

BC *Organic Grower*

Vol. 7, No. 4

Winter 2004 - 2005



*British
Columbia
Certified
Organic*



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**COABC, 3402 32nd Ave.
Vernon BC V1T 2N1**

President's Letter

by Patrick Mallett

Winter is a time of reflection – at least that's what people tell me. I certainly haven't noticed a seasonal slowdown around the COABC office or around my office. However, our annual conference and AGM in February will mark the end of my two year term as Board President, after which I will be stepping down. So it seems fitting, if somewhat trite, to review the progress that we've made as an organization over that time. This is not a list, just a personal reflection on the direction the organization is heading.

It seems the Board spent a lot of time planning. That's what Boards do, but especially a Board where the members change completely every couple of years. It gets to be quite onerous / repetitive/haven't we already done this, especially if you are action-oriented. However, I think we have made one significant step as a result – clearly separating out our core functions of standard-setting, accreditation and logo management, and setting a fee schedule that covers these functions. These activities are our base; they are what we have been mandated to do and are what licensees pay us for. By separating out the real costs of these services and having these costs fully covered by fees, we know that we can deliver them on an ongoing basis, allowing us to focus on how we improve these services and make them more cost effective. You never know, membership fees could go down!

It can be argued convincingly that standard-setting is COABC's reason for being. The content of the standard is at the heart of our work and attempts to reflect our vision of what is organic agriculture. We have invested responsibility in managing our standard to the Standards Review Committee (SRC), which is made up of representatives of each of the member Certifying Bodies. This is not glamorous work but it is critically important. The SRC has been working to a new model over the last year. In practice, a lot of their energy has been consumed in addressing new areas of standard development, such as aquaculture and cosmetics. I don't believe that the time and energy required to come to meaningful recommenda-

tions on these new areas pays off. While we need to be open to new areas of standard development, we still need to refine our model of standards management, so that we don't burn out or disenfranchise our volunteers. (see Standards p. 11)



Accreditation is one of those things that I think most members feel is a cost of doing business, without any real benefit. For those licensees that are marketing their products locally, I would tend to agree. I have never been one for bureaucracy for the sake of bureaucracy. But it is a reality for most trade in organic products and provides the level of confidence that the market and government require. Since the inception of the accreditation program, COABC licensees have been getting close to a free ride, with the Provincial Government picking up most of the cost of this activity. The total expense is not great, but we have to be clear that this expense may not always be covered by other sources and we should start to figure more of the real costs into our membership fees.

Beyond the core functions, everything else becomes a project: the research, education, marketing and advocacy. We can take something on if it is a priority for members and if we have the external funds and capacity to do it. Unfortunately, as an organization, we still don't have a clear idea of what are these priority projects. We move along in a relatively ad hoc fashion, taking advantage of opportunities as they arise. The strategic planning in 2002 that resulted in the BC Organic Sector Plan for OSDP Funding was a useful process for defining what the organic sector in BC needs, but not for defining the role that COABC plays in meeting those needs. COABC still needs to take the time to decide what type of activities, if any, beyond our core functions, we want to pursue. That means more strategic planning, oh joy, oh bliss!

We have a good opportunity to partner with other organic farmers to take on some of the

projects that we prioritize. Over the last year, we have been discussing a partnership with the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) in the creation of a BC Chapter of COG. In December, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with COG which states our intention to work with them to promote organic agriculture activities in the Province. It also gives COABC connections to a national network of growers and to potential joint fundraising for projects. We can all get to know COG a bit better when they hold their national AGM in conjunction with the COABC AGM in February.

One of the key questions that I think the organization needs to address is the extent to which we should be taking positions on different issues of interest to our members. Recent examples include the outbreak of avian flu in the Lower Mainland, the new Provincial legislation on abattoirs, and the Canadian Seed Sector Review. While we are not primarily an advocacy organization, we could do more. However, some would argue that we shouldn't have any role in advocacy; that there are other organizations that are better placed and better oriented to do this. In either case, we need to come to a common understanding, as an organization, what is the role of COABC, specifically, in addressing these and other emerging issues of concern and interest to the organic community.

One venue where we can discuss these issues is the Annual General Meeting and Conference, which will be held this year from 25 to 27 February in Sidney. This is the best opportunity for the Board to receive direct input from the membership as a whole. I know that the Conferences are getting bigger and better. The line-up of workshops and discussions make this one an event not to be missed. I am really looking forward to seeing many of you in Sidney and to meeting others for the first time! ✓

SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE CONFERENCE AND AGM

February 25 - 27, 2005

Mary Winspear Centre at Sancha, Sidney, B.C.

Featuring Humberto Rios Labrada
Director of Participatory Plant Breeding, Cuba,
and Stewart Wells, NFU President

see pages 28-31 for details and registration

BC Organic Grower

is received by all members of organizations belonging to the Certified Organic Association of British Columbia. BC Organic Grower is published quarterly by COABC.

We welcome letters to the Editor (500 words maximum) and articles (1000 words maximum). We reserve the right to edit for length.

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Advertising (rates & copy) & non-member **subscriptions** (\$20/year plus \$1.40 GST) to:

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Cover Photo: Paddy Doherty

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Editor's Note: We apologize for the accidental omission of a by-line in the last issue. The article "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" was written by Abra Brynne.

Next Issue Deadline:
March 1, 2004

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Cuban Plant Breeder at Seeds for the Future

With the generous support of Nature's Path cereals and Coast Islands Conservancy Dr. Humberto Rios Labrada from Cuba will be the keynote speaker at the COABC conference. Humberto is a key figure in Cuba's farmer based Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB), which is becoming a major engine for rural (re)development and new multi-stakeholder partnerships, giving farmer-breeders, as natural scientists, greater control over breeding and seed production.

Farmers and researchers are reshaping Cuba's agriculture with PPB, as it learns the hard lessons of dependency and scarcity, and now countrywide undertakes massive food security programs. Cuba's national agricultural system has been near collapse mostly because of the USA's 44 year blockade and the relatively recent Soviet Bloc collapse of industrial agricultural support and markets.

These lessons are very relevant for Canada, where government support of agricultural extension has withered and seed breeding is



L to R: Eleanor Wright, Mendel Rubinson, Cuban farmer Sergio, Humberto Rios Labrada, Carlos Feo de la Fe, Paula Rubinson, Nikki Spooner

being captured by concentrated private capital interests (see page 5).

In 1999 COABC delegated Ron Pither to liase for capacity building between Cuban and COABC farmers. Ron says, "Using community (not just farmers) participatory methodologies, the Cubans have been teaming up to work in Mexico to save and propagate the land races of

our ancient corns that are threatened by GMO and the insane industrial models of corporate concentration. In the Carribbean and Latin America they are collaborating on similar strategies with all manner of crops."

Ron adds that Humberto is a fantastic musician, lyricist-composer, vocalist, percussionist, arranger-producer, and we hope he will participate in the musical side of the conference.

So come to the Conference to catch the PPB beat and to rethink conventional breeding strategies – recognizing the key roles of farmers, and their knowledge and social organization in the management and maintenance of agricultural biodiversity. ✓

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Save our Seed System

by Cathleen Kneen

In metaphor and reality, seeds are the basis of agriculture and arguably of life itself. Since time immemorial farmers and gardeners have saved, swapped, and re-planted the seeds from their crops, and so have developed varieties and strains that fulfill their particular needs, whether for productivity, disease or pest resistance, harvest time, tolerance to drought, heat, or cold, or a myriad other factors, including beauty.

Now the ability of farmers to save, re-use, and swap seeds is under threat. The CFIA is has posted proposed changes to the Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR) Act which will effectively place control of Canada's seed supply in the hands of the 'seed breeders' – i.e., the seed corporations such as Monsanto and Syngenta.

The National Farmers Union is leading a campaign to oppose this legislation. The NFU has produced background fact-sheets and a petition, as well as a background analysis of the Seed Sector Review upon which the legislative changes are based, all available at their website, www.nfu.ca

According to the December issue of The Union Farmer, the Seed Sector Review includes plans to:

Encourage or compel farmers to buy 'certified' seed (by linking Crop Insurance rates or Wheat Board contracts to the use of certified seed);

Terminate the right to sell 'common' seed (by requiring that all seed be sold by variety name – an impossible requirement for most farmers);

Collect royalties on farm-saved seed;

Extend royalty payment periods on seeds and giving seed corporations powerful new enforcement and collection tools (including powers to seize farmers' crops).

