

BC Organic Grower

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*British
Columbia
Certified
Organic*



***President's Message: AGM
Report
Representative Democracy?
PACS News
Founders Award
Standards Review
New COABC Board
Composting Sustainability
Making the Internet Useful***

***Farm Apprenticeships
Moving Your Greenhouse
BC Standards
Equivalency Agreements
New Staff
IFOAM
What's Going on Across
Canada
Organic Directory***

**COABC, #8A, 100 Kalamalka Lake Rd.
Vernon BC V1T 9G1**

President's Message

by Linda Edwards

The 2001 AGM was a noteworthy event, as much for what did not happen as for what did happen.

What did not happen? We did not have an educational event, having decided to focus our resources on the upcoming IFOAM Congress. And we did not have any acrimonious debates perhaps because we have changed our structure so that changes to the Standards are not dealt with at the AGM, but by the new Standards Review process (see page 10). (By the way, the Order in Council has just gone through approving the updated Standards. This up-to-date version will be available on the website soon plus hard copies will soon be available through the your certifying body for a very reasonable price.)

So what did happen? Oh, just the usual, you know: we agreed on a balanced budget and fee structure which will cover the costs of core services; we received reports on new information- sharing and organic training projects; we honoured some outstanding members; we played with the babies; we appointed a new Board of Directors; we debated proposals to restructure the organization ... and, of course, we shared fabulous organic food and beverages and partied and talked into the night.

It really is remarkable what a strong collective spirit we have in the organic community given the diversity (not to say idiosyncrasy) of our members! I am continually amazed at the way in which we manage to conduct our business in a completely business-like manner but with humour and genuine debate. We have some real challenges and tough issues to face - largely, for sure, because of our successes - but clearly we have what it takes to address them and continue to propel the organic movement into the mainstream of B.C.'s economy and culture.

This was particularly evident as we spent the

first day hearing reports from each CB and committee and reviewing the year 2001.

In addition to the changes to Standards Review, two significant issues have been addressed in the past year. The first was the establishment of the Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS) (see page 8), to provide a certifying body to carry out ISO 65 equivalency certification for growers who export, and to find a way to carry out certification not dependent on burned out volunteers. To date, the full membership of

Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to retiring board members, Bob McCoubrey, Glen Wakeling, Dave Friend, Roger Breed, Mary Forstbauer and Rick Llewellyn. The contribution made to the COABC by its directors goes unnoticed and unheralded until they retire it seems. I particularly want to thank Bob as treasurer and Roger as chair of the audit committee for not only the many many hours they spent on our behalf but also for the integrity, commitment and ingenuity they contributed in these roles.

four certifying bodies, COPA, CROPS, OPACK and PROPA are being certified by PACS. Also a number of individuals from other certifying bodies, especially processors and exporters, have also joined PACS, and the new organization is starting to get processors and handlers who previously certified with out of province certifiers. The membership is expected to reach about 150 this year.

The second issue was the announcement of a \$1 million Organic Trust Fund as part of the Agri- Food Futures Trust Fund. Our Strategic Planning Committee has been hard at work to develop a framework for the disbursement of this fund, in consultation with COABC members and representatives of every part of the organic sector. A semi-final draft of the strategic plan for certified organics is currently being reviewed, and we look forward its approval within a few months.

The second day we reviewed the COABC mandate and set priorities. The following are some highlights. The essential COABC mandates were reaffirmed: to accredit Certification Bodies, to maintain the Standards and handling of the Program Symbol, along with the phrase 'BC Certified Organic' and the Checkmark. We did not, however, take the position that this is the 'core business' of COABC and everything else could be slashed, although we agreed that some projects, such as the Organic Advisory Service, need to seek ways to become self-financing.

Other 'core activities' are the office, communications (including the BC Organic Grower and the listserv and website), the Materials List and public information/education about organics.

We agreed that involvement in the national scene is a priority as the Canadian Standards are being revamped and efforts are (once more) being made to establish a national organic organization. Linda Edwards, Rochelle Eisen and Jo Ann Sandhu agreed to represent us at the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) and Paddy Doherty will continue to work on the national organization.

It was also agreed that we need to maintain and enhance relationships with 'conventional' agriculture and after much debate, agreed that this should include membership in the BC Agriculture Council, with Paddy Doherty continuing as our representative.

Some specifics: The website is an important tool for promotion of the program but also for individual enterprises, who should be encouraged to buy member pages. We need to increase the number of links to retailers and other organic-related businesses and information sources. Increased advertising and distribution for the BC Organic Grower also need to be developed.

The number of events to which we are invited increases every year. We agreed that costs of participation will be covered by the COABC only if the whole membership will benefit. Commodity based events can use COABC supply materials but growers must pay all expenses.

A Brand names list of all inputs used by BC organic growers and processors will be developed and posted on the website and published in the BC Organic Grower.

A committee of Yvonna Breed, Abra Brynne, Mary Forstbauer and Jo Ann Sandhu was formed to coordinate COABC's presence at IFOAM. We will have a booth at the Conference Centre, and members can set up at the St. Ann's Farmers' Market as part of the World Exhibition.

Perhaps the most heated debate of the whole meeting centred on COABC restructuring. The movement away from strictly peer review certification and the establishment of PACS is resulting in increasingly unbalanced representation to the COABC (one certifying body – one director) and we are losing our geographical representation. One set of suggestions circled around the idea of re-forming CBs whose members are certified by PACS into Organic Advocacy Societies who could qualify for full membership in COABC if a large majority of their members were certified under the Program.

continued on page 4...

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www.CertifiedOrganic.bc.ca

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This would allow geographic representation but could be seen to give some people more than one vote (one through PACS and one through their Organic Advocacy Society). A proposal based on the idea of proportional representation received considerable support, and Bob McCoubrey and Hans Buchler agreed to explore it further (see pages 5-6). For the time being, several CBs are subcontracting to PACS for certification services so they retain their membership in COABC, but this may not be tenable in the long term. We need to continue to discuss this over the next year so we can come to a resolution at the 2003 AGM.

Next year will be the 10th Anniversary of COABC and plans are already underway to have an event which includes an extended education program and is organized to make it as easy as possible for people to attend. Considering the fun we had at this year's scaled-down AGM, I think it's safe to promise that the 10th Anniversary will be outstanding. Deb Foote, Harvie Snow, Mary Forstbauer and Paddy Doherty volunteered to coordinate this event, so contact one of them with your ideas about venue, content, or speakers. ✓

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Representative Democracy?

by Bob McCoubrey

There has been a lot of discussion lately about how COABC Board members should be chosen and who they should represent when they sit at the COABC Board table. I suggest we should continue with our tradition of representational democracy by appointing all voting Board members from the Certifying Bodies (CB), with each CB entitled to one Board member for every 50 enterprises within its certification program. In situations where a CB contracts its certification services from PACS, its members would be deemed members of PACS for the purposes of appointing COABC members. CBs that do not run their own certification program would not have a seat at the Board table. Each COABC Board member should have one equal vote on all issues.

History

This issue re-surfaced when PACS was established late last year. Several CBs took the option of contracting their certification services from PACS for the 2002 season, while remaining active as organic advocacy organizations. Some people felt that members of those CBs would receive dual representation on COABC - once through the representative from their local CB and again through the representative from PACS. COABC has traditionally structured its Board by asking each CB to appoint one Board member, regardless of how many enterprises each CB had under its jurisdiction; and until PACS was established, every CB was in the certification business.

Other Options

It has been suggested that COABC should

become a true participatory democracy, with Board members elected at large, with one vote for each producer, handler or processor within any COABC accredited certification program. I don't think this would work in our organization for two reasons.

Firstly, participatory democracy requires an informed and active membership to be effective. The experience in our local CB, and I suspect in many in BC, is that a loyal few attend the meetings and read local newsletters and the BC Organic Grower to keep themselves informed of issues which COABC handles. The election of a Board by all members, including those who haven't kept up to date on the issues and the individuals who are running for office, would not necessarily result in a good Board to carry out the business of the Organic Sector in BC. A poor voter turnout, due to apathy or lack of awareness of the issues could further undermine the ideals of democracy - government of the people, for the people, by the people.

