



OCPP/Pro-Cert Canada Inc.



Newsletter No 06/01 Western Edition

January, 2006

Organic Update Meeting - February 14, 2006

The emphasis at the third annual OC/PRO Organic Update Meeting at **Salon B, Queensbury Centre, Exhibition Park (corner of Saskatchewan Drive & Lewvan Drive), Regina, Saskatchewan** will be the following topics presented in the order given:

Organic Farming Systems

Dr. Martin Entz
Plant Science Dept.
University of Manitoba

Organic Regulation Update

Mr. Gary Briggs
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Ottawa, Canada

**Organic Beef & Livestock
Opportunities**

Mr. Keith Everets
Diamond Willow Beef
Pincher Creek, Alberta
and

Mr. Ted Soudant
Field Gate Organics
Zurich, Ontario

**Japan Agricultural Standard (JAS)
Training Session**

Mr. Lebi Perez
OCIA International
Lincoln, Nebraska

These topics are of critical interest to operators in truly sustainable and diversified organic agriculture and agri-business.

Producers and Handlers interested in exporting to Japan now or in the near future must attend a JAS Training Session within 12 months of their application for JAS certification. This session will provide the training and insight needed to comply with this unique organic program.

There will be a cash bar and an optional “sit down” dinner after the sessions close.

Book a room and bring your significant other! Registration starts at 8:30 AM. Dr. Entz will begin his presentation at 9:00 AM sharp.

Pre-register to guarantee space, help us plan the event and save money.

OC/PRO – Canada’s “One Stop Certifier”

OC/PRO Canada via its various accreditations and alliances now can provide comprehensive organic certification services to the following organic standards:

1. The OC/PRO Canada Standard
2. Canadian Organic Standard
3. European Regulation 2092/91
4. The United States Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (NOP)
5. The Quebec Organic Reference Standards
6. The Bio-Suisse Standard
7. The Japan Agricultural Standard.

This “one stop” service is made possible by OC/PRO’s fundamental accreditations:

1. The Standards Council of Canada (SCC)
2. The USDA National Organic Program (NOP)
3. The Conseil des Appellations Agroalimentaires du Quebec (CAAQ).

The SCC accreditation to ISO Guide 65 is OC/PRO’s corner stone in the market place. The SCC is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and a signatory to the IAF Multi-Lateral Arrangement (MLA). ISO Guide 65 is the globally accepted protocol for certification body assessment and is accepted by all of Canada’s major trading partners including the EU, Japan, and South Korea.

If your certifier (or proposed certifier) cannot provide access to the EU, US, Quebec, Switzerland, Japan, or South Korea, you need to consider OC/PRO Canada in 2006!

OC/PRO’s fees for comprehensive organic certification and export authorization remain the lowest in Canada. OC/PRO is the only Pan-Canadian certifier which does not collect a royalty fee. Others charge an additional 0.5 to 1.5% of your gross income!

EU Regulation Updates

“Third Country List” Derogation

“On September 20, 2005, the Council of the European Union unanimously agreed to adopt the amendment to Regulation EEC No 2092/91 to extend the deadline for its organic trading partners to be on its third-country equivalency list to December 31, 2006” (CFIA OTF Update)

This derogation has created additional time for Canada to pursue the conversion of the Canadian voluntary regulation system in which OC/PRO is a participant into a mandatory system and to complete the 2nd Edition of the Canadian Organic Standard. The CFIA National Organic Office (NOO) indicated on December 14, 2005 that the draft regulation, once gazetted (April, 2006) can be used to enter Third Country List/ equivalency negotiations with the EU and other trading partners.

EU Regulation Amendment

On December 21, 2005 the European Commission published a proposal for significant overhaul of the Regulation 2092/91. In an explanatory memorandum, the Commission commented that consultations leading up to the publication of the “*European Action Plan*” in June of 2004 showed that “... *the most important conclusions in the regulatory domain were the need to lay down more explicitly the principles and objectives of organic farms, the importance of safeguarding the integrity of the inspection system, the need to overcome dysfunctions of the internal market caused by national and private logo’s and standards, the need to complete and improve standards and the need to make import provisions more efficient.*” The detail of the new proposed Regulation is reduced and it now includes aquaculture and wine while moving away from the system of derogations in 2092/91 to a more flexible yet strictly regulated system designed to account for local variations.

