



# ACORN

Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network  
Issue 24, Spring 2007

## Executive Director's Report

IT'S BEEN SEVEN MONTHS SINCE I LEFT ACORN on maternity leave, and as you can probably imagine, the time has flown by. Many of you have sent your best wishes and sage advice, and we feel very fortunate to be raising our daughter in the organic community.

I would like to thank Matthew Holmes for managing the office and business affairs of ACORN for the last seven months. With so many projects that have taken place during this time, it has been reassuring to know that he's been overseeing them and returning the office in good condition!

Although departing from his position with ACORN earlier than anticipated, we are very pleased that Matt will remain in the organic sector as the new Managing Director of the Organic Trade Association (see page six). I'm also expecting that his new position will be of general benefit to the organic community of Atlantic Canada, providing greater national awareness of the region and its distinct characteristics.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our new board members to ACORN—Larry Nason (NB), Ralph Messinger (NSOGA representative), and B.W. Wildsmith (MCOG representative)—they've already jumped into ACORN with both feet and we're very happy to have them with us. I'd also like to thank our out-going board members—Alan Stewart, Larry Slipp, and Jeremy Frith—for their time and dedication in making ACORN a better organization.

It's another great board of directors that the ACORN membership has elected for 2007/2008, bringing positive energy and many new ideas to the organization. Already, the new board has been brainstorming what activities ACORN can undertake that would be the most meaningful to promoting local organics (and if you have an idea for ACORN, please share it with us). With such passion for organics, you're sure to see ACORN embarking on some new and innovative projects this year!

It's good to be back,

Beth McMahon

## President's Report

THE BAY OF FUNDY IS HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE because of upwelling, a phenomenon in which nutrient-rich water from below moves up to the water surface. Upwelling is easy to spot—surrounded by still water, you can see a patch of bubbling water, full of movement and energy, and containing the resources needed for growth.

Organic agriculture is like an upwelling. While conventional agriculture is somewhat static right now, organics is growing at an incredible rate. The farming community is full of energy and, now, thanks to public and government support, we are getting the resources we need to grow.

We are at this place today thanks to many dedicated volunteers in the past. In particular, I would like to thank ACORN's past president, Alan Stewart, and our past vice-president, Larry Slipp, for their great ideas and hard work.

I want to see ACORN become more vital in Atlantic Canada—an essential resource for farmers, gardeners and consumers. To do this, we need to know what you think. Please tell us your vision for ACORN. What's most important to you? Do you want to see farm apprenticeship programs, or see local organic food in school cafeterias? Would you like more workshops on farming, see more energy put into educating consumers, or focus our energy on the annual conference? Or...?

Let us know what you would like to see ACORN do and how you can help this vision come true,

I look forward to hearing from you,

Janet Wallace  
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# Meet the 2007/2008 Board of Directors



**Tony Grant** lives in Oak Mountain, NB, with his wife Stephanie, and their three children, Kallista, Kade, and new baby Klairissa. Tony is employed by Speerville Flour Mill,

specializing in sales, product procurement, and process analysis. He is also currently training staff on the "Mother Hearth" wood-fired oven, which will be touring across the Maritimes this summer. Tony is the New Brunswick representative on the Organic Federation of Canada, a newly incorporated organization which represents the organic industry and oversees the new organic regulation, he's also a vendor and board member of the Woodstock Saturday Market. Tony is the ACORN Vice-President and organic processor representative.



**Rupert Jannasch** has worked as an agricultural researcher, farm writer, and Executive Director of R.E.A.P. (Resource Efficient Agricultural Production) Canada over the past 15 years.

Rupert returned to Hants County in 2004, where he grows certified organic (MCOG) hay, highbush blueberries, raspberries, squash and greenhouse crops for SeaSpray Atlantic Farmers Cooperative.



**Joyce Kelly**, along with her husband Mike, own and operate Nature's Bounty Farm in Dromore, PEI. They sell their fruit and vegetables at the Charlottetown

Farmers Market, along with Joyce's siblings, Raymond Loo (Springwillow Farms) and Margie Loo (Elderflower Organic Farm), in a unique (and profitable) partnership. Nature's Bounty has been certified organic for over ten years, first with OCIA-PEI and currently with MCOG. Joyce is now entering her third term as ACORN Secretary.