Secondly, COABC is more than just a political body representing individual organic producers, handlers and processors. Under Provincial legislation (The Food Choice and Disclosure Act), COABC is an umbrella organization of Certifying Bodies, which provides accreditation of the certification programs of those CBs, establishing and maintaining the minimum standards which CB's must enforce in order to keep their accreditation. The members of COABC are actually the CBs, not the individual members of the CBs, and each accredited CB must be represented at

continued on page 6

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the Board table where issues affecting accreditation and the standards are decided.

Others have suggested that COABC should provide for Organic Advocacy Organizations with voting members on the COABC Board, to legitimize CBs which have contracted certification from PACS, but remain intact to provide local venues for education and discussion purposes.

This option has two problems. It would allow individual enterprises to have dual representation on COABC, once through PACS, where they will be getting their certification, and again through their local advocacy organization, hence, one person - two votes. It also would provide access to the decision making of COABC to advocacy organization members who are not active participants in the Organic Sector. *(Editor's note: This could be resolved by ensuring that a substantial majority of members of such an advocacy organization must be certified organic enterprises.)*

Representational Democracy

Appointing COABC representatives only from

CB	MBRS	COABC REPS	MBRS	COABC REPS
BCARA	57	1	57	1
BIO-DYN.	13	1	13	1
BOPA	14	1	14	1
COPA	59	1	0	-
CROPS	12	1	0	-
FVOPA	20	1	20	1
IOPA	44	1	44	1
KOGS	28	1	28	1
LEOGA	22	1	22	1
NOOA	60	1	55	1
OPACK	16	1	0	-
PROPA	60	1	20	1
SOOPA	79	1	40	1
STOPA	21	1	21	1
PACS	0	-	171	3
TOTAL	505	14	505	14

Certifying Bodies that actually certify enterprises will maintain the integrity of COABC as an umbrella organization which sets the standards and accredits its member organizations. Each CB would be assured of a voice and a vote in the decisions that affect it. Allocating the number of seats on the COABC Board, to each CB according to the number of enterprises within its certification program, would more closely approximate "representation by population" - another commonly held tenet of democracy. This method of appointing COABC Board members fully recognizes that COABC is a representative democracy, as any umbrella body, made up of grass roots bodies, must be. Within each CB, participatory democracy governs how the members elect an executive to conduct the CB's business, including the appointment of the best person to represent the CB at the COABC Board and to keep the CB informed on issues dealt with at the COABC table.

There may be perceived inequity in cases where small CBs gain a Board seat with less than the minimum 50 members, however the impact of those "under-represented" votes would be minimized on a large Board; and in reality would provide protection for small CBs once PACS grows to the point where it represents more than 50% of all enterprises in BC.

A comparison of the current system with this proposed system shows how the Board make-up would change. The membership numbers for 2002 are estimates based on last year and where individuals may choose to be certified in 2002. They are based on discussions at the COABC 2002 AGM, indicating that OPACK, COPA and CROPS would likely turn all certifica-



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tion over to PACS; SOOPA would likely lose half of its members to PACS; NOAA would lose 5 processors and handlers; and PROPA would lose some but not all members. Exact numbers won't be available till summer.

(NOTE: This allocation of Board positions assumes that a CB would gain another member when it reaches the half-way point between two units of 50; i.e.. 125, 175, 225, 275 etc.)

As time goes by, PACS may continue to grow, likely as a result of more CB's choosing to turn certification over to PACS. As the number of non-PACS CB's becomes smaller, it will be more important to ensure those CB's retain a voice at the COABC table. At the same time it will be important for PACS to establish locals within its organization, so that education and discussion can continue in each geographic area.

If you have an opinion on how the COABC Board is chosen, talk to your current COABC Board member, or write to the BC Organic Grower so this issue can be resolved before the 2003 AGM. ✓

Needed

Organic Production Experts

The Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS) is seeking organic production and handling experts to become members of its certification committee. PACS is developing a "roster" of experts to provide input on organic production and handling issues, review certification files or elements of files on an as-needed basis.

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The Pacific Agricultural Certification Society was born from a resolution at the 2001 COABC AGM to develop a new CB with the mandate to: ú Provide an ISO 65 compliant certification program to BC organic players ú Provide business-like certification services for CBs that want to get out of the volunteer headache of certification That AGM was in February, and by August the PACS was incorporated; it started certifications late in 2001. There are currently 70 paid clients in the PACS portfolio, with four or five new applications coming in every day. Most of these operations have come from COPA, OPACK, PROPA, and CROPS, but there are some brand new applicants as well.

The PACS shares office space with NOAA in the COABC office complex in Vernon. The PACS administrator is Roz Cripps; she works three days a week, but this will increase as the workload demands. The PACS has a commitment to supplying credible, efficient and confidential certification services to its customers. The office is striving towards a three-week turnaround time for processing applications. BC's newest CB will be working towards an electronic paper format. This will save time, money, and trees, and there will likely be incentives for operators who use electronic forms.

The PACS has developed ISO 65 compliant operating procedures (PACS Quality Manual) and has been recognised by the United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards and recently by Loblaw's Canada. The ISO 65 procedures require lots of paperwork and exceptional quality control. They also require an arms-length certification committee, whose members must be disinterested from the files they are dealing with but must nevertheless have substantial knowledge and experience of organic certification. They are paid an honorarium for their services. The PACS certification committee is: Abra Brynne, Chair, with members at large Julia Jamieson and Sarah Davidson.

In the short-term PACS expects to receive

approval for export into the US and Quebec through the state-to-state agreement being negotiated by the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Accreditation by the Standards Council of Canada may be required, but the PACS Board has decided to see how the issue of markets access proceeds before making a decision on this.

The 2002 PACS Board of Directors

President: Gunta Vitins
Vice President: Carmen Wakeling
Secretary: Andrea Turner
Treasurer: Sharyn Pollitt (COABC Rep)
Lone Male Director: Ted Buchan
(Standards Review
Committee Rep)

FAQs

What are the PACS fees?

The PACS fees are based on the same sliding scale of gross organic sales that the COABC uses. These are posted on the PACS page of the COABC website. If you don't have internet access, call the PACS office. The PACS charges inspections fees according to the amount of time your inspection takes. All inspections are billed out at the same rate of \$45/hr regardless of the amount the inspectors are paid.

What is the deadline for applications?

There is no deadline. The PACS operates all year around and will be dating certificates and scheduling inspections accordingly. If your certificate is about to expire and you require PACS certification, it is up to you to make arrangements. Thereafter PACS will be sending out renewals all year around (naturally, according to seasonal conditions).

Will PACS use local VOs?

Yes, PACS is making a list of VOs available in BC. PACS will use the most appropriate and the cheapest VO they can. Whenever possible, inspections will be grouped together to save travel costs.

Can I stay with my present CB and still certify with PACS?

Yes, but you will still be charged the full PACS Administration Fee. Your COABC fee will only be paid once and PACS will probably be able to co-operate with your present CB on the inspection process and costs.



Founders Award

Mary Forstbauer was the proud and deserving recipient of the COABC Founders Award at the 2002 AGM. The COABC Founders Award was initiated at the 1998 AGM as recognition of the dedicated effort recipients have made to this organisation.

Award Recipients:

1998 Fred Reid
1999 Hans Buchler
2000 Harvie Snow
2001 Brian Mennell
2002 Mary Forstbauer

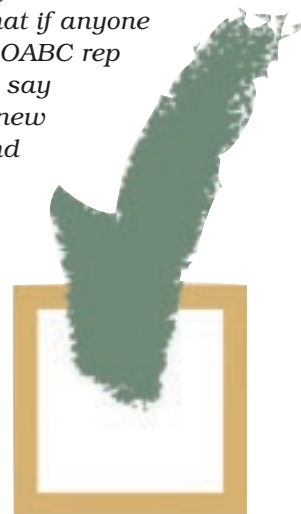


Founders award winners (L-R): Mary Forstbauer, Brian Mennell, Harvie Snow, Hans Buchler and Fred Reid swap (bad?) stories of COABC's past.