The new proposal makes the use of the EU logo or wording obligatory for all food products sold in EU member states. At present organic foods may bear the organic logo for their individual member state. Under the new regulation it will be compulsory for them to also carry either the EU logo, which has existed for a number of years, or 'EU Organic' wording. If they opt for the wording this may appear in other European languages aside from English.

Commission spokesperson Johan Reyniers stated that labeling is the main area in which the new regulations differ from the old. But other key aspects govern organic content and GMOs: at least 95 percent of the final product must be organic for it to be labeled as such. Although products containing GMOs may not be labeled as organic, there is an exception for those with up to 0.9 percent GMO content from accidental contamination.

For imports the current third country listing system will be maintained but will now be based on demonstrated equivalency with either the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines or the EU Regulation. The replacement of the 'import derogation' will be on the basis of compliance with the EU standards and submission to the EU system of controls, **or on the basis of equivalent guarantees certified by control bodies that have been approved by the EU for that purpose.**

The regulations will come into force for EU member states in January 1, 2009, although **the new import rules will apply from January 1, 2007, but will allow for continued import authorizations for individual products to allow all necessary measures to be put in place and so as not to disrupt trade.**

Reyniers said that there have been a lot of modifications to the current organic regulations between 1990 and 2005, and by bringing all of these together into one document the

Commission is seeking to present the rules as simply as possible.

Datamonitor estimates that in 2004, the total market for organic food in Europe was worth 20.7 billion euro, and that the market grew by 26 percent from 2001.

Canadian Regulation Update

In the meantime, the Canadian regulatory saga continues albeit at a quickened pace. The A&AFC/CFIA Organic Task Force (OTF) is being replaced by a permanent National Organic Office (NOO) with an ambitious agenda for 2006. NOO officials indicate that "the consultation period is over;" a draft regulation under the CAP Act "is in the hands of CFIA lawyers." The latter group are opining on some 22 legal issues, many of which are jurisdictional in nature. The Canadian organic industry as represented by the ad hoc Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) has not seen the draft but has been exposed to bits and pieces in recent months. This piece-meal information seems to indicate that the proposed mandatory system:

1. will be built upon the existing voluntary system;
2. will utilize the existing network of certifiers;
3. will feature a "Canada Organic" logo;
4. will have a national standard which is referenced in the regulation;
5. will not explicitly reference an advisory body in the regulation!

Little beyond the above has been revealed other than the "tidbit" that the CFIA may or may not have presented a proposal for some \$13 million in annual funding for a 48 person organic bureau to the Federal cabinet late in 2005! We understand that the current proposal is for an 8 person bureau. We have requested a copy of this astounding document via the [Access to](#)

Information Act. We have also requested via the same Act:

1. A copy of the report summarizing the findings of the OTF assessment of the SCC, CAAQ and the COABC in their roles as accreditors of organic certifying bodies in Canada;
2. A copy of the Cost Benefit Analysis report; as participants and contributors we respectfully submit that we are entitled to see the results of this project;
3. A copy of the SCC/CFIA mutual recognition project results;
4. A copy of any other documentation which impacted in the OTF proposal regarding accreditation of certifying bodies under a mandatory regulation system in Canada.

Implementation Schedule

NOO officials have verbally released (December 14, 2005) a tentative implementation schedule:

- April, 2006 Draft Regulation Gazetted (I) for 90 day comment period;
- April – Sept, 2006 Response to public response;
- Sept, 2006 Gazette (II) of final Regulation
- 2006 – 2009 Three (3) year Implementation period.

Given past performance, this schedule must be considered optimistic. Gary Briggs of the CFIA will give up an update at the Regina meeting on February 14, 2006. **Please attend this session!**

Accreditation Issue

Another morsel released by the OTF in October of last year was the notion that instead of having one national accreditor of certifying bodies -- the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) -- the government is considering no less than five (5) accreditors:

1. The CFIA (Canada),
2. The SCC (Canada),
3. The COABC (BC),
4. The CAAQ (Quebec),
5. The IOAS (IFOAM).

OC/PRO expressed it's concerns to the minister of A&AFC, ITCAN and Industry Canada via letter on November 23, 2005. The following are excerpts from that letter addressed to the Honourable Andy Mitchell.

