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# Complaints handling by Conformity Verification Bodies under the Canada Organic Regime

Date: March 10, 2014

**To:** Conformity Verification Bodies (CVB) designated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

**Subject:** Complaints Handling by Conformity Verification Bodies (CVB) under the Canada Organic Office (COR)

Section B.8 of the Canada Organic Office (COO) Operating Manual and clause 5.9 of ISO/IEC 17011 require the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) to establish procedures for dealing with complaints related to the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency)-accredited Certification Bodies under their oversight.


CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency)-designated CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies)s are responsible for handling any complaints they receive from the COO (Canada Organic Office) and ensuring that they are closed in a timely manner. To ensure that all complaints under the COR (Canada Organic Office) are dealt with in a consistent manner, all CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies)s should observe the following when handling these complaints:

1. The CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) will acknowledge receipt of any complaint within 5 business days.
2. The CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) will begin the investigation of the complaint as per their own procedures, or forward the complaint to the appropriate CB (Conformity Bodies) for investigation if the complaint is on a certified organic product, producer or CB (Conformity Bodies) personnel.
3. When passing complaints to the appropriate CB (Conformity Bodies), the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) will ensure that confidentiality of the complainant is maintained.
4. Within 20 business days, the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) will inform the COO (Canada Organic Office) of the following:
  1. The status of the complaint
  2. What actions have or will be taken to resolve the complaint
  3. The expected timeline for resolution of the complaint
  4. Requests for additional information as required.
5. The CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) will endeavour to close all complaints received in a timely manner. Upon closure of the complaint the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) will provide the COO (Canada Organic Office) with the following:
  1. Confirmation that the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) considers the complaint adequately

closed

2. A summary of the actions the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies)/CB (Conformity Bodies) took to close the complaint
  3. Any important follow-up information (e.g. (for example) unannounced audit to verify, grounds for suspension, etc. (et cetera)).
6. Once the COO (Canada Organic Office) has reviewed the information provided, and does not require additional information, they will inform the CVB (Conformity Verification Bodies) that the complaint is considered closed.

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