Mary's tireless efforts have been a feature of the COABC since the beginning of the organisation. 2002 is the first year since incorporation that Mary has not been on the Board of Directors! She is still active though, serving on the Standards Review Committee, the 2003 (ten year!) AGM committee, and marketing and promotional committees as they emerge. She is the most dedicated promoter of the Checkmark in the COABC.

Mary says

I was honoured to receive the COABC Founders Award at the AGM this year. I wish to thank the COABC directors for making the years that I have served with them on the board memorable and educating. There were times that I felt we were climbing mountains and then times when I thought we were going to fall off a cliff but we always held on and remembered our common goal "to work together in the best interest of our growers and the consumers". Our different personalities and talents have added to the enjoyment of my board position. Everything has all been worth the time and energy I have spent at meetings and on conference calls. I would recommend that if anyone asks you to be the COABC rep for your CB that you say YES! You will make new friends, have fun, and you will have the opportunity to make a difference in the organic industry. I hope that Jill Rothe finds the position as the rep for BD as rewarding as I did. Remember to CHECK your product!



Contact Information

PACS office hours: 8:30-4:30 Wed. Thurs. Fri.
Roz Cripps, PACS #8-A 100 Kalamalka Lk. Rd. Vernon,
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continued from page 6

Can my CB contract its certification to PACS and still remain a member of the COABC?

Yes. In this case, the members of the contracting CB do not become members of the PACS. PACS provides administration and certification either for a set fee, or collects the fees itself (according to the agreement between the PACS and the CB).

Will PACS be certifying outside of BC?

Certification in BC is the PACS' prime focus, but it can certify in other regions if required. ✓

Standards Review Committee

by Fred Danenhower

The Standards Review Committee, formed at the 2002 COABC AGM, is a more efficient and accountable way of amending or adding to the COABC Organic Standards. The Standards Review process has four stages:

1 A draft document is developed by the appropriate committee and circulated within the Review Committee for one month for input, before a final draft document is presented publicly.

2 Individual licencees of COABC are then expected to provide improvements to the draft document within the next six weeks (note, this review does not take place during the months May through August).

3 Following this research, documentation and public input into the Review Committee's work, the amendment document is voted on by the Review Committee. A 75% majority is needed to approve an amendment.

4 Once the amendment has been passed, it is ratified by the COABC Board of Directors before it takes effect.

The Review Committee has been structured with four sub committees: Crops, Livestock, Processing and New Issues. Meetings are held as required. Each certification body should have a representative on the committee. COABC members can initiate a standards review through their association representative.

What we are not: a super certification committee. The Standards Review Committee cannot interpret the standards for certifying bodies. We cannot make decisions or recommendations on waiving existing standards.

What we are: a means for changing or adding to the COABC Organic Standards. Input is paramount to the pro-

cess. *No standard can be changed in less than three months and will more likely take at least one year.*

Chair: Fred Danenhower (OPACK)

Secretary: Tracy Schimpf (NOOA)

Sub committee - Processing

Tracy Schimpf (NOOA)

Sarah Davidson (BCARA)

Sub committee - Livestock

Susan Grace (IOPA)

Alyssa Bell Stoneman (FVOPA)

Rick Llewelyn (BOPA)

Sub committee - Crops

Lonnie Lecerf (KOGS),

Mary Forstbauer (Bio-Dynamics),

Ed McCullough (PROPA)

Sub committee - New issues

Jim Bagley (SOOPA),

Carmen Wakeling (CROPS)

(STOPA) - No representative yet

(Living Earth) - No representative yet

(PACS) - No representative yet. ✓



Andrea Turner (SOOPA), Tim Ewert (PROPA), & Paddy Doherty (Staff) prepare for discussion of the COABC priorities at the AGM.

COABC Directors 2002

Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Society of British Columbia
Jill Rothe, Alternate: Mary Forstbauer

Boundary Organic Producers Association (BOPA)
Jodi Koberinski, Alternate: Rick Llewellyn

British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture (BCARA)
Stephen Gallagher, Alternate: John Switzer

Comox Regional Organic Producers Society (CROPS)
Dagmar Pattison, Alternate: Daniel Terry

Consumer/Environment Representative
Cathleen Kneen

Fraser Valley Organic Producers Association (FVOPA)
Harvie Snow, Alternate: needed

Island Organic Producers Association (IOPA)
Peter Johnston, Alternate: David Friend

Kootenay Organic Growers Society (KOGS)
Patrick Mallet, Alternate: needed

Living Earth Organic Growers Association (LEOGA)
Lee McFadyen, Alternate : Gabi Hollmann

Organic Producers Association of Cawston and Keremeos (OPACK)

Linda Edwards, Alternate: Godfried Sellmer

North Okanagan Organic Association (NOOA)
Jon Alcock, Alternate: needed

Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS)
Sharyn Pollitt, Alternate: Gunta Vitins

Peace River Organic Producers Association (PROPA)

Tim Ewert, Alternate: Ted Buchan

Shuswap Thompson Organic Producers Association (STOPA)

David Nelson, Alternate: Arlene Solomon

Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association (SOOPA)

Andrea Turner, Alternate: Hans Buchler

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Composting Sustainability

by William F. Brinton, Jr.

Editor's Note: This internet posting piqued our interest in the following article, which is reprinted with permission.

"Unturned compost, with enough roughage, matures only about 20% slower (about 120 days vs. 100) than turned compost.

"On the subject of pathogens, which I know will come up, since the edges of unturned compost piles will not heat up: pathogens (E. coli etc.) are killed in compost even at ambient temperatures within 50 days. It is the microbial food chain that does them in, not necessarily heating. They are very tasty morsels for bacteria feeding nematodes and protozoans. There's no way it's going to be there."

Composting has traditionally been used as a form of slow rotting of farm-yard manures and vegetative wastes with the resultant humus product useful in agriculture. However, renewed interest and modern engineering involvement has resulted in an essentially new composting image emphasizing significant technological inputs. A typical example is the use of frequent turning or forced aeration to deliver air constantly to a compost pile. Along with this intensification, there has naturally been a dramatic upturn in commercially available turning machines, in-vessel compost reactors, aeration systems, pile covers, and so on for farms, municipalities and industry. Finally, it is also apparent that there is increased availability to the consumer of a variety of compost-based products.

Despite this impressive record of modern composting, little if any actual studies or data exist comparing technology inputs either on the basis of cost/ benefit or quality-of-end products. In contrast, within agriculture in general and specifically in organic and biodynamic farming, numerous comparison studies exist for various alternative management schemes from the viewpoint of cost/benefit, soil-degradation and quality of end-products. From this point of view, the science of composting appears to lag behind technological developments. Furthermore, the sustainability of intensified composting has never been evaluated. This paper examines certain basic intensification assumptions in modern composting on the basis of economics and process biology and considers the effects of varying intensification are in view of nutrient and organic matter retention, endproduct quality and overall costs.

Sociology of New Technologies

It has been said that composting has achieved paradigm status and become a trend. It is suddenly an industry which has attained self-definition, and in this lie certain dangers. Constraining the examination of the merits of high-tech composting are the facts that the economics are curiously skewed, and in many cases waste products involve fees up-front (to the farmers or composters), called tipping-fees, before any actual sales of completed end-product take place. In Switzerland, for example, community tip fees to eligible farmers for contracted leaf and yardwaste composting are about SFr120 per tonne, while the potential value to the farmers may be more likely SFr 10-20/tonne. Similarly, in the US while tip fees are not so high, it is possible to receive on the front end more than twice the value of the actual product. These factors translate into incentives representing society's desire to rid itself of the waste; they say nothing however about the intrinsic merit or sustainability of the current composting technologies chosen. Similarly, environmental pressure which may force growers to adopt composting does not necessarily translate into economical or viable practices.