As an adjunct professor of philosophy at Dalhousie University, **Andrew Kernohan** shares his time between Dartmouth and his 1200-acre farm in Parrsboro,

Cumberland County, NS. Currently, Andrew grows OCIA, NOP, and CAAQ certified organic field crops and also has some conventional beef cattle. Other related interests? Boards you're on? Andrew is the OCIA representative to the ACORN board.



Having returned to the family farm, **Ralph Messinger** and his wife Meg, have started an organic farm in the Annapolis Valley. Presently they are producing vegetables

and grains, with planned expansion into livestock. Ralph is a member of the Canadian Organic Growers, Certification Coordination for NSOGA, and the NSOGA representative on the ACORN board.



In 1990, **Larry Nason**, Kathy and their 2 daughters, Beth and Becky, began raising sheep and operated a greenhouse and later added beef. In 1999, Springbrook

Cranberry Inc. was started. Due to planting schedules the livestock and greenhouse was sold. Larry began transition in 2006 and hopes to add other small fruits in the near future. Larry is director of the NB Alliance, Chair of the local Ambulance board, and past president of NB Cranberry Growers Association. He became a director of ACORN in 2007.



**Doug Nichols**, his wife Marlene Wilson-Nichols, and their four children, own Apple Lane Farm Inc., in Berwick, NS. They are producers on 33

hectares of apples, 2 hectares of pears and 2500 hogs per annum. Since 2001, they have operated a parallel operations with currently 16% of the apple production as certified organic by OCPP-ProCert. Doug is the 2007/2008 ACORN Treasurer.



For over 15 years, **Gary Ogle**, his wife Karen, and their two sons, Liam and Nigel, operated an organic farm on Grahams Road, PEI. Gary has also served as a board

member, newsletter editor and president of OCIA-PEI, and later as a PEI chapter chairperson for MCOG, and a board member of the PEI Certified Organic Co-op. Gary is currently employed at Veseys Seeds as Art Director and as supervisor of trials and of the organic department. Gary is the ACORN organic retailer representative.



Organic Farm was started as a hobby farm almost 15 years ago by **Melba Rabinowitz** and her husband Mike, in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, which is 20

minutes outside St. John's, NL. The farm now offers a CSA, on-site gardening store and farm market and supplies a wide range of herbs and vegetables to restaurants and stores. Finding and working with seed and plant varieties that are productive in the short-seasoned climate of the Avalon Peninsula is one of the greatest challenges. Melba is also active in a number of local organizations involved in food security, poverty reduction and infant mental health.

# New ways to market your product and the experience of buying locally

By Matthew Holmes



Janet Wallace became the coordinator of NSOGA in 1994 and has been active in the organic community since then. She has edited or written several publications on

organic farming, including *Under Cover: a guide to using cover crops in the Maritimes*, *the Organic Field Crop Handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), *The Organic Companion* and *Livestock Nutrition from Field to Feeder*. For nine years, she had a small mixed organic farm near Margaretsville, Nova Scotia. She is now the editor of *The Canadian Organic Grower* and a freelance writer. She now lives and gardens in New Brunswick's Albert County. Janet is the 2007/2008 ACORN President.



Bruce "B.W." Wildsmith runs Sustenance Gardens market garden in Lunenburg County, NS. Putting his double major from Dalhousie University aside for now, B.W. has

decided to focus on permaculture, organic farming and sustainable energy. Focusing on market gardening and raising animals leaves little time for kayaking, but gives rise to a new south shore expression, "Make hay when the sun shines and go kayaking when it rains!" B.W. is active in the organic community and currently sits on the Maritime Certified Organic Growers (MCOG) board and is the MCOG representative on the ACORN board.

## Changes to ACORN by-laws

at the 2007 AGM, the ACORN membership unanimously passed a by-law change removing the "associate member" category and clarifying that business members receive only one vote. This change means that only paid members of ACORN will enjoy the benefits of ACORN membership.

ACORN ATTENDED A WORKSHOP IN MARCH entitled "A price that *clicks* & a profit that fits!" held by New Brunswick's Really Local Harvest Co-op. The session was facilitated by Marc-André Roy, an agrologist and son of an agricultural producer. His experience includes being a sales representative in the agri-food sector and the director of agricultural accounts with a banking institution; he is currently senior advisor in development strategies and an accomplished speaker and analyst for small businesses. The session was held in Moncton and attended by approximately 40 people.

