



Organic Certification Regulation in BC

August 21, 2018

Emma Holmes and Karina Sakalauskas

BC Ministry of Agriculture



Ministry of
Agriculture

Objective

- Describe recent changes to organic regulation and the reasons behind the change
- Go over the policy guidelines – what activities require certification
- Discuss how the new regulation has been unfolding



Update on Organic Policy

Scope: Organic agricultural products produced and marketed in BC that are certifiable through the BC Certified Organic Program (BCCOP) or the Canadian Organic Products Regulation (OPR).

- Food and Beverages (BCCOP and COR)
- Feed and Seed (BCCOP and COR)
- Flowers (BCCOP)
- Cannabis (BCCOP)

Update on Organic Policy

What: As of September 1, 2018 all agricultural products marketed in BC as “organic” must be certified through an accredited or provincial organization.

How: The Ministry introduced a new regulation that restricts the use of “organic” in intra-provincial marketing. Uncertified producers in the province marketing their agricultural products as “organic” will face penalties, including a possible fine.

Update on Organic Policy

Food and Agricultural Products Classification Act:

<http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/16001>

Organic Certification Regulation:

http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/lc/statreg/304_2016

Organic Certification Regulation Amendment (in force September 1, 2018):

http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/304_2016

Leading up to the BC Policy Change

Why change the labelling system?

- Consumer confusion about what the word organic means
- Misrepresentation of “organic” by non-certified producers
- Difficult for consumers to tell the difference between certified and non-certified products

Leading up to BC Policy Change



2009 Canada Organic Regime

- Mandatory certification for organic products sold inter-provincially or internationally