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The Farm View of Composting

Sustainability and quality are the key traits in the acceptance of composting within agriculture. There has been continued hesitancy on the part of farmers to adopt what appear to be machine-intensive, time-consuming composting practices. Farmers are, however, concerned about soil and water quality, and have demonstrated a commitment to improvements in waste management, with composting high on their list of interesting subjects. Additionally, organic and biodynamic farmers depend largely on recycled and composted local and on-farm resources for a fertile base. As such, the growers are caught in a unique conflict. On the one hand they have their own needs and capabilities, the latter largely defined by cost and certified or eligible practices. On the other hand, they face a confrontational environmental sector combined with the alluring, high-tech pitch of the composting industry. Thus, a need exists to develop an agriculturally viable form of composting that is consonant with the traditional farm setting without sacrificing quality and viability.

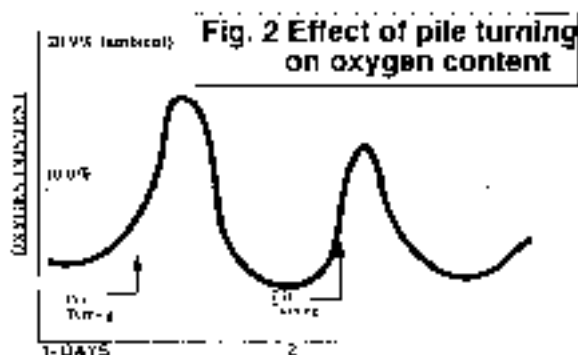


Figure 2

Current Studies

Woods End Research Laboratory has been researching compost biology and use in farming over a period of many years. In this direction two research projects were funded to examine intensification of composting in relation to cost and quality of end-products. The first study was a joint project of Woods End of Maine and CDAQ (Centre de développement d'agrobiologie du Québec), funded by Agriculture Canada; the second was conducted by Woods End with assistance of the Erth-Rite Company of Gap, PA and support of the USDA Technical Center in Chester PA. These two projects focused in on

farm handling and its impact on the composting process.

Both studies examined the premise of intensification, and its impact. To develop composting within agriculture the following goals operate:

- Limit necessary source material to local or on farm resources;
- Identify and focus on key traits for composting and eliminate unnecessary technology steps;
- Test approach in varying farm settings including Quebec Dairy Farms (Agriculture Canada) employing varying amounts of straw bedding and on Pennsylvania Dairy and Poultry Operations (USDA)

The composting studies assembled two groups of ingredients varying from straw to sawdust for bulking and subjected them to a range of intensification scenarios from no-turning to high-rate Scarab-type turning, as follows:

(Note: The word Scarab is used generically to identify a large straddle-type window turning machine and does not imply an endorsement or recommendation of any equipment bearing that name.)

Lay-out of Treatments

In the first study we varied the frequency of turning based on recommended approaches versus fixed approaches with two farms having varied ratios of straw to manure, influencing the porosity of the mix. In the second study, we varied manure type and carbon source with 3 types of turning.

continued on page 14

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Treatments were replicated twice or three times, each for the USDA and Quebec studies, respectively. The study collected information throughout the process on:

- temperature & oxygen performance
- organic matter and nitrogen loss
- change in humification and respiration rate
- O & M (operations/maintenance costs) In this report we give data for temperature, oxygen and organic and nitrogen matter losses.

Results

Compost piles are normally turned in order to reintroduce oxygen, which is necessary for aerobic composting. In the first part of these studies, we examine the immediate effects of turning by measuring oxygen content 2.5ft within the compost pile before, during and after turning by a windrow machine. The results of observing these effects over two days are seen in Figure 2.

The effect of pile turning was to refresh oxygen content, on average for 1.5 hours (above the 10% level) after which it dropped to less than 5% and in most cases to 2% during the active phase of composting. No significant differences were observed between windrow turning machines and manure-spreader turning, while bucket loader turned piles depended more on operator efficiency as to how much temporal air was introduced.

We have previously reported temporal oxygen effects of turning. However, we have also shown that they exert little or no negative effects if aerobic activity in the long term is the issue. As later data will show, it depends on pile size and porosity. By introducing more straw which we do in the Quebec study, the effects are similar to introducing more air (Fig.4). We also observed that self-aeration in these compost trials appeared to exert a significant overall effect. The graph (Figure 3) shows the three USDA turning treatments in relation to the behavior of oxygen content during the course of composting. Even

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Fig. 3 Effect of compost management on oxygen over time

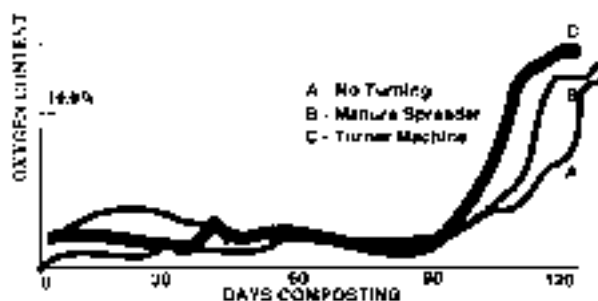


Figure 3

with no turning, all piles eventually resolve their oxygen tension as maturity approaches, indicating self-aeration alone can adequately furnish the composting process. The data shows that rapid high-rate turning with a turning machine advanced the final rise in oxygen (= stabilization) by a few weeks.

However, all piles remained low in oxygen through-out the active composting period, and rose dramatically towards the end of their own accord. Contrary to how some would interpret this data, it proves that the piles are constantly consuming oxygen, and therefore remaining essentially aerobic despite low measured O_2 levels. In other words, turning the piles has a temporal but little sustained influence on oxygen levels. However, turning does rehomogenize the materials leading to an improved appearance.

We examine the length of time to attain stability defined as the point where pile temperature drops below 100°F and does not rise even with turning.

The results clearly indicate that on the basis of temper-

ature stabilization alone, intensification of the composting process either by more turning or adding more bedding had comparable effects of measurable but slight improvement in the time-efficiency for composting. In both trials, the mean maximum gain in time to stability from intensification was about 20 days; in the dairy manure compost trials, the time to stability of No-turned was 123 days versus 106 days with twice-weekly Scarab-turned piles; and with the poultry manure compost trials the times were, 145 days vs. 130, respectively.

In order to more precisely measure stabilization, we applied the Dewar self-heating test on all piles at 120 days. This information is reported in Table 2. We measure self-heating at one point for the dairy and at three points for the poultry which took longer to stabilize. The data show an advantage to intensive Scarab-turning of piles for poultry manure at 108 days. Dewar testing is such that we expect values less than 10°C for stabilized composts.

In a later report, we will show data for the Quebec trials comparing chemical and humic effects of intensification. Analyses of Q4/6 ratios, an index of humic maturity, failed to show any statistically significant advantage of turning to no-turning for all compost treatments.

Microbiochemical results

A number of means exist to evaluate compost quality microbiologically and biochemically. We took samples of the dairy and poultry compost piles between days 66 and 75 prior to final stabilization and evaluated enzymatic and microbiological traits (see Table 3 p. 17) The results of the microbiochemical examination show some higher hydrolase enzyme activity in unturned or bucket-turned dairy composts but inconclusive difference among young poultry

Dewar Self-Heating (Maturity) of Compost in Relationship to Intensification		
TREATMENT	Age, (Days) Sampled	Temp Rise, $^{\circ}\text{C}$ above Ambient
Cow Manure Composts		
No-Turn	117	2
Bucket-Turned	117	3
Turner 1x 2 weeks	117	3
Turner 2x weeks	117	1
Poultry Manure Composts		
No-Turn	108	17
Bucket-Turned	106	16
Turner 1x 2 weeks	108	12
Turner 2x weeks	106	2
Poultry Manure Composts		
No-Turn	138	1
Bucket-Turned	136	9
Turner 1x 2 weeks	136	
Turner 2x weeks	138	8
Poultry Manure Composts		
No-Turn	153	0
Bucket-Turning	153	5
Turner 1x 2 weeks	153	0
Turner 2x weeks	153	0

Table 2.

continued on page 16

manure composts. We expect hydrolase activity by this test to drop to less than 10 ug/g/min in completed composts and to be as high as 50 in active piles. Dehydrogenase activity which ranges from under 100 to 10,000 TPF units in mature vs. fresh composts gave little consistent trends in these trials with all results being in the moderately stable range.

