary requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

The item I can donate to the auction is (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

The food I can donate for the meals is (describe): \_\_\_\_\_



**Please make your cheque payable to COABC and mail it and this form to:**  
**COABC Conference Office, 723 Selkirk Ave, Victoria, BC, V9A 2T4**

Conference Coordinator: Lee Fuge, email: [leefuge@pacificcoast.net](mailto:leefuge@pacificcoast.net)

*Cancellation Policy: The COABC will refund registration fees less a 25% service fee only until February 18th. Cancellation requests must be made in writing to the Conference Coordinator to the address noted above. Refunds will not be provided after February 18th and refund payments will be prepared after the conference.*

# Steaming is great for carrots

Steam-treated soil yields healthier carrots



*Press Release, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University, Denmark*

**L**ess hassle, expenditure and labour input to control weeds and other nuisances in organic carrots may sound like a dream for the organic farmer. But that is what scientists at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences at Aarhus University are in the process of developing.

The method consists of heating a small strip of soil using steam. The heat kills weed seeds and shoots, nematodes and harmful microorganisms – which benefits high-value vegetable crops such as carrots, onions and leeks.

“Compared with untreated soil you can reduce the weed pressure by 90 per cent if you steam the soil first,” says the leader of the project, senior scientist Bo Melander from the Department of Integrated Pest Management at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences.

The method of steaming the soil – where the soil is heated to around 80°C – is in itself nothing new. It has been used for several years, but mainly to steam large areas. This is the so-called mobile soil steaming process that sterilises the soil down to 15 cm depth. But this method is not permitted in organic farming [in some jurisdictions].

“Sterile soil is not particularly ecological. The steaming certainly removes the weed seeds, but it also removes the organisms you would

like to encourage,” explains Bo Melander. This is why in organic vegetable growing the steam is applied in strips only to spare as many beneficial soil organisms as possible. The strip corresponds to the area where the crop plants are growing which otherwise would require substantial manual weeding.

“The manual bit takes an awfully long time – for example more than 500 hours per hectare in leeks. It is costly and takes up manpower in a period that is very busy anyway, and so keeps the farm workers from doing other valuable tasks on the farm,” says Bo Melander.

## Steaming for organic farmers

Scientists are therefore busy developing a steaming process that can be used in organic vegetable farming. Initially, scientists have studied the effect of restricting soil steaming to the small strip where the crop is later sown. This has already led to considerable savings in energy consumption compared to sheet steaming.

When the ground is sheet steamed it is sterilised to a depth of 15 cm throughout the field. This uses a whopping 4000 litres of oil per hectare. With steaming in strips the soil is sterilised to a depth of 5-8 cm and to a width of 12-13 cm. This uses only 500-600 litres of oil.

Machines for strip steaming have been developed and are used by a

handful of Danish and Norwegian vegetable producers, but they are both expensive and slow. Scientists are therefore trying to improve the technique. They have, for example, supported the development of a machine that manages 0.2 ha in an hour and as it has an in-built GPS it needs no driver input until it has to turn. The farmer normally has to check the machine every other hour – depending on the length of the rows – in order to turn it, and to refill with water and fuel. The machine can do nine rows at a time and the GPS works to a precision of 1-2 cm.

## Life returned to the soil

The improved technique will also return some life to the sterile soil – but the right kind of life. In place of the troublesome weed seeds and nematodes that are removed in the steaming process, the sterile soil is supplied with beneficial organisms subsequent to steaming and sowing. This is done to re-establish the microbiological environment and to prevent the invasion of pathogens.

The soil supplement consists of bacteria, various beneficial fungi and pea flour. Pea flour has a high content of nitrogen, which is nectar to microorganisms. The beneficial fungi have a symbiotic relationship with plant roots and improve the plant uptake of phosphorus.

This part of the practical investigation takes place at two carrot producers.

The project receives financial support by the Innovation Law under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries in Denmark. 

*For more information, visit the Aarhus University Faculty of Agricultural Sciences website at: [http://agrsi.au.dk/en/nyheder/artikel/steam\\_treated\\_soil\\_gives\\_healthier\\_carrots/](http://agrsi.au.dk/en/nyheder/artikel/steam_treated_soil_gives_healthier_carrots/)*



## *Vancouver Island Beekeepers Respond to the Lifting of the Bee Import Quarantine*

*By Greg Horne*

**B**eekeepers on Vancouver Island are still buzzing mad about the May 1, 2010, lifting of the quarantine prohibiting the importation of bees to the Island from the lower mainland. The quarantine had protected Vancouver Island bees from mainland diseases for over 20 years.

According to their website, the BC government claims that the policy was removed in order to equalize “honeybee import standards for Vancouver Island with the rest of BC” and that Vancouver Island was seen to have the same diseases in honeybee populations as the mainland does, making the ban legally indefensible. They further assert that an influx of new genes from the mainland will strengthen the Vancouver Island’s honeybee population.

But Bob Liptrot, of Tugwell Creek Honey Farm and Meadery in Sooke, speaking at a September 23 Legislature rally in favour of

the quarantine, says this is untrue. “We do not have a number of key diseases – resistant European Foulbrood, resistant American foulbrood, small hive beetle, greater wax moth, or Africanized honey bees – that are on the mainland,” he says.

The estimated 1200 bee keepers on Vancouver Island have not found any traces of these diseases.

Last winter, 90% of bees on Southern Vancouver Island were lost. The causes are not completely known, but likely include the parasitic Varroa mite, as well as atypical weather.