While some of these may seem to be issues primarily for Prairie grain farmers, it is worth noting that many of the varieties used by organic farmers, and certainly the heritage varieties and breeds that we try to conserve, would not

be 'certified'; this includes vegetables as well as grains. In fact Plant Breeders Rights are an issue for all farmers and those who care for the land.

Rights vs. Privilege

A big clue to the purpose of the legislation is the language which enshrines "rights" for plant breeders, and a framework which may – at least temporarily – give farmers a "privilege" or an "exemption" that would allow them to save and re-use their seeds.

Talk of Monsanto's "rights" and farmers' "privilege" is offensive and turns reality on its head. Farmers' rights to their seeds are real and based on thousands of years of tradition. Corporations cannot have rights; they are non-human and exist at the pleasure of society. The protection from competition we grant to these

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corporate non-persons – through patents and so-called Plant Breeders Rights – is a privilege, granted so that we, as citizens, may realize certain outcomes for the public good. Properly-conceived legislation would begin by enshrining farmers' rights to their seeds and then, perhaps, give seed corporations certain limited privileges designed to facilitate the public good of plant development.

The corporations' rights will be enforced through measures which include the right to seize a farmer's crop if they suspect you are using their PBR protected variety without proper permission and royalty payment – just as Monsanto now does with its patented GMO seeds – and the onus will be on the farmer to prove that the accusation is false. Of course what Monsanto will do is visit the farm, allege that you have violated their Plant Breeders' Rights, propose a farm-destroying settlement amount, and then suggest a smaller amount if you agree to a gag order.



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Furthermore, unauthorized possession is prohibited, so a seed company can catch a farmer years after the unauthorized transaction. Seed companies, in their Seed Sector Review, admit that their goal is to have farmers paying royalties every year on seed that farmers save and re-use on their own farms.

The end of public breeding

All of this is based on the assumption that seed breeding requires ownership rights over not just the seeds, but over their germplasm/DNA, and that without PBR and/or patents on seeds there will be no further plant breeding. The reality is that in Canada almost all plant breeding was done by the public sector – federal and provincial, including universities – until the 1980s and '90s. Researchers on the public payroll at universities and Ag. Canada facilities developed new varieties to meet farmers' needs and then turned those varieties over to farmers at low cost. In the early '80s, the public sector did 95% of plant breeding in Canada and 100% of breeding for cereal crops and oilseeds. Even canola, that darling of the biotech industry, was developed by and in the public sector, and taken over by Monsanto and the others only when it was fully developed. The blackmailers that threaten 'no food future' without privatization and ownership 'rights' over seeds and their genes have stunningly short memories.

Once the provisions of the Act have enabled the 'seed companies' to claim ownership of all the genetic stocks they can lay their hands on, there will be no independent sources of germplasm for either farmers or independent (eg. university) researchers trying to develop a crop to resist a particular pest or climatic challenge. The "farmers' right" to save seed in the absence of access to other germplasm and traditional varieties is meaningless, whether it's wheat or carrots.

Mary Ballon, of West Coast Seeds, comments that the seed supply for the planet is already being eroded. "I can't find a source for open pollinated scarlet nantes carrots at less than \$70 US/lb.," she says. "All we can hope is that the seed stock people have in their hands right now can be kept alive and well and well-described."

Parallel to the corporate profit-enhancement scheme, the federal government plans to further withdraw from all "crop variety development research," get out of "animal production research," and get out of "applied research" except for "genetic enhancement and germplasm," "health and safety and environmental issues," and "bioproducts and bioprocesses." In other words, changes to the PBR Act are designed to underpin a private, for-profit, high-cost, farmer-funded seed system for Canada. There is not one thing in the government of Canada's proposed amendments that farmers would want or that would benefit farmers. Not one thing.

Call to action

So far, the CFIA has chosen passive "consultation": posting documents on its site, relying on farmers to find the documents, and allowing comment. Consultations close March 8, 2005.

The CFIA discussion paper is nine pages long, relatively easy to read, and available at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/pbrpov/ammende.shtml. Please read it, and write or email the CFIA and let them know that you do not want pro-corporate changes to our PBR Act, that you do not want a government withdrawal from plant breeding and other vital agricultural research, and that you are strongly opposed to the overhaul of our seed and food system outlined in the Seed Sector Review report.

If you need more background, contact the National Farmers Union at www.nfu.ca. – and come and hear NFU President Stewart Wells at *Seeds for the Future* in Sidney! ✓

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Another Krist... in the office

As usual, the COABC office is a hive of activity. The departure of our most recent Office Co-ordinator, Jilly Skelhon, means that there is now a new face: Kristy Wiperman is a young woman who is fairly new to Vernon. She has background in office administration, accounting and customer service, and seems to have a very easy-going attitude. Hopefully, she will be able to maintain her mellow nature when she is thrown to the wolves I mean COABC office. Welcome to Kristy and I am sorry that I couldn't hire someone with a name less similar to mine. Now you shall all be even more confused- is it Kristen or Kirsten or Kristy?? Are they all the same person? Tee Hee.

Gas Rebate for COABC

Keep a look out for your Husky-Mohawk rebate card and a letter explaining the program to arrive in your mail. We are sending one to each CB member, as well as those who are closely associated with COABC. There are a few more cards available so if we have missed someone, contact the office for a card. In short, the rebate program is a fund-raiser for COABC- when someone purchases gas or other products at Husky-Mohawk, a portion of the sale goes back to COABC. Watch for the letter for more detail.

Magnets & Brochures Available

Now available! A new COABC brochure, advertorials and fridge magnets for distribution. Contact the office to have these on hand for your market booths or CSAs. The advertorial ran in October in both the Vancouver Sun and Province. The Sun version is slightly more detailed, with more text. The brochures are intended to complement the new consumer-oriented COABC site (which is still somewhat under construction) with similar tag lines, colours, and messages. The magnets are green and white, feature the checkmark and say "Guaranteed Goodness". We will send magnets for each of you care of your CBs in the next little while.

by Kirsten Kane

Terra Madre - BC's Slow Food Delegation

By Ted Buchan with Gabriele Cursons



Ted Buchan

In October I was honoured to attend the "Terra Madre" global meeting of Food Communities in Turin, Italy, travelling with Jerry Kitt, his son Donovan and daughter Kari.

Bringing together 5,000 delegates from 130 countries, billeting and feeding them all for five days required a feat of organizational skill that boggles the mind. There were some glitches. For example, I was initially assigned to the "Community of Southern California Persimmon Growers"; I was eventually reassigned to the "Community of Bison Ranchers", a community of one, I think, because Jerry was assigned to the "Community of Diverse Livestock Producers." A two-hour line up for the buffet lunch was remedied the next day - though the conversations were so interesting that we formed a 'community of the queue'.

There were also the Food Community of Entomophagous Women from Burkina Faso (women who harvest, process and sell insects, which are part of their local diet), the Farmers Market Community of British Columbia, the Community of Yak Farmers in Kirghizia, and the Community of Tuscan Archipelago Palamita Fishermen in Italy, among many, many others.

The group I wound up with consisted of about forty North American alternative and organic livestock producers including Joel Salatin. There were also 40 or so Japanese farmers and processors, including a sake salesman with samples for all and Maki, their Japanese-Italian translator, a volunteer, who on the first evening had to relay messages in sign and body language through me to the Anglophones until we found an Italian-English delegate on the second day. Hai!

Welcoming the delegates in his opening speech Carlo Petrini, President of Slow Foods International and instigator of this conference stressed that "your knowledge and know-how must not be threatened by the logic of productivity, by the manipulation of genes, by the profit motive of a privileged few, by the lack of respect for the environment, by the exploitation of workers... Alone and divided, food communities are not in a position to react against this violence... Only if consumers become co-producers and fully grasp the fact that production is being threatened, may we be able to move on."

The messages were profound. To preserve the integrity of local food communities, the globalization of food must be resisted. To preserve the integrity of local seeds the release of GMO seed must be banned. To feed the world with dignity and justice, communities must work together to link local producers and processors with regional appetites. By calling together producers of unique or heritage foods which cannot be easily mass-produced the organizers hope to build a sense of solidarity and optimism which would be shown in the media and return with us to our various communities.