Bacteria counts of both groups of composts are moderate to high between both aerobic and facultative anaerobic (= aerobes + anaerobes) groups and there is no hydrogen-sulfide activity in any treatment, evidence of a lack of strict anaerobic activity, and overall no evidence that populations were significantly influenced by turning schemes. There were no surviving *E. coli* or salmonella strains as measured by DNA-probes with a sensitivity of 1 cell/25gr sample. These data overall do not support a conclusion of significant effects derived from the different intensity-turning schedules. Pooling all biochemical data from replicated treatments between compost types gave no statistically significant effects attributable to turning.

Nitrogen and Organic Matter Losses

An important feature of composting is loss of organic matter, clearly evidenced in loss of pile weight and volume. We measured organic matter and nitrogen during the composting and calculated total losses at the end of the process. The

data is summarized in Table 4. These data show clearly that as intensification of management increases, so do losses, which are significantly correlated between all the trials and treatments. The least losses observed for organic matter and nitrogen were in the Un-turned dairy manure piles which lost 70 and 51%, respectively, and the highest losses observed were in the poultry compost trials where Scarab-turning twice a week gave 88 and 86% loss, respectively, for organic matter and nitrogen. For both the Pennsylvania and Quebec trials the data clearly show that nitrogen and organic matter losses are closely tied. We did not observe any improvement of losses from increased bedding in the Quebec trials; since any improvement from added carbon was off-set by increased rate of composting and organic loss associated with better porosity.

Economic Factors of Intensification

We examined the costs of intensification of composting for the Pennsylvania trials. This was conducted by tracking inputs, labor and maintenance during operations with the exclusion of equipment capitalization and cost of bulking agents. The following table reproduces the essential features of the study. In calculating costs, we gave the higher-intensity methods the benefit of the doubt and stopped tabulating costs as soon as stability was indicated by lack of self-heating. We also assigned slightly lower land-area costs to intensive treatment since windrow treatment with straddle-machines

required less space. We did not calculate watering/irrigation costs for no-turned piles since they did not have added water. However, irrigation costs were only about 5% of variable costs. Thus, the data clearly indicate that intensive turning brings substantially increased costs which may or may not be off-set by the gain in time or the more homogenous appearance of the final product.

Conclusions

These findings support the notion that intensification of composting through technology may be unnecessary, certainly if the goal is on-farm



Fred Reid examines his compost.

TREATMENT	Organic Matter Loss%	Nitrogen Loss%
Cow Manure Composts @ 120 days		
No-Turn	71	71
Bucket-Turned	78	80
Turner 1st 2 weeks	75	81
Turner 2nd week	80	84
Poultry Manure Composts @ 150 days		
No-Turn	71	72
Bucket-Turned	79	76
Turner 1st 2 weeks	79	78
Turner 2nd week	86	86

Table 4

nutrient and watershed management and land-application. The needs for pathogen reduction and stabilization are fully met provided the basic requirements for moisture and texture optimization are met. With these results in mind, a low-tech form of composting can be implemented without undue economic or management pressure for farming.

Composting methods that require intensification are a curious result of modern popularity and



Paddy Doherty, Dragon Mountain Farm

technological development of composting, as particularly evidenced in popular trade journals. They do not appear to be scientifically supportable based on these studies. Our view of sustainability is analogous to a reduced tillage approach to maximizing soil quality. By carefully managing composting to achieve proper mixes and limited turning, the ideal of a quality product at low economic burden can be achieved.

continued on page 18

Biochemical and Microbiological Traits of Differently-Managed Compost Piles						
TREATMENT	Hydrolase Activity @ 30°C ug FDA/g/min	Dehydrogenase Activity ug TTC/g/hr	Aerobic plate Count	Facultative Anaerobic Count	31,5 Activity pos (+) or minus (-)	E. coli/Salmonella pos or neg
Cow Manure Composts at Day 75						
No-Turn	17	168	10 ¹	10 ¹	.	neg
Bucket Turned	11	222	10 ¹	10 ¹	.	neg
Turner 1st 2 weeks	0	244	10 ¹	10 ²	.	neg
Turner 2nd week	2	150	10 ¹	10 ⁴	.	neg
Poultry Manure Composts at Day 66						
No-Turn	11	168	10 ¹	10 ¹	.	neg
Bucket	7	165	10 ¹	10 ¹	.	neg
Turner 1st 2 weeks	.	264	10 ¹	10 ²	.	neg
Turner 2nd week	7	167	10 ¹	10 ¹	.	neg

Table 5.

Within bio-dynamic management, as an example, low-intensive composting has generally been the norm, but has been criticized by modern composters. Based on these studies, it would appear that low-tech composting is more sustainable in view of nutrient and humus-conservation and also costs. Important factors to consider in successfully implementing low-tech minimum turning approaches are correct amount of bedding and moisture control in the compost piles. In view of these results, current approaches to composting must be re-thought in view of modern, sustainable farming practice.

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A full copy of Woods End's USDA study is available for \$19.95 by writing to Woods End Institute, PO Box 297, Mt Vernon, Maine USA 04352. ✓

Costs Associated with Varying Intensity of Compost Turning	
TREATMENT	Cost \$/ wet ton
No-Turning	\$3.05
Bucket-Loader Turned	\$6.74
Turner 1x/ 2 weeks	\$14.34
Turner 2x/ week	\$41.23

Table 3.



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Event Updates

BC Farmers Market Association

The BC Farmers Market Association held its AGM in Duncan on March 1st-3rd, 2002. The meeting was well attended with many participants from the Organic sector. COABC's booth was set up and sparked some new interest, especially in the Organic Advisory Service. Interest was also expressed for more organic workshops (hands-on type). Watch for a "Satellite Farmers Market Meeting" coming soon in your area! <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/>

Biodynamic AGM

The AGM and conference of the Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Society of British Columbia is April 12,13,14 at the UBC Research Farm in Oyster River, B.C. Guest speaker Trauger Groh will address the theme "Working Together Building Farm and Community" and "The Need for Agriculture and Gardening in Our Childrens' Education". More information from bcdemeter@yahoo.ca or phone Mary Forstbauer (604) 794-3999.

Food Farming on the Ridge

The Land for Food Coalition will sponsor a slide show and talk on urban farms by Michael Ableman, visionary creator of Fairview Farm in Santa Barbara, CA., followed by a discussion of a plan to return Cordova Bay's 10-acre Haliburton Farm to a growing business and community resource. Wednesday, April 17, 2002, 7 - 9 pm at the Cordova Bay United Church, 813 Claremont, Saanich, B.C. For information call 250-652-4668



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Making the Internet Useful

by Cathleen Kneen

Some farmers are real computer geeks - they have websites of their own, they belong to listservs and they get masses of information from emails, and they even know how to 'surf the Net' and check with multiple sites and search engines to ensure that the information they have retrieved is reliable.

But most of us aren't like that.

The new pilot project which is being finalized as you read this by Rochelle Eisen, on behalf of the COABC, and the HRDC, is going to change all that. The project is called "Rural Capacity Building Through Organic Agriculture" and it is being funded under the Learning Technologies in the Workplace program. Starting in mid-April, Rochelle will be working on two fronts at once (fortunately, she's used to doing at least two things at a time):

1 Advancing Organic Content Online: The project will develop the first North American organic market intelligence page, listing weekly prices and other market news.

