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Canada's Organic Regulation pre-published

Canada's long awaited organic regulation was finally pre-published in the *Canada Gazette* (Vol. 140, No. 35, 2 September 2006). This pre-publication is a milestone for Canada's organic sector since the Canada organic standard, introduced in 1999, has not been codified into law. Certification of organic producers and handlers as well as accreditation of certification bodies have been conducted voluntarily except in the province of Québec, which requires certification to the Québec organic standard by certification bodies accredited by the Conseil des appellations agroalimentaires du Québec (CAAQ).

Most of the industry's requests were reportedly fulfilled in the new regulation. These included:

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has been appointed as the Competent Authority and, according to the Organic Trade Association (OTA), a member of Organic Regulatory Council (ORC)/Conseil canadien pour la réglementation biologique (CCRB), this helped shape the proposed regulation. CFIA will establish a Canada Organic Office (Bureau national du biologique) to verify compliance and enforce this new regulation after it is finalised.
- Industry's request for the regulation to refer to the standard, which allows amendments to the standard to be made without amending the regulation. However, despite the industry's preference to CFIA over the Canadian General Standard Board

(CGSB) (see TOS issues 60 and 63), the regulation opted to refer to the later. CGSB organic standard, *i.e.* CAN/CGSB-32.310, *Organic Production Systems – General Principles and Management Standards*, as stated in Part 3, 8(2)(d).

- The regulation also retained the accreditation and certification system already in place as requested. Guidelines developed by CFIA for assessing and recognising organic certification bodies will be utilised in the new Canada Organic Regime.

Paddy Doherty, Canadian Organic Initiative Project coordinator, said in an interview with TOS, '*The regulation has [been] written in a deliberately sparse language. This allows CFIA to provide elaboration, guidance and interpretation through a Quality Management Systems Manual.*'

The ORC/CCRB is already collecting comments on both the new regulation and the Quality Management Systems Manual. ORC is hoping it can answer as many questions as possible in order to ensure consistency in the comments that would point out the attributes and the flaws in both documents. ■

Source: *Canada Gazette and Canadian Organic Initiative Project*

For more information see <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/part1/2006/20060902/html/regle2-e.html>