The speakers from South America and Africa pointed out that "the transnational systems of moving First World agricultural surpluses into Third World economies was doing nothing more than promoting hunger among the poor and increasing food insecurities in the region."



Cuban Delegate presenting his low tech trickle irrigation system

Vandana Shiva from India expanded these views: "The World Trade Organization Agreement on Agriculture is an agreement of Non-agriculture and Non-food because that's what they are promoting. What is often called food in this age is not food; it is a byproduct of a war economy. The leftovers of the Second World War

chemicals of warfare are repackaged and deployed as herbicides and pesticides. Modern industrial agriculture is a war against the earth and against farmers... local agriculture is the biggest peace movement in the world...by becoming co-producers, consumers support biodiversity, local agriculture and a future of hope."

In addition to the formal Plenaries, there were scheduled seminars, listed by subject and areas of interest and fringe seminars that seemed to spring up wherever and whenever.

My first scheduled seminar was Agriculture: "Pest Management through Food" (snails, insects, worms, and other animals). One presentation was "The Power of Duck" by Takao Furuno, "One Duck - Myriad Blessings":

Plant the rice seedlings, companion plant the aquatic plant Azolla as fodder for the duck, introduce fish, introduce ducks. The ducks eat the weeds and Azolla and harmful insects, the

duck fertilizes the rice and stimulates growth through weeding by feeding and stirring up the paddy. Harvest fish and shrimp for daily protein and ducks and the rice at the end of the cycle.

This reduces labour and input, increases yield and quality over conventional 3 Tonnes /Ha. to 15 Tonnes /Ha. The Japanese to Italian translator for this presentation was the sake salesman from our group. Small world.

I wanted to drop in on a fringe seminar but as the presenter was Elliot Coleman I could not get near the door. I did get to my scheduled Seminar on "Alternative Meat" (llamas, buffaloes, bisons, reindeers and guinea pigs). At the fringe seminar on "Globalization and Biotech" I arrived five minutes early and squeezed into the last available standing room. The panel was chaired by Vandana Shiva, with Alice Waters, the Mayor of Turin, Carlo Petrini, the Vice President of IFOAM from Brazil, and a deputy minister of the Italian ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

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All spoke on the dangers of a globalized food system and GMO in the EU and promised to have laws in place to prevent the release of even one GMO seed in their regions. Apparently some former East Bloc countries have already been coerced with the usual promises and have allowed GMO. When the chair called for comments or questions I went to the mike and commented on the disaster of the release of GMO canola in Western Canada.

Anecdote in the Blueberry Patch: when Elliot Coleman bought his farm he noticed that his neighbour had a helicopter spray his blueberry field. He approached his neighbour and offered to show him how to grow organic blueberries for five times the price. The neighbour was not interested. The next year when the helicopter came, he and a friend walked out into the neighbour's field. The pilot did not spray because spraying people is illegal there. Moral: Try the polite approach first, if that does not work just say, "No."

Winona LaDuke of the Ojibwa first nation, from Minnesota "Community of Wild Rice Harvesters," gave a very powerful talk in the closing Plenary about the co-opting of native N.A. foods by the Europeans. The potato, tomato, varieties of beans and squash, rice and cacao (chocolate) were crops all developed by the Native American farmers. This community will do whatever it takes to protect their wild rice variety from contamination by GMO or any




Gabrielle Cursons and Vandana Shiva

other external threat. She received a standing ovation from the delegates.

Chef Alice Waters introduced the Prince of Wales for the closing address. The impeccably dressed Prince, not a hair out of place, came to the podium to address the 5,000 campesinos, peasants, Salts of the Earth, fishers, gatherers and small farmers. The irony could have been pounded like a fence post, but he pulled it off very well. The four or five standing ovations he received during his speech forced me to stand and applaud just to keep the action in sight.

When he told us that we were making a difference in our own way and that we really were the only hope for a sustainable future, I swallowed it hook, line and sinker. When he stated that the giant biotech companies and multinational corporations were a dead end, I believed him. Of course, I already knew that! But hearing it from the future King of England may take the message beyond the already converted.

When the closing session was over I walked the kilometer to the Salone del Gusto, where the produce and products of farmers from all over the world are presented by the Slow Food movement every two years. The huge building was packed with a sea of humanity squeezed shoulder to shoulder. The exhibits were divided into Vias (roads) and there were miles and miles of cheeses, wines, processed meats and bread all identified with a region. Finally I came to the corner dedicated to the Ark of Taste: a Slow Food virtual list of the National or Indigenous foods that are in danger of disappearing because of the global food system. I found Canada and there was Mara Jernigan handing out samples of bread made with Red Fife wheat, made daily by a baker from Victoria in a Turin Bakery and brought to the Salone. Red Fife wheat, the Montreal Melon and the Canadienne cow are Canada's contribution to the Ark of Taste. When I moved close enough to talk, Mara said, "We've got to get buffalo on the Ark; I need help with the paper work." "Count me in," I said as a surge of mankind swept me up to the Wild Rice Gatherers. Going with the flow I exited the Salone del Gusto feeling claustrophobic but inspired.

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After heartfelt goodbyes with some new friends we prepared to leave for home. We arrived at the airport at 4:20 a.m. and hung out with a heritage turkey farmer from Colorado, and an organic grain grower from Saskatchewan as we awaited our 10:50 departure. Vandana Shiva strolled in to wait for the same plane to Frankfurt. As we moved through the security check and boarding passes I asked her if she thought that this movement could solve the problem of world hunger without first solving the problem of overpopulation. She replied, "People on the land do not overpopulate." "Like

my buffalo," I said, "will not breed if there is no grass in the spring. They do not come into estrus until the nutrition rises." "What kind of buffalo do you have?" she asked. "North American Bison, *Bison*," I replied. "Oh," she laughed, "people on the land are just like that."

text of Terra Madre speeches available at: <http://www.slow-foodusa.org/events/terramadre.html>



Changes, Proposed New Standards *Standards Review Committee*

The committee met four times this year with involved discussion on Aquaculture, Land Care Management, Personal Care Standards and Seed Standards. Changes were made to clarify the standards regarding gestation of transition slaughter animals, dairy minerals, and propagation standards.

To meet the future requirement for certified organic growers to use Certified Organic seed in accordance with the USA and EU standards, our Draft National Standard proposes that non-organic, untreated seeds may only be used if an equivalent organic variety is not commercially available. The SRC is examining a similar statement in its standards to parallel these requirements. A draft Seed Standard has recently been forwarded to the committee and is currently under review. A discussion is also in progress on SOOPA's request for a whole farm policy. A summary of responses and scenarios are being examined and further discussion is scheduled.

Standards Changes for 2005

Changes to Operation Policies and Management Standards Version 6 (Version 7 will be current for 2005. Applicable replacement pages will be available Spring 2005) following the comment period – please read the protocol below.

Protocol for submissions to make changes to the standards:

- a) Proposed amendments or additions to the BC Certified Organic Standards may be directed to the Chair from members, individual operators, the BCMAFF, or interested members of the public. A draft document along with a rationale for the changes must be submitted prior to November 1st for inclusion in that year's agenda.
- b) The Standards Review Committee will review and revise the submission and will post the proposed changes by December 1st for comment by

continued on page 12...

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the membership. The comment period runs until February 1st

c) SRC finalizes recommendations to Board by the AGM in February.

d) New Board ratifies recommendations by April.

e) Standards are circulated and come into effect January 1st of following year.

Section 2 – Definitions & Certification Procedures

2.1 Certification References

Insert:

76) Transition - The act of establishing organic management practices in accordance with this standard.

77) Transition Period - The period of time between the start of implementing a program of organic management of a production unit and the completion of the production unit as organic in accordance with this standard.

78) Transitional Product - A product from an enterprise that has completed one or more years of the transition period towards becoming a certified organic enterprise and is in a COABC recognized certification program.

Section 3 – Land and Resource Management

3.3.2 Required

3) For transplants and potted plants - Enterprise has received appropriate inspections and meets the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All other crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued. Plants not grown in a biologically active growing medium may not be sold as certified organic for human consumption.