2013 COTA Market Research

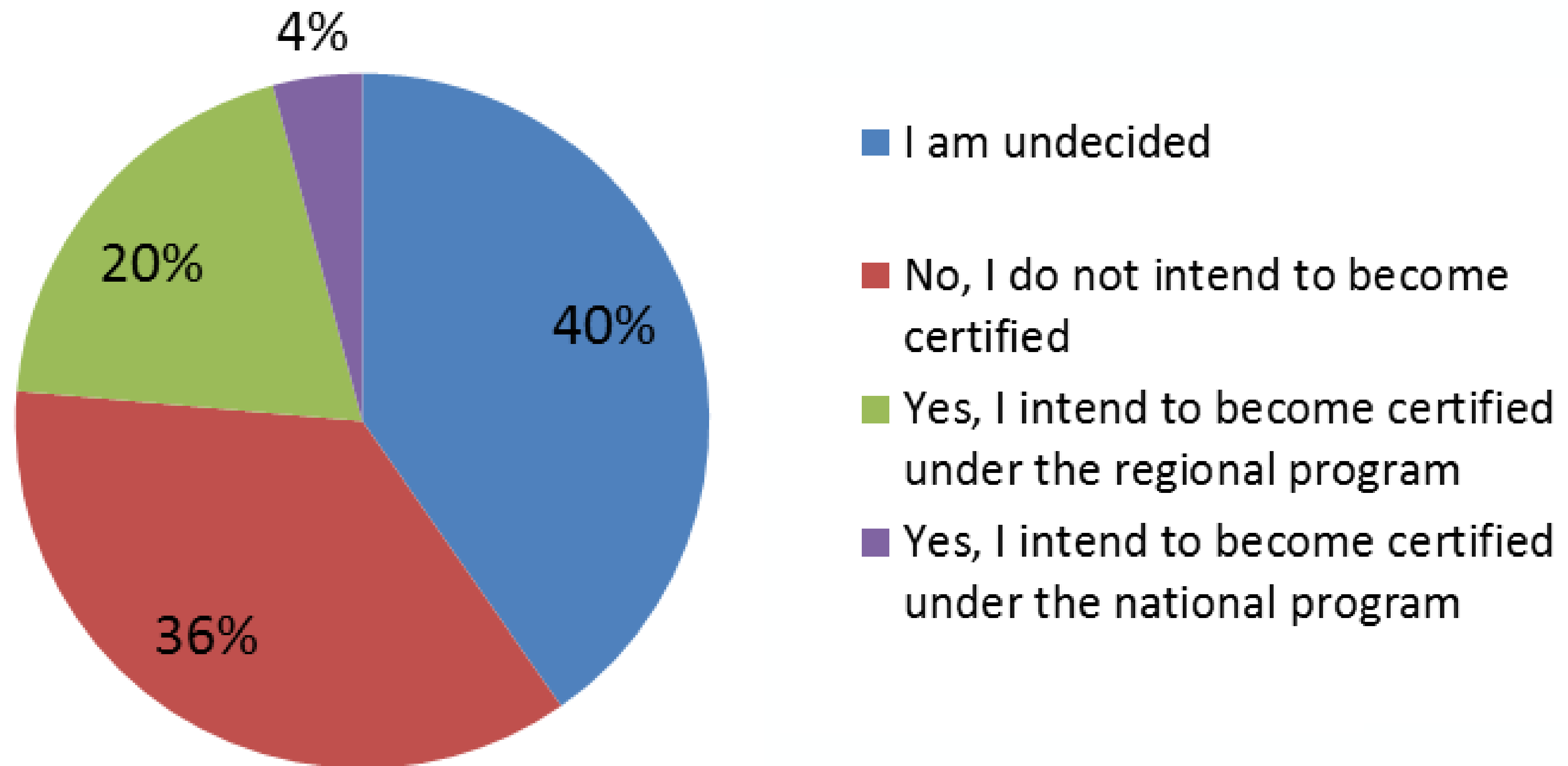
Support from Sector in BC

- As indicated in 2015 survey results



2015 Consultation – Key Findings

As a non-certified organic operator in BC, please indicate whether you intend to become certified should BC regulate the term “organic”.

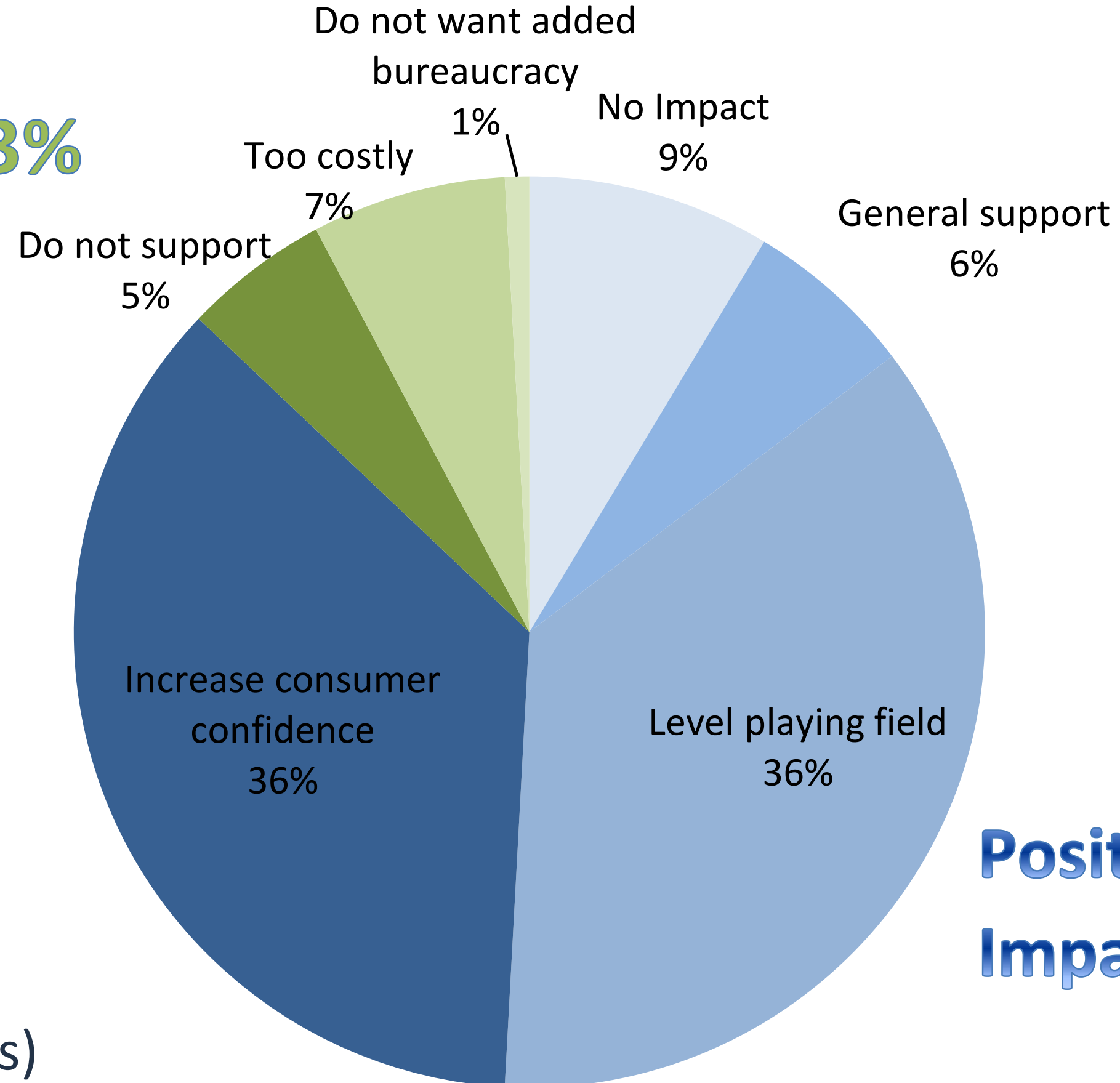


*n=72
(non-certified producers)

2015 Consultation – Key Findings

Identify any positive or negative impacts to your operation should the term “organic” be regulated in BC.

