NEW BRUNSWICK
ORGANIC SECTOR PROFILE
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:
ACORN New Brunswick
Sackville, New Brunswick

Prepared by:
AMEC Earth & Environmental Limited
Fredericton, New Brunswick

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Methodology

ACORN has engaged AMEC Earth & Environmental, a Division of AMEC Americas Limited (AMEC) to conduct a survey of producers and processors with respect to developing a profile for the organic sector in New Brunswick.

The survey involved the design of a questionnaire geared towards soliciting information on several major topics related to the current situation and current issues affecting the growth of the organic sector in New Brunswick.

A stakeholder database was assembled comprising 79 producers and processors who are presently certified organic or have been certified organic within the last two years. The questionnaire was transmitted by email and regular mail to all stakeholders and responses were received via email and fax. All responses were treated as confidential. This report provides the respondent information related to their organic business as well as their opinions and perceptions of issues affecting the growth of the organic sector.

"Statistics related to the overall response are as follows"

- Questionnaires Sent: 79
- Questionnaires Received: 47
- Response rate: 59.5%

Key Findings of the Study

Those working in the sector have an exceptionally strong attachment to the sector and the overwhelming majority indicated that they intend to remain involved. The sector has seen significant growth in the past few years and this appears to be a continuing trend with more than half of the respondents stating that they plan to expand their operations within the next 12 months.

Most respondents indicated that the number of people working in their operation has either been stable or has increased over the last five years and they expect this trend to continue. In fact, no one indicated that employment would be declining. However, finding qualified people willing to work in the sector continues to be a concern. Many indicated that their ability to pay a competitive wage was likely part of the problem.

The distribution of annual sales by operation shows a significant degree of variability. Approximately 25% indicated that their annual sales were less than five thousand and approximately 22% indicated that their annual sales were over one hundred thousand. A full 40% stated that their revenues did not exceed their costs. Another 12% noted that they were in a breakeven position.

The market area for most operations is New Brunswick although 13 respondents indicated that their market area is inter-provincial and 8 said it was international. Of those who intend to expand, most are looking to further the penetration of the New Brunswick market, although several are looking to expand inter-provincially and/ or internationally. The main challenges to expansion are the availability of labour, marketing, and financial. Respondents suggested that help with marketing and subsidies related to labour and infrastructure were the best incentives to encourage expansion.

According to those who answered the survey the major barriers facing the sector are financial issues, the lack of an effective distribution network and the lack of consumer awareness. Respondents also mentioned many opportunities, such as marketing, value added products and new organic products.

Almost half of the respondents believe that the new Organic Product Regulations are a positive step for the sector; about a quarter believe they were not; the rest do not believe they know enough about the topic to make a decision. Also, almost half of the respondents believe the Government of New Brunswick should implement regulations that mirror the federal regulations; only a fifth believe they should not, and the rest do not believe they know enough about the regulations to make a decision.

Approximately 60% indicated that the overall condition of their facilities and equipment is either good or excellent. Almost 36% said they have a financial / business plan, but most do not.

Respondents were asked what issue, if resolved would have the biggest positive impact on their operation. Marketing and distribution, government policy, enforcement of the regulations, finances, and consumer education top the lists. Respondents were also asked how ACORN and how the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture (DAA) could better serve the sector. Common responses to both questions suggest that both ACORN and DAA should continue with their current programs and services. In addition it was suggested that the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture could do more financial cost sharing.

The above noted comments are the essential highlights of the survey responses. A detailed account of responses, question by question are presented next. Appendix A provides a transcription of the individual responses to questions that asked for comments. In most cases these are a verbatim transcription, however, some responses were slightly altered (i.e. names or financial amounts were deleted) to protect the identity of the respondent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Document

The Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN) has engaged AMEC Earth & Environmental, a Division of AMEC Americas Limited (AMEC) to conduct a survey of producers and processors with respect to developing a profile for the organic sector in New Brunswick.

The purpose of the survey is to identify major issues, financial and human resource constraints, potential markets and long-term strategic opportunities for the sector. These will aid in the planning and development of the sector by both ACORN and the provincial government.

ACORN is a membership based non-profit organization whose mission is to promote organic agriculture by facilitating information exchange; coordinating non-formal education; and by networking with all interested parties who have similar goals and objectives.

1.2 Methodology

The study primarily involved obtaining input from stakeholders by means of a survey. The population of interest is all organic producers and processors in New Brunswick who currently have an organic certificate or who have held an organic certificate within the past two years. The New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture (DAA) developed a list of 79 such operations.

The survey instrument (questionnaire) was developed by the consultant in conjunction with both ACORN and DAA with the input of a sample of producers. The questionnaire was then translated and made available in both official languages. Due to time constraints it was decided that each potential respondent would be e-mailed or faxed the survey instrument and each would be asked to either e-mail or fax back their responses. In addition each potential respondent was sent the survey by regular mail since not all had access to e-mail or fax. Each potential respondent was also given the option of calling one of the consultants who would take their responses over the phone.

1.3 Response Rate

ACORN established a committee to oversee the development and implementation of the survey. This group of volunteers from the sector were instrumental in the follow up to ensure a high participation rate. It is important to restate that only the consultant had access to completed surveys. Statistics related to the overall response are as follows:

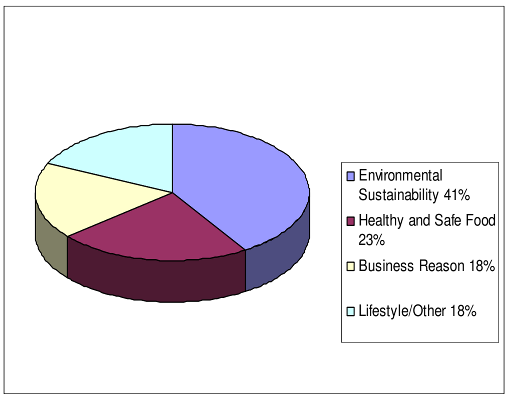
- Questionnaires Sent: 79
- Questionnaires Received: 47
- Response rate: 59.5%

2.0 OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 General Information (Questions 1 to 11)

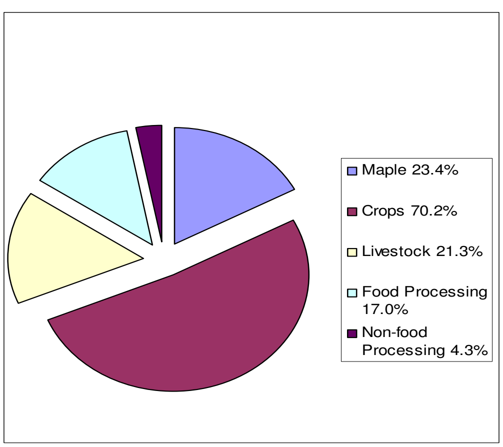
2.1.1 Question 1: What is the main reason you and / or your operation became involved in organic production?

Respondents often gave more than one reason. Given the "openness" of the question the consultant reviewed all responses and grouped them into themes. Although this is not a precise process, it is obvious that the top two reasons relate to environmental sustainability and healthy and safe food.



2.1.2 Question 2: What type of production are you involved in? (Check all that apply)

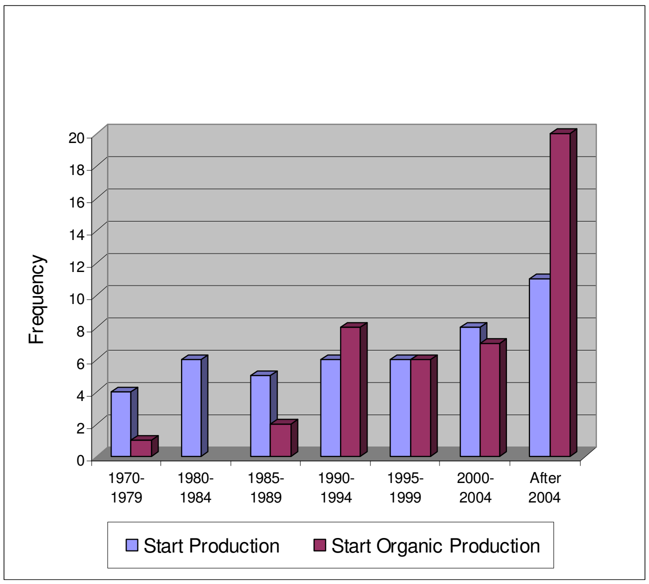
Approximately 70% of respondents indicated that they produced crops; 23% produced maple; and 21% produced livestock. Food processing was indicated by 17% and non-food processing by just over 4%. Overall, 80.9% of respondents were farmers and 8.5% were processors and the remaining 10.6% were both farmer and processor.



2.1.3 Question 3: In what year did you start production?

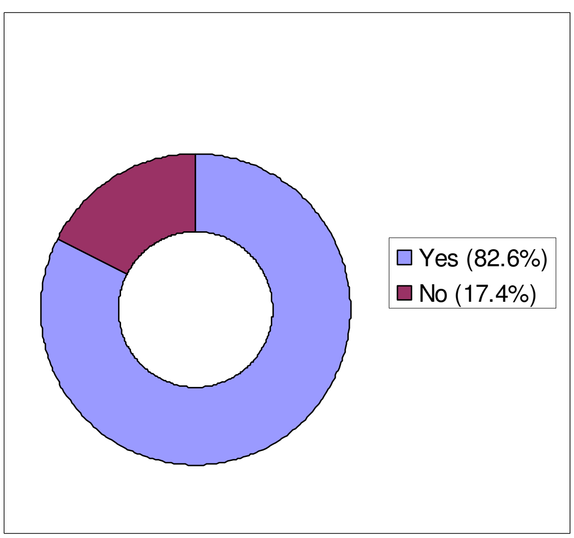
2.1.4 Question 4: In what year did you start organic production?

