



Certified Organic Associations of BC

Annual Report for 2012



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President's Message

Submitted by Mary Forstbauer, President

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and starting on the first one." Mark Twain

Throughout this busy year, the board has been working to improve COABC and the BC Organic Sector as a whole.

COABC actively promoted organics and organic principles in many ways this year. Our association has spoken out against the introduction of the Arctic apple and the proposal for low level presence of GMO's. The need for Mandatory Organic regulation is also an ongoing issue that COABC has promoted and we will continue to represent the sector with a strong voice on all these issues.

This year, in answer to the fact that small-scale operations are leaving certification, COABC undertook the Small-Scale Certification Research Project to discover the challenges, barriers and solutions related to the problem. The project aims to gather information that COABC can use in creating a larger more unified certified organic sector.

Unity of the BC Organic Sector has been an overarching goal in 2012. This led to the amazing Organic Sector Strategic Planning session in November facilitated by Kate Sutherland. We gathered the Organic Sector to create a strategic plan not only for COABC but for the entire Sector. The session was attended by organic producers, distributors and retailers as well as representative from other organic organizations and government.

As we implement the new strategic plan, we will break our "complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks and [start] on the first one". The Organic Sector will make this plan manageable one task at a time.

A very strong executive started off the year and has, along with the board and staff, worked together to strengthen COABC. We have set up some great structures to maximize our time and resources. In the course of the year, we were sorry to have a couple of the executive members, Kris Chand and Annie Moss step down. However in December, we welcomed Corey Brown as Vice President and look forward to his leadership in the coming years.

The office was also challenged when Kristy had a serious auto accident in September. Nothing keeps her down though and we thank her for her dedication to COABC.

I have enjoyed being president of this amazing association and I am not going away! I will continue to volunteer and I want to see the Strategic Plan for the Organic Sector be successful. Teamwork helps to make every task manageable.

Thank you to each member of the executive, board, staff, contractors and volunteers for your support and encouragement. COABC is still growing and I look forward to the next 20 years!

Remember to CHECK your Products.



THE ORGANIZATION IN 2012

COABC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. BCARA **British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture**
Chris Bodnar Alternate: Michael Hale
2. Bio-Dynamic **Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Society of British Columbia**
Mary Forstbauer (*COABC President 2012*) Alternate: David Avery
3. BOPA **Boundary Organic Producers Association**
Roly Russell Alternate: Karl Lilgert
4. FVOPA **Fraser Valley Organic Producers**
Susan Snow Alternate: Doug Luder
5. IOPA **Islands Organic Producers Association**
Kris Chand (*COABC Vice-President January-November 2012*)
Alternate: Randy Pearson
6. KOGS **Kootenay Organic Growers**
Angela Weir Alternate: Jeanine Powell
7. LEOGA **Living Earth Organic Growers Association**
Sarah Martin Alternate: Clive Johnson/ Jordan Marr
8. NOOA **North Okanagan Organic Association**
Rebecca Kneen (*COABC Co-Secretary 2012*) Alternate: Bob McCoubrey
9. PACS **Pacific Agricultural Certification Society**
Annie Moss (*COABC Co-Secretary 2012*), Rob Horricks (*COABC Treasurer 2012*), Charlie Lasser, Gay Hahn, Annamarie Klippenstein, Fred Danenhower
Alternates: Eric von Krosigk, Linda Edwards, Phillipa Mennell, Paddy Doherty
10. SOOPA **Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association**
Corey Brown (*COABC Vice-President December 2012*) Alternate: Yuri Zebroff
11. STOPA **Shuswap Thompson Organic Producers Association**
Dieter Dudy Alternate: Ron Coghlan/Mendel Rubinson/ David Comrie
12. BCFSN **BC Food Systems Network**
Jen Cody (Consumer/Environment)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

13. BCSPCA **BC Society for Protection of Animals** (non-voting)
Geoff Urton, Alyssa Bell Stoneman
14. BCMA **BC Ministry of Agriculture**
Fiona Cubitt (ex-officio)

COABC COMMITTEES

The COABC Board of Directors convened the following committees:

Executive

Mary Forstbauer (President), Kris Chand (VP) January-November, Corey Brown (VP) December, Rob Horricks (Treasurer), Rebecca Kneen (Co-Secretary), Annie Moss (Co-Secretary)

Advocacy of Operators

Inactive

Capacity Development

Inactive

Communication & PR (Awareness)

Mary Forstbauer, Annie Moss

Events

Mary Forstbauer, Annie Moss, Rebecca Kneen, Corey Brown, Andrew Arkestyn-Vogler, Susan Smith, Jen Gamble

Human Resources (HR) Adhoc

Mary Forstbauer, Rebecca Kneen, Fred Danenhower, Anne Macey, Jen Gamble, Kristy Wipperman

Levies Committee

Inactive

Research and Education

Paddy Doherty, Peter Stockdale, Hans Buchler

COABC Restructuring Proposal Committee

Clive Johnson, Carmen Wakeling, Kris Chand, Fred Danenhower

Accreditation Board

Anne Macey (Director/Chair), Cindy Hartford, Rose Morrison, Navneet Gill, Molly Thurston, Rochelle Eisen, Kristy Wipperman (AB Coordinator)

Organic Sector Development Program (OSDP)

Paddy Doherty (OSDP Co-ordinator), Deb Foote, Phyllis Nelson, Peter Stockdale, Emily MacKenzie (AAFC ex-officio), Susan Smith (BCMA ex-officio), Miriam Esquitín (IAF), Linda Fogarty, Jen Cody

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE SUPPORT

The COABC operates a staffed office in Vernon. Office staff members:

- Jen Gamble - Administrator
- Kristy Wipperman - Office Manager

In general, the COABC office:

- Managed correspondence
- Respond to daily enquiries about certification
- Responded to daily enquiries from Membership
- Attended BoD and Exec meetings
- Acted as reporting liaison to the board
- Managed insurance renewals
- Kept the bookkeeping in order
- And tended to the many, many other details of such a large organization!

The COABC office maintains relationships with BCMA, the BCAC, the OFC, etc.

In June COABC was fortunate to receive an intern from the Okanagan College Business program. Sandra Huet helped with administrative details, filing and data entry.

COABC has also contracted with the following individuals:

- Paddy Doherty - OSDP Coordinator
- Rob Korbynn - Information Technology Technician

- Anne Macey – Accreditation Board Director
- Jeffery Newman – Cyber-help Technician
- Moss Dance & Andrea Langlois– Organic Grower Production team
- Peter Leblanc & Andrea Lawseth – COABC 2013 conference
- Andrea Lawseth, Rochelle Eisen, Gunta Vitins & Brenda Frick - Small Scale Certification Research Project
- Kate Sutherland - Organic Sector Strategic Planning Session

INSURANCE

The COABC maintains liability insurance for the Board of Directors and contents coverage. As a service to its membership, the COABC has arranged for CB's to have their own D&O insurance at a reduced rate. COABC also carries E&O and Commercial General Liability as part of being a recognized accreditor under the Canada Organic Regime.

THE PURPOSES OF COABC

Reprinted from CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The purposes of the society are:

1. To promote organic agriculture and to provide public education on organic agriculture;
2. To represent members in matters relating to the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act of British Columbia;
3. To develop and administer an organic certification accreditation program for members;
4. To grant permission for use of the phrase "British Columbia Certified Organic" on agricultural product labels by agri-food enterprises certified by members;
5. To facilitate research and marketing activities on behalf of members;
6. To provide information to the public on behalf of members;
7. To be responsible for incidental matters related to the above-referenced activities.

BC CERTIFIED ORGANIC PROGRAM

COABC Accreditation Board Report

Submitted by: Anne Macey, COABC Director of Accreditation

Programs

The COABC Accreditation Board is the body responsible for assessing the competence of certification bodies which in turn verify that operators are following the Canadian Organic Standard. The system is intended to give confidence and maintain the integrity of organic claims thus providing a guarantee for consumers.

In 2012 the COABC Accreditation Board provided accreditation under the BC Certified Organic Program. This BC program provides the authorization for CBs to permit operators to use the Program symbol (the checkmark) and the phrase "British Columbia Certified Organic" to identify organic product.

The COABC Accreditation Board is also one of the four Conformity Verification Bodies (CVBs) operating under a recognition agreement with the CFIA. These CVBs assess CBs who wish to operate within the Canada Organic Regime (COR). Operators certified under the COR are able to use the Canada Organic Logo on their product.