Marc-André had some excellent advice on how to feel good about making money from your hard work, while also cultivating customers who return to you for the experience you offer. With a new growing and market season ahead, many ACORN members could benefit from some of his "tricks of the trade." Here are a few of the things he recommends:

- Come up with a different way of telling your customers the price. As we all know, low prices and high quality don't necessarily go together. But the problem is people automatically compare your price with the other ones they've seen elsewhere when that's the only information you give them. Try telling them the story of your product as part of the price: quality, locality, uniqueness, taste, possible recipes—these are all as important to your customer as the price is. The best thing to do is get in the habit of saying the price in the *middle* of a sentence (it's surprisingly hard to do!)—for example: "These apples grow just 20 minutes from here, and at \$4 a bag you won't find a fresher or tastier apple." Or "This rhubarb juice is incredible mixed with a bit of sparkling water, and a \$4 bottle is the perfect thing to share with a couple friends on a summer afternoon." When you describe your product this way, with the price in the middle, it makes the price only one part of the whole product: and your customer immediately recognizes that they're not only buying the product, they're enjoying the local flavour and the

experience of what you have to offer.

- Do not under-price you products to your customers. If someone says "make me a friendly price" try telling them that your friends want to see you able to continue to offer fresh local food and so they actually pay 15% *more* than what you're offering this customer!
- Try working with other local producers and businesses to reward your regular customers: for example, offer them the experience of a workshop to experience wood oven baking with the local bakery as a sign of your appreciation for their regular business. Or try having a monthly recipe that includes your product and the products of two other local organic businesses: all three of you can feature the recipe and encourage your customers to stop by each other's locations (whether stores or separate stalls at the same market)—not only does this mean you start sharing and building your customers with each other but you also create a unique experience that your customers won't get anywhere else.

Some other tips or helpful facts:

- Remember to wait for your customer to touch, smell or taste your product before you start telling them about it. Arrange your product in such a way that it invites them to "interact" with it.
- Make sure your non-verbal communications are strong: smile, make eye contact, nod or otherwise indicate you are aware of the customer and approachable.
- Where you put your price can go a long way: before the ingredients can say "...and this is everything you'll get for this price." Putting the price after the ingredients can suggest the quality of the product is what's most important. Placing the price so it's not the first thing they see can help them to learn more about the product. And if you have a good deal, make sure people know about it.
- A survey of people shopping at one of the area's major grocery chains found the price of food was 15<sup>th</sup> on their list of priorities: the top listed things customers are looking for include cleanliness of where they shop, the quality of the products, and the service they receive.

# Organic Sector Added to Value Chain Roundtables

By Allison Grant

*“We should all take some comfort in this latest recognition of the Organic Sector, and look for positive outcomes from this initiative as we all face the challenges of the commodification and globalization of organics.”*

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA (AAFC) has established Value Chain Roundtables for a variety of agricultural sectors. The Roundtables bring leaders together from all points of the value chain and governments to build a shared understanding of their competitive position and consensus on how to improve it with action plans to address the needs of each sector and drive positive change across the industry. These Value Chain Roundtables were created to help take the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) to the next level or Next Generation, and direct government resources at key priorities. The

current bilateral agreements of the APF are set to expire in 2008. For more information on APF and APF Next Generation go to [www.agr.gc.ca/cb/apf/index-e.php](http://www.agr.gc.ca/cb/apf/index-e.php)

The latest and eighth sector roundtable established by AAFC, together with industry and provincial partners, is the Organic Value Chain Roundtable (OVCRT). The inaugural meeting of the OVCRT was held in Toronto, in December 2006, bringing together members representing a wide cross section of the Canadian Organic Sector.

After introductions, explanations of the roundtables and process and examination of SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), members established key priorities and success factors for the sector. These priorities include market development, regulations, research and increased Canadian capacity. It was noted, although export is important, Canada's domestic market is an

area to be developed with 80%+ of organic products coming from outside the country. Working groups have been established to address these key areas and begin the journey of developing positive action. Reports of their progress will be presented at the next meeting of the OVCRT in Vancouver, April 2007.