2 Upgrading farmers' capacities to access the information: An Information Technology (IT) program will be offered across the province (approximately \$15.00 per head) to help farmers use the Internet as an organic information resource. Each participant will be sent home with a preloaded CD to help with accessing organic materials online.

COABC is not in this alone. There are a number of project partners working on different aspects of the project.

- BCSPCA – Farm animal welfare outreach and promotion;



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- OACC (Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada) – Development of a online organic helpdesk;
- BCMAFF – Planning for Profit transition to organic worksheets, and maintenance of the Organic Infobasket Website content;
- UBC faculty – pilot project evaluation process;
- Summerland Secondary – development of two IT (Information Technology) farmer training tools.

BC organic farmers will benefit immediately from increased access to information on markets which will help them plan their production to include crops which have a ready or growing market. As the Strategic Plan which COABC has been developing over the past winter makes clear, the potential for growth for BC's organic sector is a real chicken-and-egg situation. More concrete infrastructure is needed (packing, transportation, etc.). But to make this viable, greater organic production is required. And in order to increase production, farmers need more information about what the market wants, including what is wanted – and what the prices are – at any given time and season. They also may need enhanced skills to enter new areas or to expand production, and certainly a host of information and skills are needed for new entrants into organics. So where to start?

This project enters the production/marketing spiral at the point of increased and enhanced knowledge and skills. It promises to assist organic farmers increase production and profitability, but may well also lead to an increase in the number of BC Certified Organic growers as organic information becomes more readily available. For this reason the project is listed in the strategic plan as one of the key initiatives COABC is taking in the immediate future to address its mandate to support and enhance the effectiveness of the organic sector.

To enroll for the course, or for information on any other aspect of this project, check the COABC website or contact Rochelle Eisen at:

email: rare@telus.net
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Organic Farm Apprenticeship Program

by Johanna Stiver

Stewards of Irreplaceable Land (S.O.I.L.) is hoping to expand its apprenticeship program across Canada this year. Founded in Vancouver Island, the program currently advertises placements on the BC mainland and Ontario as well.

The program was germinated in 1989. In addition to offering exposure to a farm lifestyle, a S.O.I.L. apprenticeship can provide a valuable hands-on opportunity for anyone wishing to pursue an agricultural career or simply to acquire a few basic gardening skills. In turn, farmers and farm communities benefit greatly from the influx of new ideas, energy and enthusiasm that apprentices often bring.

Apprenticeships are available to anyone over 18 who is healthy, self-motivated and eager to learn. Like the WWOOF program (Willing Workers on Organic Farms), most apprenticeships involve labour in return for room, board and the opportunity to learn. With the apprenticeship program, however, a minimum of eight weeks commitment is encouraged to allow apprentices exposure to a variety of learning opportunities throughout the season such as seeding, transplanting, harvesting and marketing. Furthermore, the farmer is expected to be committed to actively teaching farming skills.

S.O.I.L.'s purpose is to build a program which has credibility as a training program for future organic farmers. Along with the apprenticeship program, S.O.I.L. is interested in promoting and strengthening a variety of relationships between farms and labour: short and long term volunteering, daytime volunteering from nearby urban areas, internships, mentorships, and partnerships.

Both prospective apprentices and farmers fill out an application form specifying the type of farm experience desired by one and offered by the other. S.O.I.L. helps connect farmers and potential apprentices through its website or by mail, but it is the apprentice's responsibility to contact the farmer(s) and investigate the potential for the apprenticeship to take place.

The S.O.I.L. placement program is open to any farmer in Canada who is moving towards truly sustainable (organic) agriculture.

Apprenticeships are only offered on farms that emphasize organic techniques with no dependence on pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or chemical fertilizers.

The cost to be involved in the program in 2002 is \$20.00. Applications for both farmers and apprentices can be accessed via email at <soil@shaw.ca> or at our new website <www.soilapprenticeships.org>. For more information contact Stewards of Irreplaceable Land, Johanna Stiver, Box 807, Sooke, B.C. V0S 1N0 (250) 642-3671 or (250) 642-2131.



Lee McFadyen on an Organic Advisory Service visit at Northern Root garden project in Smithers, BC



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IFOAM brings knowledge from around the world

a letter from Anne Macey

Dear Farmers,

What an incredible diversity there is in the global organic movement! Reading through some of the submissions to the program I couldn't quite believe that all these people will be coming to Victoria in August, just a few months away! Many of the world's leading researchers in Organic systems are planning to attend, along with farmers and representatives of NGOs from Australia to Zimbabwe.

If you want to be up on the latest technical information Swiss researchers will tell what they know about controlling potato blight; UK researchers will talk about weed control and soil management; presenters from several countries will discuss their experiences with EM for a variety of applications; John Reganold (you remember - he's the guy that did the study comparing organic and conventional apples) will lead a session looking at comparison studies between conventional and organic productivity and economics; others will talk about green manures and crop nutrition in fruit tree systems....the list goes on. If you are more interested in the debates around some of the production issues try the Round-table discussions on animal welfare or seeds and plant breeding. It's an unbelievable opportunity to get information which will be relevant to your own production and ask pointed questions of people who really know their stuff.

If your main challenge right now is marketing - well, in Victoria you'll be able to learn from the experience of producers from all over world. There are sessions on developing local markets and building cooperatives, on ethical trade, and on getting into supermarkets (if that's your goal), as well as everything from

codes of conduct for traders to consumer surveys. One presentation I don't want to miss is Lawrence Woodward's "Food miles implications for organic marketing systems" - the director of the Elm Farm Research Centre in the UK is sure to be provocative. And yes, for those that are addicted there will be debate on certification and standards issues.

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Still not convinced you can get away even for a day or two? ... pity, you'll miss a great party!

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Anne

ps Don't forget early registration discount deadline is May 31!

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Moving your Greenhouse - Part 2

By Hermann Bruns

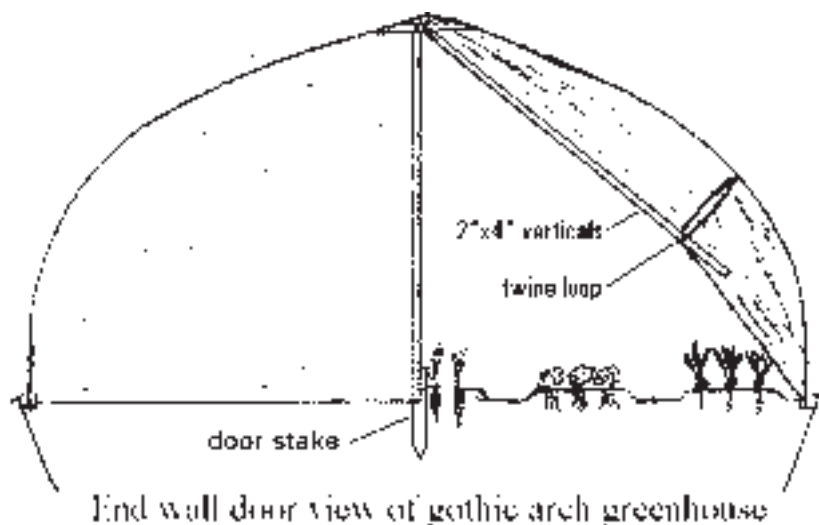
End wall/door design

After having read the moving greenhouse article in the last issue, several people have asked for more details on our end wall/door design.

Building an end wall with a door in it, whether out of steel supplied with the greenhouse or homemade out of wood, always seemed to me like the most complicated part of constructing a greenhouse. So even before we came upon the idea of moving our houses I was looking for a simpler solution.

There were two other features that I was looking for in a greenhouse door. The end walls had to be able to open as wide and high as possible for maximum ventilation so that I could save myself the cost of roll-up sides. And finally I wanted to be able to drive in with a larger tractor (JD 2130) to bring in compost or occasional tillage. So once the door was opened, there could be no obstructions to tractor access.

Once we began moving some of our houses the



end wall design proved to be very useful. Obviously if one wants to move a greenhouse over existing crops the end wall must be able to open high enough across its entire width so as to clear the tallest crop.