Together these programs provide flexibility to allow operators to choose from three different levels of certification to verify that their products are grown or produced in accordance with the Canadian Organic Standard:

- BC Certified Organic ISO-compliant Program - Canada Organic Regime which allows product to move out of BC.
- The BC Certified Organic Regional Program for product sold only in BC markets.
- The BC Certified Organic Low Risk Program which allows for reduced frequency of inspection for operations where there is no identified risk to organic integrity and the product is marketed locally.

There are three CBs in the COABC ISO-compliant program and on the CFIA list of recognised certification bodies: BCARA, FVOPA and PACS. The COABC Accreditation Board is the interface between these CBs and the Canada Organic Office (COO). We are responsible for making recommendations for accreditation and the ongoing surveillance of the CFIA accredited CBs.

In 2012 there were 443 operators in the certification programs of the ISO-compliant CBs which is only 4 more than this time last year. These numbers represent 72.5% of operators under the COABC umbrella with the majority located in BC although PACS also has a few members in Alberta and the Yukon. The numbers include farms in transition as well as producers, processors and handlers of certified products. The program now provides these enterprises with access to organic markets in BC, the rest of Canada and, through the equivalency arrangements, with the United States, the European Union and Switzerland.

The COABC Accreditation Board renewed accreditation for 8 certification bodies in the Regional Program in 2012 which in turn certify a total of 168 operators or 27.5 % of the total. Over the course of the year the number of operators in the regional program dropped by 7 % and unfortunately continued the decline of 2011(17% drop). IOPA has the largest number of operators and continues to operate a low risk program with reduced frequency of inspections

for eligible farms. The Accreditation Board is hoping that more of the regional CBs will apply to operate a low risk program in 2013.

The total of 611 operators represents 83% of certified farm operations and 66% of the certified processing and handling operations in the province.

Accreditation Board Members and Auditors

Currently there are 6 members:

1. Anne Macey, Director
2. Cindy Hartford, Processor rep:
3. Rose Morrison, Consumer/environmental rep
4. Molly Thurston, Producer rep
5. Rochelle Eisen, Inspection/certification rep
6. Navneet Gill, ex officio BC Ministry of Agriculture;

Thanks are extended to all these individuals for volunteering their time and expertise to the program and to Kristy Wipperman, the COABC office manager who continues to provide excellent administrative support.

The COABC Accreditation Board contracted the International Organic Accreditation Service for the ISO on-site evaluations and in July 2012, Angela Jackson carried out the PACS & FVOPA surveillance audits. The on-site audits of SOOPA, KOGS and NOOA were conducted by Cindy Hartford in September. These audits identify if all the requirements are being met in practice as well as on paper and where there are opportunities for improvement in the job done by the administrators, VOs and the certification committees.

The Accreditation Board met once by teleconference in 2012 and in person in November to review reports and make accreditation decisions as well as conducting e-meetings as needed at other times. There were no new applications for accreditation in 2012 and no withdrawals.

Training & Information Sessions

In conjunction with the 2012 COABC conference in Chilliwack the Accreditation Board held a half day roundtable information session for CB administrators, CC members & VO's led by the AB Director (Anne Macey) and AB member (Rochelle Eisen). CBs & VOs were able to participate via Skype if they could not attend in person. This has become an annual event and all personnel involved in the certification process are encouraged to attend.

Ongoing Improvement

The COABC Accreditation Program is subject to auditing by the CFIA to ensure the operations of our program remain in line with the requirements of the Organic Products Regulation and the COO Operating Manual. Valeriya Staykova visited the COABC Office in July and also witnessed our audit of FVOPA. Another requirement for continued recognition is to participate in the annual CVB consultation meeting in Ottawa and take part in periodic conference calls. We review any issues that may have arisen with the Canada Organic Regime and discuss whether changes to the COO Operating Manual are needed or more guidance needs to be provided to accredited CBs. In 2012 timing was such that the meeting coincided with the retirement of Michel Samur the Manager of the COO, and also with the Organic Reception in the Parliament Buildings.

In 2012, a revised version of the COO operating manual was released and the international standard for conformity assessment ISO 65 was replaced by ISO17065. As a result, COABC is in the process of reviewing and revising Book1 and the Annexes to bring its accreditation program in line as well as assisting the ISO CBs with understanding the changes. We were very pleased that in November 2012, an Order in Council changed the BC Organic Regulation to reference the current version of the BCCOP Policies and Procedures rather than a particular revision version. This is a successful resolution of an ongoing issue where the regulation was always referencing out of date documents.

Appeals and Complaints

In 2012 there were no appeals of accreditation decisions and 13 complaints were directed to COABC. Some were forwarded to CBs to handle and others to the COO. Only two were related to misuse of the BC Certified Organic Checkmark.

Finances

Program expenditures in 2012 were \$49,607 which covered the costs of 2 part time staff plus some contract work (50% of the budget), the audits (26%) and a share of the office costs. In 2012 the certification bodies paid 75% of audit costs. Our intention is to keep the costs as low as possible without compromising integrity.

Going Forward

The certified organic sector in BC continues to be faced with the challenges presented by a lack of a mandatory regulation in the province and labeling rules which prevent the use of term "certified" on product certified under the COR. One result is that in the local market organic certification is losing its relevance.

With the continued decline in numbers in the regional BC Certified Organic Program, the research being carried out by COABC is very timely. While work goes on to explore ways to involve more organic farmers, we encourage CBs to consider the BC low risk program to help reduce the cost of certification for eligible operators. There are several reasons producers opt out but cost is certainly one of them.

2013 will see changes in the Accreditation Board. I have resigned as Director and will be replaced by Molly Thurston in April. The director position was created by COABC in 2006 to help plan for the introduction of the Canadian Organic Products Regulation and to address the additional workload that came with its implementation. It has been a pleasure working with all the COABC accredited CBs as we navigated the ever changing rules. There will undoubtedly be new and different challenges in the future.

COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION & EDUCATION

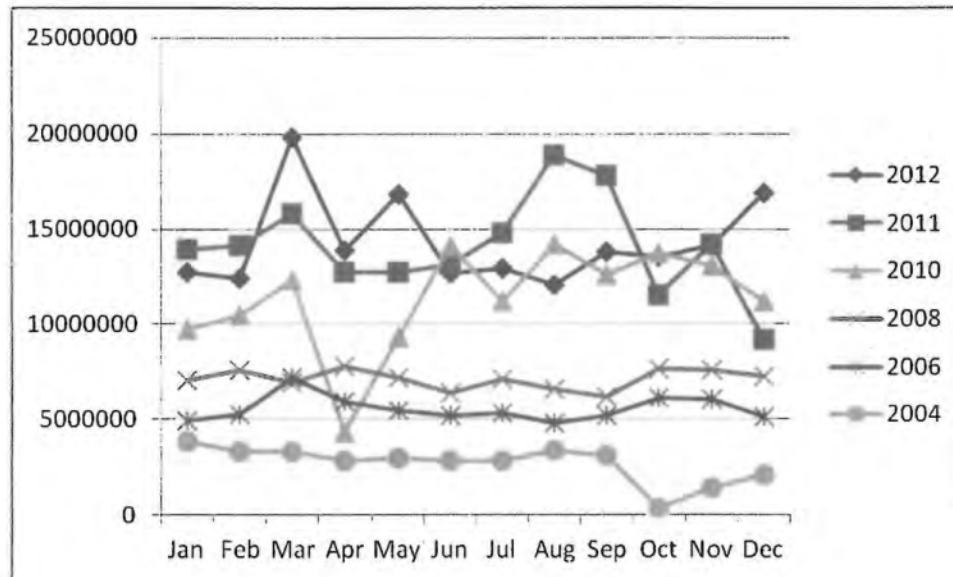
Submitted By Jen Gamble, Administrator

E-News: Keeping You Informed

The E-news, a key source of information, is sent directly to members and posted monthly on the News & Events tab of the website. Information included in the E-news ranges from COABC activities, upcoming events, OFC activities and updates regarding the standards. As the Enews is a publication for members, suggestions and event listings are always welcome!

Website

In 2012, the traffic to the COABC website increased again, although it peaked at different times than in 2011.



The website has become more dynamic this year with the front page changing regularly. One of the highlights is the "Love the Apple" panel discussion videos. The four part video series creates an interactive feature to engage the audience.

The BC Organic Grower online is now posted as an online publication which allows the most current cover to be displayed on the front page as a live link to online version.