It is clear that there has been a significant increase in new organic entrants after 2004. Although not indicated by the graph below, 9 of the 20 that started organic production after 2004 did in fact start in 2008.



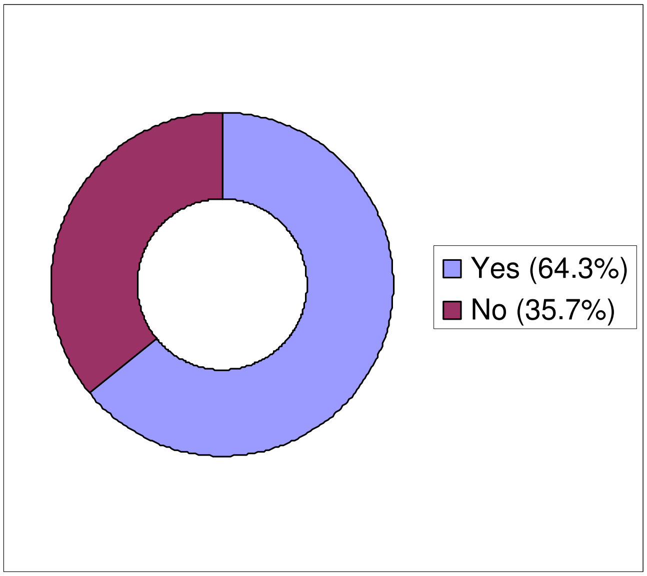
2.1.5 Question 5: Did you have an organic certificate for 2009?

The preponderance of respondents had an organic certificate for 2009 (83%).



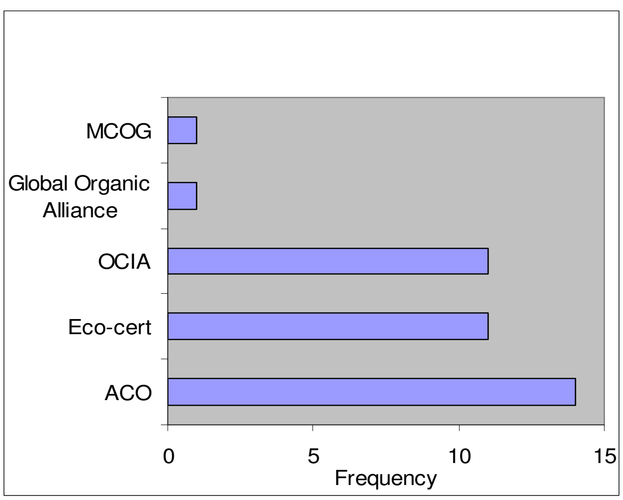
2.1.6 Question 6: If yes, (to Question 5) is your entire operation certified organic?

Of those who have an organic certificate, approximately two thirds have chosen to certify their entire operation.



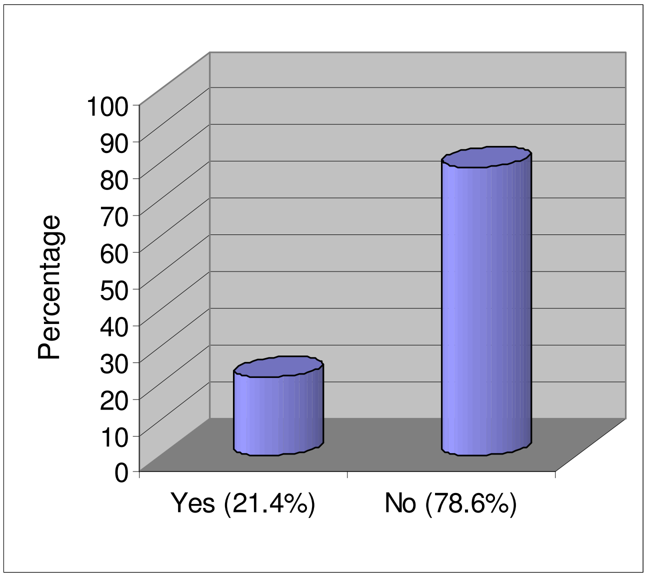
2.1.7 Question 7: If yes, (to question 5) please identify the certifying agency.

Of the 38 who indicated that they have an organic certificate, 14 (36.8%) identified ACO as the certifying body. This is followed by Eco-cert and OCIA, each at 11 (28.9%).



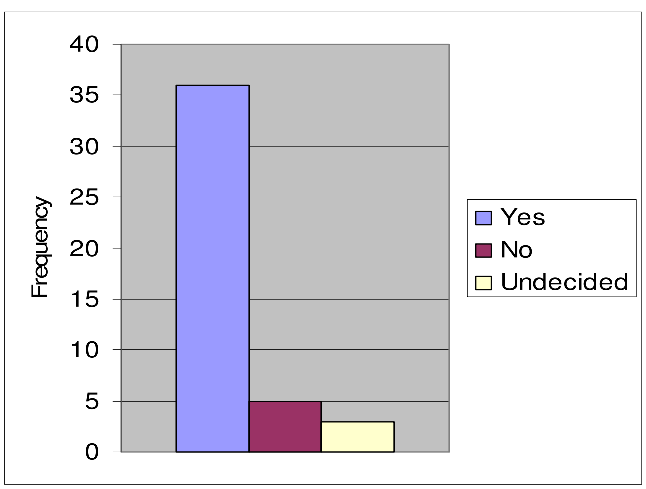
2.1.8 Question 8: Is your operation in transition or pre-certification?

Of the 42 who responded to this question, 33 (78.6%) indicated that they are not in transition. Still, 9 (21.4%) indicated that they are in transition, and presumably will be certified within the next few years.



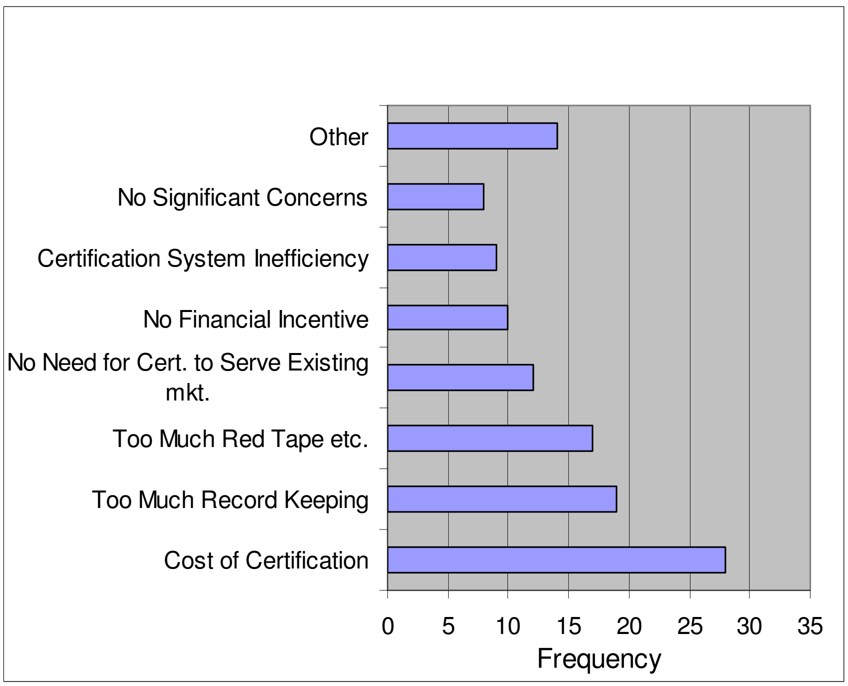
2.1.9 Question 9: Do you intend to remain in certified organic production for the next two years?

Of the 44 who responded to this question, 36 (81.8%) indicated that they intend to be involved in organic production for at least the next two years. Only 5 (11.4%) said no, and 3 (6.8%) are undecided.



2.1.10 Question 10: What are your main concerns with the current organic certification system? (Check all that apply)

Respondents were provided with a list of possible concerns and ask to choose all that apply. The reason checked most often was "cost of certification" at 28 (59.6%) followed by "too much record keeping" at 19 (40.4%) and "too much red tape" at 17 (36.2%). A total of 12 people (25.5%) indicated that there was "no need for certification to serve the existing market" and 8 people (17%) indicated that they had "no significant concerns". However, various other concerns were noted. Please see Appendix A for further detail.



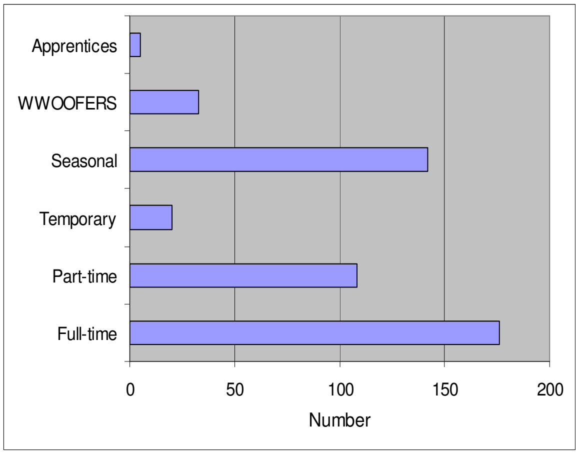
1.2.11 Question 11: If you are no longer certified organic, what would encourage you to re-certify?