Before this first meeting was over, and with support from all, Paddy Doherty agreed to be Chair of the OVCRT. You'll remember Paddy from COABC as the co-ordinator of the Canada Organic Initiative Project. Paddy has been an organic farmer for 30 years in British Columbia and has an impressive resume of involvement with the Organic Sector from local to international. For more on OVCRT, the who's who and what's what, go to: [www.ats.agr.gc.ca/value\\_chain\\_roundtables/organic\\_e.htm](http://www.ats.agr.gc.ca/value_chain_roundtables/organic_e.htm)

*Allison Grant has been a member of Atlantic Canada's Organic Community for near fifteen years. Her current roll as Coordinator for SeaSpray Atlantic Organic Farmers Cooperative plus many years of experience in retail, marketing and participation with certifying bodies and organic organizations has led to her recent appointment as a member of the OVCRT. She is one of only two participants from our region, the other; Dr. Ralph Martin of OACC.*



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# Notes from Newfoundland and Labrador

THE NUMBER OF ORGANIC FARMERS IN Newfoundland and Labrador are very few, although the number of farms in transition is increasing. Newfoundland and Labrador does not have an incorporated provincial, organic organization in place, so the representation on the Organic Federation of Canada is an informal arrangement. Mark Wilson agreed to step into this role on a temporary basis, until an election. Mark recently completed his organic inspector training and is taking an active role in promoting local organics.

Congratulation to Christa Williams, who reports that her farm is now certified with OCPP for regular root crops, and other vegetables. The farm is located in Bay Bulls, twenty minutes south of St. John's. Two other farms are in transition: The newest "kid" on the block is Colette Urban, a recently retired professor from Western in London, Ontario. She purchased land last

year in the Cornerbrook area and established MEADOWS POINT Guest House. This year, she will begin the first steps toward organic certification.

Jane White recently took over the role of Natural Resources Specialist, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, which includes the organic sector. Jane has an extensive background in crop production (both horticulture and vegetable crops) as well as pest management. In other news, there is a full page article on Latah Tomatoes in Agriview, the quarterly publication of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture. The article was submitted by the Organic Farm to promote the use of Latah seeds (purchased from Mapple Farm in Weldon, NB) and Latah tomato plants for the short-seasons on the Avalon Peninsula, a region of the Island of Newfoundland where temperatures are significantly cooler than the West Coast of the Island.

Earth Day was celebrated in St. John's on Sunday, April 22nd with around 40 tables of like minded people demonstrating environmental friendly equipment and materials, along with an afternoon of speeches on the land, environment and the importance of local, accessible, organic food. The Organic Farm organized a three table demonstration area with displays, handouts and the ACORN Brochures. Those attending were also able to purchase organic plants, seeds, soil and gardening supplies. Many people stayed around to ask questions about varieties, species, starting seeds and planning a back yard gardens.

Reported by: Melba Rabinowitz, Organic Farm and ACORN Board Members.  
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## Organic Trade Association Names Managing Director

THE ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION (OTA) has selected Matthew Holmes as managing director for OTA in Canada. Holmes will divide his time between the offices of the OTA in Ottawa and Sackville, NB.

"After a coast-to-coast search, OTA was pleased to find such an enthusiastic candidate with knowledge of organic issues and the leadership skills necessary for OTA in Canada at this time," said Caren Wilcox, executive director of the Organic Trade Association. "Hiring Matthew brings to fruition the vision OTA's Board and members had for additional attention for OTA's Canadian members."

"I'm honoured to be selected to work in an organization that was founded to serve the organic business community in Canada and in the US," said Holmes. "I'm looking forward to the challenge of building OTA's membership and serving the needs of the Canadian organic business community."

Reporting to OTA's Executive Director, Holmes will have overall responsibility for implementation of all activities and operations of the association in Canada. OTA's liaison in Canada, Stephanie Wells, will continue her work on behalf of the association as well. Among key priorities Holmes will face will be building membership in OTA, and working to ensure the new Canadian regulations are implemented smoothly without disrupting the growing organic business community.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA), which was founded in 1985 by Americans and Canadians, is the membership-based business association for the organic industry in North America. OTA's mission is to promote and protect the growth of organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public, and the economy. OTA's vision is that organic products are a significant part of everyday life, enhancing people's lives and the global environment.



