

**2017 ACORN Conference and Trade Show  
Best Western Glengarry - Truro, NS**

**Workshop Title:** Solving the Mystery - Part 1: Canadian Organic Standards

**Speaker:** Allison Grant

**Executive Summary:** Introducing the ins and outs of Canadian Organic Regime will help to clarify the role of various governing and certifying bodies that work together to coordinate the system. The Standard outlines all that is required of producers and processors to meet certification requirements and achieve certification.

Canadian Organic Growers represents the needs of all stakeholders in the Organic Sector.

Part 1:

- Introduction to the Regime.
- Examine the Organic Product Regulations (OPR); makes standards law.
- Review the Canadian Organic Standard (COS).

Part 2:

- Review Permitted Substances List (PSL).
- Certification process and verification.

Organic operating manual: The guiding document on how Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) moves forward; makes sure standards are implemented.

OPR = Organic Products Regulation

CB = Certifying Body

CVB = Conformity Verification Bodies

VO = Verification Officer

Operator (crop or processor): CB sends VO once per year.

OPR law in Canada in 2009 (one of slowest countries in putting regulations in place):

- Can certify food/feed/seed (not body care or fiber). CFIA has a habit of not thinking outside the box.
- Outlines the roles and requirements of CVB and CB.
- Informs applications and procedures.
- Identifies certification type: two certificates in Canada - either for the product (primary producer) or for the processor (products that are processed come with organic certification).
- Labelling.
- References: CAN CGSB 32.310 and SCSG CGSB - 32.311.

Standards Interpretation Committee:

- Questions are submitted by stakeholders.
- Intended to provide interpretive guidance.
- Answered by committee.
- Based on guiding principles and intent.
- Public consultation.
- Final answers: rules of law (no specific document exists; final answers online).

“Visually indistinguishable” - parallel production allowable in some instances. However, what are the criteria for the above? By an expert or common person? Final answer: common person cannot distinguish one from the other when presented together

### **Organic Production System - General Principles and Management Standards - Canadian Organic Standard**

Introduction: Principles and goals defined as, “the principal goal of organic production is to develop operations that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment” (principles of health, fairness, ecology, care).

- Scope:
  - Reiterates food, feed, seed, both unprocessed and processed.
  - Reiterates principles and practice.
  - Prohibited substances, materials, techniques in organic production, and preparation (12 listed; Genetically Engineered (GE), nanotech, irradiation, amendments containing substances not listed in the Permitted Substances List (PSL), etc.)
- Prohibited Substances
- Terms & Definitions (of note: “commercially available”, “compost”, “food-grade”, “input”, “organic integrity”, “synthetic substance”, “records”)
- Organic Plan:
  - Management system plan or OSP.
  - Details of transition, production, preparation, and practice.
  - Updated annually, identify changes.
  - Describe record keeping system.
  - Maintain records (with supporting documents: sufficient detail, inputs, origin, nature, quantity, and consignees of outgoing products)
  - Enable traceability.
  - Identification systems for all products.
  - GE risk management plan.
  - All records kept for five years.
- Crop Production:
  - Land requirements; 12 months under organic management; 32 months without unpermitted substances.

- Environmental factors.
- Seeds and planting stock (has to be organic or untreated if organic is unavailable; due diligence means having tried to find the product 3 times, with proof).
- Soil fertility and crop nutrient management (“no recreational tillage”).
- Manure management.
- Crop pest, disease, and weed management (cultural first, then mechanical, physical, biological, or botanical).
- Livestock (and products): species-specific related to housing, living conditions, and indoor & outdoor stocking rates.
  - General.
  - Origin of livestock (suitable breeds for the given system).
  - The transition of livestock production units to organic.
  - Livestock feed (meet the physiological and behavioural needs of species).
  - Transport and handling.
  - Healthcare
  - Manure management.
  - Additional requirements for cattle/sheep/goat, dairy cattle, poultry, rabbits, and pigs/boar.
- Specific production requirements (apiculture, microgreens, maples, mushrooms, greenhouse, wild crops, insects).
- Maintaining organic integrity during cleaning and prep (ie. bug sprays on hands from field labour can contaminate, packaging (food grade), transport, etc.)
- Organic product composition (processing, livestock feed - 100% organic, categorized by content 95% or more; 70-95% - labeling XX% organic)
- Procedure criteria and conditions to amend permitted substances list.

Q - Are fibers able to be certified in Canada?

A -The process can be certified, but not the product; some coming into country labeled organic but not able to be; certify to the national organic program to export.

Ashley (COG) - add-on to standards; asking regulators to expand scope - it is up to the industry to define a standard then bring it to the government to move forward.