The policy change came after legal pressure on the government from a prominent commercial beekeeper. In a letter released on May 10, the Ministry of Agriculture stated, “Several Vancouver Island beekeepers experienced significant colony losses and approached the Ministry with a request to restock their hives with bees from the mainland.”

Dan del Villano, former Capital Region Beekeepers Secretary, says, “One company complained. It’s really about economics. It’s cheaper to replace your bees by shipping them from the mainland than it is to build up your stock locally, or by importing them from areas which do not have the diseases that we don’t have – such as Chile, Hawaii, New Zealand – which [were] approved under the quarantine.”

The issue has led to much debate within the beekeeping community. Mark Pitcher, owner of Babe’s Honey Farm, is among a very small minority of beekeepers that do not support the quarantine. He writes in an online blog post, “The quarantine is not working because people have smuggled bees onto Vancouver Island in the past 22 years.” He is referring to a case when bees were brought over in 1997, resulting in a Varroa mite outbreak on the island.

John Dafeyette, a Victoria Beekeeper, notes, “What [Pitcher] is

**“It really blindsided the beekeepers. Policy was changed without consultation from the majority of beekeepers.”**

**Lana Popham, MLA, Saanich South, and Provincial Agriculture Critic.**

essentially talking about is breaking the law [by smuggling bees over].”

Pitcher also asks, “Where are the DNA tests to prove that the bees imported over the last 22 years from foreign countries are not the cause of the recent collapse on Vancouver Island?”

Dan del Villano recognizes this possibility too, but points out, “If we do have some new pathogen, wouldn’t this be a reason to keep the quarantine to protect from spreading it to the mainland?” He adds, “At the very least, it should warrant an investigation by the Ministry responsible for bee health, but there has been none and instead the doors thrown open.”

Evidence of any new diseases has not been found.

The policy change was announced to the BC Honey Producer’s association during a conference call with Provincial Apiculturist Paul van Westendorp, on April 22. “It really blindsided the beekeepers,” says South Saanich MLA and Provincial Agriculture Critic Lana Popham. “Policy was changed without consultation from the majority of beekeepers.”

Much of the debate focuses on the issue of whether bees are imported on their comb or in packages. “The real danger of bringing in disease is on used equipment – comb, hives. Packages of bees [essentially a wooden box full of only bees] are much safer and easier to inspect because they don’t hide disease like used equipment does,” says del Villano. “If we have to import, we should at least do it in packages.”

Although Pitcher states that “some [keepers] would like the ability to import under proper inspection protocols,” many island keepers do not believe current inspection standards are stringent enough to catch diseases. Currently, 25 colonies or 5% of the total shipment must be inspected with a visual search.

“This is not good enough,” says del Villano. “It’s proven by the fact that diseases are widespread in all [mainland] areas that haven’t had quarantines, but have had inspections.”

“We would like to see the quarantine back in place exactly as it was,” says del Villano. “We know it works. A quick calculation shows we may have saved \$500,000 a year – in bees and treatments – by delaying the arrival of the Varroa mite years beyond its arrival on the mainland.”

He adds, “And then there’s the unquantifiable [ecological] cost of increased chemical use. It’s just not smart policy. Once we’ve all got the same diseases, and they’re being trucking around, if we crash, we all crash at the same time.”

“At the very least,” says Popham, in a call for action, “Get to your computer, email the minister of Agriculture, and demand consultation for Island beekeepers.” 🌱

*Greg Horne grew up in small town Alberta and on a family farm in Saskatchewan. He is an aspiring film-maker and mural painter, holds a BSc in Biology and Psychology from the University of Victoria, and lives in Victoria.*



**For more information, see the short documentary *Stung: Vancouver Island Honey Bees at Risk*, produced by Greg Horne. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjnE9q3s0xk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjnE9q3s0xk)**

**The Ministry of Agriculture and Land’s news release can be read at: [www.al.gov.bc.ca/apiculture/forms/importcond.pdf](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/apiculture/forms/importcond.pdf)**

## Notch Hill Organics



Credit: Susan Moore



Purple Dragon carrot seed heads Credit: Susan Moore

**“It was getting harder for me to lug around a fifty pound tote of potatoes or squash. Seeds aren’t that heavy!”**

**Susan Moore**

*By Spring Gillard*

Susan Moore told me she is an “above average” farmer. “Meaning I’m older than the average age of farmer,” she said laughing. I laughed too, but the aging farming population is a growing concern. The average age of farmers in BC is fifty-eight now.

“I look at the farms around me and there’s a guy who’s just turned sixty-five. At the next nearest, the couple is in their late sixties or seventies. The youngest nearby farmer is forty-five. We’re all getting on,” she said.

Getting young people interested in farming is a challenge, but even for those who are keen, it is getting harder and harder for them to access land and get the training they need. But this experienced farmer has been sharing her wisdom and her land with young farmers for more than a quarter century.

Susan farmed in Mission, BC, for twelve years before moving to Sorrento, a small rural community between Kamloops and Salmon Arm. With the help of her son and daughter-in-law, she grows a line of vegetables – onions, turnips, parsnips, carrots, beets, squash – some medicinal plants, and flowers on about fifteen acres of the 126-acre farm she now calls home.

She sells the produce at the local Sorrento Farmers Market, to Urban Harvest, an Okanagan produce delivery service, and to Biovia, a Vancouver-based

organic wholesale distributor that caters to restaurants. Notch Hill is certified by North Okanagan Organic Association (NOOA) – they're one of only three produce vendors at the Sorrento market and all of them are certified organic.

So what does she do with the rest of the land? She grows some hay, raises a few head of cattle, and cultivates all her own starts and bedding plants in on-site greenhouses.

