

Notes from COO Liaison Committee Meeting August 11, 2008

Present: Michel Saumur (COO), Elizabeth Corrigan (COO), Ken Bruce (COO), Dag Falck (Nature's Path Foods), Gunta Vitins (ProOrganics/SunOpta), Arnold Taylor (OFC), Betsy Hui (CHFA), Anne Wilkie (CHFA), Sherry Casey (CCGD), Mike Leclair (AAFC), Nicole Boudreau (OFC), Nathalie Doré (AAFC), Mauricio Bobadillo (Sobey's), Keith Mussar (i/e Canada), Stephanie Wells (OFC & OTA), Emily MacKenzie (AAFC)

1. Regulation: The amended regulation is not yet ready for consultation. As soon as it is ready, Michel will contact Stephanie with the proposed dates for small consultation groups to meet at CFIA offices in each province. Michel will send proposed venues now, for planning purposes; mostly in provincial capitals. The Québec consultation is likely to be held August 27 in Drummondville, where the Filière biologique is meeting then.
Note: The regulation will give CFIA the authority to demand compliance to the Canada Organic Standard for interprovincial and international trade.
2. Logo: Final design has not been decided.
3. Standard: With not too many comments on the ballots, the revisions should be ready for the deadline.
4. Stream of commerce: The policy proposed by industry has gone to the Canada Organic Office. This has been called the Transition Policy, but that creates confusion both with regulatory transition and organic transition. The official title is Stream of Commerce Policy, as it supports uninterrupted commerce through a planned enforcement strategy. It has been sent to CFIA Legal Services for approval.
5. Accreditation and Certification: COO will complete the audit assessment on EU accreditor DAP by the end of August. The COO believes this allows for Canada-approved certification in 61 of the 63 countries they have identified as shipping product to Canada. CFIA Legal Services may allow the COO to sign the contracts with ABs in advance of the December 14, 2008, implementation date. At that time, the CBs listed with the authorized ABs may be posted.
6. International: The identified Canada-EU gaps have been submitted to the Organic Technical Committee for evaluation. The identified Canada-US gaps have been sent to the NOP and await further discussion. The gaps analyses are based on the 2006 Canada Organic Standard, but ballot outcomes for the 2008 standard will be taken into account, which will shorten the lists of differences.
7. Attestation: Ken reports that proof of certification will be required, but not during the Stream of Commerce period. The attestation may not have to be a separate document; the CB can be listed on importation documents, invoices and/or on the actual product labels. The Canadian Border Services Agency will not be verifying organic certification on shipments until such time as the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is ready for use.
8. Labelling: There will be a consultation on labeling requirements on bulk shipments of produce.
9. Next meeting: August 25, 2008, at 1 PM EDT; 866-646-2080; password : 2217165

COO will attend the CHFA conference September 11-14 in Toronto. Michel will speak September 12 at 9:30.