4) Mushrooms - Enterprise has received appropriate inspections and meets the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All other crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued.

5) Sprouts - Enterprise has received appropriate inspections and meets the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All other crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued.

6) Meat Animals (excluding poultry) - Animals must be maintained by an enterprise that has been certified under the BC Certified Organic Program (or an equivalent and recognised program) from conception. For simultaneous conversion of livestock and land used for feeding livestock within the same unit: when the land in all other ways fulfill the requirements of this standard, in the third year, feed and pasture used within the unit may be considered equivalent to organic provided there is a demonstrated history of 36 months prior to harvest with no use of prohibited substances. The feed may not be sold or used as organic outside of the unit in question.

11) Processing - Enterprise has received appropriate inspections and meets the requirements specified by the BC Certified Organic Program. All other crop production standards must be complied with and verified before a certificate may be issued.

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3.6 Fences, Trellises and Buildings

3.6.4 2) CCA treated lumber cannot be in contact with soil in boxed beds used to grow crops.

3.9 Manure Management

The committee is involved in an on going discussion on a submission by BCARA regarding the use of only certified organic manure to minimize the presence of products in the manure that don't break down during the composting process. These products would primarily be GMOs, heavy metals, and some insecticides/herbicides.

3.9.3 (1b) This is not meant to exclude occasional manure deposits from naturally grazing livestock.

3.9.3 (2d)... although growers must abide by all food safety regulations. See 3.9.3 (1a)



Section 4 – Organic Crop Management

This requires use of organic seed unless it is commercially unavailable. Use of non-organic seed is regulated. The intent of this is that producers use organic seed and planting stock if it is available, unless the only organic varieties available are unsuitable for their production.

4.3 Plant Propagation

4.3.1. Recommended

1) Organically produced seeds and transplants and plant material.

4.3.2 Required

- 1) Annual seedlings must be certified organic.
- 2) Seeds and planting stock must be certified organically grown unless an equivalent organic variety is commercially unavailable (see section 4.3.3).
- 3) Seeds used for producing organic sprouts for human consumption must be certified organic.

4.3.2. Allowed

- 1) Non-toxic seed treatments, including:
 - a) hot water
 - b) legume inoculants
 - c) pelletised seeds (must not be treated with materials prohibited in these standards)

4.3.3. Regulated

- 1) Use of excessive temperatures (over 180 degrees F. /82 degrees C.) to sterilise soils.
- 2) Non-organic perennial transplants must go through a 12 month (from planting date to harvest date) transition before crops can be sold as certified organic.
- 3) Non-organic seeds (except for sprout production as in 4.3.2) and untreated non-organic planting stock such as seed potatoes, strawberry crowns and onions sets may be used only if equivalent organic varieties are commercially unavailable (see definitions, section 2). Documentation satisfactory to the certification body of attempts to obtain organic seeds and planting stock is required.

4.3.4. Prohibited

- 1) Use of synthetic fungicides, pesticides, or soil fumigants on any seedlings or planting stock produced on-farm for organic production.
- 2) Use of any practices or materials prohibited in this or any other section of these standards on seedlings or planting stock to be sold as British Columbia Certified Organic.
- 3) Genetically engineered organisms.
- 4) Use of seeds treated with synthetic pesticides.
- 5) Genetically engineered inoculants (seed dressings).
- 6) Use of non-certified organically produced annual seedlings .

Rationale: Organic Seed – where are we from Rochelle Eisen

Sometime in the future certified organic growers worldwide are going to be required to use Certified Organic seed. In Canada this may be within the next calendar year. Currently (2004), in British Columbia, the COABC standard recommends the use of certified organic seed, but allows for the use of non-organic seed, if they are untreated. The third draft of Canadian National Standards states non-organic, untreated seeds may be used if an equivalent organic variety is not available from within the farm, or from other sources (i.e. commercially

continued on page 14...

...continued from page 13

available). This version parallels the USA requirement. All standards specify that the non-organic seed must be treated only with substances in accordance with the standard. The prohibited list includes: use of synthetic fungicides, pesticides, fumigants and genetically engineered seed, treatments, or inoculants.

Section 5 - Greenhouse Management (previously section 17 Draft Greenhouse Management standards)

The motion to ratify the Greenhouse Draft Standard that has been in place and posted for 12 months was passed, with the one amendment stated below.

17). With regards to the container-growing medium, the draft says "a biologically active soil must be evident in the containers by the end of each growing cycle".

To be replaced with:

17). "a biologically active growing medium must be evident in the containers by the end of each growing cycle".

Section 9 Poultry

9.3 Housing and Living Conditions

10) (b) Pasture area of a minimum of 43 square feet per bird/year must be used. This is equivalent to a maximum of 1000 birds per acre. Access to runs may be rotated. There should be 2 (pasture) runs per flock for rotation (of runs) unless a free-range system is used. To encourage birds to use runs, provisions for cover should be provided.

(i) Housing: a coop with 1.5 square feet per bird with a patio of 2 square feet per bird be allowable.

Section 11

replace with: 11.4.3 (1) Irradiation in certified organic food processing

Section 14 Crop Production Materials List

Prohibited: Calcium Chloride. Must use food grade quality. Can be used to adjust nutrient deficiencies and/or physiological disorders.

Section 15 Processing Materials List

Prohibited: Ammonium Sanitizers

Prohibited: Quaternary ammonium Sanitizers. Prohibited for use on surfaces that may come in contact with food.

Section 16 Livestock Materials List

Prohibited: Propylene glycol

Section 17: Draft Landscape Management Standards

The proposed standards will be posted for review and comment on the website. The decision to go forward and solicit comment for these standards comes from the understanding that the Landscape standards provide good stewardship for land that may come back into agricultural production as well as providing public areas with a safe and environmentally responsible management program.

Section 18: Draft Personal Care Standards

The proposed standards for Personal Care will be posted for review and comment on the website. ✓



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How to Reach the SRC

In the previous article, all material is posted for comment except for that which is specifically marked "Approved". For information on the review process, please refer to the section at the beginning of the article called "Protocol for Submissions". To obtain copies of proposed new standards, to discuss proposals or, most importantly, to give the committee rep feedback on standards issues, please contact your SRC rep. Copies of standards and changes are also available from the COABC office and on the website. You can also contact the SRC Secretary for copies of material.

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Honeybee Diseases are Normal. Mites are Not.

by Ted Kay

Organic management of infectious brood diseases in bees is easy. All you need is the co-operation of all your beekeeping neighbours.... Seriously, unless you live in an isolated valley it is not easy but after all, there are fewer beekeepers than there once were. If you are isolated from other bees it is fairly easy to stay clean.



The red spot on the larva above is a mite

Your methods will be similar to mine as there are few factors to consider. As in all good husbandry we must understand the stresses we place on all those in our orbit: bird, plant, cow, human and in this case insects.

Bees occupy a confined nest, the components of which are frequently replaced in the wild. But in bee farming we usually make the bees re-use the same brood cells too long. Replace those old combs. They contain an accumulation of organisms that can challenge and infect the bees. The reason the combs get darker and heavier is that larval skins and infectious sites are covered in successive layers of propolis to protect the next generation of larva.

The fungus, chalkbrood, builds up spore numbers over time and removing dark comb will usually reduce dead brood dramatically. This gives you more new bees which will feed and care for more brood and the improvement multiplies itself in one of those astonishing progressions which is the reward for toiling in the sustainable field. Choose a kindly patch of soil and plant a handful of wheat and soon you have a bucketful. It's the same with those little bees.

If your colony is happy and



Note the shriveled wings on these bees which have been attacked by bee mites

clean and is not the source of the bacteria you are multiplying, the diseases AFB and EFB will be brought in with infected honey. These organisms only occur in bees and in the wild serve to remove weak and susceptible stock, then mice and other insects destroy the infected comb. The cavity the colony occupied is then safe for a new swarm to move into.

If your comb is recent you can see these infections arrive more easily and remove it. Vigorous, well fed colonies can control an infection quite well and the trait can be enhanced by selection or you can buy your queens from someone who breeds hygenic lines. Replace your queen with one of these and track down the source of the infection.

Controlling Varroa mites without fluvalinate or coumaphos is a different matter entirely and I am only just getting the hang of it. IPM is tricky because the bees have very little natural recognition of the infestation and the mites have an amazing ability to reproduce.