In addition to these and other updates the website requires regular general maintenance which is done by our webmaster.

Social Media

Our media impact continues to grow as we use our Twitter and Facebook accounts more. We encourage members of COABC and supports of Organics to join the growing online community. Check out our facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Certified-Organic-Associations-of-BC/208548192519986> and look for us on twitter username: coabccanada.

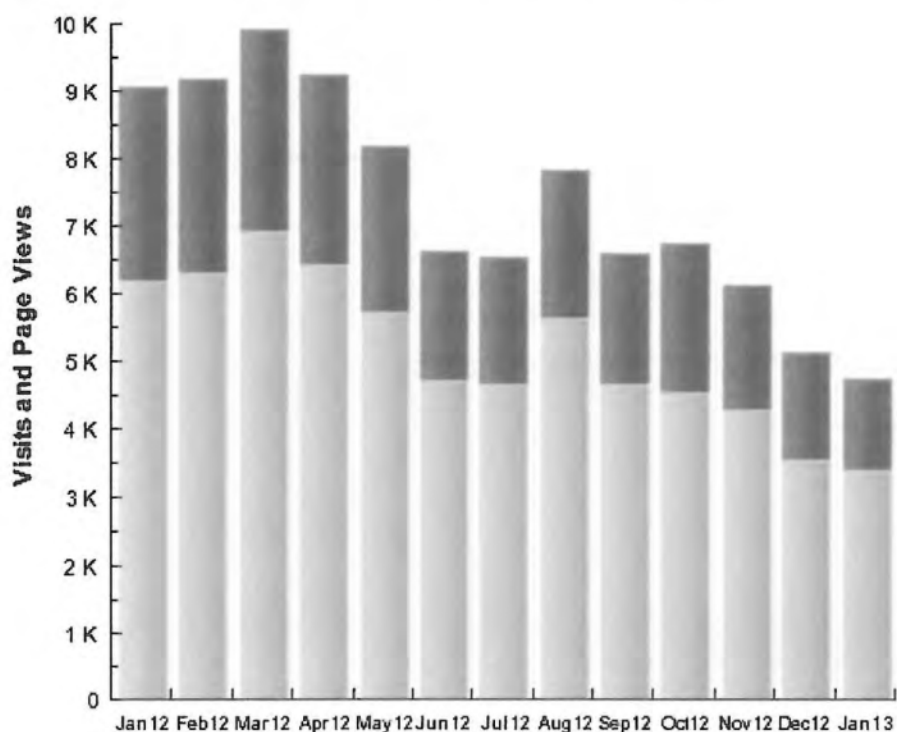
Cyber-help

This year many of the more active pages on Cyber-help have been improved with highlights such as video clips in the News section.

The Organic Farming Forum Discussion, feature of the site provides a cross pollination for those not on the COABC Listserve, especially when Listserve members provide a little advice for those finding their way into organic farming. The forum also offers a platform for discussion on a national level. Over the past year 28 topics were considered and where applicable, visitors were steered to one of the CyberHelp or COABC pages.

We received about 64,000 visits to the site in 2012, a couple of thousand below 2011. The fall-off appears to have happened during the ending months of the year, the time when Google made some fairly radical changes to its fabled algorithm.

Cyber-Help is hosted as a sub-domain of the COABC web-site, www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/ and has been funded by COABC.



Month of the Year	Visits	Page Views
Jan13	3,385	4,747
Dec12	3,515	5,118
Nov12	4,267	6,124
Oct12	4,537	6,746
Sep12	4,648	6,598
Aug12	5,632	7,829
Jul12	4,647	6,534
Jun12	4,701	6,610
May12	5,712	8,188
Apr12	6,398	9,235
Mar12	6,902	9,899
Feb12	6,301	9,170
Jan12	6,175	9,056

BCOG

The BC Organic Grower has had another busy year filled with informative and educational articles. Andrea Langlois (Editor) and Moss Dance (Layout/Advertising specialist) continue to excel at producing a professional publication for the BC Organic Community. As usual the

2012 issues are posted on the COABC website, however the format has been update and the issues are now available as online publications.

The BCOG team, COABC staff and the COABC board extend a special thank you to Eric Foster the MLA for Vernon/Monashee who has helped ensure the BCOG is delivered to all BC MLA offices.

Advertising

In 2012, the Edible Vancouver partnership continued to grow. The Winter issue featured a 1 1/3 page COABC ad. The Edible Vancouver staff has been working closely with Mary Forstbauer and COABC staff to ensure continued promotion of organics. With a reduced advertising rate, this is a valuable opportunity for all organic operators.

Events

2012 Conference & AGM

The 2012 Innovations conference was one of the most successful that the Fraser Valley has seen in a number of years. The Organic community at the Best Western Rainbow Country Inn in Chilliwack, BC from February 24-26, to enjoy a wide variety of presentations and conversations. We were fortunate to have Cuban scientist, Humberto Rios Labrada as the keynote speaker this year. Labrada painted an inspiring picture of Cuban agriculture where scientists and farmers work jointly to solve agricultural issues in an organic manner.

Other highlights included the BC Seeds room, the Organic Feast and the innovative centre pieces created by feast attendees. We were also honoured to have guests such as Adrian Dix, Lana Popham and John Van Dongan in attendance.



Once again the conference brought together diverse people, organizations and businesses to enhance the BC Organic sector. The conference aims to increase sector capacity through education and promotion of the BC Organic community. This unique opportunity builds the organic community and enhances the sector.

Thank you to the conference co-ordinators, the conference committee and all the wonderful volunteers.

PAS Report 2012

Submitted by: Mary Forstbauer

The Pacific Agriculture Show was held in Abbotsford January 26, 27, 28 2012. The COABC booth was the gathering place with our couch from Unger Furniture serving as a comfortable seat for those who were interested in discussing the latest organic issues.

Many visitors enjoyed our organic apples, thanks to Pro Organics generous donation. Children love stickers and were excited that we were giving them out at our booth.

Thank you to the staff for putting together the package of **BC Organic Grower** publications and other materials. They were shared with many interested in our association and in organics. There was a lot of interest in our AGM, which was held in the Fraser Valley in 2012.

BCARA and FVOPA supplied information about their certification programs. There was an information sheet with contact information on all CBs. We encourage all COABC member associations to supply the office with information that can be shared in the future at trade shows. Trade shows are a great opportunity to give information to new producers and processors.

Thank you to all who took time from their busy lives to help at the booth. It is rewarding to share our story and to encourage new producers. A special thank you to Pro Organics for their donation of four cases of apples and to Unger Furniture for the use of a very comfortable couch.

Organic sessions offered on Saturday were well attended. Thank you to Harvie Snow for his dedication to the LMHIA board on behalf of the organic producers. He works hard at making sure that we have speakers that will bring our sector respect and recognition in the agriculture field.

Other Events

- The **BCAC Gala** in February –represented by Mary Forstbauer and Annie Moss
- **Canadian Organic Science Conference** -represented by Nikki Strutinski
- **Building SustainAble Communities Conference**, Kelowna – represented by Molly Thurston
- **Food Sovereignty Forum with Alex Atamanenko**, Cawston -Mary Forstbauer
- **Argi-Foods Strategy Launch** - represented by Mary Forstbauer
- **Meeting with Minister McRae**, Courtenay - Kris Chand and Carmen Wakeling
- **Organic Okanagan Festival**, Kelowna –represented by Mary Forstbauer, Rebecca Kneen, Fred Danenhower and Jen Gamble
- **Low Level Presence Consultation**, Ottawa -represented by Cathleen Kneen

National Organic Week

Submitted by Jen Gamble

The third annual National Organic Week was held September 22-29, 2012. National support and organization around the event seems to be growing.

Organic Week in BC began with a 2012 Organic Week proclamation by the newly appointed BC Minister of Agriculture, Norm Letnick. Minister Letnick opened the Organic Okanagan Festival with the proclamation and presented it to Mary Forstbauer, COABC President and Rebecca Kneen, COABC Co-Secretary.

The past minister of agriculture, Don McRae, read the proclamation at the Comox Farmers Market where the Comox Organic Collective unveiled their new logo. The Qualicum Beach town crier also announced Organic Week at the Qualicum Beach Market.

As part of the celebrations, COABC co-hosted a Love the Apple Panel at the Organic Okanagan Festival. The panel made up of Fred Danenhower, Dag Falck, Jim Wood and Fred Steele aimed to bring awareness to the issues around the introduction of the Arctic Apple. The discussion is posted on the COABC website in 4 parts.