Our end wall consists of two large poly "doors" (same material as the top sheet) attached to two vertical 2"x4"s that hinge on bolts at the top of the gable end arch. Those hinging bolts are fastened into a 2"x6" crosspiece bolted to the inside

of the gable end arch (see diagram). The bottom of each vertical fits onto and is held closed by a corresponding steel pin extending out from a wooden 2"x6" stake driven into the ground on the inside. Each door opens like a large curtain (held open by a loop of twine) allowing maximum ventilation and easy access.

Despite the simplicity of this design, the doors have proved to be strong enough to withstand significant windstorms as long as they are fastened either in the open or



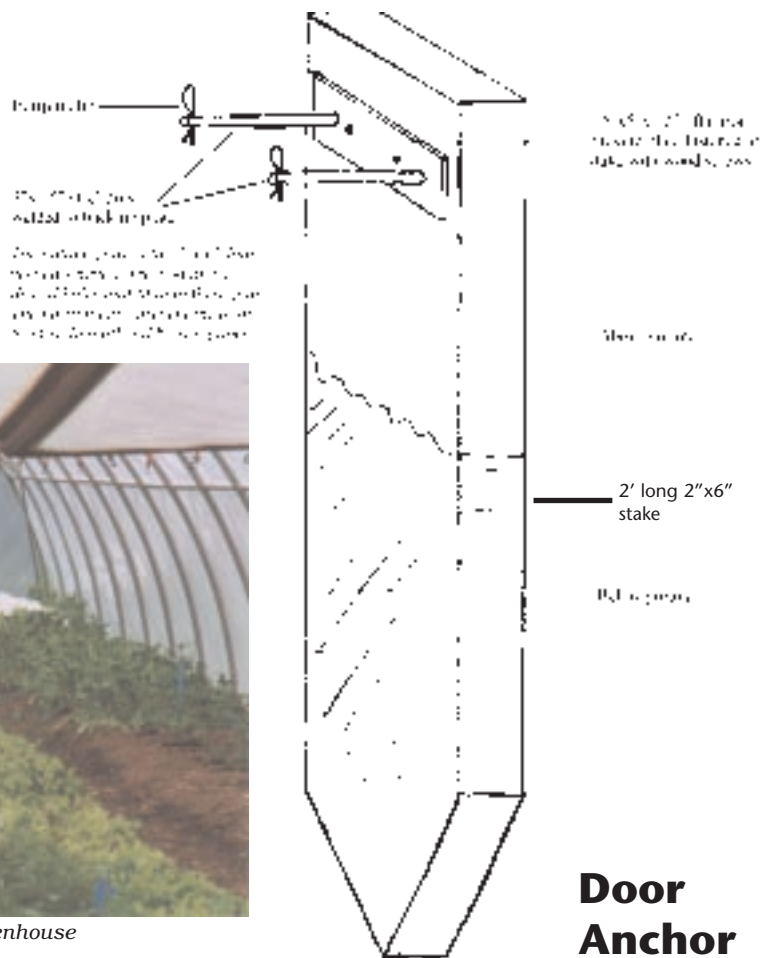
greenhouse interior, Wildflight Farm

closed position. On windy days some wind does manage to creep in under the poly but it usually doesn't amount to much.

If you'd like to build one of these end walls and have questions or need more details, feel free to give me a call (250 838-7447) or email (wildflight@jet-stream.net).



Floating row cover at Narnia Farm greenhouse



Door Anchor

BC Organic Standard Version 4

by Paddy Doherty

The British Columbia Certified Organic Management Standards Version 4 have been printed and are available from your certification body. They are also posted on the COABC website. If you need a copy and are not able to get one from your CB, contact the COABC office.

Version 4 contains all the changes up to December 31 2001. After that date, standards changes must go through the Standards Review Committee and be ratified by the COABC Board of Directors.

The new document is 3 hole punched so that you may put it in a binder. It is written in sections so that sections may be replaced as revisions are made. The page numbering is in sections for the same reason. You may want to put

divider tabs between sections so you can find your way around quickly.

Version 4 will have errors, inconsistencies, contradictions, and anomalies. This is the nature of trying to quantify something as fluid as organic agriculture. Nevertheless, they are as good as any in the world, and better than most. If you find obvious errors, or things you think need changing, send a letter (or email, or fax - but it must be in writing) to the Standards Review Committee c/o COABC office indicating the changes you would like to see.

Do not just complain about the standards, but take it on yourself to do something to make them better. The committee is able to take suggestions from any member of the COABC, or the public.



Equivalency Agreements with the USDA

by Paddy Doherty

The USDA National Organic Program comes into effect on October 30, 2002. At that time, all organic product imported into the US must be certified by an agency that is either:

1. Accredited by the USDA under the USDA National Organic Program; or
2. Under an arrangement between the USDA and a foreign government, as specified in the USDA document Subpart F #205.500

"c) ... USDA will accept a foreign certifying agent's accreditation to certify organic production or handling operations if:

(1) USDA determines, upon the request of a foreign government, that the standards under which the foreign government authority accredited the foreign certifying agent meet the requirements of this part; or

(2) The foreign government authority that accredited the foreign certifying agent acted under an equivalency agreement negotiated between the United States and the foreign government."

Many Canadian Certification Bodies (CB) have already applied for USDA accreditation. This means the USDA comes up to Canada and audits their program according to the USDA criteria, just like any other US CB. Even the Canadian CB that is accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (OCCP-ProCert) has to apply for USDA Accreditation. This is because there is no national system in place to allow an agreement between the US and Canada. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is working towards such a system, but it won't be ready before late fall at the earliest.

Why aren't BC CBs applying for USDA accreditation?

Aside from the issues of national sovereignty and economic imperialism, it is because we have a program in BC that will allow an "equivalency agreement". Officials of the USDA recognise the BC Certified Organic Program, and in the absence of a national program they are prepared to negotiate equivalency agreements with provincial governments. BC will be applying for an equivalency agreement with the US government under Section 205.500 c (2) of the USDA National Organic Program.

How far along is the equivalency agreement?

COABC president Linda Edwards has met with the BC Minister of Agriculture, has requested a letter from the Minister to initiate the equivalency agreement and received consent for this from the Minister. The new BC Certified Organic Program documents have been accepted by an 'Order-in-Council' and put into the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act as Version 4 (this was a necessary step as the new documents provide the ISO 61 compliant accreditation process required for an equivalency agreement). The documents and Minister's letter are being printed and prepared for submission to the USDA.

When will the equivalency agreement be in place?

It is likely that the process will take at least 3 months. In this case, we may have something in place by July 1st. In any event, the BCMAFF has assured the COABC that trade will proceed unhindered once the process has begun, which should be by April 1st.



New Staff



We're sorry to say goodbye to Kristen Kane, but welcome our new administrator, Maya Nunn, who is competently staffing the office, along with her mother Cara.



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What's Going on Across Canada?

by Paddy Doherty

Updating the Canada Organic Standard

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has sponsored the Canada Organic Standard updating process. This doesn't mean they are paying anyone to go to Ottawa to attend Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) Meetings, but they are paying for the CGSB process, which is very expensive. Why the CGSB has ownership of the Canada Standard probably speaks to the poor way we have managed the Canadian Organic Community over the years. However, that is a historical issue and is not being dealt with right now.

COABC sent Rochelle Eisen and Linda Edwards to the CGSB meeting in Ottawa on March 11, 12 2001. Jo Ann Sandhu (BCMAFF) also attended to represent our interests. The COABC was fortunate to receive donations for this initiative from the wholesaling and retailing sector of the organic community. If you want to know more about this project, you may contact Pascale Bourassa:

Canadian General Standards Board
Tel: 819-956-5379
Fax: 819-956-5740
email: Pascale.Bourassa@pwgsc.gc.ca
Web: <http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/>

When they got to Ottawa, Linda and Rochelle discovered that the proposed national materials list was very incomplete and certainly not what

everyone wanted; it was based on the CODEX model which lists only what is permitted, not what is regulated or prohibited. They presented the COABC Standard and were delighted that the COABC/OMRI format was quickly adopted as the model for the National standard. Negotiations are now in process for an arrangement with OMRI, since their list is copyright.