My method is based on a practice developed by a commercial producer in the Peace who winters small colonies in the Fraser Valley. In mite-bee interactions we have no models in nature to replicate and the parasite will almost always kill the host. But we can still view the problem holistically and avoid plunging after individual symptoms.

Dave Tegart's observation was: given a colony with a mild infestation, nothing serious happens to it for a year. It will produce a normal crop but begin to show serious symptoms. This colony will often die before the following spring if no treatment is provided.

So, says Dave – and like all profound observations it is obvious

once you are told – don't keep your colony more than one year. Any of you who have kept up with varroa control know how to use this idea but it takes a fine balance to keep it working, particularly if you resist the inevitable conclusion of the process. On behalf of soft hearted students and myself I am working on the last part and trying to save the parent colony. On a small scale this should be possible.



bee with mite on its nose

Here is an outline of the method:

When spring brood increase is well underway and when queens or cells will be available, make up nucs [small starter hives] with just a little open brood to hold the bees in the nuc. I use a small pad of formic acid now to knock adult mites off the bees. This will evaporate in two or three days. Remove the pad and add the cell or queen. The cell is potentially more effective than the queen in reducing varroa carry-over as there is a longer period with no brood for the mite to reproduce in. This may be more important when I have the nerve to forgo the formic acid.

If all goes well this unit will provide itself with enough feed for winter; in the summer of '04 they made a honey crop as well. In the commercial world the parent colony goes on to produce its crop and is eliminated along with its build up of mites. The nucleus goes on to winter and produces the replacement colony again next spring.


Those who raise their own queens will see a flaw here: you are unable to keep breeder queens for long term assessment without serious mite control. With screened bottom boards to display your mite population it can be done, but when conditions favour the mites, '03 for instance, it takes a lot of intervention.

Next year I hope to try removing all capped brood at the end of the honey flow and possibly moving the colony to reduce old, infested bees. Buoyed by last years success I think it is possible to produce a honey crop using outside agents only when the mite is unusually fecund.

continued on page 18...

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...continued from page 17

If we are able to keep our mite counts low with colony management these agents can be used with discrimination when they are most effective. The various oils and acids which are acceptable in organic culture are still toxins and ideally we will eventually manage without them.

I realise that an article this brief raises as many questions as it answers. For general bee

culture your library often has basic apiculture books. The provincial Ministry of Apiculture is an excellent source and gives you access to recent research. ✓

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Progress Report: Cherry Fruit Fly Control *by Linda Edwards*

Two years ago, Dr. Tim Smith of Washington State University began work to evaluate the efficacy of GF-120 NF (Spinosad) in an attractant bait formulation. There are two products registered in the US and OMRI approved that can be used for cherry fruit fly control, both containing a biological agent called *spinosad*. The one brand named Entrust is formulated to be applied with air blast sprayers. GF-120 NF is very tiny amounts of spinosad mixed with a sweet attractant bait.

When the BC Okanagan Kootenay Cherry Growers Association heard about how successful this latter product was in Dr. Smith's preliminary trials, they arranged with him to do another year's research to the standards required by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the pesticide registration body in Canada. This research was paid for by a voluntary levy by the cherry growers association plus matching funds from the Organic Trust. The project was to evaluate GF-120 NF Bait as a control option for western cherry fruit fly (*Rhagoletis indifferens* Curran), with specific attention to rate of product per acre.

Following is a summary from Dr. Smith's report of his work this past season.

Spinosad is an antibiotic product of a soil actinomycete. Actinomycetes are soil organisms that are somewhere between a fungi and a bacteria. They are responsible for the rich soil odour that is seen as an indicator of a good soil. The substance is effective against insects by both contact and ingestion. It is produced by a fermentation process. Two products containing spinosad (the active ingredient) are approved for use by OMRI. They are GF-120 NF and Entrust. Neither of these products is currently registered in Canada. However, there has been a submission of Entrust for a wide variety of pests (see the previous issue of the BCOG) to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency and it may be registered sometime in 2005. It is expected the registration for GF-120 NF may take an additional year.

The GF-120 NF was tested under pest pressure conditions far in excess of what is normal in commercial orchards. As in 2003 research, it proved to be highly effective, and quite practical in both large acreage and single-tree applications. It did not damage the fruit or foliage. Bait applications proved to be an effective, practical option for organic and conventional growers, and appears to be a viable "backyard" tree CFF treatment.

Backyard/Single Tree Trials

Of the fourteen highly infested "backyard" situations treated weekly with the bait, only one larva was found in a single 250 fruit sample. This site consisted of three highly infested 35 - 40' tall, unpruned sweet cherry trees where 204 adults were captured on one trap, which is a difficult control situation with any product. On the other thirteen bait treatment sites where numerous adults were caught per trap in 2003 and 2004, no larvae were found in 3,650 fruit.

The single larva found in this trial may not be practically significant, as the infestation history and physical aspects of that specific treated site were extraordinary, even for a backyard test site. However, a similar minor failure in the 2003 trials,

and reports from others using this product on highly infested backyard trees, indicates that extreme infestations may not be completely controlled by one season of bait treatments. If larval infestation levels are 20% or higher on the infested trees, and trap counts are over 100 per season, the first season's timely treatments reduce fruit infestation levels to near zero, but a second season of treatments may be required to bring 100% control.

The material was tested at rates ranging from 113.2 grams, 56.6 g, 42.4 g, 28.3 g, and 14.2 g. ai/acre rates at 7 day application intervals. All were effective. Single-tree bait plots were baited with a 1:3 bait:water mix applied with hand-held "window washer" squirt bottles. The amount of bait applied to each tree was adjusted to closely approximate the desired rate per acre. A standard sized tree received 25 "squirts". The bait mixture was applied to each test tree every seven days. Some of the test trees were significantly taller than those in a commercial orchard, so bait sometimes was applied no higher than the lower 1/2 of the tree. The untreated check trees had high num-

bers of adults caught on traps and significant fruit infestation. An "ineffective" product (*azadirachtin*) was also included in the trial, and was applied on six separate randomly selected sites. The subsequent high adult trap catch and significant larval infestation illustrates the potential for adult trap catch and fruit infestation if the product being tested is not effective.

Orchards

Demonstration of effective organic CFF control was continued in a commercial organic orchard. The orchard had larvae found in the fruit in both 2001 and 2002, despite alternate day, maximum rate pyrethrum applications. [Pyrethrum is registered for this use in the US but not in Canada. Ed.] Adults were trapped each of the three weeks leading up to harvest in 2002. In 2003, the grower switched to weekly applications of 1.25 ounces per acre of Entrust starting four days after regional trap catches and the CFF model (Jones) indicated first adult emergence. Three weekly Entrust sprays were applied, then, starting two days after the final Entrust application, 20 fl. oz./A GF-120NF bait mixed in 0.625 GPA water was applied weekly through harvest (three applications). Final "clean-up" Entrust sprays was applied immediately post-harvest. No adults were caught on traps and no larvae were found in fruit this year. The number of CFF spray applications dropped from sixteen in 2002 to seven in 2003 and 2004. Material and application costs for CFF control were reduced from \$1788/A in 2002 to \$332/A in 2003. A similar program in 2004 also appeared to completely control cherry fruit fly. Even more exciting is

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that other infested organic orchards in Washington State are now free of cherry fruit fly after one season of bait applications only! The cost of application and of the material used is a fraction of the use of Entrust.

For orchards, the GF-120NF bait was mixed at 1:4 ratio with water and applied in orchards with a 12 volt, electric pump, auxiliary sprayer strapped to the back of a "four-wheel" ATV motorcycle. Two adjustable-angle D3, D2 or D1 disc nozzles directed streams of the bait/water mix across the upper half of the tree. Alternate rows were treated, but bait seemed to reach both sides of each tree. It was determined that the D3 nozzle was applying the bait mixture at a rate that required unsafe application speed (10-12 MPH). The D2 nozzle allowed application at about 6.0 to 6.5 miles per hour, and sprayed a stream of bait well into the upper 1/3 of large trees. The D1 nozzle slightly reduced the application distance to about 12 -15 feet, but may be the better choice for smaller trees, or for modest speed application (7.5 MPH at 20 foot row spacing) to each row middle. The side of

the trees treated was alternated weekly, and the outside row of each orchard was treated every week. Growers being introduced to this application method were highly satisfied with the process, and easily adjusted to the new methods.