As in previous years, COABC printed 1000 extra copies of the BC Organic Grower and distributed them through Farmers attending Farmers markets and organic retailers. COABC sponsors, Choices Markets and Nature's Fare Markets, distributed the BCOG to their consumers and helped promote Organics in BC.

A number of organizations and Farmer's Markets also marked Organic Week with events and information booths. A full list of events can be found at www.organicweek.ca

Sector Connections / Membership

The Organic Federation of Canada

Submitted by Hermann Bruns OFC Director for BC

The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) represents the Canadian organic sector on issues to do with the Canada Organic Standard and Regulation. A representative organization from each province and territory elects or appoints one delegate to the board, making the OFC democratically accountable to organic operators from all parts of the country.

Over the past year, the OFC has been actively working on the following:

1. Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC): Comprised of 7 members elected to represent a cross-section of the organic sector, the SIC is managed by the OFC to provide interpretive guidance for the Canada Organic Office on issues arising from the national organic standards. Since its inception, the SIC has held numerous meetings to formulate interpretations for over 150 questions.
2. Brand Names Directory: The OFC negotiated and signed an agreement with Peppersoft, an Ontario-based software development company, to design and maintain a brand names directory of organic inputs allowed for use in Canada. The directory will be hosted on the OFC website under www.OrganicInputs.ca.
3. Maintenance Funding for the Canada Organic Standard (COS): Now several years old the COS is in desperate need of review and maintenance. The OFC has been actively lobbying the appropriate government departments, Minister of Agriculture, and even Members of Parliament in an effort to acquire funding to maintain the standard. While there currently still is no plan in hand, there have been encouraging signs that the AAFC has recognized the need for standards maintenance and is working to find ways to achieve that task.
4. Organic Science Cluster (OSC): The OFC was the applicant for the first OSC cluster in 2010 which resulted in 30 research projects and over \$6 million being directed to Canadian organic agriculture research projects. The planning has now begun for the next national organic science initiative, Organic Science Cluster II (OSCII), for which over 100 letters of intent with research ideas have been received. The OFC continues to assist with the management and promotion of the OSC initiatives as well as providing translation services.
5. GMOs: Representations continue to be made to the federal Ministry of Agriculture (AAFC) and the Canadian Seed Trade Association about the organic sector's opposition to the release of GMO alfalfa and apples. The OFC also actively participated in the federal government's low level GMO presence (LLP) consultation.

The OFC provides information on national organic issues by publishing the **Info-Bio** e-newsletter. OFC Administrator, Nicole Boudreau, has written up numerous interviews researchers and other people involved in Canada's organic sector. These interviews, as well as many other reports, are available in both official languages on the OFC website www.organicfederation.ca. Stay informed about national issues by subscribing to have Info-Bio sent directly to your inbox.

While appointed by the COABC, the OFC director for BC is charged with representing the entire BC organic sector. If you have issues or concerns you'd like addressed through the Organic Federation of Canada, feel free to contact Hermann Bruns (hbruns@organicfederation.ca, ph: 250-838-7447) or Nicole Boudreau (info@organicfederation.ca, ph: 514-488-6192)

BC Agriculture Council

Report Submitted by: Dennis Lapierre

It has been my pleasure to have, for my fourth year, represented the COABC on the Board of the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) as the Community Agriculture sector representative. The Community Agriculture sector comprises the COABC and the FARM Community Council, an aggregation of several of BC's Farmer's Institutes. The Community Agriculture seat on the BCAC Board is somewhat unique in that it is the only seat not specifically tied to any particular commodity or commodity grouping.

While not necessarily the case, because within my sector are a number of substantially-sized farms and involved members who are members of commodity organizations as well, my seat is often understood as being the voice of the smaller farm, the niche market farm, and the kind of farm that reflects traditional values to some and to others, values closely linked to particular production approaches aimed at building soil health, protecting biodiversity and producing clean, uncontaminated, healthy products.

As one of the founding voices of the BCAC, The sector is a worthy voice and one essential to the need for a well-rounded Council.

Through 2012, I, as your representative, occupied the position of Vice-Chair on the BCAC and held positions on its Finance committee and its Executive Committee. Additionally, I participated in a number of stakeholder consultations with provincial authorities on matters such as the updating to the Animal Health Act, the Water Act Modernization process, the Meat Regulation issues, the BC Food Processors Association (BCFPA) Meat Industry Committee, Growing Forward 2 consultations, and upgrades to the Agriculture Waste Control legislation.

I also became the appointed representative of the BCAC to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA). Because agriculture in Canada is a shared federal/provincial responsibility and because a number of matters affecting BC agriculture are federal government responsibilities, the CFA exists to advocate on national pan-agricultural concerns in the same way general farm organizations like the BCAC exist in each province to deal with provincial pan-agricultural matters.

Some of the membership dues paid to belong to the BCAC are put towards supporting the CFA.

None of the above mentioned consultation activities reached a point of conclusion during 2012, with the exception of the BCFPA Meat Industry Committee, which reached the end of its funding. The Animal Health legislative update was stalled for political reasons. Others are just slow in developing.

The upside of long processes are that the province is demonstrating that it is being careful in ensuring the agriculture industry is supportive of the considered changes. The downside is that because these matters take time, they are costly to work through. It is the agricultural community that ultimately pays to attend these consultations. And, the only way to be influential is to stay with them until they are done, however long that takes. The only matter I have been involved with that has a determined implementation date is the next 5-year federal/provincial support program for agriculture. The Growing Forward 2 plan is scheduled to begin implementation during the first half of 2013.

In June the Minister of Agriculture appointed me to Farm Management Canada as BC's producer representative. This is a national organization that offers a range of business management and skills development supports to Canadian farmers. Found here:

<http://www.fmc-gac.com/home>, it links to many webinars that are broadcast live through the year, online discussions, and it retains a library of resources and past webinars. If you have not yet discovered this resource, it is one worth investigating

COABC also works to ensure organic sector representation at:

BC Agri Food Trade Council

BCAC Waste Management Review

The Organic Agricultural Center of Canada

International Federation of Organic Management IFOAM

VERIFICATION OFFICERS

VO training occurred in conjunction with the 2012 conference in Chilliwack. Members of the Accreditation Board led the well attended training session.

RESEARCH & MARKETING

It was the desire of COABC directors to facilitate research in the organic sector. Starting in 2006 funds have been set aside to be used for research projects.

In 2012, the COABC Research fund contributed to the Small Scale Certification Research Project. The Research fund contribution made up 20% of the total project budget with the remainder contributed by the Investment Agriculture Foundation through the OSDP.

One of the projects supported in 2010, research into wireworm, wrapped up in 2012 but has not yet received the final payment as a final report has not been submitted.

In October, the COABC board voted to rename the Research Fund the **Organic Sector Research and Development Fund**.

Packaging and Promotional Materials

The COABC provides promotional, packaging, and educational materials to the membership at just above cost:

- Twist ties
- Stickers
- Two styles of hats
- T-shirts
- Two organic production guides

Free membership privileges:

- Promotional and educational pamphlets for use at agricultural and consumer events
- Professional display booths, complete with banners, photographs and posters

COABC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada Report

Submitted by: Deb Foote: Representative for BC Organic Farmers on OACC

The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) conducts organic farming research and provides knowledge transfer and extension services for organic farmers.

The OACC is committed to education by way of web courses in organic agriculture, organic farming methods, organic field crops, organic pest and weed management, organic livestock production, composting and transition to organic farming.

The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) founded in 2001 as an operating division of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, facilitates research and education for organic producers and consumers to build sustainable communities. 2012 saw a major change for the organization, the Nova Scotia Agricultural College has amalgamated with Dalhousie University. The staff of the OACC has been focused on these changes along with planning for round 2 of the Organic Science cluster.

The OACC is guided by an advisory board representing stakeholder groups from across Canada. OACC Board members deliberate and make recommendations about policy, strategic directions and sustain OACC. Groups represented on the board include organic farmers, transitional farmers, food distributors and retailers, university researchers, students, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and organic organizations. The board is designed in such a way that it must include at least one member from Manitoba or Alberta, one member from each British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. For a current list of Board Members please see: www.oacc.info/Board/board_welcome.asp

The OACC sponsored its first Canadian Organic Science Conference in February 2012. One of the planned outcomes of that 3 day event was to identify Research Priorities as well as perform an analysis of Canada's Organic sector.