"We have far more land than we can use," she says. But that's also where the mentoring comes in. She has hosted WWOOFers (willing workers on organic farms) and other apprentices over the years.

"Lisa and David [of Urban Harvest] wwoofed with us one year," she said. Rebecca Kneen interned there too. Rebecca and her partner now run Crannóg Ales, a certified organic farmhouse and microbrewery in the area. One year, a young fellow named Patrick Steiner leased some land from her to grow seed. Steiner, who has just relocated to the Kootenays, now runs the successful Stellar Seeds that operated out of Sorrento for many years. The relationship launched a nice sideline for Susan too.

"It was getting harder for me to lug around a fifty pound tote of potatoes or squash," said Susan. "Seeds aren't that heavy!"

So now she also harvests seed from her vegetable crops. She selects the best of the best for her seed, continuously improving the strains for size, shape and speed of growth. Notch Hill Organics is in the middle of dairy country with very few vegetable farms around, so cross-pollination is not an issue, an ideal scenario for seed growers. All of the seed is sold to Stellar Seeds.

"Selling seed gives me income at a time of year when I wouldn't normally have any," she says. She also feels strongly that farmers should know how to save some of their own seeds.

"The seed industry has become scary," she says. "Monsanto is buying up all the seed companies. If I want to buy gypsy pepper seed now, I have to buy from a company that is owned by them." Monsanto is a biotech



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company known for genetically modifying seeds to make them compatible with their own fertilizers and pesticides. They have sued farmers for growing their patented seed without purchasing it. Monsanto's most famous court case involved Round-up Ready Canola Seed which Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser spent years battling.

Many farmers feel the need to take back control of the seed supply and have started banking some of the rare and heritage varieties. Dan Jason, a seed supplier on Salt Spring Island maintains a Seed and Plant Sanctuary. He has also written an excellent book detailing how to save your own seed, called *Saving Seeds As If Our Lives Depended on It*.

The Shuswap Seedsavers maintain an open-access, public seed bank in Enderby. The group also hosts a "Seedy Saturday" where local gardeners and farmers exchange seeds. (Seedy events take place throughout North America and Europe now, usually in February and March.)

Sowing seeds for the next generation of farmers is clearly very important to Susan. "We want to leave the farm in good hands, we want to protect it," she tells me. Over the next five years, they plan to turn the farm into a co-operative. In the meantime, they're also looking for apprentices for the 2011 season, which runs from May to late October. They invite inquiries for both opportunities.

For information on the Shuswap Seedsavers and the Enderby Seed Bank, contact: June Griswold, griswold@sunwave.net 

*Spring Gillard is a communications consultant, sustainability instructor and author of Diary of a Compost Hotline Operator. www.compostdiary.com*



Credit: Susan Moore

## Contact Notch Hill Organics

Phone: 250 835-8332

Email: sudoafarm@gmail.com

Website: [www.urbanharvest.ca/suppliers/notch/](http://www.urbanharvest.ca/suppliers/notch/)

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# 101 Personal Reasons for Buying Organic

By Sarah Clark

“I buy organic blueberries but conventional bananas!”

“Why,” I asked.

“Because blueberries absorb chemical sprays whereas bananas are protected by the skin which you peel away.”

This was just the start of many conversations I had at the recent Okanagan Organic Festival where I set out to ask 101 people the question: “Why do you choose organic food?”

Asking the question “Why?” offers the opportunity to learn, and as an advocate for organic food it’s important to understand the reason for people’s food choices. Some could call it nosy; I call it curiosity, for I have learnt that we all have a different perspective on life.

The goal was not to find 101 different reasons but to uncover the personal value or connection respondents have to organic food. At first, what seems like a simple question gave many visitors cause to stand back and think for a moment. Like many of our daily choices, the reason why is not always clear. In multiple instances I had to rephrase

the questions to: “If at some point in your life you ate conventional food and now you eat organic, what made you change your mind?”

Not surprisingly, personal health was the predominant reason given by 50% of respondents. With reasons ranging from the general “good for you,” to very specific “supporting the restoration of natural cell growth” and “deep thinking after cancer.” Health is also a very common reason given in media reports for choosing organic food. I suspect that media exposure contributes to this high response.

Closely related to personal health was the health of those very dear to us – our children and grandchildren. “Small livers” summed it up for one mother, who spoke of concern about the ability of small children to process toxins and chemicals they ingest. Another respondent inherited mother’s concern – she was “raised that way.”

Although organic operators are clearly aware of the environmental and long term sustainability of organic food production these motives accounted for only 20% of answers. Soil health “no chemical damage to the soils” and “keeping

chemicals out of soil and water” were the more specific replies. “Biodiversity” was also cited. In this group of respondents there was an understanding of the bigger picture and the interactions between health, production methods and environmental impacts, in contrast to the banana versus blueberry conversation where this was not always clear.

Following environmental and sustainable responses, social and community reasons were in at 14% from values based on “how god intended it to be” to “support the local community.”

Whether there is documented support or evidence for any of the reasons was not the point of this survey. The goal was to tap into the values and beliefs of those asked. What motivates people to make this choice? With the results of this informal survey perhaps we can encourage others to choose organic food. However before you ask the question of others, ask yourself. What’s your reason? 