Further Observations

There are many indicators of the success or failure of a new product or innovation. One is the rate of adoption. Discussions with Washington State growers indicate that at least 9000 acres of cherry orchards, both organic and conventional, used GF-120 last season as part or all of their cherry fruit fly control program.

The other is what is happening in the market place. Pro-Organics, the largest handler of fresh produce in Canada confirmed that they have been able to access large quantities of certified organic cherries from the US. There were no claims due to the presence of cherry fruit fly. Hopefully registration of the spinosad products in Canada in the near future will make it possible for Canadian certified organic cherry growers to reclaim this market. ✓

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Botanical Insecticides from BC Organic Lavender and Rosemary

by Andy Maganga

A recently completed study of organic production, varieties and insecticidal value of lavender and rosemary oils concluded that these oils have a high potential for use in the control of aphids and two-spotted spider mites. While larger scale field studies are needed to confirm these findings, small greenhouse experiments showed that 2% rosemary-lavender mixtures, caused about 95% mortality of mites on roses and up to 100% mortality of aphids on peppers.

The study, sponsored by South Thompson Organic Producers Association (STOPA) with part funding from the Organic Sector Development Program (OSDP), also looked at yield and potential oil production of five varieties of lavender and rosemary. Among the lavender varieties tested 'Grosso', 'Provence' and 'Super lavender' had higher herbage yields compared to 'Hidcote' and 'Folgate' after one year of field production in Kamloops. 'Provence' showed better growth than 'Folgate' at two test sites, Kamloops and Osoyoos. 'Grosso', the highest yielding lavender variety, produced about 1.5 t/Ha of herbage after one year of growth. This amount of herbage can produce about 15 kg/Ha of lavender oil. The retail price of lavender oil is about \$492/kg.

The five rosemary varieties tested, 'Rex', 'Barbecue', 'Tuscan blue', 'Spice island' and 'Gorizia', showed no significant differences in yield or growth. The highest yielding rosemary variety, 'Tuscan blue', produced about 5.7 t/Ha of herbage after one year of growth with a potential oil yield of 57 kg/Ha. The current retail price of rosemary oil is \$ 418/kg.

This study indicates the potential of a new value-added product for the BC Organic Sector. Botanical pesticides are becoming popular in organic and conventional crop production and urban gardening. While it is generally accepted that not all botanicals are safe, low concentra-



Temperature and humidity measurements on heated and unheated portion of trays during propagation experiments in Kamloops.

tions of essential oils derived from food-grade herbs are less likely to cause adverse environmental effects. A detailed analyses of existing opportunities for production and marketing of value-added essential oil products is needed including the potential for collaborations among producers and with potential product registrants.

The study also shows how organic producers can work collaboratively with some expert advice to solve production questions requiring adaptive studies. A copy of the full report is available from COABC. ✓



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Scientist-Farmer Roundtable

by Cara Nunn

On November 19, 2004, scientists at the Summerland Research Centre in partnership with the North Okanagan Organic Association hosted a very successful round table discussion with the organic community.

A planned farm visit to the Centre grew into a joint effort to share information between the researchers who need input for developing research proposals and the organic growers who want to know the results and direction of the on-going research. Participants came from all over the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, representing commodity groups from tree fruits to ground crops.

The discussion was informally chaired by Dr. Gerry Neilson and speakers included Karen Bedford on the registration and labelling of pesticides along with Dr. Gary Judd and Dr. Howard Thistlewood on the use of biological controls, the issues with mass rearing and the

need for regulations and legal boundaries in their release. We were reminded of the effectiveness of letters to the PMRA (Pesticide Material Review Association) on the importance of registering products, such as the new "Spinosad" (see page 18).

We learned a new buzzword – "Functional Ecology" – a management system that is most effective in ground crops having a similar bio-zone between the crop and the habitat. Dr. Gene Hogue, Dr. Gerry Neilson and Dr. Tom Forge spoke about the inter-relationship with weeds, soil nutrition, and soil quality and the use of amendments. Tom spoke at length on the use of indicator species of nematodes to judge soil nutrition and the use of plants to act as suppressors to root lesion nematodes.

We also heard about tree fruits from Dr. Peter Sholberg who described his work on various tree fruits diseases and indicated several effec-



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tive treatments, including an interesting discussion on effective uses for acetic acid in disease control. Dr. Cheryl Hampson spoke briefly on her plant breeding work with apple cultivars and the development of resistant varieties.

The scientists showed keen interest in the discussion and questions raised by farmers. They encouraged the growers to approach the research centre with issues and ideas for research. They also indicated that they could use on-farm research plots in which to work. Anyone wishing further information on any of these topics can contact any of the above at the Pacific Agricultural Research Centre in Summerland at (250) 494-7711.

For our part, NOAA plans to organize another session next year, with a field day to have some

hands-on discussion during the season in addition to a late fall round-table discussion. Please call Cara at the NOAA office 250-260-7910 with suggestions, volunteer time, ideas or assistance in organizing these forums. ✓



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Lower your certification costs?

by Paddy Doherty

Many organic enterprises are a low-risk of non-compliance under the BC Certified Organic Program because:

- They do not have outstanding conditions
- They do not practice parallel production
- Their neighbouring land-use poses no threat of contamination
- They keep accurate and current records
- They do not export organic product

Many Certification Bodies have found that there is little benefit from requiring yearly inspections under such conditions. Low-risk operators pay their fees and receive their certification year after year in a routine that is often expensive and redundant. Accurate risk-assessment could identify those low-risk operators and provide an incentive to keep their enterprise low-risk and a reward (reduced inspections and consequent costs) for their efforts.

The COABC board of directors is reviewing a risk assessment proposal from an internal committee. The committee was asked to find ways to reduce the certification burden on licensees, particularly for smaller farmers. Group certification schemes were initially considered, but group certification was developed to serve many

small farms growing a single commodity in a specific area – this doesn't fit the BC organic context. Risk assessment is not new, and the rationale for a risk assessment protocol is sensible – provided it can be implemented in a consistent and fair manner.

The proposal describes the criteria a CB would need to include in its certification program should it wish to implement risk assessment:

During the annual inspection process, the verification officer will complete a risk assessment checklist, which identifies potential high risk areas. The VO is able to add items to the checklist.

The certification committee will determine the risk (low, medium or high) of the enterprise using the checklist and historical information from the enterprise files.

Enterprises that receive a low-risk ranking will require inspections once in three years.

5% of low-risk enterprises will be inspected every year – these inspections will be random and unannounced.

This proposal will be voted on at the COABC Annual General Meeting. The full proposal is available in the COABC website or from the COABC office. ✓

Environmental Farm Plan: Money Available!

by Elaine Spearing

Here is a list of projects eligible for cost-share funding under the Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Program. Producers who develop an approved Environmental Farm Plan are eligible to apply. The fundable projects are called BMPs (Beneficial Management Practices) in the EFP documents because these projects must reduce or eliminate environmental risks on your farm.

Please note that funds will not be paid for projects started before receiving authorisation. Some or all of the farmers' cost share may be "in-kind" in the form of labour or machinery rental. Check with your Organic EFP Advisor to find out the specific rules on the farmers' share of cost share.

| BMP category | Type of project | Grant Available | Caps |
|--|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Improved manure storage, handling, treatment and application | -Increased storage to meet winter spreading restrictions -Improved features to prevent spills -Containment systems for solid manure -Composting of manure and dead livestock -Specialised/modification to equipment for improved manure application | 30% | \$30K |
| Farmyard runoff control | -upstream diversion around farmyards and livestock facilities -downstream protection e.g. catch basins, retention ponds, constructed wetlands | 50% | \$20K |
| Relocation of livestock confinement and horticultural facilities | -relocation of corrals, paddocks and wintering sites away from riparian areas -relocation of horticultural facilities such as greenhouses from riparian areas | 50% | \$30K |
| Wintering site management | -shelterbelts -portable shelters and windbreaks -mobile water systems -field access improvements -fence modifications | 50% | \$15K |
| Product and waste management | -improved on-farm storage of agricultural inputs (eg. fertilisers, fuel) -composting of agricultural waste (fruit, vegetable, wood, straw residue) | 30% | \$15K |
| Water well management | -sealing and capping old wells -protecting existing wells from surface contamination | 50% | \$6K |
| Riparian area management | -remote watering systems to manage livestock -buffer establishment between riparian area and farmed area (forages, trees, shrubs--planting, weed control) -fencing to manage grazing and improve riparian function -native rangeland restoration or establishment -grazing management in surrounding uplands , watering systems & cross-fencing -improved stream crossings | 50% | \$20K |
| Erosion control structures | -constructed works in riparian and non-riparian areas -contour terraces, gully stabilisation, bank stabilisation, drop inlet systems, in-channel control, mechanical wind screens | 50% | \$20K |

Environmental Farm Planning Workshops

This winter's series of COABC Environmental Farm Planning Workshops kicked off in December in Williams Lake and early January in Cawston and Vernon. See the list below for upcoming dates. Additions will be listed on the COABC website.