Linda Edwards has taken on the daunting task of incorporating the proposed Canadian standard, the US National Organic Program, the European Union, Japanese, and CODEX standards. Her task is to identify points of difference which need to be negotiated. AAFC has agreed that the Canadian standard does not need to be identical to all of these; divergence can be negotiated in consideration of differing conditions.

For example, in Europe use of copper is banned because of centuries of over-use leading to toxic levels of copper in the soil (up to 200 ppm), while our soils have an average of .5 to 2 ppm, which is considered to be deficient for plant growth. Linda says the only people using copper in BC are the peach/apricot/nectarine growers who use one or two post-harvest foliar sprays to control peach leaf-curl and coryneum blight, both of which get worse under organic management. Other Canadian farmers have found it necessary to supplement copper in the mineral mix for sheep. This would be an area where divergence in the European and Canadian standards could be negotiated.

Linda is circulating all the material to the Directors as she generates it, so if anyone is interested in this area, please contact your Director or Linda directly.

There will be another meeting at the end of May in Ottawa where it is hoped at least some of this can be finalized. The Federal government hopes to have a completed Canadian Standard ready for negotiation with both exporting and importing countries by next October.

Canadian Organic Initiative

For the past year, Alex Scott of the Organic Producers Association of Manitoba and I have

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been working on a project to try to bring the Canadian organic community into some sort of representative organisation. We have asked provincial representatives to talk together on AAFC sponsored conference calls. The results have been encouraging and we are looking towards forming a coalition of organisations to represent the interests of the Canadian Organic community.

Access to International Markets

This is the priority issue for the AAFC and they have been proceeding methodically:

- Update the Canada Organic Standard (see above) to meet or exceed international standards. They hope to have this accomplished by the end of autumn.
- Negotiate equivalency agreements with the USDA, the EC, Japan and wherever else these are required. These agreements will allow CBs that are accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) access to the respective markets. There may be some difficulty for AAFC to negotiate these agreements as the SCC currently has only accredited two CBs. This is an identified problem – how will the AAFC convince foreign jurisdictions they represent the whole organic community when they only have CBs accredited?
- Dealing with the “Regulatory” (mandatory) issue – this is the process around regulations and enforcement procedures for the use of the organic designation (see below). AAFC has indicated this issue may take 3 years to process.

Regulating the Word “Organic”

This issue has come up in both the Canada Standard Update project and the Canada Organic Initiative project. In both cases, there has been unanimous support for some sort of regulation of the organic designation. This is because Canada is now one of only four trading nations in the world to have no regulations over the organic designation.

Apparently, Canada is becoming a dumping ground for poorly labelled and spuriously pro-

duced organic product. Anyone can import a product called organic into Canada and the government can do nothing about it. This is becoming an issue of unfair practices in the marketplace.

The other issue here is the ability for foreign certifiers to operate in Canada to whatever standard they feel like. Canadian grown organic product ends up in the Canadian market but it is certified by an organisation in Florida or California or the UK. Canadians have no say over what standard these CBs are using.

A regulation in Canada would require imports to meet a minimum standard, could be administered at the provincial level, and could have exemptions for small producers as they do in the US. You will probably be hearing more about this issue in the months to come. ✓

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BC Organic Grower, Volume 5, Number 2, Spring 2002

Page 29

Organic Directory On Its Way

Canadian Organic Growers (COG) will publish the 4th edition of the Canadian Organic Directory in time for distribution at the IFOAM Organic World Congress this coming August. The last Directory was published in 1995 by COG. In the future COG expects to publish annual updates.

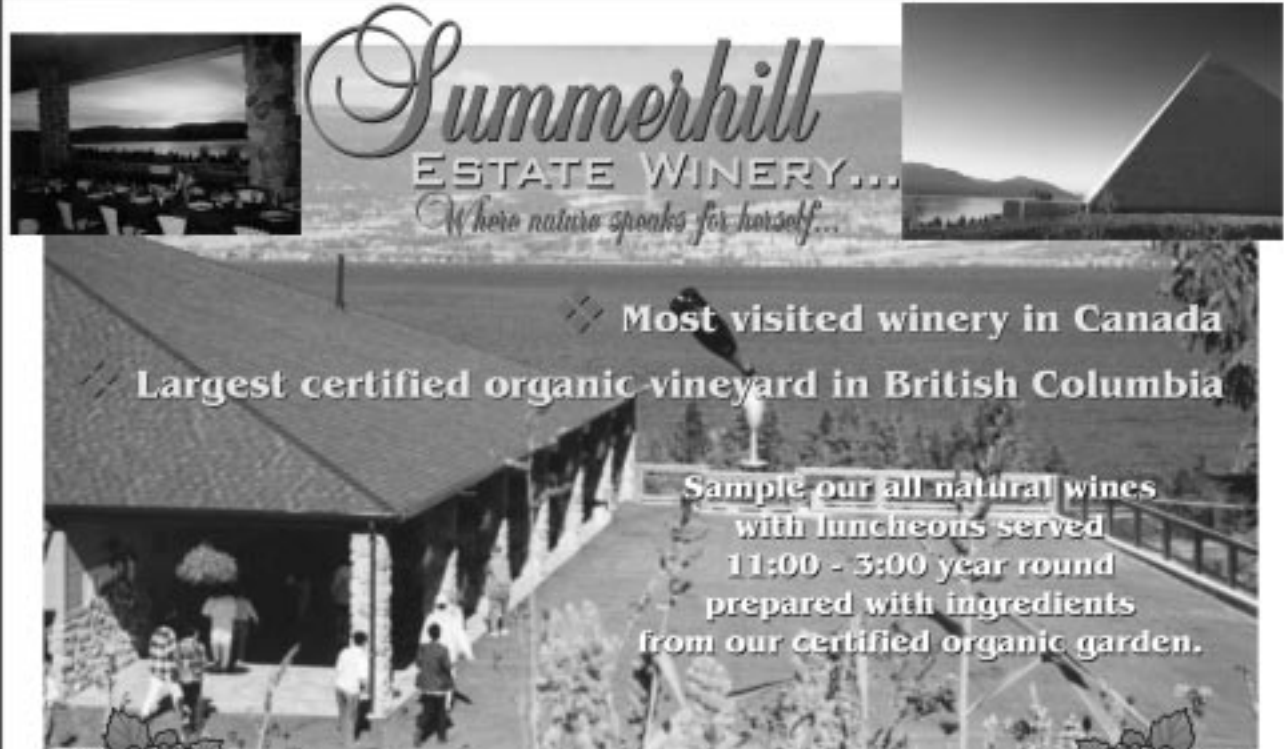
Project Coordinator Eleanor Heise plans to list information about every Certification Body in each province, however only certified growers and processors will be listed. There will also be information about organic and sustainable agriculture education, training, apprenticeships, yearly conferences, research, retailers/traders, CSAs, government contacts, extension workers, seed and other input sources, farmers markets, consultants, COG chapters and other organic and related organizations.

COG is trying to make listings affordable for every-

one, according to Marina Buchan, COG V.P. A basic producer or processor entry costs \$10 for three lines. She suggests that the simplest way for CBs to make sure every certified producer and processor is included in the directory is to send in data on a spreadsheet along with a cheque to cover their entries.

All entries and advertisements should be sent in by April 30, 2002.

For more information about entries or advertising in the Canadian Organic Directory please visit the COG website: www.cog.ca or for assistance in designing an ad contact Randy Mugford: rmugford@hfx.eastlink.ca or phone: 902-868-1299. For general information about the directory project contact Eleanor Heise: ehaise@kos.net or phone: 613-399-5613. ✓



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