Primary funding for these documents has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program (ACAAF). Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is pleased to participate in the production of these documents. AAFC is committed to working with our industry partners to increase public awareness of the importance of the agriculture and agri-food industry to Canada. Opinions expressed in these documents are those of OACC and not necessarily those of AAFC.

- [Canadian Organic Sector Macroenvironmental Scan](#)
- [Canadian Organic Research Group - SWOT analysis](#)
- [Background Briefing Document: Organic Science Prioritization Process, Including Results of the Strategic Research Prioritization Process](#)

These priorities along with current organic farming issues will inform the projects undertaken in Organic Science Cluster 2.

The OCAA is committed to seeing Organic's promoted in Canadian Farm publications and to that end tracks the articles that are published through the year:

- December 2012 [The Apple Tree Immunologist](#)
- November 2012 [Help wanted: Supporting organic agriculture in Canada](#)
- October 2012 [The Projects of the Organic Science Cluster Answer Producers' Needs](#)
- September 2012 [A Passion for New Organic Varieties](#)
- August 2012 [The Crafting of Organic Oats](#)
- July 2012 [Helping new trees thrive in organic orchards](#)
- June 2012 [Soil microorganisms are at the heart of the new green revolution](#)
- April 2012 [Establishing an insectary: Using flowers to attract beneficials](#)
- March 2012 [Approaching Organic No-Till on the Canadian Prairies](#)
- February 2012 [Is organic farming more profitable?](#)
- January 2012 [AAFC Gets to the Root of Organic Fruit Crops in BC](#)

Finally – 2012 is my final year sitting on the OACC Advisory Board. The COABC should consider nominating potential replacements for the category I represent Certification Bodies in Western Canada.

Organic Sector Development Program

Submitted by: Paddy Doherty

For more details on projects please visit the website at

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/osdp.htm>

Summary

24 applications were received and subsequently reviewed by the OSDP Adjudication Committee during the third year of the OSDP SI. Of these, 14 projects were given conditional approval for funding. One approved project was withdrawn by the client because they had administrative difficulties.

Performance in 2012 was much improved over 2011. The new funding ratio has generated an increase of interest in the programme and a commensurate number of good proposals. Though the programme is still below target, there is good reason to believe the OSDP will be close to its overall target allocation by the end of 2013.

Approved Project Details as of Dec 2012

Project	Industry Cash	Industry in-kind	Gov Cash	OSDP Allocated	Current Status
I-106 Aphid Control - research	s.21		6,630	10,000	Project Complete
I-107 Cranberry Weed Control - research			0	5,365	Project complete
I-108 Resistance to Late Blight - research			0	8,150	Project complete
I-109 Botrytis - research			0	3,912	Final report under review (incomplete)
I-110 Powdery Mildew - research			0	3,875	In production
I-111 Growing Organic Seed - development			0	26,000	In production
I-112 Pythium Trials - research			0	7,500	In production
I-122 Virus Lit Review - research			0	3,000	Project complete
I-123 Poultry Regimes - research			0	20,000	In production
I-124 Organic Cider - research and development			0	5,200	Project complete
I-129 Late Blight 3 - research			0	11,275	Project complete
I-130 Caterpillar - research			3,400	3,075	Project complete
I-131 Mineral Oil Test - research			0	8,025	Project complete
I-134 SOIL Ambassadors - development			0	2,320	Project complete
I-139 Small-scale Composting - research & development			0	97,000	In production
I-140 Urban Fruit Trees - research			0	5,500	Waiting for final report
I-142 Edamame - research			0	7,150	In production
I-144 Late Blight 4 - research			0	12,525	In production
I-145 Botrytis Beans - research			0	5,775	In production
I-146 Vineyard Nutrition - research			0	14,000	In production
I-147 COG Info-bank - development			0	17,165	In production
I-148 Carrot Production - research			0	7,000	In production
I-150 Biochar - research			0	27,711	In production
I-151 Viticulture Training - development			0	31,500	In production
I-152 Young Agrarians - development			0	23,000	In production

Project	Industry Cash	Industry in-kind	Gov Cash	OSDP Allocated	Current Status
I-154 Market Research – research	s.21		0	143,646	In production
I-160 Bunt - research			0	16,800	In preparation
S-0011 Certification Research			0	51,624	In production
SP-195Aphid Control			0	5,000	In production
Totals			10,030	583,093	
Total value	1,083,754				

Committee Activities

The OSDP Adjudication Committee members:

1. Deb Foote – Independent Consultant – industry member (trade)
2. Phyllis Nelson – Nelson's Fruit Products - producer member (horticulture)
3. Peter Stockdale – Ravenstoft Farm - producer member (livestock)
4. Emily Mackenzie – AAFC ex-officio
5. Susan Smith – BCMA ex-officio
6. Miriam Esquitin – IAF member
7. Linda Fogarty – Greenroom Organics - Producer member (horticulture)
8. Jen Cody – BC Food Systems Network - consumer/environmental member

The committee met (via teleconference) 4 times during 2012, as well as a number of email discussions and decisions. There was one in-person committee meeting in Feb 2012. The committee is meeting in-person again in Feb 2013.

Projects Reviewed in 2012

#	Title	Applicant	Reviewed	Decision	Industry	In-kind	CAAP	End date	Status as Dec 31 2012
141	Pollinators	s.21	Feb 24 2012	Approved w conditions	s.21		68,850	Dec 2013	Withdrawn
142	Edamame Research		Feb 24 2012	Approved			7,150	Mar 2013	In production
143	Animation		Feb 24 2012	Declined			10,400		
144	Late Blight 4		Apr 14 2012	Approved w conditions			12,525	Jan 2013	In production
145	Botrytis Beans		Feb 24 2012	Approved w conditions			5,775	Jan 2013	In production
146	Vineyard Nutrition		May 15 2012	Approved			14,000	Nov 2012	Complete
147	COG Info-bank		Jul 9 2012	Approved			17,165	Jan 2013	In production
148	Carrot Production		Jul 9 2012	Approved			7,000	Aug 30 2013	In production
149	Organic		Jul 9 2012	Declined			50,000		

#	Title	Applicant	Reviewed	Decision	Industry	In-kind	CAAP	End date	Status as Dec 31 2012
	Land Care								
150	Biochar	s.21	Jul 9 2012	Approved	s.21		27,711	Dec 5 2013	In production
151	Viticulture Training		Jul 9 2012	Approved			31,500	Jun 30 2013	In production
152	Young Agrarians		Sep 2 2012	Approved			23,000	Jun 30 2013	In production
153	Cultural Foods		Jul 9 2012	Declined			117,000		
154	Market Research		Jul 9 2012	Approved			143,646	Mar 30 2013	In production
155	GMO Education		Jul 9 2012	Declined			31,800		
156	Kid's Book		Jul 9 2012	Declined			17,000		
157	Urban Apprentice		Jul 9 2012	Declined			25,000		
158	Organic Education		Jul 9 2012	Declined			25,000		
159	Care Farm		Oct 26 2012	Declined			14,000		
160	Bunt		Oct 26 2012	Approved			16,800	Sep 30 2013	In preparation
161	Can Org Extension		Oct 26 2012	Declined			5,125		
162	Professional Cert		Dec 07 2012	Declined			11,305		
S-0011	Certification Research		Jul 09 2012	Approved			51,624	Apr 30 2013	In production
SP-195	Aphid Control		Jul 09 2012	Approved			5,000	Feb 15 2013	In production
	Totals						738,376		

Allocation of Funds

The following chart indicates projected budget and actual allocations. Though the OSDP is below projections for the year, the program has much improved over 2011.

Goal	Projections for 2012 (CAAP \$)	2012 Actual allocated (CAAP \$)
Goal 1: Increase Capacity	\$112,500	\$40,665
Goal 2: Build Confidence	\$9,000	\$12,000
Goal 3: Environmental Stewardship	\$36,000	\$16,000
Goal 4: Advance Research	\$220,500	\$218,607
Goal 5: Strengthen Organisation	\$27,000	\$39,624
Administration	\$22,500	\$20,453
Totals	\$427,500	\$347,349.00

Administration and Communication costs

The OSDP employs a part-time coordinator to oversee the fund, and has contracted with COABC for bookkeeping services. Other costs include a special communication fund for 2012/13 and nominal costs for postage and copying. There are also transportation and accommodation costs budgeted for in-person meetings.