*Sarah Clark is a strong supporter of organic agriculture and represented the Organic Farming Institute of BC ([www.ofibc.org](http://www.ofibc.org)) and the COABC at the Okanagan Organic Festival.*



# "Why do you choose organic?"



55. *Spiritual connection*
56. *Healthy, body and mind connection*
57. *Marketing*
58. *Tastes better, less chemicals*
59. *Taste*
60. *Longevity*
61. *Cleansing the body*
62. *Sustainability*
63. *Healing from the inside out*
64. *Lifestyle*
65. *Deep thinking after cancer*
66. *You know what you are eating*
67. *It's my choice*
68. *I don't like chemicals*
69. *Better for personal nutrition and the environment*
70. *You feel better*
71. *It's good for you*
72. *Biodiversity*
73. *Healthy planet / healthy kids*
74. *Organic - looks real*
75. *Keeping the soil clean*
76. *Seeing what working on non-organic farm could do to me makes me want organic*
77. *Free of chemicals*
78. *No pesticides*
79. *Convenient*
80. *Why not!*
81. *Keep chemicals out of soil and water*
82. *Living in Nelson, BC*
83. *Because it just makes sense*
84. *Healthier, and makes you feel good and different*
85. *Easier on my liver*
86. *Small livers (children)*
87. *Because my grandchildren will thank me for it*
88. *Healthier for you*
89. *Tired of irradiated processing*
90. *To live a long and happy life*
91. *Sustainability*
92. *Health*
93. *Healthier and tastier food*
94. *Food infused with love and gratitude*
95. *Less toxicity*
96. *Because we have the choice*
97. *Way healthier*
98. *Keeps everything in balance*
99. *Prevents chronic disease*
100. *It's how God intended it to be*
101. *Health - tastes Better*

# “Organic” Labeling

*Tips for producers & processors*

By Sarah Davidson

Even with the new Organic Products Regulation in Canada it can be difficult for consumers to know if a product is actually organic. Certified operators can help consumers by thinking about it from a consumer’s perspective and doing their best in terms of labeling.

## How does a consumer know if the product is organic?

A reasonable answer is that the product has the BC checkmark, the Canada Organic logo, or the USDA organic logo – and bottom line – the name (or acronym) of a certifier. All products with British Columbia Organic checkmark or phrase “British Columbia Certified Organic” and the Canada Organic logo are produced and certified as being in compliance with Canadian Organic Standards.

For fruit with PLU stickers the PLU number should begin with a 9 – at least that way the consumer knows that the producer or packing house is claiming that the product is organic – not just the store. But when a consumer sees fresh product without a PLU sticker or any label the only option is to ask questions – if the store itself is certified, consumers can generally rely more on their signage.

It becomes even more difficult for a consumer when a store re-packs in the store or sells bulk, unpackaged products – such as dried beans or grain, coffee, or even apples or vegetables that are unlabelled in bulk bins. Retailers don’t have to be

certified to do that, though some choose to be. There may be no certification information on the bins or on the re-packed packages. All consumers can do is ask questions and see if the answers make sense. One of the problems with bulk display is that it is easy for mistakes to be made. Avoiding mistakes means all the staff has to be well trained and paying attention.

The fact that retailers do not have to be certified can be frustrating. A few retailers have chosen to become certified. A consumer could feel more confident at those stores and the stores, surely, should be rewarded for the extra work and attention to detail that is required.

For processed products, the ingredient panel should indicate which ingredients are organic and which are not, as is required both by the Organic Product Regulations and the COABC Book 2 – the Organic Management Standards for the BC Certified Organic Program. Reading the ingredient panel is an eye opener even if the product is organic. And if no certifier is listed on the label it is very possible to find some weird things on the ingredient list because the product is not certified as organic and doesn’t follow all the rules.

So, once again, this is why it is a good idea for all certified operators to use a recognizable logo on your packaging, but don’t forget that your Certification Body has to approve the use of the logo on the label. The Certification Body is just looking for compliance with organic regulations on the label, not all the other legal requirements for labels.

Sometimes it is frustrating that

the certified primary producer and processor are under such intense scrutiny by the Certification Body and that stores are not. I think most chain stores are probably buying certified products (too much of the time from outside Canada), but all bets are off in smaller outlets, especially for bulk or re-packed products.

## Certified Organic: the current state of affairs

Unfortunately the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has said that they don’t want us to use the word “certified” on organic labels, because according to the Organic Products Regulation (OPR) all products that are organic must be certified.

The problem is that the OPR is a Federal regulation – so only applies to products that cross provincial or international boundaries. This creates a ridiculous situation in BC and most other provinces because only Quebec controls the use of the word organic within the provincial boundary – for products sold only in BC there is no regulation that requires certification for the use of an organic claim. This makes it harder to tell what is certified and what is not – you are back to looking for a certifier name or acronym and the optional logos which act as good visual cues.

But if someone does label their product with the term organic and CFIA gets a complaint that the product is not organic they say they will check that the producer follows the Canadian Organic Standards (as the CFIA officer reads them). Currently

if an organic product grown or made in BC is sold only within BC it doesn't legally have to be certified. If it is also sold outside BC it does legally have to be certified by an ISO 65 accredited certifier.

Information on the Labelling of Organic Products  
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/questlabel.html> 

*Sarah Davidson is the Certification Administrator for the BCARA.*

## Editor's Note:

You can find helpful diagrams related to organic labeling on pages 24 & 25.

