

Canadian Organic Growers Cultivons Biologique Canada

Perth-Waterloo-Wellington



Thinking About Organic?

The benefits of organic farming for human and environmental health are broad and long-lasting. This information sheet outlines the benefits of organic farming and certification.

Benefits of Organic

- An investment in your land (capital) instead of in the pockets of multi-national chemical companies.
- A commitment to protecting your health and the health of the local community, environment and economy.
- Producing food a better way, which involves:
 - Building healthy soil
 - Eliminating the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers
 - Treating livestock humanely
 - Minimizing soil erosion and water withdrawals
 - Eliminating GMOs (feed and seed)
 - Eliminating antibiotics and growth hormones
 - Eliminating sewage sludge
 - Eliminating irradiation and food additives



Organics is the fastest growing sector in agriculture, with sales increasing at 20% per year.

Benefits of Certification

- Provides accreditation for the quality of your product.
- Provides a consistent symbol that consumers can recognize.
- Provides a high level of confidence in organic products.
- Ensures a high level of integrity along the entire production supply chain.
- Provides complete source-to-sale traceability.
- Provides support and a united voice for organic producers.
- Allows you to sell your product at organic market value – your product is now worth a premium.
- Allows you to market your product inter-provincially and internationally with the new national logo.

The Canada Organic Logo

- According to the **Organic Products Regulations** (OPR) (SOR/2006-338) farmers who market their products as organic must certify as organic with an accredited certifying body (CB) if they wish to trade their products across provincial or international border or if their products will bear the Canada Organic Logo.



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What is Organic Certification

- Organic certification is a third-party verification process for producers of organic food and other organic agricultural products. Any business directly involved in food production can be certified, including seed suppliers, farmers, food processors, retailers and restaurants.

Transitioning to Certified Organic

- Get to know the new Canadian Organic Standards and Regulations. Check out www.cog.ca/stds_regs.htm.
- Identify your product market. Will you be selling wholesale, in farmers' market, in public institutions or in restaurants? Will you be marketing your products locally and/or internationally? Identify which certifying bodies can certify you to standards required to access those markets.
- Know your land. What was the land previously used for? Were synthetic chemicals used? How long ago? You may need to test your soil qualities.
- Identify the certifying bodies (CBs) in Canada approved by a Canadian Food Inspection Agency-accredited conformity verification body (CVB). Check out: www.cog.ca/cb.htm.
- Find an accredited certifying agency that best meets your needs. Certifying agencies provide certification to different standards and they provide different services. Compare their programs. Talk to other certified organic farmers and ask them what their experience has been.



The Transition Period

- During the transition period land must be managed using organic practices for 36 months prior to harvest of the first certified organic crop.

Costs

- Annual Inspection fees – The cost for certification may depend on the amount of annual sales or on the number of farmed acres. Fees can range from a few hundred dollars for a small market garden to a few thousand dollars for a medium size herd of cattle.



Paperwork

- In general, all certifying agencies ask for similar types of documentation. The size and type of farm, and the stage in the certification process, will affect nature of the type and volume of record keeping.
- Once established, paperwork is easy and efficient and records benefit the development of the farm business.



Marketing

- Once certified, you can market your products as organic. You can use your certifying body's logo and the new Canada organic logo.
- Currently, there is a market demand for organic in excess of production, meaning your certified product can now be sold at a premium.