Late January - Summerland

Date & location TBA
call Rochelle Eisen 494-7980

February 23 - Saltspring Island (partner: IFA)

Farmers Institute Meeting Room 6.30 to 9.30pm
Rainbow Rd. Ganges

February 21 - Surrey

Fleetwood Library Meeting Room 6pm -9pm
13742 72nd Ave, Surrey

February 25 - Sidney

Mary Winspear Centre 1:00-4:00pm


March - Grand Forks

Date & Location TBA

COABC has an agreement with the British Columbia Agriculture Council to be a delivery group for the Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Program. Brochures describing the program can be obtained from the COABC office.

For workshop or program information, call Elaine Spearing(250) 747-3237 e-mail: elaines@quesnelbc.com.

| | | | |
|---|---|-----|-------|
| Erosion control land management | -forage or annual barrier establishment in critical areas (strip cropping, grassed waterways, steep slopes) -straw mulching -grazing management in critical erosion areas not associated with riparian zones: watering systems, cross-fencing | 50% | \$5K |
| Improved cropping systems | -equipment modifications on seeding equipment for low disturbances placing of seed -chaff collectors and chaff spreaders installed -precision farming applications: GPS | 30% | \$15K |
| Winter cover crops | -Equipment modifications for seeding winter cover/relay crops | 30% | \$5K |
| Improved pest management | -equipment modifications for improved application -information collecting and monitoring -biological control agents | 30% | \$5K |
| Nutrient recovery from waste water | -recycling of waste water from milk houses, fruit and vegetable washing facilities, and greenhouses in order to recover nutrients -irrigation equipment modification/improvement to improve water use efficiency | 30% | \$10K |
| Irrigation management | -equipment to prevent backflow -improved infiltration galleries and irrigation intake systems | 30% | \$10K |
| Shelterbelt establishment | -establishment of shelterbelts for farmyard, livestock facilities, dugout snow trap, wildlife habitat establishment, field | 50% | \$10K |
| Invasive alien species control | -integrated approaches for control of invasive plant and animal species e.g. leafy spurge, purple loosestrife, scentless chamomile | 50% | \$5K |
| Enhancing wildlife habitat and biodiversity | -buffer strips--native vegetation -off site watering systems -improved grazing systems: cross-fencing -wildlife shelterbelt establishment -improved stream crossings | 50% | \$10K |
| Species at risk | -off-site watering systems -improved grazing systems: cross-fencing -plant species establishment -infrastructure development and relocation | 50% | \$10K |
| Preventing wildlife damage | -forage buffer strips, set-aside and lure strips -fencing to protect stored feed, concentrated livestock, high value crops, drip irrigation systems, and other ag. activities -low volume scaring and repellent systems and devices | 30% | \$10K |
| Integrated pest management planning | -consultative services to develop integrated pest management plan, planning and decision support tools | 50% | \$2K |
| Grazing management planning | -consultative services for range and grazing management planning, planning and decision support tools | 50% | \$2K |
| Soil erosion control planning | -Consultative services for soil erosion planning, planning and decision making tools | 50% | \$2K |
| Biodiversity enhancement planning | -consultative services to plan habitat enhancement, stewardship for species at risk and/or wildlife damage prevention within agricultural land base; planning and decision support tools | 50% | \$2K |
| Irrigation management planning | -consultative services for improving water use efficiency of existing irrigation systems, planning and decision support tools | 50% | \$2K |

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- Goat Cheese: Gouda, Herb Gouda, Garlic & Dill Gouda, Feta.
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Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are welcome. Letters must be under 500 words. We reserve the right to edit for length.

To the Editor:

In our rush to try to bring conventional producers into the organic system we have compromised a lot of the ethic that made us organic producers in the first place. We must return to the prohibition of parallel production and require total farm conversion to organic production if the farm is to be certified organic. The risk of cross contamination is too great when you allow the production of a conventional crop or animal within the same farm system that produces an organic product of the same species. And it is fundamentally wrong to allow a farm that produces tens of thousands of conventional birds fed prohibited materials and kept in an inhumane environment to produce a few thousand birds organically and sell them under a certified organic label.

Ironically, outside the organic movement, this is recognized. SPCA will not allow the use of their humane label by farms that also raise animals conventionally. The conventional system itself is recognizing that the two systems are incompatible within the same farm, although they see the cross contamination threat in the opposite direction that we do. Believing that a farm system that has both outside birds and totally enclosed birds runs the risk of introducing a disease such as avian influenza from the exposed outside birds to the inside birds, they are recommending no parallel production. It is time the organic system did the same.

Another issue is the use of conventional manure and animal by-products such as blood meal and bone meal on organic farms. We allow this practice with the caveat that the manure be composted first. We state that the materials that are used in the composts must be free of contaminants, and yet we require no testing for possible contaminants in conventional manure – because we know that the likelihood of contaminants being present is too great.

GMOs will contaminate any manure produced from animals fed feeds produced from GMO

altered canola, soy, or corn. One of our main arguments against GMO products is that we do not know how they will manifest themselves in the environment over time. The organic system steadfastly contends that it has strict avoidance of GMO products but allows the use of manure likely to be contaminated by GMOs or other prohibited substances. When taking manure from conventional farms you have no idea of what is actually in the manure; what went into the feed that was fed to the animals in the first place; what pesticides were used in barn clean out or what antibiotics were given to the animals.

Then there is the ethical problem: in taking the waste from conventional farms we are condoning their methods of production and the inputs that they use by tacitly saying that their wastes are safe.



We must totally separate certified organic production from the conventional system or risk being contaminated by it in a real and ethical way.

Fred Reid

Classifieds

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FOR SALE: ORGANIC APPLE TREES, T-2, 2005. Cripps Pink, Honeycrisp, Ambrosia. \$4.50 - \$8.00 each plus royalties. 250-496-5443 Richard Brungardt



SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Clear your calendar of all other commitments for the last weekend in February, 2005 and join the rest of BC's organic community in Sidney.

Seeds, carefully selected, saved, and re-planted by generations of farmers, are the key to agriculture. This process is being threatened; by genetic engineering which threatens to change the integrity of the seed supply, and by legislation which threatens to place control of seeds into the hands of transnational corporations.

These issues, which are front and centre at this year's conference, are of critical concern to all of us: farmers, distributors, processors, retailers and eaters. The conference will be an opportunity for all of us to gain information, analysis, and skills to develop a sustainable seed supply – and a whole lot more.

HIGHLIGHTS



Seeds: plant breeding, plant breeders rights, seedsaving, seed sale!

Our keynote address on Friday evening is by **Humberto Rios**, the dynamic and articulate head of the participatory seed breeding program in Cuba, focusing on seed development from the ground up. Other sessions on the seed theme include: discussion of new **Plant Breeders Rights** legislation, a workshop on **Seed Saving**, and (getting right down to earth) the **Sunday Seed Sale**.

Friday evening's **reception** will be hosted by IOPA and SIOPA

Trade Show (open at 6PM Friday): a marketplace of products and ideas to challenge your imagination. We welcome suppliers of approved inputs; seeds; appropriate technology;

Additional Workshops:

Farm tour: visit local organic farms (weather permitting)

Deconstructing Supper: a film and discussion about GMOs and the battle to control global food production.

marketing tools; resource materials;the list is endless. Producers, distributors, retailers, processors – book your Trade Show tables through the Conference office.