"It has come to our attention that your CFIA Organic Task Force (OTF), instead of supporting and augmenting the highly successful ISO Guide 65 system involving the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) as the sole accreditor of organic certifiers in Canada, is proposing a regulation with no less than five (5) accreditors only one of which (the SCC) is qualified to accredit to ISO Guide 65 and is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). This proposal is absurd and will have disastrous effects on the international trade of organic goods if allowed to proceed.

Given that all certifiers, irregardless of their accreditor's international recognition/acceptance and/or competence, will be able to grant the use of the "Canada Organic" logo, and that the produce variously certified under the proposed scheme will be mixed during processing, the perceived quality of Canada's organic products will sink to that of the least recognized/competent certification body.

In the short the CFIA is proposing to perpetuate the status quo with a regulation that will please everyone and serve no one.

The international acceptance and good will gained during the last six years under the voluntary ISO 65/SCC system will be lost to mediocrity. This is not what the organic industry asked for, nor is it what the industry needs. This is also not the program we want to take to the EEC in the New Year!

Common and business sense aside, the proposed CFIA scheme has at least three legal impediments:

- 1. it contravenes Canadian “Smart” legislation and regulations regarding redundancy of and competition between government agencies, (i.e. competition between the SCC and the CFIA;*
- 2. ISO Guide 65 accredited certification bodies cannot delegate certification decisions to non-ISO Guide 65 accredited bodies. Hence produce from non-ISO Guide 65 certified enterprises cannot be co-mingled with ISO 65 certified produce;*
- 3. the EEC and other IAF members are not obligated to accept the accreditation of agencies, which are not IAF members. This includes the CFIA, the CAAQ, the COABC and the IOAS. The CFIA’s “licensing” of these agencies may or may not result in the acceptance.*

The Government of Canada via the three ministers involved in the matter now needs to make the decision which is in the best interest of the entire sector. It needs to take “the high road” and specify the highly successful ISO Guide 65/SCC/IAF system as the future and only accreditation system in Canada. The issue of SCC accreditation costs can be dealt with via the reinstatement on an ongoing basis, of the A&AFC 50% grant program.

The issue of Quebec’s (CAAQ) accreditation acceptance in the EEC and other jurisdictions remains to be determined. We will accept the SCC’s decision with respect to commingling Quebec produce. There are, at this time, no other accreditors or agencies with the expertise or credentials to accredit to ISO Guide 65 in Canada.”

There has been no response to our letter at the ministerial level, nor will there be until after the election. There have however been communications with CFIA managers. The USA which has 10 times the number of organic operators as Canada opted for one accreditor. Most other countries have one accreditation agency.

OC/PRO Canada – Regulation Ready

In assessing your certification status relative to imminent Canadian Organic regulations you need to remember that **OC/PRO Canada is 100% “regulation ready” via it’s Standards Council of Canada (SCC) accreditation.** Regardless of where you are located in Canada or the USA, your organic operations, produce and production will be certified to comply with the revised Canadian Organic Standard and the CFIA administered regulation.

Document Changes

OC/PRO system managers anticipate that some changes to Application/Contracts, Inspection and Evaluation Checklists and Certificate documents will be needed as a result of the new regulation. These will be made at the earliest opportunity to avoid any transition problems.

New Organic Plans

Completion of a new Application/Contract will be necessary for all OC/PRO clients in order to capture your current “Organic Production Plan” and adhere to new Canadian regulatory requirements as well as to comply with the USDA NOP request for a periodic update of your organic plan.

Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) Update (COG News)

The Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) met with the CFIA Organic Task Force (OTF) in Winnipeg on December 15th to work on the development of a Quality Manual. The OTF is now moving into an implementation phase after completing their one-year research, development and consultation phase. The OTF will now morph into a National Organic Office (NOO) based in the CFIA in Ottawa. The Task Force met at the end of November to develop an action plan to implement the regulation in nine months. The plan was presented to management on December 16th for approval. **Bashir Manji**, Ph: (613) 221-7154 has been appointed as the Director and **Michel Saumur**, (613) 221-7165 as the Program Manager.

OTF/NOO representatives told ORC members that the organic regulation has been drafted and a lawyer from the Department of Justice has been assigned to the file. We have learned that the recently updated National Standard (the last vote on the Standard was sufficient for adoption, having surpassed the requirement for a 64% vote, with 75% of those returned votes being positive) can be referenced in the regulation, rather than “imbedded” in it, which means that it will be much easier to amend when necessary. The organic sector will have 90 days to comment on the regulation when it is pre-published in the Canada Gazette in April(?) of 2006.