# Other Labeling Tidbits

- B All labels with organic claims must be approved by a certifier before use (COABC Bk 2 para 5.4). CBs have jurisdiction over the use of organic logos, phrases, claims and certification identification on labels as outlined in the OPR (particularly section 24). Other Canadian labelling requirements (including those in orange boxes in the samples above) are CFIA jurisdiction. For advertisements using the Canada Organic legend, apply directly to the Canada Organic Office.
- B For products with less than 70% ingredients an organic claim may appear only as descriptors for individual ingredients in the ingredient list/panel. Such products do not need approval by a certifier, but if the firm is already certified, such products could be listed on a producer's certificate.
- B Certifier logos may also be used when approved by the certifier.
- B Global fruit and vegetable Price-Look Up (PLU) Codes streamline customer check-out experience and assist with inventory control. Organic product can be identified with the inclusion of a "9" in the front of the universal four digit PLU code. The long-term objective of the Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) the coalition of international fruit and vegetable associations that oversees the PLU system "is to improve the supply chain efficiency of the fresh produce industry through developing, implementing and managing harmonized international standards." Refer to ([www.plucodes.com](http://www.plucodes.com))
- B Claims must be true and cannot deceive a consumer with respect to the composition or quality of a food. The revamped CFIA Guide to Labelling and Advertising especially Chapter 4 "Composition, Quality, Quantity and Origin Claims" and Chapter 3 "Advertising Requirements" helps navigate through this very complicated area and actually makes quite interesting reading. ([www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml))
- B Claims could be made if substantiated by a 3rd party certification system (Kosher and Certified Angus Beef are great examples). This means non-GMO claims can be made if for example the product is certified by the NON GMO Project Verified ([www.nongmoproject.org](http://www.nongmoproject.org)).
- B CFIA Guide to Fresh Packaged Fruit & Vegetable Labels ([www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/frefra/qual/frueglabetie.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/frefra/qual/frueglabetie.shtml)) covers specific labelling requirements for fresh fruit and vegetable retail packaging plus shipping labels and master labels. Also clarifies that a nutritional panel is not required on fresh product, but if any claim than all the requirements for nutritional labelling must be met.
- B This information is Pertinent to Canadian marketed products. Products destined for markets outside of Canada must adhere to the labelling requirements of the receiving country.

# “Organic” Labeling Tips

## OTHER PRE-PACKAGED FOOD PRODUCT LABELING REQUIREMENTS (beyond organic regulations but not including French language requirements).

- \* has a nutritional panel
- \* has product common name
- \* has an ingredient list (in descending order)
- \* has date marking (aka best before date)
- \* has net quantity (on principal display panel) see sample
- \* has name and address (not on the bottom of the package) see sample
- \* priority allergy statements

### Highly recommended inclusion

- \* Origin Claim (Product of Canada or qualified Made in Canada statement that accurately reflects contents to ensure clarity). See sample

CFIA's Interactive Label for Prepackaged Food  
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeli/mapcarte.shtml>

✓ the inclusion of the word “organic” in the common name of a certified product.  
 ✓ there is no modification to the organic claim such as “certified organic,” “Verified organic,” “ultra organic” etc

✓ This optional artwork must be secured from your COABC CB and not modified. Could also opt to use the phrase only

✓ organic ingredients to be clearly identified in the ingredient list  
 COABC Bk 2 para 5.4 G DPR 25(b)



✓ common name “cookies” is present (CFIA requirement)

✓ a qualified origin claim (a CFIA recommended inclusion).

✓ Use of the organic logo is voluntary. The logo is only permitted on products that have an organic content that is greater than 95% and has been certified by a CFIA accredited Certification Body. The Canadian Organic Logo is available to organic operators through Canadian Food Inspection Agency accredited Certification Bodies.

✓ label must identify the CB.  
 ✓ label may indicate that it was certified by the name of the CB (e.g. certified by xyz CB).  
 ✓ MAY NOT STATE “Certified Organic” by xyz cb

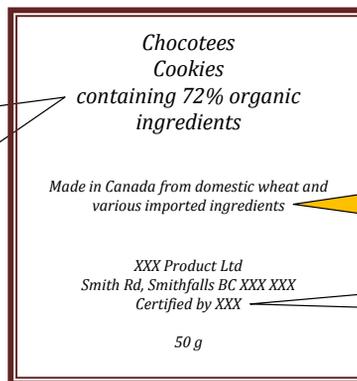
Sample 1 – a >95% organic content multi-ingredient food product, certified by a COABC accredited certifier

## OTHER PRE-PACKAGED FOOD PRODUCT LABELING REQUIREMENTS (beyond organic regulations but not including French language requirements).

- \*same as Sample 1

✓ The organic content rounded down to the nearest whole number. Note: the phrasing is restricted to “x% organic ingredients” as shown DPR 24 (2)

✓ organic ingredients to be clearly identified in the ingredient list  
 COABC Bk 2 para 5.4 G DPR 25(b)