There were a total of 11 responses to this question. The most common reason given relates to finances, either financial help with the cost of certification or the ability to command a premium (price) for certified product. However various other reasons were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.2 Workforce Information (questions 12 to 16)

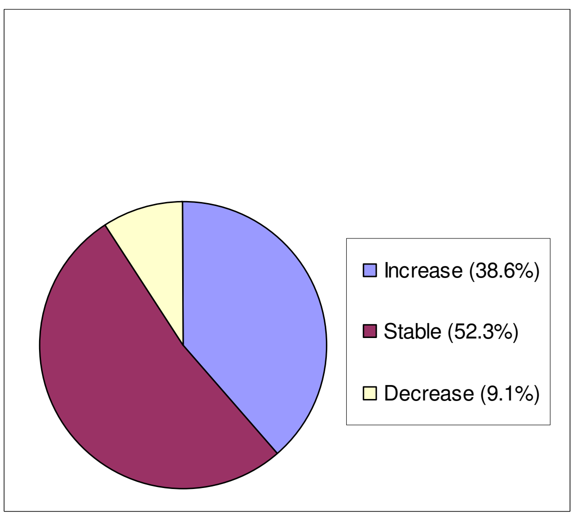
2.2.1 Question 12: How many people (best estimate) work in your operations in a typical year? (Including yourself)

Respondents indicated that a total of 484 people work in their operations in a typical year, with most (176) of them being full-time. However, it needs to be noted that a significant number of those who work full time and a significant number of those who work on a seasonal basis, work for the same operation.



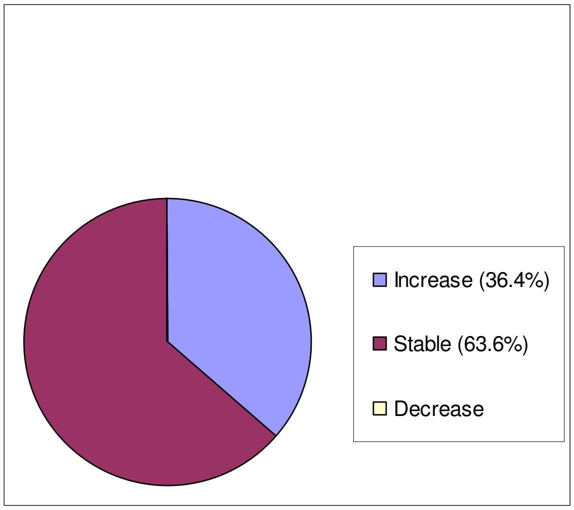
2.2.2 Question 13: What has been the trend regarding the number of people working in your operations over the past 5 years?

Most (91%) indicated that employment has been increasing, or at least stable over the last 5 years.



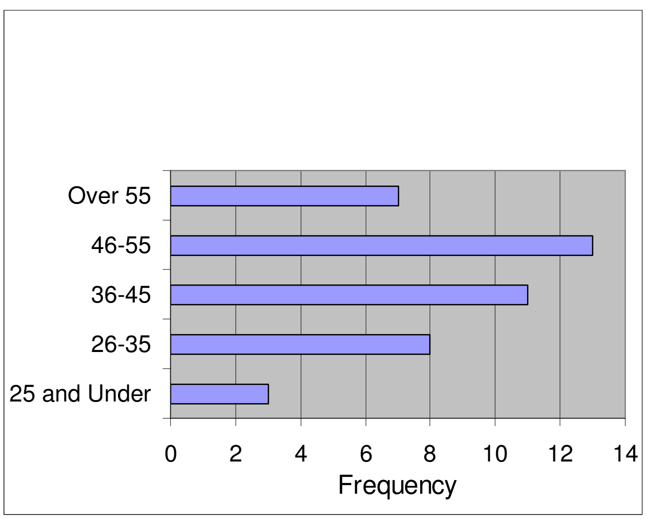
2.2.3 Question 14: What do you think the trend regarding the number of people working in your operations will be in the future?

Almost two thirds (63.6%) of the respondents indicated that they believe employment will remain stable over the next 5 years. About a third (36.6%) believes it will increase. No respondent indicated that they expect their employment level to decrease in the next 5 years.



2.2.4 Question 15: What is the average age (best estimate) of the majority of your essential personnel? (Including yourself)

For the most part, the following graph is of no surprise. It indicates an aging workforce, but it is not much different from any other workforce in New Brunswick. However, it is of some concern that only 3 operations (16.7%) indicated that the average age or their workforce is less than 25 years of age.



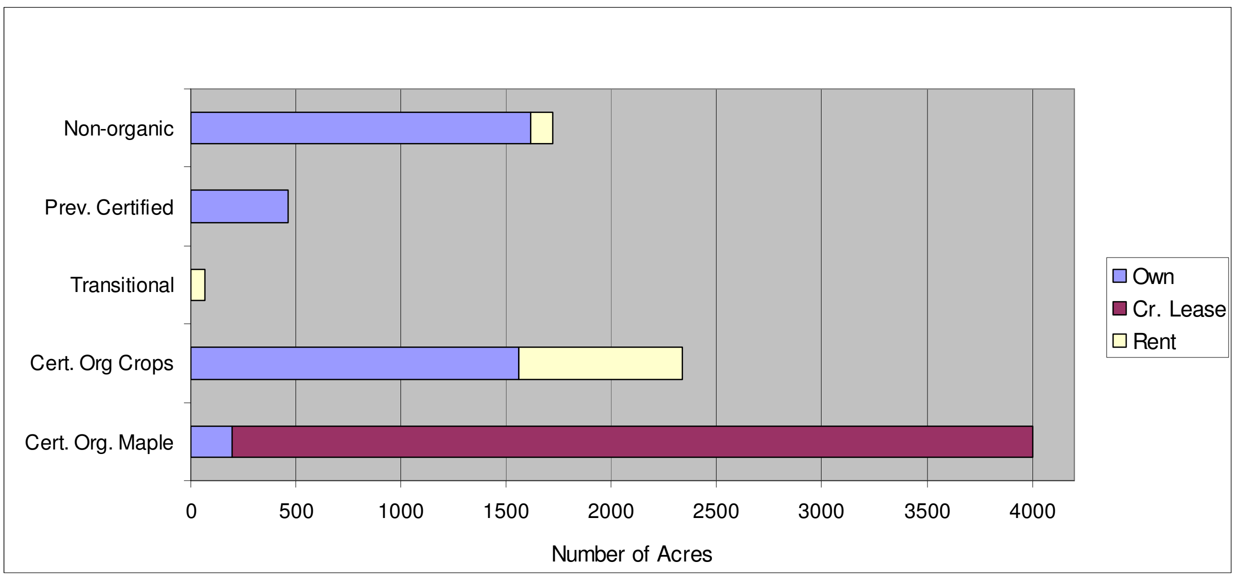
2.2.5 Question 16: What are your main labour concerns?

There were a total of 34 responses to this question. The most common reason given relates to availability of labour (finding people willing to work) and the cost of labour (overhead). A couple mentioned age and time available as concerns. However various other reasons were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.3 Production Information (questions 17 to 25)

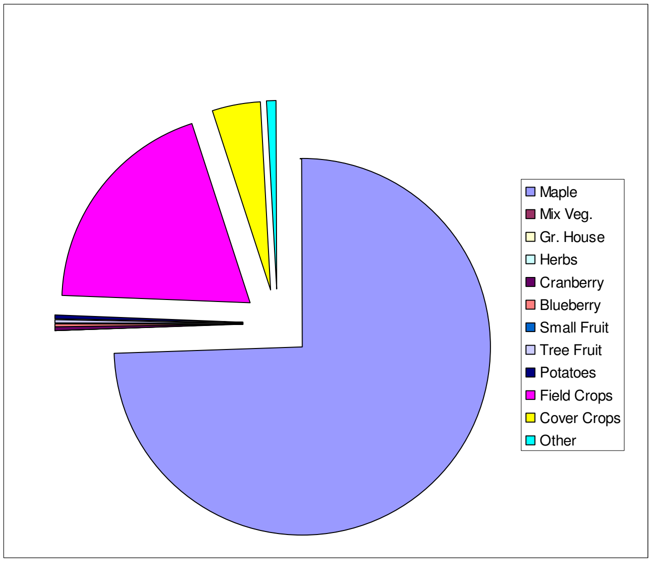
2.3.1 Question 17: What was your acreage allocation for 2009?

This question was not fully answered by many respondents. Unfortunately many did not provide details related to the acreage. However, based on the information that was provided there were 4,000 acres under certified maple production (predominantly crown lease) and approximately 2,300 acres under certified organic crop production (two thirds farmer owned and one third rented). There were also almost 500 acres that were previously certified and just over 1,600 acres that were non-organic. There were a comparatively small number of acres that were transitional (65 acres).