OC/PRO Directors Larry Lenhardt and Wallace Hamm are active members of ORC and will communicate the gazetted drafts to OC/PRO clients for comment and discussion.

OTF Website

Visit the OTF/NOO website at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fsaa/orgbio/otfgts/pbc.shtml for further updates on the Canadian Organic regulation saga.

Canadian Organic Statistics (COG News)

The number of certified organic farmers continued to climb in 2004 to 3670, an increase of close to 11% from 2003, representing about 1.5% of all Canadian farms. A further 257 farmers were in transition to organic agriculture. Saskatchewan and Quebec led the pack both in terms of the number of organic producers and the rate of growth. The value of all organic crops at the farm gate was estimated at between \$250 and \$350 million. The big story in 2004 was the dramatic increase in the number of certified organic processors and handlers – from 499 in 2003 to 742 in 2004, representing a 48% increase.

This work was supported by a grant from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the statistics were compiled by Anne Macey. We are in the process of compiling production statistics for 2005. For the full report, visit the COG website @ www.cog.ca

Editorial Comment

These statistics do not reflect total acreage /production and distribution within Canada, nor do they portray the very evident improvement in quality of organic producers and production in Canada. Thanks again to Anne for her unrelenting pursuit of statistics (J.W. Hamm, P.Ag.).

JAS Certification

In recognition of the growing importance of Japan as an importer of North American organic food and fibre, OC/PRO has implemented a three phase program to upgrade it's Japan Agricultural Standard (JAS) certification services to it's North American clients. JAS services previously being provided were by ad hoc alliances with other certifiers.

Phase I – Strategic Alliance

A strategic alliance is being formed with the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) International as an interim arrangement. This alliance, which is expected to be formalized by mid-February, 2006 will result in a JAS certificate with OCIA named as the certifying agency. OC/PRO affiliates will conduct the inspection and all interactions with the applicants, while the evaluation and certification decision will be performed by OCIA. The JAS cost to OC/PRO clients under this interim arrangement will be \$600.

Phase II – Registered Foreign Certification Organization (RFCO) Status

Simultaneous with the above, OC/PRO has applied to the Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) for RFCO status. This status will enable OC/PRO to issue certificates and to authorize use of the JAS seal in it's own right via it's Head Office in Saskatoon. The cost of JAS certification directly by OC/PRO will be less than that through the OCIA.

The new RFCO program enabled by legislation adopted in 2005 represents a transfer of monitoring and management authority from the MAFF to accredited certifiers with off-shore offices. ISO Guide 65 was adopted by MAFF as the criteria for certifier evaluation and accreditation.

Phase III – Japanese Office

An OC/PRO presence near MAFF's offices in Tokyo remains under consideration. The need for physical representation however, appears to have diminished with the passing of the privatization legislation. OC/PRO will reassess the need in 2006 and until the impact of the new law is apparent.

JAS Training

JAS certification requires applicants and/or applicable staff to participate in recognized JAS training courses within 1 year of their initial application. OC/PRO is sponsoring a JAS Training course in conjunction with the February 14, 2006 update meeting. If JAS certification is a possibility in the next 12 months do not miss this course. Processors with potential markets in Japan should also attend, particularly staff associated with quality assurance.

Combined Bill of Lading (BOL) & Transportation Sanitation Affidavit (TSA)

We are developing a combined BOL/TSA document in 3 carbonized copies to facilitate certified organic produce delivery and transport record keeping at the time of farm pickup. These documents, will be available at the February 14, 2006 update meeting or via our inspectors this summer.

Seed Rule Update

The requirement to use 'organically grown' seed, seedlings and rootstocks for propagation of organic crops as found in the OC/PRO Standard, the Canadian Organic Standard, EEC Reg. 2092/91, the Quebec Organic Reference Standards, the USDA NOP, the Bio-Suisse standards and others remains unchanged. The enforcement of this requirement worldwide by importing countries is unrelenting.