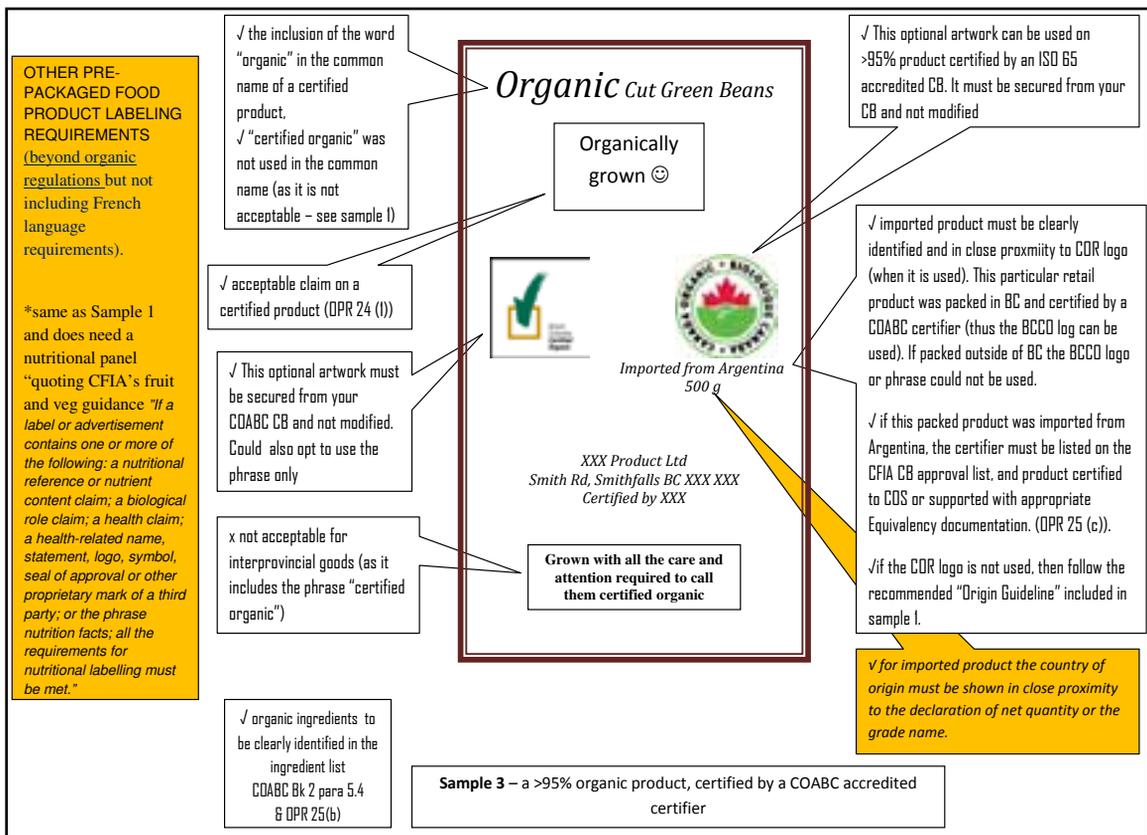


✓ a qualified origin claim (a CFIA recommended inclusion). Do not confuse a “made in Canada” origin claim with the USDA/NOP “Made with (70-95%) organic category”

✓ used the optional phrasing by adding in “certified by” (refer to sample 1 for explanation)

Notice in this example neither the BCCO or COR logo used. Neither the word “organic” (except in the x% organic ingredient claim). Use of any of these in anything but a >95% product is prohibited except in the ingredient list.

Sample 2 – a 70-95% organic product, certified by either a COABC ISO 65 or a Regional accredited certifier



Diagrams by Rochelle Eisen, Sarah Davidson & Anne Macey

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# The 2010 GMO “Roundup”



*Medicago sativa*

By Lucy Sharratt

In 2010, we saw the system of GM crops in industrial agriculture begin to break down under pressure from superweeds. Will it be enough to stop Monsanto’s GM Roundup Ready alfalfa from threatening organics in 2011?

## Parliament debates GM crops

This year, for the first time in our 15-year history with genetically engineered (GE) crops, the Canadian Parliament has debated some of the real issues. This debate was thanks to Bill C-474. Bill C-474 would require that “an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted.” This one-line Private Members Bill provided, and still provides, a unique chance for the organic sector to educate MPs about the threat of GE crops, alfalfa in particular.

Before hearings on the Bill were shut down by Liberals and Conservatives, the Agriculture Committee heard testimony from conventional and organic alfalfa growers who described how inevitable contamination from GM alfalfa would ruin their business. Conservative and Liberal MPs could barely believe this revelation and shortly thereafter closed the hearings down. The final vote on Bill C-474 is scheduled to happen in mid-December (For updates and to follow the final vote check [www.cban.ca/474](http://www.cban.ca/474)).

## GM alfalfa and sugarbeet

It has been illegal to plant GM alfalfa in the US for four years thanks to legal challenges but plantings could be approved in the US any day now, threatening the future of the North American organic food and farming system. The US Department of Agriculture has been forced by the courts to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement

“In 2011, GM alfalfa will be the opportunity and test for the organic sector, but this fight is also intimately tied to our ability to stop GM pigs and GM salmon.”

on GM alfalfa – once this is finished, plantings could resume. If this happens, Monsanto will likely request variety registration in Canada to get GM alfalfa on the market here too.

Organic farmers also successfully challenged GM sugarbeet based on contamination concerns and the US Department of Agriculture was similarly compelled to conduct an environmental assessment, just released for public comment by December 6. All of Canada’s sugarbeet seeds (white sugarbeet for sugar processing, grown in Ontario and Alberta) come from the Willamette Valley in Oregon. If GE sugarbeets cannot be planted in the US, there may be no GE sugar beet seed for Canada.

## GMOs escape into the wild

In yet another unfortunate “we told you so” moment, university researchers found transgenes present in 80% of the wild canola plants

they tested in North Dakota. The canola provides new evidence that GM crop plants can survive and thrive in the wild, possibly for decades. But this is not the first transgenic crop to escape into the wild.

It was recently revealed that the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the USDA refused to alert the public that GM Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass spread from a test plot in Western Idaho to irrigation ditches in Eastern Oregon. The feral GM bentgrass is a warning about the future of GM alfalfa contamination.

### Year of the Superweed

2010 was also the year of the superweed. Palmer amaranth or pigweed is among 10 weed species in 20 US states, and one in Ontario, that have become resistant to glyphosate due to overuse with GM corn, cotton and soybeans.

The rapid spread of glyphosate resistant pigweed is a major agronomic failure of Monsanto's Roundup Ready technology, and an economic shock to farmers. In the US cotton belt, the pigweed is forcing farmers to revert to more toxic herbicides such as paraquat, and they are abandoning their cotton-picking machines in favour of hired labour.

