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Clarification on the Certification of Organic Products

Date: February 24, 2015**To:** Conformity Verification Bodies (CVB) designated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Certification Bodies (CB) accredited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)**Subject:** Clarification on the Certification of Organic Products

The [CFIA \(Canadian Food Inspection Agency\)](#) has recently noted some inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of the *Organic Product Regulations* (OPR) when determining which products can be certified as organic. This memo intends to clarify what products may be certified as organic, who may apply for certification of products and the types of certificates that can be issued under the Canada Organic Regime (COR).

Products that can be certified as organic

The following are products that can be certified as organic under the [OPR \(Organic Product Regulations\)](#) and [COR \(Canada Organic Regime\)](#).

- Agricultural Products
 - Animals and/or plants or an animal or plant product intended for human consumption
 - Products intended for human consumption and wholly or partly derived from animals and/or plants
- Feed
 - Animal and/or plants intended to feed livestock
 - Products intended to feed livestock and derived from animals and/or plants
- Seed
 - Any plant part used to grow plants for the purpose of human or livestock consumption

Products that cannot be certified as organic

The following are examples of products that cannot be certified as organic under the [OPR \(Organic Product Regulations\)](#). It is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- A product already certified as organic under the [COR \(Canada Organic Regime\)](#)
- Agricultural products produced on land under transition to organic production
- Aquaculture products
- Natural Health Products, as defined by the [Natural Health Product Regulations \(/english/reg/jredirect2.shtml?natur\)](#)
- Drugs, as defined by the [Food and Drugs Act \(/english/reg/jredirect2.shtml?druga\)](#)
- Cosmetics and Textiles
- Pet Food

Who can apply for organic certification of products

Only a person that can provide all the required information under section 12 of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations) and meet the requirements of section 13 of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations) can apply for an organic certification of products. Once a certificate is issued, the applicant becomes the holder of an organic certificate.

Types of certificates issued under COR (Canada Organic Regime)

The OPR (Organic Product Regulations) give certification bodies the authority to issue two types of certificates:

- A. Organic Product Certificates
- B. Organic Product Packaging and Labelling Certificates

A. Organic Product Certificates

Subsection 13 (2) of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations) authorizes Certification Bodies (CBs) to issue documents to the applicant confirming the organic certification of the product after verification that the product is produced and/or processed in compliance with CAN/CGSB-32.310 and CAN/CGSB-32.311. Once a product is certified in accordance with section 13 of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations), the certification does not expire, it may only be cancelled. The CB (Certification Bodies) cannot issue organic certificate to the Canadian organic standard for any agricultural product that is already certified by another CB (Certification Bodies). Operators who are issued organic product certificates are not required to receive a packaging and labelling certificate concerning those products if these activities are part of the operator's organic plan.

B. Certification of Packaging and Labelling of organic products

Section 15 of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations) authorizes CBs (Certification Bodies) to issue organic certificates for product packaging and labelling after verification that the packaging and labelling methods are in compliance with CAN/CGSB-32.310 and CAN/CGSB-32.311. Only products that are certified under section 13 of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations) may be packaged and labelled as organic under section 15. This certificate may be issued for the packaging and labelling of bulk and final products. Certificates issued for packaging and labelling of products expire after 12 months.

When an organic certificate cannot be issued

An organic certificate cannot be issued to a person who performs an activity or service for a certified organic product other than packaging or labelling.

Attestation of Compliance


In order to ensure the organic integrity of products is maintained, a person may **voluntarily** apply for an attestation of compliance in accordance with section C.11 of the Canada Organic Office Operating

Manual. Attestations of compliance are issued by Certification bodies after verification that the operation complies with CAN/CGSB-32.310 and CAN/CGSB-32.311. An attestation of compliance does **not** replace an organic certificate.

An attestation of compliance may be issued to:

- A person performing the slaughtering of organic livestock or the transportation and storage of organic livestock or an organic product as per section 19 of the OPR (Organic Product Regulations).
- A person performing other custom services for bulk agricultural products such as seed cleaning where the ownership of the products remains with the primary producer/processor
- A person owning a certified organic product and involved in the sale of the organic product such as a trader, importer and distributor.

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