# ACORN Organic Conference—Something for Everyone!

PARTICIPANTS AT THE SEVENTH ANNUAL ACORN Conference and Trade Show agree—the show was a big success! With over 275 people who came out for the workshops, trade show, organic dairy symposium, Seedy Saturday and gardeners' workshops, their feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Based on our evaluation survey, 38% of people attending were new to the ACORN show. "This was my first time at the conference and it was a total learning experience... it met my



ACORN held its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Seedy Saturday, in conjunction with the conference and trade show. Gardeners workshops were also held Saturday morning, covering topics such as seed saving and organic pest management for gardeners.



Murray Bunnett (New Brunswick) presents on his natural pork production during the special pork workshop series held Friday, March 2.

expectations, and exceeded them," wrote one conference participant, who was interested in organic grains and cereals.

Another participant, who had been to an ACORN conference before, echoed this sentiment, "There was a good variety of information—something for everyone. A chance to meet lots of industry related people, and lots of friendly people."

Networking has always been cited as a key reason for attending the conference, and this year was no different. Based on surveys, the workshops were the number-one learning experience and our keynote speakers—Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens and Gary Zimmer—were big hits.

The Organic Dairy Symposium was a great success, with over 100 people coming from across the Maritimes to listen and learn. It was also very encouraging to have students from the agricultural program at a nearby high school coming out for the day. Friday's workshops on pork production were also very well attended—we even had to open up a second room because there were so many people!

Food is also a very important element to the conference, as we use as much local organic to showcase regional food (our meals are sold as a breakeven initiative). Since the conference circulates between the provinces and we're always using new chefs, food hasn't always been as memorable as it could have—but this year Chef Mike did an excel-



Charles Levkoe (Nova Scotia) presents on Community Shared Agriculture based on his experiences at The Stop (Toronto) and SunRoot Farm (Kennetcook, NS).

lent job! "Tremendous" and "excellent" were the responses to food that we received on our surveys. A big "thank-you" to the food committee, who worked very hard, as well as to the farmers and processors, who supplied such delicious products.

Yet again, our annual trade show was sold out. With over 30 exhibitors from the Maritimes, Quebec, and Ontario, there were suppliers, producers, retailers, certifying bodies, government services and more. Although the space is limited, we believe the trade show is really a great vehicle to network and encourage the public to attend (it's always free admission). We also strive to keep the table fees reasonable, so smaller businesses will attend. Most importantly, our exhibitors were once again pleased with this year's event, reporting it was a good value for their business/organization.

I'd like to thank the conference committee, ACORN board, and many volunteers who made the 2007 conference one to remember. I'd also like to thank our staff (Matthew and Nadene) for their hard work. And the event couldn't be what it is without the financial support of the ADAPT Council/Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Carrot Cache, and our many sponsors and food donors. Most importantly, thanks to our members and participants for making the ACORN conference the most important organic networking and education event in Eastern Canada!

Respectfully yours,

Joyce Kelly,  
Conference Chair



Nelson Paradis (Quebec) presents to a full house at the First Organic Dairy Symposium on March 1, 2007. Other panelists shown included John Cleary, Gary Zimmer, Roger Henry, and Frazer Hunter.

# Raymond Loo's Contributions to Organics Recognized

Article (in part) by Brenda Frick, Ph.D., P.Ag., is the Prairie Coordinator for OACC

ACORN'S ANNUAL GERRIT LOO Memorial Achievement Award was presented to Raymond Loo (Springwillow Farms, PEI) during the conference banquet on March 2nd. Longtime friend, Fred Dollar (Kentdale Farms), presented the award which was created in honor of Raymond's father, a true organic pioneer, Gerrit Loo.

Raymond has also just received an honourable mention in the Outstanding Organic Farmer of the Year contest held by OCIA RnE (Organic Crop Improvement Association Research and Education). The OCIA RnE board developed the Outstanding Organic Farmer of the Year award to honor and showcase talented producers who excel in cropping and livestock practice, who are good stewards of the natural environment and who are committed to the organic community.