### Farmers' take down Monsanto's stock

On a possible up side, these problems are also a financial headache for Monsanto. 2010 was a difficult year for the world's biggest seed and biotech company as the US Justice Department intensified



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**Bill C-474 would "require that an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted."**



its antitrust investigation, farmers in Haiti burned Monsanto's seed donation, and Monsanto started giving rebates to farmers so they could buy competitor's herbicides in order to kill Roundup resistant weeds.

Monsanto is also being investigated in West Virginia for possibly misleading growers who were promised improved yields from Roundup Ready 2 Yield soybean. Monsanto's stocks dipped significantly in October when results showed farmers were not buying the 8-trait Smartstax corn as projected.

### Organics under the GMO Gun

There is a concerted biotech industry campaign to promote genetic engineering as part of sustainable agriculture, and even organic farming. This is twinned with Monsanto's new attempt to gain acceptance for the idea of GM wheat in the fu-

ture. The organic industry, including farmers and consumers, needs to be aware and fight back.

GM alfalfa will be the opportunity and test for the organic sector, but this fight is also intimately tied to our ability to stop GM pigs and GM salmon in 2011. Stopping GM animals will challenge the food movement in Canada and will test the ability of the organic industry to galvanize public support and strengthen its political muscle. 

*Lucy Sharratt works in Ottawa as the Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, a coalition of 18 groups campaigning against genetic engineering ([www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca))*



# Ergot Fungus Infection

## A Short History & Management Strategies for Organic Farms



Dominique Jacquin

By Marjorie Harris

*Note: The 2010 spring growing season in BC was unusually cold and wet which facilitated an outbreak of ergot fungus infections occurring particularly in low lying valley bottoms and in stands of winter rye green manures that were left to mature in the field. On my late summer organic farm inspection tour in BC, I found that 70% of the mature winter rye had heavy infections of ergot mould that the farmers did not know how to recognize or identify. When one farmer happily showed me his crop and announced that he was going to feed his family with this ergot infected grain, I realized that it was time to write an article! Full references are available upon request.*

**E**rgot is the parasitic plant fungus *Claviceps purpurea*, which infects cereal grains, forage grasses and wild grasses, producing poisonous mycotoxins that are very toxic to livestock and humans. Ergot has a long significant legacy with humanity both anthropologically and agriculturally.

Anthropologically, ergot is important because it helped to shape human culture and to a degree, spiritual consciousness. Agriculturally ergot is important

as a plant disease that requires special field management to reduce its incidence and to maintain a high quality food supply.

Humanity inadvertently entered into an intimate partnership with ergot at the inception of the Neolithic Revolution less than 10,000 years ago, when people began domesticating wild cereal grains in the mountains and foothills of Asia Minor's Fertile Crescent. Soon people were enjoying bread, beer and a psychoactive potion called *Kykeon* that was used in the ancient Greek and Roman Eleusinian Mystery religions. For over 2000 years *Kykeon*, was served to initiates of the cult of Demeter, to honour the Grain Goddess and her daughter Persephone during the annual Rites at Eleusis.

The development of hospitals was in direct response to the ghastly scourges of St. Anthony's Fire that plagued Europe for 600 years before the cause was finally discovered to be ergot-infected grains. The Order of Hospitaller monks of St. Anthony opened the first hospitals in 1100 AD to care for people suffering from Ergotism. This syndrome was caused by excess ingestion of the ergot mycotoxins and resulted in the Acute or Chronic forms characterized by mental disorientation (madness), convulsions, muscle cramps, and vasoconstrictions leading to migraines, sensations of being burned at the stake, before their fingers, toes, hands and feet dropped off from dry gangrene of the extremities.

The feudal system of the Middle Ages ensured that the poor suffered greater rates of St. Anthony's Fire. Rules dictated that the purified white breads were reserved for the Lords table while the tenant farmers were reconciled to eating black breads subject to greater numbers of ergot bodies.

However, madness from bread still exists today on small and large scales. In August 1951 an outbreak in France caused 5% of the villagers of Pont Saint Esprit to go mad. They had hallucinations, writhed in agony, vomited, ran crazily in the streets and suffered terrible burning sensations in their limbs. The ergot source was traced to the contaminated flour used at a local bakery.

Modern medicine has found a place for ergot alkaloid derivatives in psychiatry, migraine therapy and gynaecology. Albert Hofmann first synthesized the ergot-derived

LSD-25 (Lysergic acid diethylamide) in 1938 and by the 1950s the CIA was conducting mind control experiments with it. In the 1960's Western youth discovered it as a mind-expanding drug and used it for spiritual discovery and recreational escape.

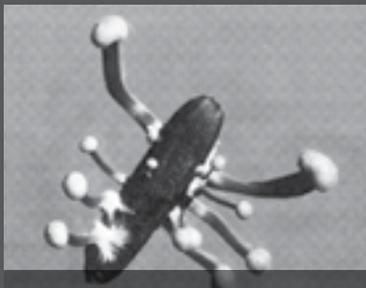
Agriculturally, ergot is an economic challenge because it reduces the grade classification of the infected grain, causes illness and death in livestock, contaminates the human food supply and requires active on-farm management to prevent outbreaks. Ergot outbreaks occur quite regularly throughout Canada and are more prevalent in cool wet years. The exteriors of the ergot fungus bodies, called sclerotia, are purplish-black and are larger than their neighbouring grain kernels, with some reaching up to 2 cm in length. The sclerotia appear in late July to mid-August.