In August of 2003, the EU introduced Regulation 1453/2003 which extended the provision for use of non-organic seed, however required a documented seed search and written approval from a certification body for non-organic seed use. In addition to organic certificates, shipping and import documentation, many EU nations and buyers

require additional documents to confirm the use of organic seed and compliance with this regulation before accepting product from North American growers. **The requirement to use only organic seed in 2006 was among the most common requirements communicated to OC/PRO Bio-Suisse applicants.**

In 2005 OC/PRO added a list of Certified Organic Seed Growers to the **Organic Buyer & Processor Profiles List**. Sadly, most growers reported very little contact and/or support from their fellow organic producers.

The aforementioned standards and regulations require only the use of ‘organically grown’ seed, which can include both certified organic and transitional (T2 and T3) seed sources. If off-farm seed supplies are being used, this seed must be organically produced unless not commercially available. If a non-organic source is being considered an Application for Organic Seed Rule Exemption must be completed and approved by OC/PRO prior to use. **Growers who applied for Seed Rule Exemptions for the same crop and variety in 2005 may not be eligible to receive an additional exemption in 2006.** This position may seem harsh. However, “the customer (the importers) is always right” rule comes into play. The EU and Switzerland could use this rule to suppress imports in 2006/07.

The use and acceptability of uncertified seed cleaning plants remains a perennial issue. OC/PRO will only permit the use of uncertified seed cleaning plants when a certified alternative is not available and for the purpose of seed use only. Any product handled in an uncertified facility may not be sold off the farm as “Certified Organic.” Further if there is any remaining inventory of such seed following seeding, this product must not be commingled with “Certified Organic” product for any reason. If such commingling occurs the entire lot will lose organic status. Unfortunately some

producers ignored this in 2005 and thereby lost the ability to sell some product as organic.

OC/PRO has also developed a Plant Sanitation Affidavit (Doc # 7.4.3b) which may be used to document the sanitation of any non-organic plant used for seed cleaning. OC/PRO inspectors will pay particular attention to seed sources and seed cleaner status during the 2006 inspection season.

USDA NOP Update

National List of Permitted Substances

The USDA NOP has published an amendment to the annotation for one permitted substance on the National List of allowed and Prohibited Substances. The amendment is made to Section 205.603(d)(1) of the National List, became effective October 22, 2005. The amendment allows for the use of methionine as a synthetic feed additive in poultry operations until October 1, 2008, and is published as follows:

“DL-Methionine, DL-Methionine-hydroxyl analog, and DL-Methionine-hydroxyl analog calcium (CAS #-59-51-8; 63-68-3; 348-67-4) – for use only in organic poultry production until October 1, 2008.”

The above amendment was made in response to a recommendation made to the Secretary of Agriculture by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) in March of 2005. Methionine was petitioned for continued use as a synthetic feed additive. Methionine is a colorless or white crystalline powder that is soluble in water. It is classified as an amino acid and is considered to be an essential amino acid that is regulated as an animal feed nutritional supplement by the Food & Drug Administration.

The addition of methionine as a synthetic feed additive for use until October 1, 2008 has been permitted in the USA to allow the organic poultry industry to continue research and development of non-synthetic alternatives for use.

Poultry Confinement

Due to potential outbreaks of Avian Influenza (AI) the USDA NOP has provided some clarification regarding the need for confinement of poultry flocks in affected areas and the effect of such confinement on organic certification of the flocks. The USDA recommends producers consult the guidance for poultry producers as provided by the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) which can be found at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity/>

If Federal or State/Provincial animal health authorities determine that more prescriptive actions are required, organic producers could be required to adhere to those actions. The NOP regulation does make provision for such emergency measures as described in 205.239(a) of the Livestock Living Conditions section.

Where temporary confinement is deemed necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of organic flocks, the USDA recommends producers and certifiers work together to determine the appropriate method and duration of confinement for organic poultry flocks without a loss of organic certification. The method of confinement used must be approved by the certification body and provide necessary protection to the birds while meeting the remaining requirements of the NOP Regulation.

CAAQ Revised Standard

The Conseil des Appellations Agroalimentaires du Quebec (CAAQ) has announced the revision of the Quebec Organic Reference Standards. The standards have been updated to make them more comprehensive and/or to announce the end of some exemptions. Version 2.2 of the Quebec Organic Reference Standards is now available online in PDF format at www.caaq.org in French and English translations.

Bio-Suisse Certification

Switzerland consumers love Saskatchewan organic wheat and grains! Exports to this non-EU member state are controlled by Bio-Suisse. We are proud to report that OC/PRO certified producers achieved excellent access to Swiss markets in 2005. Certification decisions we have received to date indicate a 91% approval rate. Congratulations!