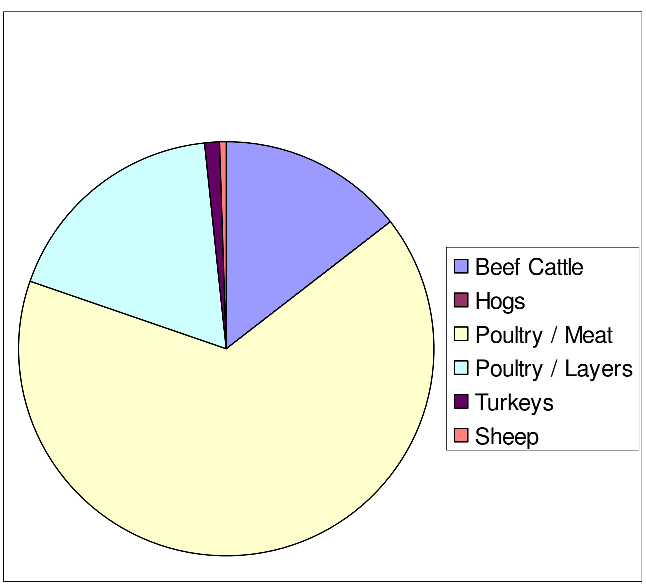
2.3.2 Question 18: What certified organic crops did you produce in 2009?

This question was not fully answered by many respondents. Unfortunately many did not provide details related to the acreage. However, based on the information that was provided there were approximately 4,000 acres under maple production (280,300 taps), about 8,250 square feet under green house production and just over 1,000 acres in field crops. The next largest organic crop allocation was about 225 acres of cover crops. There were also about 35 acres of potatoes, 16 acres of cranberries and about 14 acres of three fruit. There were a comparatively small number of acres of other crops. Please see Appendix A for further detail.



2.3.3 Question 19: What certified organic livestock did you produce in 2009?

Although 10 respondents indicated that they were involved in livestock production, a few did not provide a number in the space provided. This suggests that the implied response was zero (i.e. no certified organic livestock produced in 2009) or it could mean that, for whatever reason, the person did not answer the question. However, based on the information that was provided there were approximately 1,350 poultry (meat), 370 poultry (layers) and 300 beef cattle under organic livestock production. There were also about 25 certified organic turkeys produced.



2.3.4 Question 20: If you are producing crop and/or livestock and/or maple, are you involved in value-added activity? (e.g., peeled, cut, pickled/preserved, specially packaged, etc.)

Of the 36 respondents to the question 16 (45%) indicated that were involved in a value-added activity. A wide variety of examples were given. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	44.4
No	20	55.6
Total	36	100.0

2.3.5 Question 21: What type(s) of support / resources would be of most use for processing your organic products? (Check all that apply)

Respondents were given several choices and asked to check all that applied. The top choice was a canning / bottling facility (28%), followed by an abattoir (19%) and a freezing facility (17%). In addition to the options given, a wide variety of others were noted. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

	#	%
Canning / bottling	13	27.7
Abattoir	9	19.1
Freezing facility	8	17.0
Juicing facility	6	12.8
Food tech centre	6	12.8
Incubator facility	4	8.5
Other	14	29.8

2.3.6 Question 22: What were your annual sales of certified organic products in 2009?

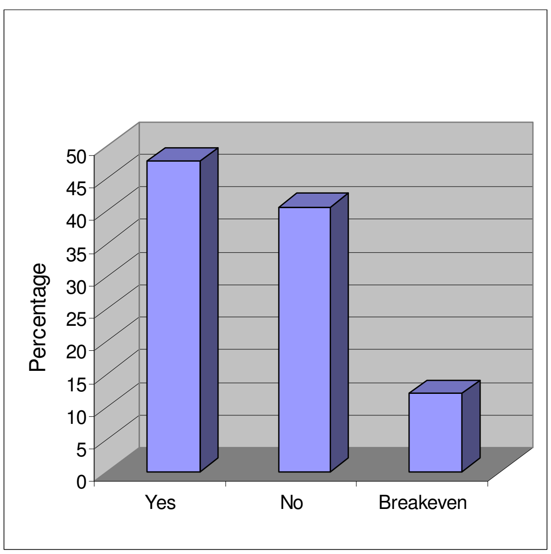
There is a wide distribution among the producers related to annual sales of organic products. Approximately 25% of those who answered the question indicated that their annual sales were less than $5,000. The cumulative distribution indicates that 53.7% of organic producers had less than $20,000 in annual sales. Approximately 22% indicated that their annual sales were more than $100,000.

Of the 10 respondents who indicated that their annual sales of certified organic products in 2009 were less than $5,000, 3 indicated that they were in transition/pre-certification; the other 7 indicated they were not in transition/pre-certification. Of the 8 respondents who indicated that their annual sales of certified organic products in 2009 were between $5,000 and $10,000, only 1 indicated that they were in transition/pre-certification.

	#	%	Cum %
Less than 5K	10	24.4	24.4
5K – 10K	8	19.5	43.9
10K – 15K	1	2.4	46.3
15K – 20K	3	7.3	53.7
20K – 30K	2	4.9	58.5
30K – 40K	3	7.3	65.9
40K – 60K	3	7.3	73.2
60K – 80K	1	2.4	75.6
80K – 100K	1	2.4	78.0
Over 100K	9	21.9	100.0
Total	41	100.0	

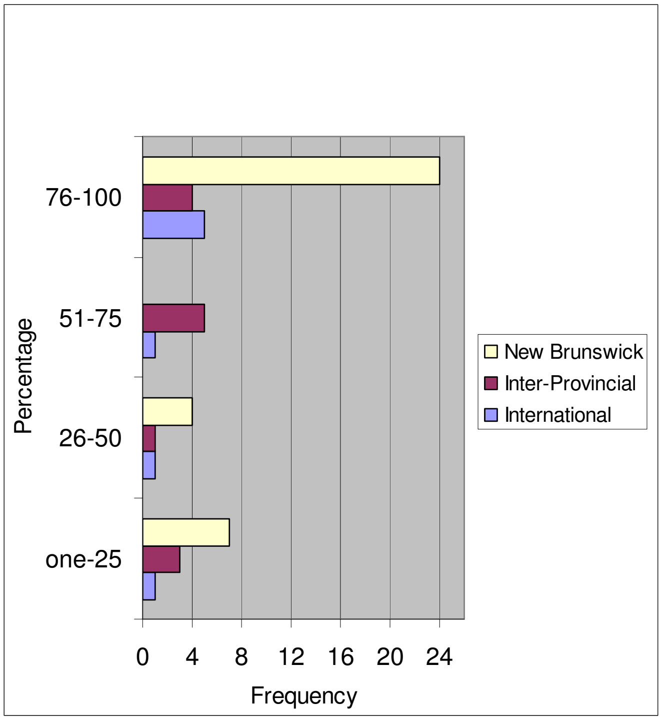
2.3.7 Question 23: Do your revenues exceed your costs?

Of the 42 people who answered this question, 20 (48%) indicated that their revenues exceeded their costs; another 17 (40%) indicated that they did not; and another 5 (12%) indicated that they were in a break even position.



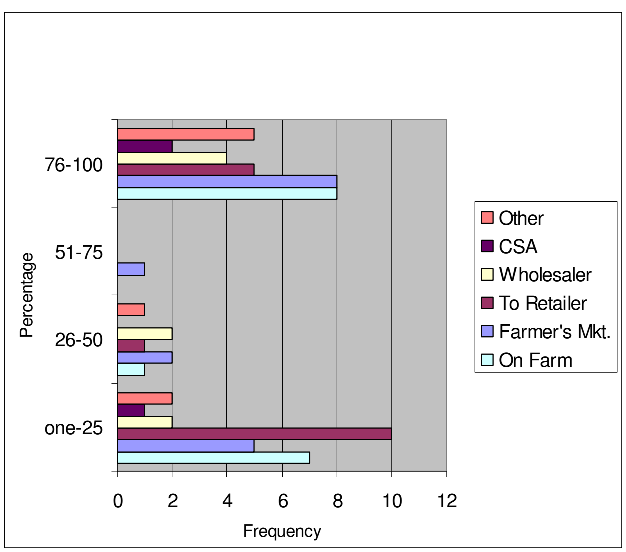
2.3.8 Question 24: Please identify the market area for your certified organic sales (2009) by percentage (best estimate)

A total of 35 respondents indicated that their market area included New Brunswick; 24 of these indicated that between 76 -100% of their product was sold here (i.e. that it was their major market). Another 7 indicated that between 1 - 25% was sold here (a minor market). The other 4 indicated that New Brunswick was the market for between 26 - 50% of their product.



2.3.9 Question 25: For sales in New Brunswick, please indicate your sales (2009) by percentage (best estimate).

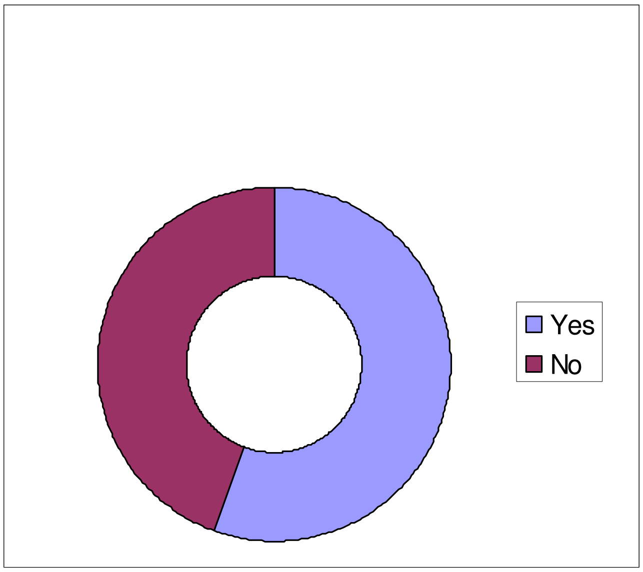
The graph below suggests that once a producer picks a market area (within New Brunswick) the sales to that market tend to be substantial (i.e. more than 75%) or relatively minor (i.e. less than 26%).