Activity	Budget	Actual
Co-ordinator Contract (includes office costs)	s.21	
Book keeping contract		
Communication		
Meeting & travel expenses		
Total		

Progress towards Strategic Plan Goals

The OSDP has made good progress towards all of its strategic goals in 2012. The new funding ratio has encouraged more good proposals and the results of the project should lead the sector in a positive direction in 2013 and years to come. Though it is heartening to have good projects to review in 2012, extra effort will need to be applied in 2013 to encourage projects that need to be complete by the end of the year.

Small Scale Certification Research Project

Submitted by: Andrea Lawseth, Project leader

Background

The Small-Scale Certification Research Project is exploring options that would encourage non-certified operations to come under the umbrella of certification in BC. There are well over 3000 'non-certified organic' producers in this province, most being small-scale operations. This high number indicates two problems:

- 1) The current certification model is not appropriate for all organic producers, especially small-scale operations.
- 2) Consumers are not being protected from fraud under the current system.

Communications and Consultation

The COABC Small-Scale Certification Research Project (SSCRP) process began with the development of a communications strategy to engage organic producers, and those who make, or would like to make, organic claims and to seek their opinions on the issues of certification. The project kicked off with the identification of key stakeholders within and outside of COABC, including urban agriculturalists. A total of 30 stakeholders were contacted directly for interviews via phone and in person.

To engage additional stakeholders in the project, we consulted with the public at agriculture events and through online and written surveys to gain feedback on barriers to certification and potential solutions. Some of the events that have been attended thus far include:

- BC Food Systems Network Gathering;
- Annual Vancouver Urban Farming Forum;
- BC Seeds Gathering;
- Nanaimo-Cedar Farmers Institute Meeting; and
- Pacific Agriculture Show.

An online survey was also created to provide another vehicle to engage with the public. The survey sought feedback on barriers to certification and recommendations for potential solutions. A total of eighty-one surveys were completed. Details of the project were published in the Fall edition of the BC Organic Grower (BCOG) magazine, which is distributed to all COABC members. An announcement of the project was also distributed through the COABC listserve.

Project recommendations will be submitted to COABC in 2013. The COABC board will then consider implementing appropriate recommendations to minimize barriers to certification.

FINANCE

Financial statements were provided to the Board quarterly.

Sponsorship program

The sponsorship program is a vital part of COABC. As a non-profit organization, COABC relies on donors to continue and expand outreach activities like the BC Organic Grower, the annual conference, the website and Cyber-help.

In 2012, COABC sponsors were:

Diamond: Vancity

Gold: Horizon Distributors and the Organic Grocer

Silver: Discovery Organics, Que Pasa, ProOrganics, Askews Foods, Left Coast Naturals, Eatmore Sprouts and Greens and West Coast Seeds

Bronze: Choices Markets and Nature's Fare Markets.

Thank you to our generous 2012 sponsors.

Additional financial support for the Strategic Planning Session held in November 2012 was provided by the Investment Agriculture Foundation, Choices Markets, Thrifty Foods, ProOrganics and Urban Harvest Organic Delivery.

FINANCIAL REPORT & STATEMENTS CAN BE VIEWED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

**CERTIFIED ORGANIC
ASSOCIATIONS OF B.C.**

**Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2012
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

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tel: 250 5-5 2136
fax: 250 5-5 2136-4
www.bdo.ca

BDU Canada LLP
2704 30th Avenue
Suite 202
Surrey BC V1V 2B6 Canada

Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Certified Organic Associations of B.C. as at December 31, 2012 and the statements of financial position, changes in net assets and revenue and expenditures for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Accountants

Vernon, British Columbia
January 24, 2013

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Financial Position
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

December 31	2012	2011
-------------	------	------

Assets

s.21

Current

Cash and term deposits
Accounts receivable
Inventory
Prepaid expenses

Equipment (Note 1)

Liabilities and Net Assets
Current

Accounts payable
Deferred revenue

Net Assets

Invested in equipment
Internally restricted for research purposes (Note 3)
Unrestricted

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Director

Director

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

For the year ended December 31	Invested in Equipment	Restricted for Research	Un- restricted	2012	2011
Balance, beginning of year					s.21
Revenue over expenditures for the year					
Investment in equipment					
<u>Balance, end of year</u>					

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

For the year ended December 31	2012	2011
--------------------------------	------	------

s.21

Revenue

- Fees and subscriptions
- Publications
- Advertising
- Conference and workshop
- Sponsorship
- Grant
- Administration fees
- Investment
- Other

Expenditures

- Advertising and promotion
- Amortization
- Bad debts
- Bank charges and interest
- Conference and meetings
- Contract fees
- Donations and subsidies
- Memberships, dues and fees
- Office and miscellaneous
- Rent and utilities
- Telephone and fax
- Travel and meals
- Wages and employee benefits

Revenue over expenditures for the year

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Notes to Financial Statements
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

December 31, 2012

- 1. Equipment** s.21

Furniture and fixtures
Computer equipment

Net book value

-
- 2. Grants Under Administration**
s.21

-
- 3. Restrictions on Net Assets**
s.21
-

Organic Sector Development Program 2
Balance Sheet As at 12/31/2012

ASSET

Assets

Valley First Credit Union-Trust2...
Cash Drawer
Accounts Receivable
Advances Paid

Total Assets

s.21

TOTAL ASSET

LIABILITY

Liabilities

Accounts Payable
Government Grants Received
GST Paid
HST Paid

Total Liabilities

TOTAL LIABILITY

EQUITY

Equity

Accumulated Earnings/Deficit
Current Earnings

Total Equity

TOTAL EQUITY

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Organic Sector Development Program 2
Income Statement 01/01/2012 to 12/31/2012

REVENUE

Revenue	s.21
Government Grants	
Other Revenue	
Total Revenue	

TOTAL REVENUE

EXPENSE

Expenses	
Advertising	
Accounting & Legal	
Bank Charges & Interest	
GST expense-non refundable	
Contractors	
Travel/Accommodation	
Meals/Entertainment	
Admin Expenses from COABC	
Advances paid-COABC	
Advances Paid	
Suspense	
Total Expenses	

TOTAL EXPENSE

NET INCOME

Printed On: 02/06/2013

Organic Sector Development Program 2
 General Ledger Report 01/01/2012 to 12/31/2012
 Sorted by: Transaction Number

			2012
5700 Advances Paid	I-111	Growing Organic Seed	s.21
	I-123	Poultry Regimes	
	I-129	Late Blight Control	
	I-130	Caterpillar Control	
	I-134	Soil Ambassadors	
	I-139	Small Scale Composting	
	I-140	Urban Fruit Trees	
	I-142	Edamame	
	I-144	Late Blight 4	
	I-145	Botrytis Beans	
	I-146	Vineyard Nutrition	
	I-147	COG info-bank	
	I-148	Carrot Production	
	I-151	Viticulture Training	
	I-152	Young Agrarians	
	I-154	Market Research	

Generated On: 02/06/2013

Vancity

2012 Diamond Sponsor

**Certified Organic
Associations of BC**

Annual Report 2013



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Rebecca Kneen, Co-President

COABC's life has reflected those of our members over the last year. We have remained married to our ongoing work as accreditor and advocate for organics in BC; we have seen the birth of new projects, new staff members have arrived, and we have said very sad farewells.

To start with the marriage: all of the audits and accreditation work have been completed, showing that we continue to be diligent to ensure the credibility of certification. Our long-time Accreditation Board director, Anne Macey, retired this year. Molly Thurston of Lake Country is her new replacement and is doing a fine job. Anne really defined this position, and Molly's work has been exemplary.

In January we had a chance to stand up as an advocate for organics with a flurry of media discussing agro-toxin contamination in organic food. This allowed us to highlight the process of organic agriculture while re-iterating the need for the use of the term "organic" to be limited to certified producers.

COABC has undertaken two major new projects this year. The Organic Toolkit project, funded by Investment Agriculture Foundation (many thanks!) is creating collections of resources and materials for four areas: farmers markets and vendors, certification bodies, new organic entrants, and organic retailers. These resources will help people find information, standards, guidelines and research. The Organic Certification and Public Education project builds on the work of the Small-Scale Certification Project to increase public understanding of organic certification as well as to educate potential members on certification requirements. This project has also allowed us to hire a communications director who will be working as our government liaison as well as public outreach. We are very pleased to welcome Gloria Chang to our staff.