Poster Sessions: If there's something related to organic production that you want the rest of us to know about, contact the Conference office to book free space.

Practical and interactive **workshops** throughout Saturday and on Sunday afternoon covering a wide range of topics.

Saturday evening's **banquet and dance** with delicious food, convivial drink, can't-help-but-dance marimba music, and Roma Tomato, our lively MC and auctioneer. Come celebrate with your organic community.

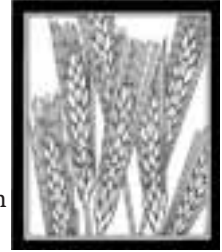
The **auction!!** The creative wealth of our community is reflected in the range of items to be auctioned: clothing, books, art, food, wine, tools, SEEDS – endless possibilities. If you would like to donate an auction item, just bring it with you. We'll have both a silent auction and a live auction Saturday night: auction items will be on display from 6PM Friday evening until auction time.

The conference package, including the workshop program and registration form, are also posted on COABC's website.

Mary Winspear Centre at Sancha, Sidney, B.C. February 25 - 27, 2005

CONFERENCE AND AGM

WORKSHOPS



Poultry on pasture: Farmers describe their experiences with different moveable housing designs and the benefits of integrating poultry into a mixed farming operation.

Garlic White Rot Disease: Recognized world expert, Dr. Fred Crowe (Oregon) explains how to recognize and prevent the Allium white rot disease.

Farmers and Chefs working together: Creating a local organic food culture. A panel comprised of Tina Fraser, Sean Brennan and other farmers and chefs will discuss how they work together to introduce local foods to eaters.

Eating to save the planet: Elizabeth White, Gunta Vitins and Guy Dauncey join other panelists in a discussion of the environmental impact of our personal food choices. How far does my food travel from farm gate to my plate? Is organic food really more environmentally friendly than conventional if it travels as far? How does my involvement in the organic food system contribute to the earth's environmental health?

Meat regulations and other issues for livestock producers: An opportunity to discuss the implications of the new meat processing regulations, bio-security, standards and other issues of interest to organic livestock producers.

Reducing tillage through mulch and cover cropping: Find out about the benefits of living mulch and cover cropping. View new video footage on pioneering methods of no-till for large scale vegetable production.

It's a matter of scale: matching your capacity and vision with your market. A panel discussion contrasting marketing strategies of growing and selling wholesale to distributors and retailers with direct marketing to restaurants and consumers.

The flavour economy: agriculture, culinary and agritourism strengthening local economies. Mara Jernigan presents a slide show featuring the Italian

experience followed by a discussion of the relevance of ideas presented to BC.

Agriculture and Conservation: Striving for the best of both worlds. This interactive workshop will focus on the relationship between farming, biodiversity and the conservation of natural systems. It will explore ways in which farming and conservation can be complimentary activities. This workshop is sponsored by The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) and presented by Ramona Scott and Jonaki Bhattacharyya.

Composting: Art Bomke describes research conducted in BC and discusses issues relating to sources of manure for composting and the "turn or not to turn" debate.

Harvesting techniques for quality product: Hear from farmers who employ methods of harvesting that improve efficiency and quality.

Land ownership options: getting more farmers onto land. A panel discussion exploring innovative forms of landholding which preserve farmland and create opportunities for new farmers

Controlling flea beetles and other problem insects: Linda Gilkeson discusses preventative measures effective for market gardens in southwest BC.

Adding value: the next horizon for Canadian farmers? A presentation exploring value-added production. Sponsored by the Small Scale Food Processors Association; presented by Frank Moreland and Sandra Mark of Edible Strategies.

Seed Saving: Patrick Steiner (Stellar Seeds) will talk about some of the issues facing seed savers and those of us who use their seeds. He will also bring information regarding a BC certified organic seed cleaning facility and lead a discussion around developing an organic seed strategy for BC.

Mary Winspear Centre at Sancha, Sidney, B.C. February 25 - 27, 2005



SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

CONFERENCE AND AGM

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday Evening

- 4:00 - 9:00 Registration
- 6:00 Trade Show and Poster Presentations Open
- 6:00 - 7:30 Reception (light supper) hosted by IOPA and SIOPA
- 7:30 - 9:00 Seeds for the Future
Speaker: Humberto Rios**
- 9:00 - 10:00 Organic Bar

Saturday

- 7:30 - 9:00 Registration
- 7:30 **Trade Show** Opens - runs through evening
- 7:30 - 8:30 Light Breakfast
- 8:30 - 10:00 Plenary: Seed Issues**
Stewart Wells and panel.
- 10:30 - 12:00 Workshops
- 12:15 - 1:15 Lunch
- 1:30 - 5:00 Workshops
- 6:00 - 11:00 Banquet, Auction and Dance:**
the highlight for many of us.
Organic food, marimba music and an entertaining auctioneer.

Sunday

Seed sale before AGM, during lunch and during farewells

- 8:00 - 9:00 Light Breakfast
- 9:00 - 12:15 COABC AGM
- 12:15 - 1:15 Lunch
- 1:30 - 3:30 Workshops
- 3:30 - 4:30 Closing and Farewells (with beverages and snacks)

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

Friday

- Noon **COABC Board** and Alternates: lunch and meeting - Contact Peter Johnston: pjohnst@mail.island.net
- 1:00 - 4:00 **Environmental Farm Planning Workshop** Contact Elaine Spearing: elaines@quesnelbc.com
- 4:00 - 6:00 **Canadian Organic Growers (COG) AGM**
Contact Laura Telford: laura@cog.ca

Saturday

- 9:00 **PACS AGM**
Contact: Roz E. Cripps: pacs@junction.net

Sunday

- all day **COG Board meeting**
extending into Monday
- 3:30 - 6:30 **Small Scale Food Processors Association (SSFPA)** meeting
Contact Frank Moreland: frank@ssfpa.net

Travel and Accommodations

The Centre is located five minutes from the Victoria International Airport and the BC Ferry Terminal at Swartz Bay, and across the street from the Victoria Airport Travelodge, where we have reserved rooms. Several other hotels and motels are within a few minutes' walk of the Centre. There is regular bus service from both airport and ferries. If you need other ground transportation arrangements, call the conference office and we'll gladly assist you.

The Victoria Airport Travelodge is holding 60 rooms for conference attendees at a rate of \$69.00/day plus tax. When you're booking, you must say that you want the COABC rate. The rate will be held until February 9. We encourage you to share rooms and will keep a list of persons wanting to share. Other accommodations close to the Centre are listed in your registration package.

Every effort will be made to enhance your enjoyment of the Conference. If you have dietary, child care or other requirements, please contact the Conference office.



SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE



Conference and AGM

February 25 – 27, 2005

Mary Winspear Centre at Sancha, Sidney, B.C.

REGISTRATION FORM:

Registration Deadline is February 14. Late registration subject to \$20 additional fee.

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

I am a member of (certifying body): _____

Please choose from these options:

Option 1: Full Conference: \$120.00
includes: Friday Keynote and Reception; Saturday Plenary, Workshops, Banquet, Dance, and Auction; Sunday Workshops; access to the Trade Show and Poster Sessions; Breakfast, 2 coffee breaks and lunch on both Saturday and Sunday

Option 2: Mini Conference: \$80.00
Includes Friday Keynote and Reception; Saturday Plenary and Workshops; access to Trade Show and Poster Sessions; Saturday breakfast, lunch and two coffee breaks

Option 3: Saturday (conference only) \$60.00
Includes Plenary and Workshops; access to Trade Show and Poster Sessions; lunch and two coffee breaks

Option 4: Saturday (evening only) \$35.00
Includes Banquet, Dance and Auction

Option 5: Saturday Dance only \$15.00
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 registration form to:

COABC Conference Office, 738 Selkirk Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V9A 2T5

Conference Coordinator: Lee Fuge

email: leefuge@pacificcoast.net • Phone: 250-385-7974



Pro Organics proudly supports the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia.

British Columbia is home to Pro Organics and many other organic pioneers and farming families. Together, we have nurtured the organic marketplace and celebrate its continued success.

Pro Organics' commitment to BC organics began over 14 years ago with the singular goal of building a strong organic future for growers and consumers.

Today, as in the beginning, our mission is simple: promoting the growth and integrity of organics from field to table.



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