2.4 Expansion Plans

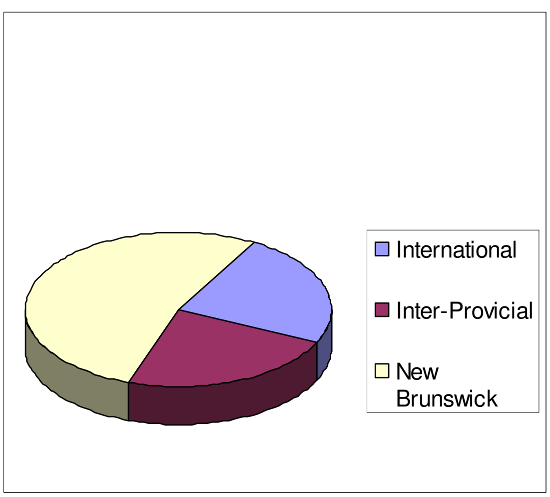
2.4.1 Question 26: Are you planning to expand your operations in the next 12 months?

More than 55% of those surveyed indicated that they were planning to expand their operations within 12 months.



2.4.2 Question 27: If yes, which markets will you attempt to penetrate? (Check all that apply)

More than half of those considering expansion indicated that they will attempt to penetrate the New Brunswick market. The remainder was evenly split between attempting to penetrate the inter-provincial market and attempting to penetrate the international market.



2.4.3 Question 28: What are your main challenges to expansion?

There were a total of 36 responses to this question. The most common reasons given relate to the availability of labour, marketing challenges and financial/access to capital. However various other challenges were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.4.4 Question 29: What incentives would encourage you to expand your operations?

There were a total of 32 responses to this question. The two most common incentives mentioned relate to help with marketing and subsidies (labour and infrastructure). However a wide variety of other incentives were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.4.5 Question 30: What are the barriers facing the organic sector in general? (Check all that apply)

Respondents were provided with a list of possible issues and were asked to chose all that applied. Respondents indicated that the number one barrier facing the organic sector is financial issues (51%), followed by lack of effective distribution network (47%), a lack of consumer awareness (43%) and lack of processing facilities (43%). Lack of marketing knowledge and difficulty with retailers were checked off by 38% of respondents.

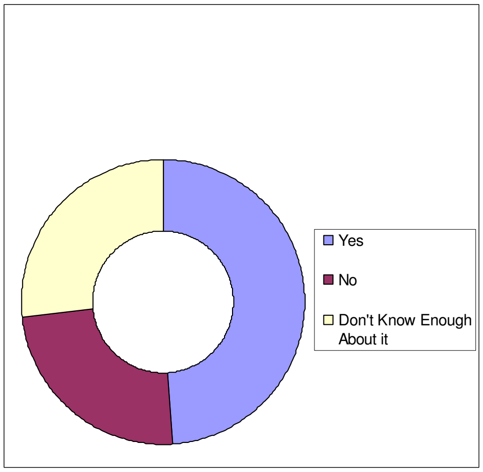
	#	%
Financial issues	24	51.1
Lack of effective distribution network	22	46.8
Lack of consumer awareness	20	42.6
Lack of processing facilities	20	42.6
Lack of marketing knowledge	18	38.3
Difficulty with wholesalers/retailers	18	38.3

2.4.6 Question 31: What are the opportunities for growth in the organic sector?

There were a total of 33 responses to this question. The most common opportunities mentioned relate to marketing, value added and / or creating new organic products. However a wide variety of other opportunities were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.4.7 Question 32: Do you believe the new Organic Product Regulations are a positive step forward for the organic sector?

Almost half indicated that they believed the new Regulations were a positive step forward with only about a quarter indicating otherwise. The remaining quarter did not believe they knew enough about the regulations to make a determination.

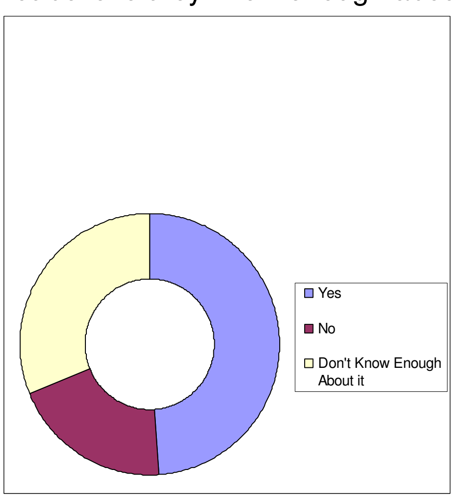


2.4.8 Question 33: Please explain. (Related to question 32)

There were a total of 27 responses to this question. Respondents who indicated a positive response noted that better labelling will create a “level playing field”; help to clarify consumer confusion; and provide clear rules and standards. Respondents who indicated a negative response noted that the cost and paperwork that were now required makes it more difficult to comply, especially for the smaller producer. However various other reasons were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

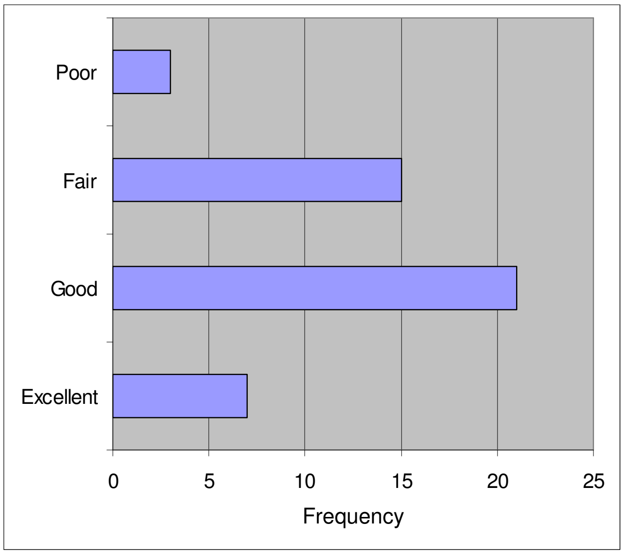
2.4.9 Question 34: Should the Government of New Brunswick implement legislation and regulations that mirror the federal Organic Product Regulations for inter-provincial trade activities?

Almost 50% indicated that they believe the government of New Brunswick should implement similar regulations, with only 20% indicating the government should not. The remaining 31% did not believe they knew enough about the regulations to make a determination.



2.4.10 Question 35: What is the overall condition of your facilities and equipment?

A total of 28 respondents (61%) indicated that their facilities and equipment are in either good or excellent condition. Another 15 (33%) indicated that they were in fair condition. Only 3 (7%) indicated that the overall condition of their facilities and equipment was in poor condition.



2.4.11 Question 36: Do you have a written financial/business plan?

A total of 16 of the respondents (36%) indicated that they had a written financial/business plan. The other 29 (64%) indicated that they did not have one. A couple of those who said that they had a plan also noted that it was likely out of date.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	35.6
No	29	64.4
Total	45	100.0

2.5 Conclusion

2.5.1 Question 37: Which issue, if resolved, would have the biggest positive impact on your operations?

There were a total of 39 responses to this question. The most common issues mentioned relate to marketing and distribution, government policy, enforcement of the regulations, finances, and consumer education. However a wide variety of other issues were presented. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.5.2 Question 38: How could ACORN better serve the organic sector?

There were a total of 35 responses to this question. The most common ways mentioned were related to continuing to bring all players together and raising consumer awareness. However various other responses were given. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.5.3 Question 39: How could the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture better serve the organic sector?

There were a total of 40 responses to this question. The most common ways mentioned were related to financial cost sharing, continue to offer the current programs and services, and to continue to improve the certification system. However a wide variety of other responses were given. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.5.4 Question 40: Please list three topics that you would like to be discussed at the Strategic Planning Forum (scheduled for February 2, 2010)

There were a total of 66 suggestions to this question. The most common suggestions related to financial, marketing/distribution, organic product regulations/certification, and education/training. However a wide variety of other suggestions were given. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

2.5.5 Question 41: Do you have any other comments?

There were a total of 19 who took the opportunity to make a comment. The most common comments relate to time for action, general comments related to organic farming, and marketing/distribution. However various other comments were given. Please see Appendix A for further detail.

APPENDIX A
Survey Comments

Appendix A
ACORN Survey 2010
Survey Comments by Question Number

Question 1
What is the main reason you and / or your operation became interested in organic production?