**Negative
Impacts: 13%**



**Positive
Impacts: 78%**

*n=116
(both certified and non-certified producers)

2015 Consultation – Key Findings

What is needed for effective transitioning to new regulation?

- Sufficient time to become certified prior to the regulation coming into effect (3 years)
- Business strategy programs providing funds and business advice on a plan to become certified.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/agri-business-planning-program>

2015 Consultation – Key Findings

What are the key barriers to becoming certified?

- Paperwork burden
- Cost of certification
- Return on investment for size of operation (less feasible for small businesses)

Minister's Mandate

July 2015: Work with BC organic farming sector to create a strong BC Organic brand to market locally produced products

- Work with organic sector to develop the BC Organic brand
- Implement transitional programs to support farmers in becoming certified organic
- Build consumer confidence in BC Organic brand (*through regulation)

Transition (2015-2018)

AGRI and COABC partnership to:

- Build BC Organic Brand
- Provide programs to support BC producers and processors with the transition
 - Organic Online System (\$450K)
 - BC Organic Brand Campaign (2016)
 - BC Agri-Business Planning Program
 - Education, outreach, and transition assistance

AGRI Organic Webpage



[Home](#) > [Farming, Natural Resources & Industry](#) > [Agriculture & Seafood](#) > [Animals & Crops](#) >

- ▶ [Agricultural Licences & Forms](#)
- ▶ [Animal Health](#)
- ▶ [Animal Production](#)
- ▶ [Animal Welfare](#)
- ▶ [Crop Production](#)
- ▼ [Organic Food & Beverages](#)
 - [Certification](#)
 - [Organic Policy Update](#)
 - [Transitioning to Organic Farming](#)
 - [Organic Aquaculture](#)
- ▶ [Plant Health](#)
- ▶ [Provincial Industry Contacts](#)

Organic Food & Beverages

Organic production and processing uses a system of care, based on preventive management and development of sustainable management approaches. Organic food and beverages production requirements can be found in the national standards as approved by the Standards Council of Canada.

Certification

Organic certification is available for food and beverages which are produced or processed using organic methods.

- [Read more on how to obtain organic certification](#)

Organic Policy Update

In 2018, all domestically produced and processed food and beverage products marketed in B.C. as “organic” require certification through an accredited federal or provincial program.

- [Learn more about these upcoming changes](#)

Events & Conferences

Help ease the transition to organic farming by attending an organic event.

- [Organic events and news in B.C.](#)
- [National Organic Week](#)

Industry Links

Associations & Boards

- [Certified Organic Associations of B.C.](#)
- [BC Agriculture Council](#)

External Agencies

- [Canada Organic Regime or](#)

Guidelines

Provides clear information regarding regulation and how it impacts producers, processors, and retailers in B.C.



Guidelines for BC's Organic Certification Regulation

Background

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance to operators in BC who are seeking clarity on how to be compliant with BC's Organic Certification Regulation.

As of September 1, 2018, the term "organic" is now a protected label within BC for agricultural products that have been produced or processed in BC, and for which certified organic programs exist. Currently Certified Organic programs exist in BC for food and beverages, flowers, cannabis, pet food and any product made from 100% agricultural products that can be assessed using the Canadian Organic Standard CAN/CGSB 32.310; 32.311 or 32.312.

Guidelines

Organic certification is required for any producers or processors who make an organic claim, including “made with organic ingredients” or “made with X% organic ingredients” claims.

Organic certification is required for processing activities, including at retail. Processing is considered combining multiple products to make a new product.

Guidelines

Organic certification is currently voluntary for selling bulk or prepackaged organic products that have a prior organic certification earlier in the supply chain and when there is sufficient documentation to back up the claim.

Outreach

- COABC
- Retail Council of Canada
- BC Association of Farmer's Markets
- Small Scale Food Processors
- BC Food Processors
- BCAC
- Young Agrarians

Enforcement

- Producers and processors are required to maintain current proof of certification
- Complaint based enforcement through AgriServiceBC with follow up by enforcement officer
- Enforcement officers empowered to issue tickets



Thank-you!

Karina Sakalauskas

Karina.Sakalauskas@gov.bc.ca

(604) 850-4786