These projects and our new staff will allow us to carry on the work we have set ourselves in the Strategic Plan. The main focus of the COABC continues to be to uphold the integrity of the organic standards while building capacity within BC's organic community to fill and define the market for organic food. Our advocacy work focuses on increasing the understanding of certification for both public and other farmers, encouraging new members, and working to get use of the word organic limited to certified members.

I will end with an ending. In the summer of 2013 we lost Brad Reid, past president of COABC, organic farmer, great father and husband, and active community member. Brad will be long remembered for his deep commitment, sense of humour, and no-bull attitude. He was instrumental in shifting COABC into its new role as advocate and national accreditor. We are glad to be able to remember him with the new Brad Reid Memorial Award, which will be presented annually at the COABC conference to someone who embodies Brad's vision and values in the organic community. He leaves a hole in our hearts but a strong and clear vision for us to follow.



Rebecca Kneen



Susan Snow

THE ORGANIZATION IN 2013

COABC Board of Directors

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. BCARA | British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture
Chris Bodnar Alternate: Dave Reid |
| 2. Bio-Dynamic | Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Society of British Columbia
Gabe Cipes Alternate: David Avery/ Mary Forstbauer |
| 3. BOPA | Boundary Organic Producers Association
Roly Russell Alternate: Sheila Dobie |
| 4. FVOPA | Fraser Valley Organic Producers
Susan Snow (COABC Co-President) Alternate: Doug Luder |
| 5. IOPA | Islands Organic Producers Association
Arzeena Hamir (COABC Secretary) Alternate: Robin Tunnicliffe |
| 6. KOGS | Kootenay Organic Growers
Ruth Fraser Alternate: Alys Ford |
| 7. LEOGA | Living Earth Organic Growers Association
Sarah Martin Alternate: Clive Johnson |
| 8. NOOA | North Okanagan Organic Association
Rebecca Kneen (COABC Co-President) Alternate: Matt Thurston |
| 9. PACS | Pacific Agricultural Certification Society
Fred Danenhowe(COABC Treasurer 2012), Charlie Lasser, Terra Park,
Annamarie Klippenstein, Eric von Krosigk, Andrea Turner
Alternates: Linda Edwards, Gay Hahn |
| 10. SOOPA | Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association
Felix Boulais Alternate: Corey Brown |
| 11. STOPA | Shuswap Thompson Organic Producers Association
Ed Basile Alternate: Ron Coghlan/Mendel Robinson/ David Comrie |
| 12. BCFSN | BC Food Systems Network
Rosemary Plummer/Carol Kergan (Consumer/Environment) |

Associate Members

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 13. BCSPCA | BC Society for Protection of Animals (non-voting)
Alyssa Bell Stoneman |
| 14. BCMA | BC Ministry of Agriculture
Fiona Cubitt/ Jennifer Girard (ex-officio) |

COABC Committees

The COABC Board of Directors convened the following committees:

Executive

Rebecca Kneen (Co-President), Susan Snow (Co-President), Fred Danenhower (Treasurer), Arzeena Hamir (Secretary)

Advocacy Committee

Rebecca Kneen, Susan Snow, Fred Danenhower, Arzeena Hamir

Capacity Development

Inactive

Communication & PR (Awareness)

Mary Forstbauer, Andrea Turner, David Comrie

Events

Mary Forstbauer, Annie Moss, Rebecca Kneen, Corey Brown, Andrew Arkestyn-Vogler, Susan Smith, Annemarie Klippenstien, Jen Gamble

Human Resources (HR) Ad Hoc

Mary Forstbauer, Rebecca Kneen, Susan Snow, Clive Johnson, Jen Gamble, Kristy Wipperman

Levies Committee

Inactive

Research and Education

Inactive

COABC Restructuring Proposal Committee

Clive Johnson, Carmen Wakeling, Rob Horricks, Paddy Doherty, Anne Macey, Corey, Brown, Andrea Turner

Accreditation Board

Anne Macey/ Molly Thurston (Director/Chair), Cindy Hartford, Renee Prasad, Navneet Gill, Rochelle Eisen, Kristy Wipperman (AB Coordinator)

Organic Sector Development Program (OSDP)

Paddy Doherty (OSDP Co-ordinator), Peter Stockdale, Philip Bergen (AAFC ex-officio), Susan Smith (BCMA ex-officio), Miriam Esquitín (IAF), Linda Fogarty, Deb Foote, Phyllis Nelson, Jen Cody

Administration & Human Resource Support

The COABC operates a staffed office in Vernon. Office staff members:

- Jen Gamble – Administrator
- Kristy Wipperman – Office Manager

In general, the COABC office:

- Managed correspondence
- Responded to daily enquiries about certification
- Responded to daily enquiries from Membership
- Attended BoD and Exec meetings
- Acted as reporting liaison to the board

- Maintained relationships with BCMA, BCAC, OFC as well as others in the sector
- Managed insurance renewals
- Kept the bookkeeping in order
- And tended to the many, many other details of such a large organization!

COABC has also contracted with the following individuals:

- Paddy Doherty – OSDP Coordinator
- Rob Korbynn – Information Technology Technician
- Anne Macey/ Molly Thurston – Accreditation Board Director
- Jeffery Newman – Cyber-help Technician
- Andrea Langlois (January-July)/ Marilee Peters (July-December) & Moss Dance – Organic Grower Production team
- Andrea Lawseth & Diane Elliott-Buckley – COABC 2014 conference
- Andrea Lawseth, Rochelle Eisen, Gunta Vitins & Brenda Frick – Small Scale Certification Research Project (Completed April 30, 2013)
- Rochelle Eisen, Gunta Vitins & Brenda Frick – Organic Resource Toolkit Project
- Kate Sutherland/ Marilyn Hamilton – Board Retreat Planning Session

Insurance

The COABC maintains liability insurance for the Board of Directors and contents coverage. As a service to its membership, the COABC has arranged for CB's to have their own D&O insurance at a reduced rate. COABC also carries E&O and Commercial General Liability as part of being a recognized accreditor under the Canada Organic Regime.

The Purposes of COABC

Reprinted from CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The purposes of the society are:

1. To promote organic agriculture and to provide public education on organic agriculture
2. To represent members in matters relating to the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act of British Columbia
3. To develop and administer an organic certification accreditation program for members
4. To grant permission for use of the phrase "British Columbia Certified Organic" on agricultural product labels by agri-food enterprises certified by members
5. To facilitate research and marketing activities on behalf of members
6. To provide information to the public on behalf of members
7. To be responsible for incidental matters related to the above-referenced activities

BC CERTIFIED ORGANIC PROGRAM

COABC Accreditation Board Report

Submitted by: Molly Thurston, COABC Director of Accreditation

PROGRAMS

The COABC Accreditation Board is the body responsible for assessing the competence of certification bodies, which in turn verify that operators are following the Canadian Organic Standard. The system is intended to give confidence and maintain the integrity of organic claims thus providing a guarantee for consumers.

In 2013 the COABC Accreditation Board provided accreditation under the BC Certified Organic Program. This BC program provides the authorization for CBs to permit operators to use the Program symbol (the checkmark) and the phrase “British Columbia Certified Organic” to identify organic product.

The COABC Accreditation Board is also one of the four Conformity Verification Bodies (CVBs) operating under a recognition agreement with the CFIA. These CVBs assess CBs who wish to operate within the Canada Organic Regime (COR). Operators certified under the COR are able to use the Canada Organic Logo on their product.

Together these programs provide flexibility to allow operators to choose from three different levels of certification to verify that their products are grown or produced in accordance with the Canadian Organic Standard:

- BC Certified Organic ISO-compliant Program—Canada Organic Regime, which allows product to move out of BC.
- The BC Certified Organic Regional Program for product sold only in BC markets.
- The BC Certified Organic Low Risk Program, which allows for reduced frequency of inspection for operations where there is no identified risk to organic integrity and the product is marketed locally.

There are three CBs in the COABC ISO-compliant program and on the CFIA list of recognized certification bodies: BCARA, FVOPA and PACS. The COABC Accreditation Board is the interface between these CBs and the Canada Organic Office (COO). We are responsible for making recommendations for accreditation and the ongoing surveillance of the CFIA accredited CBs.

In 2013, there were 427 operators in the certification programs of the three ISO-compliant CBs which is less than last year’s certified operations. These numbers represent 72% of operators under the COABC umbrella with the majority located in BC although PACS also has a few members in Alberta and the Yukon. The numbers include farms in transition as well as producers, processors and handlers of certified products. The ISO program provides these enterprises with access to organic markets in BC, the rest of Canada and, through the equivalency arrangements, with the United States, the European Union, and Switzerland. As of March 28, 2013 Canada also entered into an equivalency arrangement with Costa Rica.