- First to provide our family with clean healthy food and now to try educating and marketing our produce
- To fill the need for locally produced organic animal feeds and to support local organic growth
- Lifestyle
- Market opportunity
- To pursue the # 1 health goal. Healthy food natures the mind, body improves connection with self & community. The best way to obtain longevity.
- Profit potential
- Initially it was for financial gain but now it is a way of thinking about what goes into and the processes surrounding our foods
- Produce the best food we can, build-up our farm without damaging the soil. Be a good member of our community, have a viable business
- I was farming conventionally but was not comfortable with the heavy use of chemical inputs in terms of their impact upon both me and the food I produce.
- Stewardship of the land, dislike of food produced conventionally
- Health and welfare of our environment and society!!
- Lifestyle that brings about food quality and safety respecting the environment and people
- To help spread the information about the soil food web
- We have been organic since we started farming in 1973
- We wanted to work with nature not against nature. Did not like handling chemical sprays
- I grew up on a dairy farm, so I knew that I wanted to own my own farm someday – but, not a dairy farm. I decided to go into vegetable production because it was possible to start small, I decided to grow certified organic because I did not want to expose myself or my family to the types of chemicals found in commercial vegetable operations, and because it provide me with a niche market.
- Because it has the least impact
- Always been interested in growing healthy food. Organic production allows us to market it as such.
- Because conventional farming practice is unhealthy and unsustainable.
- Unsustainable regular food system, financial and quality
- Emerging global demand. Health benefits
- It seemed like a good thing to do
- It most closely reflects true Christian stewardship of the land, plants, animals and people
- We produce some apple juice bars for (name deleted) Farms. They are the company that is organic.
- Environmental stewardship & self reliance
- Environmental and health reasons

- Principles of long-term environmental sustainability
- To avoid herbicide use, to promote healthier soil with an end result of healthier food
- To diversify and gain the experience before others did to differentiate from low price commodity agriculture
- For my family, organic production would bring long term benefit in terms of workplace safety, environment, more acceptable for my close by neighbour
- To be a good steward of the land & provide the best quality of product to consumers
- Environmental stewardship & sustainable farming practice
- We have always been in organic production and would never think of doing it otherwise, For all the right reasons it is the best way to go.
- To produce contaminant free food
- Financial gain
- In the interests of producing safe food which is sustainable and improving our environment
- committed organic farmer and would never consider going conventional
- As a young farmer just starting up it seemed to be the best way to start up concerning profitability, environment
- Two very equal reasons, personal health and health of the environment
- Have specific and precise knowledge. Have knowledge of the products.
- Money and to try to produce a superior quality product.
- Desire to minimize impacts from my agricultural practices on the environment. Set the example for my children.
- Long term profitability and the usage of best management practices for transformation of product, product standards, and the prestige of a controlled (certified) product.
- Create a better product without chemicals and to promote such products.
- For the respect of nature. Create a different product that the people want and have a bit more means to do it.
- Because of the usage of harmful products on the environment. The law protects the smallest maples. Adjustment of the price when selling.
- Better product. Better prices. Easier to sell in a new market or targeted market.

Question 10
Other concerns with the organic certification system

- Doesn’t cover selling organic products in your own province
- Lack of enforcement of organic claims intra-provincially
- The fact that all the work and experience the farmer goes through gets lost at retail end. Additional education in handling etc. When grain buying time is here (Sept to Dec) no certifications are ready so the farmer can sell his crops in turn know for sure that I am buying certified grains.
- We were warned about following NOP’s footsteps but we ignored it
- Complicated certification forms that ask a lot of questions that shouldn’t matter. Why does the size of my field matter? Why does my application rate for lime or compost matter? If it is an allowable input why does it matter how much of it I use or where I use it?

- Movement to accommodate “big” organic
- Time delay after inspection and payment to receive confirmation and certificate.
- The National Organic Regulations need to be applied by the new Brunswick government for NB
- The regulations are not small producer friendly
- Ridiculous rules changed in 2009 – about parallel production – issues for bedding plants transplants.
- Surplus of organic syrup
- Protection of system against counterfeiting
- Have only a biological organization.

Question 11
If you are no longer certified organic, what would encourage you to consider re-certification?

- Local involvement of certification board more community involved less large corporation feel
- We didn’t expand on question 11 as we are under the impression that if you discontinue being part of the Certification Process it is not easy to Re-Certify. We got this impression from people we talked to last year at the ACORN Conference.
- Adopting the EU standard of crop and soil testing. Emphasis on small operations, not large agri business.
- Financial viability
- Re-instating – growing same varieties of organic veg transplant and selling same variety as a conventional. Bedding plant – I agree on what we were doing with MCOG – colour coded pots, different greenhouse; different watering system etc.
- Reduce cost of certification
- cost of certification has to be less and less paper work
- Premium.
- I am not currently. I am converting to a new product (berries).
- A premium is a factor but also the standard of production and the prestige of a controlled product.
- The usage of harmful products on the environment.

Question 16
What are your main labour concerns?

- There are not any people willing to work in this type of endeavour
- Cost of overheads
- Would like to provide benefits (dental & drugs)
- Aging workers
- Availability of labour
- Difficult to get labour that is willing to do hard, physical work in the heat and rain.
- Difficult to get and hard to predict number & quality of WWOOFERS. Also, we are not getting any younger!
- Young people are not looking for labour jobs anymore!
- Cost of labour and the necessity to have a relatively high number of labourers
- Finding people who will work at labour jobs

- Kids want off-farm jobs, I need an off-farm job to invest in my farm since it does not provide enough revenue to pay for itself.
- It is very hard to find dedicated personnel
- Having enough good help willing to work
- To much work not enough time
- Being able to pay competitive wage rates
- Cost and available staff to keep up with demand
- That conscientious apprentices/WWOOFERS etc. continue to be available
- Organic farming on small scale not economically viable to support paid labour
- Finding willing workers & paying them adequately. Finding knowledgeable & skilled staff – where?
- Difficult to find good help
- No reliable skilled young men willing to stay on farm long term; no one wants to work long hours required for farming; some get lax when not being watched
- As I expand, low cost labour may be hard to get in my region as population is getting older (workforce)
- Difficult to find willing labour for temporary work
- We are getting too old to do all the work
- Obtaining quality attention to detail and dedicated people
- Can't afford to pay someone, not financially feasible
- find people that want to work and not just going for the pay cheque
- there is no available labour pool of agricultural workers – either experienced or those looking for experience
- Difficulty in finding specialized part time labour.
- None for the moment.
- The cost of training.
- Qualified workers.
- Finding good, dependable employees.
- Keeping the same employee's and hiring younger employees.

Question 18

Other certified organic crops produced in 2009

- Garlic - .1 of an acre
- Hay – 6 acres
- Hay/silage 66 acres
- Seeds – 2 acres

Question19

Other certified livestock produced in 2009

- None listed

Question20

If yes (re: value added activity) please specify

- maple
- apple cider, preserves, dried apple slices, jams and jellies

- fresh pack, will be doing dried fruit late 2010
- processed garlic
- we do quite a bit of barley and other value adding. Also sell our meat direct to consumer. The majority of the value we produce organically is from organic soils, composts etc.
- cut and wrapped meat
- oversees marketing of poultry and beef
- u-pick, shelled beans and cleaned/trimmed garlic
- specially packaged seed
- pickled / preserved juices & freezing
- lettuce greens
- Seed cleaning
- Retail vegetables
- Finished products

Question 21
Other support resources listed

- Organic dairy processor
- Cooler's
- Long term storage facility for root crops
- Storage facilities for organic crops
- Fewer regulations for our existing facility to allow it to diversify better.
- Distribution and marketing
- Drying facility
- Seed cleaning facility & equipment
- To upgrade processing building
- A good market price setting system for wholesalers
- grain dealers
- Other: Washing equipment
- Other: Product transformation centre.

Question 25
Other NB Sales listed

- Mill
- Other farmers – 80%
- Seed catalogue - 1%
- Restaurants – 5%
- Mail order - 94.5%
- Processor – 53%
- Other Farmers – 30%
- Mail order 100%
- Factory 50%

Question 28
What are your main challenges to expansion?

- Labour
- Capital, lack of growth
- Production issues
- Marketing issues
- Finding enough hours to commit to the work necessary for organic production
- The process for obtaining additional Crown lease land is unbelievably difficult for small operations
- Labour and availability of large plants
- Age, workforce, lack of desire for major expenditures required
- Government! Bureaucracy and finances
- Financial decrease. Strawberries and raspberries are labour intensive but cranberries cost of establishment is huge with no returns for 3-4 years.
- Time
- Age
- Cost of infrastructure, obtaining financing from banks, low commodity prices for products produced, lack of educational resources in agriculture sector concerning organic greenhouse food crop production.
- Marketing to the right people
- Meeting the government regulations for value adding farm products. We have a bakery but CFIA frowns on a bakery doing processing etc.
- Time and labour and department of health regulations
- Marketing and distribution
- Developing relationships with restaurants so as to grow what is in demand. Next would be distribution (staff)
- Weather / growing conditions, deer damage, insufficient infrastructure (equipment storage, header house) insufficient rotational land
- Labour, cost of production & viable income; marketing & distribution
- Handling and storage limitations
- Need more productive land base; need specialized seed cleaning & storage facilities; need staff!!; need better admin & accounting system. Need legal advice.
- Higher minimum wage; dependable markets; good labour; bank unwilling to lend to farms without crop insurance; organic prices falling
- Access to capital investment
- Labour and technology (e.g. need new software)
- We are ageing and there are no successors
- Obtaining more workable land
- more cattle, just bought a boar, would like to have more hens, meat kings and vegetables
- finding land to rent
- labour
- Location of land.
- Start-up costs – machines, equipment, soil labour.
- Financing.
- Financing.

- None for the moment.
- The government does not want to lend me additional public land. They prefer to have them cleared by large corporations.

Question 29

Q29 – What incentives would encourage you to expand your organic operations?