However, the concept of 'once approved always approved' is not realistic. Bio-Suisse applicants may not be approved in future years if specific conditions for future approval, communicated with the certification results are not met. In many cases this year, the terms "Second & Final Admonition" or "Final Admonition" prefaced these requirements. Of the 9% who have been denied access to date, the most common reason for the denial was failure to adhere to requirements which have been communicated 2 or 3 times by both Bio-Suisse and OC/PRO.

In preparing for the 2006 season, please bear in mind that **Bio-Suisse will not accept your application until such time as you have identified the responsible North American Exporter and the Swiss Importer.** There are no exceptions to this requirement. If Bio-Suisse approval is part of your marketing plan, a review of some of the most common certification requirements is useful.

The area set aside for bio-diversity must amount to at least 7% of the agriculturally usable area. Functionally this refers to an area equivalent to 7% of the total cultivated acres. These areas are typically pasture and hay land, yard sites and native prairie, native or orchard trees, hedges and woodlots, ditches, pools, ponds, sloughs and peat land.

Green fallow is only considered if it is a species rich stand which is left untouched for a minimum period of 15 months. Bio-Suisse requires a detailed description of these areas to be added to the inspector's report.

Organic seed must be used (the non-availability of organic seed must be confirmed by the inspection body). Please see the preceding article "Seed Rule Update." **It is important to note that in many cases in 2005 approval was only granted for crops sown with organic seed.**

Bio-Suisse regulations concerning a balanced crop rotation must be complied with. The Bio-Suisse regulations require a minimum of 20% of the cultivated acres be sown to crops which protect or improve the soil or which accumulate nutrients. **Therefore a ½ and ½ wheat:fallow rotation is not acceptable for access to the Swiss markets.** The requirement for 20% soil building crops can be accomplished by sowing nitrogen fixing legumes such as peas, beans, lentils, vetches, lupines, clovers or alfalfa. Alternative green manure crops may also be used in place of fallow in the rotation but will not fix atmospheric nitrogen.

At least 50% of the open tillage area must have sufficient plant cover outside of the vegetative period. This requirement is typically seen in relation to farms maintaining fallow in the rotation, and usually in conjunction with the aforementioned requirement for a balanced crop rotation. Where fallow is used, winter cover crops such as fall rye are recommended to reduce the erosive damages from wind, water and runoff and multiple tillage operations. Fall rye also has some financial effects via allelopathic exudates.

Certification Hotspots

Paperwork and organic compliance improved again in 2005. **BUT**, there were still "hotspot"

issues which delayed certification, increased our costs and restricted market access for many clients. The most common are discussed below in the order of occurrence.

Additional Information Requests - Producer

Inspector and evaluator requests for additional information commonly are still ignored until a sale is imminent. **We then receive panic calls for rushed service! Information requests are due by return mail unless otherwise arranged.**

At the time of writing approximately 10% of our clients still owe information for the 2005 season and cannot be evaluated for certification status. In 2006 and thereafter OC/PRO will implement a \$50 late fee for any information not submitted by November 30 unless otherwise specified.

Inspection Appointments

During the 2005 inspection season many applicants did not make themselves or a representative available to inspectors during their initial visits to a region. This resulted in many delays in the inspection season and large increases in travel fees for inspectors and for neighboring organic producers because of a lack of sufficient producers for pro-rating of travel costs to be of significant value.

In 2006 if you do not make yourself or a representative available at a time convenient to the inspector during their initial visit to your region pro-rating will not apply and full travel costs for the extra trip will be levied along with costs for the inspectors travel time @ \$45/hr.

Document Completion & Submission

With increased access to fax machines and internet service we are seeing an increase in information being transmitted in electronic formats.

To ensure these documents are legible please be sure to complete all information in dark colored ink. If you are submitting information via email, please remember not all formats are compatible. **To ensure we are able to open your attached documents, pictures and scanned information please submit in PDF format. If this is not possible please submit the information in a Word or Excel formatted document.**

Extension Application Submission

In 2006 the deadline for submission of your Producer Extension Application & Contract is March 31. Historically many producers miss this deadline and incur a late fee because they have not yet decided on their cropping plans for the upcoming year. Please note that the extension application includes Table 4.2 Current Year's Production Plan which includes Planned and Actual cropping plans. There is no penalty if you deviate from your Planned submission. Please do not delay in submitting your Extension Application and risk late fees!