The Canadian Grain Commission's, "Primary Grade Determinants for Ergot Official Grain Grading Guide," tables indicate that all grades of grain carry a percentage of ergot contamination measured by weight. In decreasing order of infection incidence, ergot is most prevalent in rye, triticale, wheat, barley and only rarely found in oats.

Ergot mycotoxins are chemically known as peptide alkaloids and have the tenacity to remain active even after food and feed processing is completed. Livestock are seriously affected when they ingest too much ergot – adverse symptoms appear as lameness, loss of body parts from gangrene, miscarriages in pregnant animals, and death. Sub-lethal doses appear as poor growth, reduction in milk production, and going off-feed.

Mycotoxins can accumulate in the food chain (ie. in dairy products), and in food processing, and their potency is only partially reduced by high temperatures in baking, which means they remain in products such as bread. Ergot mycotoxins are only slowly eliminated from the human body and become concentrated in the blood stream leading to Ergotism. This syndrome is most commonly seen among grainery workers but can occur anywhere in the population. As well, ergot can interact with some prescription medications and trigger an Ergotism episode. 🌱

*Marjorie Harris (BSc, Organic Chemistry, Freshwater & Soil Science) is an active IOIA Advanced Organic Inspector, for Crops, Livestock & Processing.*



*Stage One: An ergot body that has germinated to produce structures that will release ascospores.*

*Credit: Robin Morrall*

## Preventing Ergot Mold

Prevention strategies are directed at breaking the two-stage disease cycle. The first stage starts in the spring when the soil-bound ergot bodies germinate producing ascospores that become wind borne infecting blooming grass florets. The second stage is called the "honeydew stage," the florets exude a sticky ooze of spores that are spread to other florets by insects and rain.

Once an infection is discovered, removal must be done carefully wearing a mask to prevent inhalation of the spores, and gloves should be worn to stop absorbance of mycotoxins through the skin. To help prevent crop re-infection remove the diseased plants before the ergot bodies fall to the ground increasing the soil load.

Ergot tends to grow more heavily on the outer edges of the grain planted fields where it comes in contact with the wild grasses so mowing headlands and roadways before wild grasses flower helps to limit stage one.

## Tips

- Crop rotation away from cereal grains for one to two years limits ergot survival.
- When using winter rye as a green manure make sure to plow it under in the spring as it is at high risk for infection if allowed to mature.
- Plant clean seed for grain or forage grasses. Till under crop residue at least 4 cm to make ergot germination less successful.
- Keep heavily infected crops separate from clean crops when delivering to the grain elevator.

# Events and Announcements

**The Canada Organic Office (COO)** continues to receive numerous e-mails and calls from the CFIA accredited Certification Bodies with requests for clarification on various issues related to the Organic Products Regulations and the Canada Organic Regime. The Canada Organic Office would like to invite the CFIA Accredited Certification Bodies, VOs along with CVB board members to participate in an information/training session which will take place on March 4th (Friday), 2011 in The Mary Winspear Centre ([www.marywinspear.ca](http://www.marywinspear.ca)) 2243 Beacon Avenue, Sidney, from 9 a.m. to 12 o'clock p.m.

**SEEKING INPUT!** Howard Joynt will be speaking on Estate Planning at the COABC conference in March 2011. In preparation for his talk Howard would welcome the opportunity to speak with COABC members about their specific or general interest in Estate Planning. Estate Planning is the process that begins when you enter the business of farming. It ranges from making will, setting up your business structure, looking after family, and to the time when you decide to phase out of the farm business. To get in touch with Howard, call 250 549 2818 or email him at [lorange47@yahoo.com](mailto:lorange47@yahoo.com).

**FarmFolkCityFolk (FFCF)** now has a network of Shared Harvest websites covering Metro Vancou-

ver, Southern Vancouver Island and the Okanagan which provide free online classifieds for locally produced food and agricultural products. Shared Harvest's classified ads provide an up-to-date, season by season snap-shot of what local foods and agricultural products are available and in demand in each participating region. Farmers, processors, grocers, restaurants, distributors and the general public can post and browse ads for free. For businesses, Shared Harvest increases buying and selling opportunities; for the public it means greater access to local food. Visit the network of websites at [www.sharedharvest.ca](http://www.sharedharvest.ca).

**The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada** has set up an on-line forum, to encourage organic growers and others to share trials and experimentation that they have been doing, and comments about research they'd like to have done, and also to foster general discussions related to organic agriculture.

The forum is at: [www.oacc.info/phpbb3/index.php](http://www.oacc.info/phpbb3/index.php) Currently there are two forums on the site On-Farm Trials and Experimentation. Please use this area to discuss on-farm trials and experimentation, share the details and your success or frustrations, there is also a general discussion area.

**Seeking interview participants.** A Master's stu-

dent from Simon Fraser University's School of Public Policy is currently seeking interview participants for a study on climate change adaptation on small scale farms in BC. The goal of the research is to uncover challenges related to climate change adaptation, which are particular to small scale enterprises. This study will also seek to understand market access for small scale farmers and how governments can best assist with adaptation, while also protecting and enhancing the viability of small scale farms. Please contact Kaleen McNamara if you are interested in participating: [kmcnamar@sfu.ca](mailto:kmcnamar@sfu.ca) 778-558-0444

**The Rainbow Chard Farmer's Collective** is selling its fundraising calendar for \$15-\$20, sliding scale. "Farmer Tans," is a provocative new calendar, full of organic farmers showing off their sexy farm tans! A great way to support the next generation of farmers, this new calendar for 2011 is jam packed with recipes, useful information and delicious eye-candy... or perhaps eye-salad. <http://rainbowchard.yolasite.com/>

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