- Labour subsidies
- Transportation costs
- More commercial farms i.e. dairy
- Being able to ensure an income
- Profit
- Keep certification and government separate
- Incentives with seasonal help
- Help planning a market strategy now for 2011 – when we will be in full production
- Lack of slaughter facilities. I raise lamb which is conventional. If I had better slaughter options, I would consider converting my lamb to organic and possibly adding beef.
- At my age, probably none
- We do not feel it is safe to base expansion on subsidies
- Young partners
- Courses in organic greenhouse production. Better marketing forums.
- Finding markets and getting fair process for my product
- More availability of organic ingredients and inputs. More cost effective and straight forward certification.
- Regulations tailored to the scale of operation
- Value added processing, and marketing and distribution
- Continue growth in the local/organic movement. Continued government programs for growth in marketing infrastructure
- What is your definition of expansion? As in question #28.
- Distribution co-op that caters to small producers
- Wage subsidy program
- Crop insurance on crops; marketing help, lowering cost of nitrogen (organic), money for weeding equipment, money for grain storage, grain cleaning. Grain sorting, strong market for organic feed grain
- Restore cranberry as a crop for perennial crop provincial loan
- assistance from NB Gov't in obtaining leasable land via unused land that is currently in the FLIP program
- farmers market from January onward
- subsidized labour to train young workers
- All the different types of food equipment.
- Financial assistance not too complicated to obtain and doesn't take months of bureaucracy to get.
- Subsidy.
- Demand of product.
- Creation of job opportunity.
- The price per pound and land that is more accessible.

Question 30
Other barriers facing organic industry

- Inadequate population
- Information to public by traditional growers that organic is not worth the price
- Public will and gov. foresight
- Lack of market for organic feed grains, pork and chicken
- Lack of cost effective inputs and seeds and ingredients, these two issues are problems, but more farmers would be best remedy.
- If ? the growth of the sector is unsustainable
- Feed costs, insufficiency of allowed poultry numbers
- Too labour intensive
- Weather uncertainty
- Some people take it to personally
- Combination of individual efforts. Farming coop.
- Not enough of a market.

Question 31
What are the opportunities for growth in the organic <u>industry</u>?

- Further processing facilities for organic fluid milk, poultry, eggs, abattoir etc
- Asia and Europe
- Unsure
- Value added fruit production
- Local markets & community involvement
- Organic meat and eggs
- CSA's expanding, the desire of the consumer in general to eat local and/or organic
- Unlimited – it is the only healthy food available!
- Buy local movement is opening up retail stores to some degree. Growers working together to meet supply and working out transportation issues
- See (name deleted)
- Local – direct marketing
- Lots of market for organic vegetables
- All season production. Innovative ways of supplying the local market.
- Consumers demanding local <u>and</u> organic foods
- See opportunity in CSA and direct marketing local food.
- The opportunities are massive, but the most important ones we need to grow is number of small mixed farms
- Product availability and awareness
- More growth in Agritarism to encourage on site education for consumers: festivals, more farm tours, networking. By-pass retailers (grocery)
- Storage vegetables, small fruits (fresh and frozen) Replace imports
- Organic is the largest growing sector & demand is high from consumers – how do we get the product to the consumer
- Training for young people interested in small scale production
- Restaurant supply

- Consumer awareness of the realities of agribusiness today, the desire to eat local; healthy food will increase demand
- Exports to Europe, organic French fries, chips, New England
- If one creates value added products transform at the farm, opportunities are good
- Small scale processing; livestock products; marketing to supermarkets
- It is time to start using common sense again – too much red tape
- opportunities are hindered by the big box stores and wholesalers – they are margin grabbing
- labour market
- overseas grain sales
- There are opportunities in production and processing
- Enormous. We are only at the beginning of a great increase in demand. There is insufficient production.
- I cannot answer because we have insufficient information on this subject.

Question 33

Please explain (re: product regulations)

- Better labelling
- To much red tape means people look for new ways around standards
- We already are over burdened by government bureaucracy, less would be better
- We are new but have read the standards and with more explanation, we feel the regulations are a positive step forward for good growers.
- The regulations are encouraging production which may be legally defined as organic but is simply another version of industrial agriculture for example, farms with land bases that cannot handle the manure being produced, or vegetable farms which are only sustainable because of huge inputs of approved chemicals.
- It will eliminate dumping from other countries of “bogus” organics. If MOUs are signed, it will eliminate the attitude that “I’m organic because I say I am”.
- Our regulations have slipped looser to allow more industrial and farming methods (pelletized chicken manure from conventional farms)???
- Import products can now be traced and challenged if products are in question
- Having a National Program should be good; but it is in essence a step backward.
- Government involvement will weaken standards, encourage (could not read) export, and increase cost and bureaucracy
- This has put cost of certification up because of the need to be certified with an accredited CB to the point which some people have dropped out and this leaves a big cost for the farmers in certified organic system
- The organic Product Regulations are good for the industry overall, but because they are not applied internally in the province of New Brunswick they do not protect small certified organic local growers that do not export, from farmers that call their products organic but are not certified. Consumers do not always discern the difference between organic and certified organic and organically grown.
- Yes they are a step forward however cost to implement is a hardship to growers making many try to avoid certification. This is a big problem since it creates consumer confusion.
- If the new regulations help to clear the confusion of the consumer in the market place

- Set a standard that organic products have to meet, but in some cases it has created a barrier
- Protects those of us who play by the rules
- It has created a level playing field when applied nationally AND provincially. Removes consumer confusion. Brings greater integrity to the organic industry.
- Product & customer integrity is important
- Important to have clear rules and standards
- Would be more effective with more consumer awareness – needs to be promoted / explained to the consumer
- Some standards were lowered in the new regulations
- Consumers will learn to recognize the COR standards & symbol whereas before there were too many certifying bodies for people to be familiar with
- Too much red tape – takes away time that could be spent in the field
- But – the regulations are not small producer friendly
- Some regulations are OK but some of them are just costly, and the industry is pushing farmers to cheat!! … in order to get certification. I will not play this game.
- Consistency with certifying bodies
- A positive step to have federal regulations but negative in New Brunswick and other provinces that have not yet adopted the regulations. There is already confusion in the NB market place over the use of the term “organic” and “certified” organic so the consumer needs more information on the regulations, in order to make an informed choice.

Question 37

Which issue, if resolved, would have the biggest positive impact on your operations?

- We are really too new to offer informed and constructive comments at this time, last year was our first certified year
- Further food manufacturing
- The issue, if resolved, that would have the biggest impact on our operation, as an organic operation, would be a more timely response when we ask if a product or amendment is allowed under the Standards. We wait weeks and then receive only a yes or no. We feel this is not enough information considering the cost to Certify. As we are new to the process it seems surprising that the Government and ACORN are so helpful and have many resources available, that the Certification process is almost confrontational. Please understand that we expect to researching and developing our own process but it takes some readjustment of mind set to work with the people we pay to keep us on the right path.
- Department of Natural Resources at present active opposition to maple
- Unsure at this time - but income is huge concern
- Enforcement of the organic regulations in N.B. A second issue which could help organics is a program which identifies organic production which is local.
- Ability to distribute my fresh eating crops to those who want them
- Retail outlets that care and understand about organic foods and consumer education.
- Debt paid off
- Please see (name deleted) comments as I was involved with writing them.
- Consumer education

- Financial issues are the biggest obstacle to being successful and the lack of information on how to farm profitably in Atlantic Canada. Successful business models would be helpful if they could be applied to farms in Atlantic Canada and if they could be used as business plans to obtain financing.
- Lack of distribution network
- Less interference from marketing board for milk and chicken.
- Regulation based on scale of production i.e. organic regulations; health regulations etc.
- Marketing and distribution
- Marketing, business plan, keeping government programs in place. Strict regulation as to calling oneself "organic".
- Internalize the Federal Organic Reg's in NB
- Economic viability – without becoming a factory farm!!
- Improved handling and storage
- Location
- Cost of certification and record keeping requirements
- Crop insurance for organic crops
- Loan acquisition is my major issue
- Labour challenges
- Cost of fees, distribution of product
- What is considered parallel production of bedding plants, garden transplants
- Stabilize weather; over last 5 years we have lost production to weather events (eg too much rain, too much snow and ice)
- NB Gov't involved with FLIP program to make more low priced land available
- a new green house and cooler equipment – financial help from government
- Time and experience
- issues around labour, and the availability of farm workers
- The cost of maple grove equipment is very high when considering the length of the season.
- Lead welding and non-conformance barrels.
- Access to financing and stream-lining of the environmental impact assessment process.
- Stabilization of establishments.
- Calcium build-up in the stove pans.
- None for the moment.
- Location of public land and cost.

Question 38

How could ACORN better serve the organic industry?

- ACORN needs to be aware that there is more to organics than just vegetable farming. Supporting the berry sector is a good start
- Lobby
- Availability of necessary inputs locally & in quantities for size of operation
- By not being a mouthpiece for large certification bodies and government departments
- The involvement by ACORN in seminars on marketing and encouraging co-operation between individual members would provide a further service.

- Training
- Continue connecting producers; bring together producers and potential distribution system. Help develop more CSAs. Hold another organic inspections training session.
- A new organic directory; marketing groups; public education
- We believe ACORN is doing a great job. It is only restricted by associations limiting ACORN'S involvement.
- ACORN does a great job already. The annual conference and marketing tools have been very helpful
- Bring organic producers and consumers together
- They do a great job! Educating consumers on value of local and organic would be great.
- Encourage and provide more information on mixed farming – seek out <u>new</u> farmers
- More public awareness related to local organic producers, processors and retailers
- Further promote organic networks/farms/website
- Help NB government implement Fed Organic Reg's, monitor development Canada GAP standards in Atlantic in Atlantic Canada – Impact??
- ACORN is doing the best job serving the industry – don't forget the voices of small producers
- Support local production for local products, whether or not it's certified, or fully organic. (MOFGA example)
- Consumer awareness campaigns & events
- Continue to promote consumer awareness of organics and local organic farms
- Not sure – nitrogen efficiency, plant fixing or biological
- Continue to listen & don't forget small producers
- I think they are doing a wonderful job!!
- More education to the consuming public
- don't know. They do a good job.
- by adopting a better farm apprenticeship system unique to Atlantic Canada, that is better than SOIL.
- Listen to the producers.
- Publicity. Get people to know about the organic industry.
- By helping the organic industry to develop even more.
- More visibility for the francophone areas of NB. Promote organic.
- Have a good follow-up with the producers and keep them informed.
- Insist that the Province should finance more start-up programs.
- By meeting with us <u>Personally</u>.
- By providing us more information on the emergence of the industry.
- By producing more publicity.