At Springwillow Farm near Breadlabane, Prince Edward Island, Raymond Loo is finding ways to produce healthy food with the smallest possible environmental impact. He grows mixed grains, potatoes, vegetables, legume hay, pasture, and small fruit. He also raises beef that are sold directly to consumers.

Land stewardship is important on Springwillow Farm. Raymond, his family, and workers have established two wetlands on the farm and have planted 4 km of hedge rows in the last 5 years.



Weeds and bugs are often managed by hand. Insect pressure has been reduced as the natural environment was enhanced. Weeds in the vegetable garden are managed by hand and with a mechanical weeder. Fertility is managed with legumes and composted livestock manures. Raymond avoids fall cultivation when possible, and plants cover crops to reduce erosion potential after potato or vegetable harvest.

Raymond has an on farm program to breed better potatoes for organic production, and his family has released a registered variety, Island Sunshine, which is highly resistant to late blight. Springwillow Farm has variety trials for potatoes and more recently, for black currents.

Raymond has been very active in the farming community, promoting better farming practices. He has worked closely with the government of PEI to promote organic farming. Raymond's goal is to change a large portion of PEI's 1000 farmers to organic production. He feels that PEI has a very good chance to lead North America in organic agriculture in the future.

Raymond feels markets need to pay a fair price if organic farmers are going to succeed. He and a co-operative group of local farmers are working towards selling organic black-currant jam to Japan. His next project is to promote organic canola products. Raymond hopes this will lead to a "GMO Free" PEI. Raymond is always promoting organics, and in his words, "the work goes on!"

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## We need your ideas!

At the end of April, ACORN awarded the project contract for its Sustainable Funding Plan to Nova Chee Inc. Nova Chee's project team consists of Brian Ives and Marianne Manuge, with financial oversight by Rodger MacKinnon.

Many of you know Brian Ives as an organic inspector and very active member of the Atlantic Canadian organic community. Marianne has also been quite active in organics, as well as agriculture in general, and brings a strong financial background to the team.

As a member, your input on this project would be very appreciated. We want to ensure we are meeting your needs. We also want to discover ways we can improve. Please take a few minutes to share your ideas and opinions by answering the questions below. All responses are strictly confidential:

1. How long have you been an ACORN member?
2. What is your involvement in organics (farmer, processor, retailer, gardener etc.)?
3. How has ACORN helped you in your enterprise?
4. Which ACORN services and events are most useful to you?
5. What do you think is the purpose of ACORN? Is ACORN meeting this?
6. Are there activities you feel ACORN should be offering or expanding?
7. Are there other organizations you think ACORN should be working more closely with?
8. ACORN members have valuable skills and knowledge. How can ACORN help members and the general public benefit from these resources? For example, are there services (paid or voluntary) you would be willing to provide? Feel free to brainstorm your ideas!
9. In an effort to become more financially independent, can you think of ways that ACORN can generate revenue?

Please email your responses to [livity2000@hotmail.com](mailto:livity2000@hotmail.com) or fax to 902-761-2201.

Thank you!

The final report from this project will be completed at end of June and reported back to you in the next issue.

## OMRI Update

ACORN HAS A RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIP with Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI is the organization that determines which input products are allowed for use in American organic production and processing.) and as a member of ACORN, we would invite you to view the latest update by visiting: [http://omri.org/OMRI\\_quarterly\\_update.html](http://omri.org/OMRI_quarterly_update.html)

You will then need to enter the following information:  
username: subscriber  
password: 2iso

Please note that the OMRI newsletter archives are also available at this location and are free to download. And remember, always check with your certification body before using any inputs.

## Accredited Maritime Certification Body

BASED ON THE RESULTS FROM ACORN'S Certification Feasibility Study, a committee has been struck between the Maritime Certified Organic Growers (MCOG) and the Nova Scotia Organic Growers Association (NSOGA).

This committee is currently submitting a funding application to hire a staff person to review and create policies and procedures for a new accredited certification body that would be in compliance with the federal regulation. The regulation is being phased in over the next two years, but it is the committee's intentions that the new certifying body would be in operation before that time.

"It's important to our memberships to have a local option for organics," said Ted Wiggans, President of MCOG and member of the working committee. "Working together is the only way we're going to accomplish accreditation and we're all very positive about the process."