Crop Rotation – Soil Building Crops

Summerfallow remains a dominant part of many grower's organic rotation. The need for balanced crop rotations cannot be stressed enough and is implicit in the OC/PRO Standard, the Canadian Organic Standard, EEC Reg. 2092/91, the Quebec Organic Reference Standards, the USDA NOP, the Bio-Suisse standards and others.

Among the most common problems communicated to us by producers, processors, traders and exporters are the low protein levels in cereal crops. While outside factors may influence protein content, including seed quality, growing season temperature and moisture and harvest conditions, **the most important and common cause of low protein in cereals is lack of available soil nitrogen during the growing season!**

The notion that organic status can be achieved and maintained by simply discontinuing the use of prohibited pesticides and fertilizers and using

a 2 year (fallow & crop) rotation is false. It breeds a soil miner instead of a sustainable organic farmer. The importers of Western Canadian grain (eg. Switzerland) are denying market access to these farmers.

Soil building crops must be an essential part of the rotation to continue compliance. The choice of nitrogen fixing crops must vary on each farm and include annual, biennial and perennial options. These options must be weighed annually in consideration of previous cropping history, moisture accumulation and current climatic regime, cost and future crop rotation. In some years and locations annuals may be preferable, while in other years perennials may be better suited.

While cost of green manure crops is perennially quoted as being an issue, without these crops in rotation, yields will decline, quality will diminish, realized financial returns will drop and eventually your market will disappear. Studies conducted throughout the world, including Canada and the US have shown that organic rotations can outperform non-organic practices with respect to yield and quality, provided a balanced rotation is used. **If rotation continues to be an issue for your farm, please be sure to attend Dr. Entz presentation on February 14, 2006 in Regina.**

2006 OC/PRO Deadlines	
January 31	Pre-Registration for OC/PRO Update Meeting – February 14, 2006
March 31	Application/Contract & Retainer Fee Submission
Before Seeding	Organic Seed Rule Exemption Applications
June 1	Bio-Suisse Certification Application to OC/PRO (if applicable)
November 30	2006 Produce Storage Summary submission and Additional Information submission

Calendar of Events

Minnesota Organic Conference St. Cloud, MN	Jan. 20, 21	Upper Midwest Organic Conference LaCrosse, WI www.mosesorganic.org	Feb. 24, 25
Ecological Farming Conference Pacific Grove, CA www.eco-farm.org	Jan. 24-28	Growing the Organic Industry Abbotsford, BC www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca	Feb. 24-26
Guelph Organic Conference Guelph, ON www.guelphorganicconf.ca	Jan. 26-29	Acorn Organic Conference Wolfville, NS www.acornorganic.org	Mar. 2-4
NPSAS Winter Conference Fargo, ND www.npsas.org	Feb. 10, 11	CHFA Expo West Vancouver, BC www.chfa.org	Apr. 20-23
OC/PRO Organic Update Regina, SK www.ocpro.ca	Feb. 14	All Things Organic Chicago, IL www.organicexpo.com	May 6-9
SAFRR Organic Update 2006 Bruno, SK	Feb. 15, 16	Organic Connections Saskatoon, SK www.organicconnections.ca	Nov. 12-14
Bio-Fach Nurenberg, Germany www.biofach.de	Feb. 16-19		

Pre-registration Form Pro-Cert Organic Update Meeting

**Queensbury Centre, Exhibition Park, Regina Saskatchewan – February 14, 2006 – 8:30 am
(Reply by January 31, 2006)**

Name: _____

Complete Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Number of Guests: _____

Payment Calculation:

1. **Registration & Lunch:** _____ persons x \$ _____/person = \$ _____
(\$30/person for Pro-Cert clients & family)
(\$40/person for others)

2. **Evening Meal** = _____ persons x \$28.00/person = \$ _____
(\$28 per person)

Total Payment Enclosed = \$ _____

Notes: (1) Registration fee after January 31th and at the door will be \$40 and \$50 per person respectively with no guarantee of space.

(2) JAS Training cost included in registration fee

Mail to: Pro-Cert Organic Systems Box 100A, 475 Valley Road, RR#3 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J6