Question 39
How could the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture better serve the organic <u>industry</u>?

- Work with dairy farmers to help find a solution for their milk to be processed
- Get maple moved from DNR

- Be more involved in smaller operations less push for large mono-culture farms
- By having people in these positions of liaison between the grower and the department that are there for the long-haul and are progressive yet aren't surprised by the nitty-gritty
- We have had professional help and involvement by the knowledgeable people who work for the department. I am very encouraged by their support. More seminars and workshops would stimulate the involvement by traditional farmers.
- Better access to training
- Passing an MOU with the federal government to defend the word organic. Be more inclusive to the organic industry. This has improved, but there is a way to go.
- By accepting the facts with respect to the growing demand for healthy food and the decreasing number of people interested in farming
- The NB industry needs to have the government to develop a long term (more than 5 years) plan. This plan must have the organic industry's input.
- Help by paying part of certifying costs
- The department of agriculture needs to help farmers obtain infrastructure financing. Profit margins for most agricultural products are too low for farmers to go into debt to build them. Loans with guaranteed long term interest rates or flexible loans that don't have to be paid during years of low commodity prices or bad growing seasons. Farmers need to be able to take courses in greenhouse production and marketing – preferably on-line.
- The department needs to treat the organic industry the same as the non-organic, and not just something somebody is doing on the side
- Again, they do well but could be better by helping in certification costs to help include more producers and by adopting provincial regulations.
- Encourage small mixed farms instead of encouraging large monoculture farms
- Financial assistance for distribution, processing, marketing and retailing
- They're doing a great job. Keep the programs/support. Simplify the process.
- Implement Fed organic Reg's in NB , Continue to have our organic specialist, continue support for ACORN
- Support for a co-operative distribution, marketing & business opportunities
- Training programs for new small scale farmers
- ODI – marketing programs are great – keep it up
- Provide vets that are knowledgeable in naturopathic / homeopathic livestock area
- Enforce the COR standard to limit the use of "organic" wording on non-certified products.
- Provide crop insurance to it; form a nitrogen research program; Twin-n; blooming blossoms; AC Green Pit; other allow bone meal to be used from abattoirs; recycle human waste
- Perennial crop loan re-instating; BNAA personal have been very helpful to me over the years
- Pay for certification costs
- Funding incentives for small producers to certify & more support to large farms to encourage transition
- The department should allow our representatives to be more active to visit our farm's and not be in the office doing paper work. We have lost a lot of that in the last few years.
- Continue with financial help to organic producers

- Help promote NB products within New Brunswick
- support direct marketing and keep farmer independent. Help the small abattoir stay in business
- Develop a nutrient management plan especially for organic grain farmers
- by subsidizing the cost of certification
- Continue to subsidize the organic industry.
- By helping producers with financial aid to reach their goal.
- More people to offer support. There is a very good representative in place, but is alone for all the Province. There is a big opportunity for economic development but the support is necessary.
- Have good follow-up with the producers and keep them informed.
- Promotion and programs.
- By investing more money and having a qualified person who would be able to represent us.
- More information (have an information session).
- By taking under their umbrella all the maple syrup production farms that the Minister of Natural Resources transfers to the Minister of Agriculture.

Question 40
Please list three topics that you would like to be discussed at the Strategic Planning Forum (scheduled for February 2, 2010).

- Livestock production needs
- Renewable energy to benefit the farm
- Biodiversity in farm production
- Simplify record documentation keeping
- Difficulty in obtaining Crown lease (i.e. willing to contend with Irving's who own the province)
- Is eco-cert given pre-eminence in the Agency
- Should all producers of organic products have certification from several certifying bodies
- The border – try sending products to the U.S. and stay sane, and civil. Export difficulty
- Marketing for organics
- Increased help with local markets
- Labour challenges - seasonal labour
- Provincial regulations of organic products
- Infrastructure – farmers are losing it, both in conventional and organic farming.
- Development of a program which clearly identifies local product
- Given the future problems with transportation, an organic distribution network will be essential.
- Get the retailers to acknowledge what local really is
- Marketing and business planning
- Lab testing of soil and organic products like the E.U.
- Uniform maritime certification – how many CBs do we need?
- Cooperative marketing
- Networking between producers and processors. For #34, forming an informal working group representing the industry

- Marketing of organic products
- Adoption of organic product regulation within New Brunswick
- Infrastructure financing
- Threats and competition in organic industry and local marketing
- Working together between the different commodities
- Bring cooking back into schools as mandatory subjects
- Reduce dependence on food imports
- Cost of certification
- Ways to include all organic farmers in certification
- Incentives to grow number of organic farms
- Implementation of federal regulations in New Brunswick
- Food security versus food safety
- Quota does not apply to organic i.e. organic pasteurized(?) chicken is a unique product which should not fall under the same marketing board as conventional chicken; turkey; eggs
- Processing
- Distribution
- Marketing and retailing
- Competing with the large retailers (remaining independent, commanding exclusivity, strong pricing, education)
- Canadian Organic reg's implemented in all provinces
- Effect on organic agriculture of shrinking farm numbers - organic and conventional
- How do we have farmer generated agri policies that will survive government change @ provincial & Federal levels eg NB Ag Summit process
- Certification co-op that helps small producers who want to sell inside of the province.
- # 38 and # 39 above (McFGA example; and Training programs for new small scale farmers), and how both of these relate to increasing demand for local produce, and in general, increasing local (N county scale) food security & self reliance.
- Consumer awareness campaigns
- Organic is food but we need to develop bio-fuel diesel on farm to offset rising oil prices
- Crop insurance
- Advance payments to organic crops
- Co-op or group certification options which follow the new organic regulation but are small producer friendly
- Parallel Production
- Paperwork
- Red tape
- Better marketing in NB
- More visibility of NB organic products
- Develop marketing pricing system for everyone to use
- direct marketing
- financial help with an agricultural degree
- no need to take the organic regulations personally
- a distribution system for organic products
- Farm labour for organic farms, and an organic farm apprenticeship program

- A processing facility for organic products
- Have only one recognized organic organization.
- Profitability of all the organic farms (margin of profit from organic products versus additional costs). Technical and professional support. By convincing the provinces to put in more resources. By favouring cooperation between farmers for the transformation of products, putting the products on the market and distribution of products.
- Stability. Support by each program. Technical support.
- Problem with calcium build-up in the pans. Have a field person to help. Less bureaucracy.
- Information on finished products (candy, maple taffy, etc.). How to keep requested records. Governmental laws.
- Publicity of maple products like those for milk. Conservation of maple groves and the transfer of these Baux.

Question 41
Do you have any other comments?

- The on going concern re: market/store for selling organic produce through
- We are looking forward to February 2nd and hope to play a part in the process to develop a vibrant strategic plan.
- Please do not make this another avenue for people to complain and whine. Let's actually work together to develop our industry with positive energy and avoid the negative energy.
- The financial information gather using year one is not a good representation. For example, our income in 2008 was about (amount deleted) compared to less than (amount deleted) this past year.
- If people know what they can do with fruits and vegetables, they don't need to buy expensive, packaged and unhealthy foods. This subject should also include nutrition.
- We can learn a lot from Quebec. They should be invited to speak.
- Less gov't talk more action
- Gov't support for environmental goods & services in agric
- Why wasn't this survey issued on an easy computer generated interactive system?
- We like the idea of small roadside farmer markets similar to the "Green Pig" in Salisbury to supply local organic products to an area we feel this is a better model than trying to bring local organics into the box stores.
- Farmers need all the help they can get due to losses from weather, insect and animal damage, and lower yields due to weeds
- Organic farmers should be recognized for the low cost they incur to society i.e. not incurring costs of health problems; environmental problems that are created by conv'al farms; as a result it makes sense (i.e. cost effective) for the gov't to pay the certification costs of farmers.
- It was a good step forward to implement national regulations but I feel that they cater to large operations; we need better options & solutions for small producers.
- I am very saddened to have not certified this year because of crazy rules on parallel production. I will continue to farm organically and offer good produce. But

just because I love a certain variety of herbs, vegetables; I will be able to grow my organic transplants for my garden and I will grow the same varieties of transplant in my conventional green houses to sell to mu clients. This way I will not be encouraged to not operate with the full organic integrity that a certification body would want to have. I sincerely think some of these crazy rules are pushing farmers to cheat, go underground and not care. Instead of going that route I have decided to do it the right way. Thank you.

- NB gov't (DAA) to develop consumer education system
- The challenge for the organic industry is significant. We have seen a decrease in organic farms in the south-east of New Brunswick for the last 2 years after a few good years. The challenge appears to be the profitability of the small farmers versus the price that consumers are willing to pay.
- I am a new producer and I have not had the chance to see all the facets of the organic industry.
- Organic certification should take into consideration the stability of the establishments who use the same regulations as the Federal.
- We do not need questionnaires. We need a qualified person to meet with us to discuss our problems. Owner: (name deleted)