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Directive 10-07: Certification Bodies' adherence to the interpretation questions related to the application of the Canada Organic Standard

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Canada Organic Office

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1.0 Purpose and Scope

This directive outlines the obligations of the [CFIA \(Canadian Food Inspection Agency\)](#) accredited Certification Bodies to adhere to the interpretations of the Canadian Organic Standard ([CAN \(Canada\)/CGSB \(Canadian General Standards Board\) 32.310](#) and [CAN \(Canada\)/CGSB \(Canadian General Standards Board\) 32.311](#)) provided by the Standards Interpretations Committee and considered official by the Canada Organic Office.

2.0 Authority

Reference documents:

- The Organic Products Regulations (OPR)
- Canada Organic Office Operating Manual
- Canadian Organic Standard and the Permitted substances List ([CAN \(Canada\)/CGSB \(Canadian General Standards Board\) 32.310](#) and [CAN \(Canada\)/CGSB \(Canadian General Standards Board\) 32.311](#))

3.0 Background

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Organic Federation of Canada, has

developed the Organic Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC). The mandate of the SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) is to provide to the Canada Organic Office, interpretive guidance on issues related to the application of the Canadian Organic Standard and the Permitted substances List (CAN (Canada)/CGSB (Canadian General Standards Board) 32.310 and CAN (Canada)/CGSB (Canadian General Standards Board) 32.311).

The members of the SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) are democratically chosen well respected representatives of the organic sector that bring together the collective knowledge of the industry. Requests for interpretations of the Canadian Organic Standards can be submitted to the SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) by anyone (e.g. (example) operator, CB (Certification Body), CVB (Conformity Verification Body) and etc. (et cetera)) to the Canada Organic Office.

The length of time required for SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) to respond to a request for interpretation depends on the scope and complexity of the question and the workload of the SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee). The SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) meets on a monthly basis and aims to respond to interpretive questions within a month. The decision is delivered to the Canada Organic Office as a proposed interpretation. The Canada Organic Office then posts the proposal(s) for a period of 60 days and unless there is strong, irresolvable opposition voiced by the sector the interpretation is posted on the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) web site. Once final, the interpretation is considered an official policy and is expected that all stakeholders adhere to it.

The Canadian Organic Standards are developed and maintained through a consensus process using balanced committees of experts that are made of Producers, Users and General Interest members who provide broad-based input to the standards. The Canadian General Standards Board manages this process and any interested party has the opportunity to make suggestions for amendments to the Standard.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) -accredited CBs (Certification Bodies) will be responsible for the application of this directive.

CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) designated CVBs (Conformity Verification Bodies) will be responsible for monitoring the certification activities of the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) accredited CBs (Certification Bodies).

5.0 Activities

Certification Bodies

The CBs (Certification Bodies) are obliged to follow the official SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) interpretations as posted on the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) web site to achieve uniform and consistent application of the rules to all operators through various CBs (Certification Bodies). The CBs (Certification Bodies) have to inform their operators about these interpretations.

Operators


The operators are obliged to implement and follow the official SIC (Standards Interpretation Committee) interpretations.

Conformity Verification Body

CVBs (Conformity Verification Bodies) shall review the verification procedures and records during each onsite audit of the certification body.

6.0 Inquiries

Inquiries concerning this directive should be addressed to the Canada Organic Office.

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