In 2013, COABC Accreditation Board renewed accreditation for eight certification bodies in the Regional Program. The Regional CBs certify a total of 164 operators or 28 % of the total operators under the COABC umbrella. Four regional operators were lost during 2013, representing a decline of only 2% as compared to a loss of 7% of the regional members in 2012 and 17% in 2011. IOPA continues to have the largest number of operators and continues to operate a low risk program with reduced frequency of inspections for eligible farms. In 2013, NOOA also began to offer the low risk program to its membership. The Accreditation Board is continuing to encourage more of the regional CBs to operate a low-risk program in 2014.

ACCREDITATION BOARD MEMBERS AND AUDITORS

Currently there are 6 members:

1. Molly Thurston, Director/Producer Rep
2. Anne Macey, Past Chair Inspection/Certification Rep
3. Cindy Hartford, Processor Rep
4. Renee Prasad, Consumer/Environmental Rep
5. Rochelle Eisen, Inspection/Certification Rep
6. Navneet Gill, ex-officio BC Ministry of Agriculture

Thanks are extended to all these individuals for volunteering their time and expertise to the program and also to Kristy Wipperman, the COABC office manager who continues to provide excellent administrative support.

The COABC Accreditation Board contracted the International Organic Accreditation Service for the ISO on-site evaluation and in December 2013, Angela Jackson carried out the BCARA re-assessment audits. The on-site audits of IOPA and BDAS for the regional program were conducted by Cindy Hartford in October.

The Accreditation Board met once by teleconference in May 2013 and for two-days, in person in November 2013 to review reports and make accreditation decisions as well as conducting e-meetings as needed at other times. There were no new applications for accreditation in 2013 and no withdrawals from the program.

TRAINING & INFORMATION SESSIONS

In conjunction with the 2013 COABC conference in Vernon the Accreditation Board held a half day roundtable information session for CB administrators, CC members & VO's led by the AB Director (Anne Macey) and AB member (Rochelle Eisen). CBs & VOs were able to participate via Skype if they could not attend in person. This has become an annual event and all personnel involved in the certification process are encouraged to attend.

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

The COABC Accreditation Program is subject to auditing by the CFIA to ensure the operations of our program remain in line with the requirements of the Organic Products Regulation and the COO Operating Manual. Valeriya Staykova and Brian Burns of the CFIA were present to conduct a witness audit during the BCARA reassessment and surveillance visit in December, 2013. The results of their audit suggested that COABC is generally compliant with the requirements of a CVB and also provided the suggestion that the COABC communicate on regular basis with the contracted auditor prior to the on-site assessment to ensure that all the requirements are understood and properly interpreted.

Another requirement for continued recognition is to participate in the annual CVB consultation meeting in Ottawa (October 2013) and to take part in periodic conference calls. Issues that may have arisen with the Canada Organic Regime are reviewed and potential changes to the COO Operating Manual are discussed as needed. Guidance is provided to accredited CBs in the form of a memo from the AB, including pertinent information and feedback from the discussions with the COO.

In 2013, a revised version of the COABC Book 1 Annex 2 was completed and approved by the BOD. This brought Annex 2 in line with the international standard for conformity assessment, ISO17065. In preparation for the 5 year reassessment of the COABC, we are also in the process of reviewing and revising AB policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect the change to ISO 17065 and other updates are being made to the documents as necessary, generally to reflect name and/or acronym changes.

APPEALS & COMPLAINTS

In 2013, five complaints were directed to the COABC. Some were forwarded to CBs to handle and others to the COO. Two of the complaints were related to the misuse of the BC Certified Organic Checkmark. The other three complaints were passed on to the CBs concerned for follow-up actions or to the COO and/or CFIA, where appropriate. There were no appeals of accreditation decisions in 2013.

FINANCES

Program expenditures in 2013 were \$47,9178, which covered the costs of 2 part-time staff plus some contract work (58% of the budget), the audits (19%) and a share of the office costs. In 2013 the certification bodies paid 100% of the average annual audit costs.

The intention of the Accreditation Board has always been to keep the costs as low as possible without compromising the integrity of the program. Unfortunately, the transition period from the government funded and COABC subsidized audit program has ended, leaving the CBs responsible for the full cost of audits. Accreditation costs have been steadily increasing since 2010.

2014 ACTIVITIES

In 2014, COABC must re-apply to the Canada Organic Office for reassessment by the COO. Work has already begun on the document review portion of the reassessment, including the revision of numerous policies and procedures to reflect the change to the ISO 17065 standard and to ensure compliance with the COR. COABC is expected to have surveillance and witness audits by the COO of COABC activities at some time during August –September, 2014.

Two new Accreditation Board members have been recommended to the COABC's Board of Directors, Lynn Lashuk and DeLisa Lewis will join the AB for the next meeting in 2014.

COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION & EDUCATION

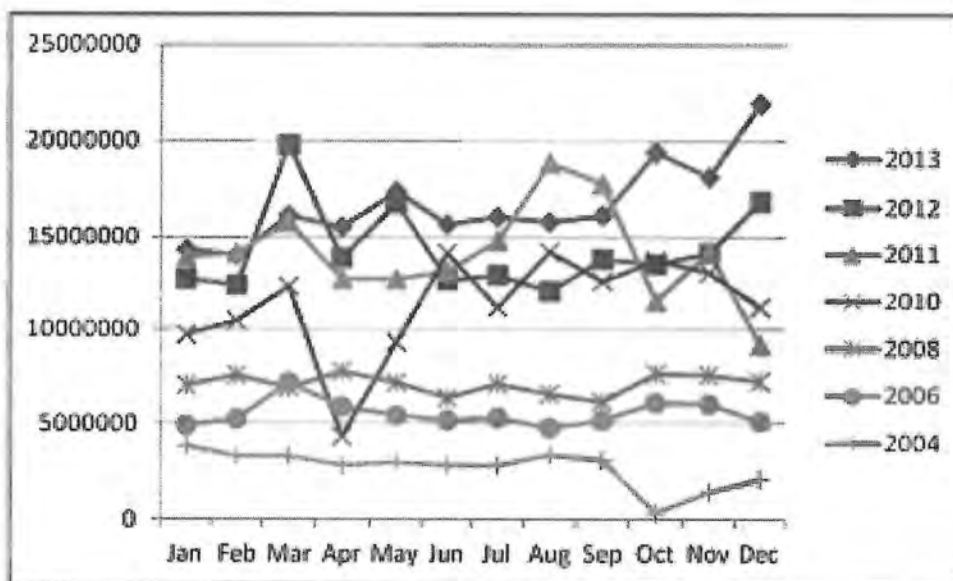
Submitted By Jen Gamble, Administrator

E-News: Keeping You Informed

Thanks to Tech Soup, an organization that offers reduced rates on software to non-profit organizations, COABC was able to obtain Adobe InDesign. With this new software, the E-news has taken on a new look. It is still a key source of information for members. The monthly newsletter is sent directly to members and posted on the News & Events tab of the website. The E-news features COABC activities, upcoming events, OFC activities and updates regarding the standards. Event listings and suggestions for the E-news are always welcome!

Website

In 2013, the COABC website continued to be one of the main sources of organic information that COABC supports. Reports like the one from COTA released this spring have been drawing web traffic.



On the whole, even though we have less website hits this year, the hits are consistent through the year and visitors are staying on the website as evidenced by the increasing volume of data being downloaded.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The COABC facebook page has begun to promote COABC issues and events to a wider audience. The page now has over 500 likes and these continue to grow.

We encourage members of COABC and supporters of Organics to join our online community. Check out our facebook page at facebook.com/pages/Certified-Organic-Associations-of-BC/208548192519986 and look for us on twitter: @coabccanada.

CYBER-HELP

During the past year, Cyber-help has continued to offer online resources to organic farmers and provide updated resources like the fruit and vegetable price list.

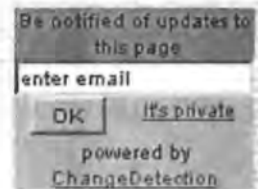
Cyber-help was offered access to a BC organic farmer's photo collection and has started adding some of these to the site. Images are sometimes directly informative and otherwise simply add a feel for the topic they illustrate. The right layout and images add to the experience and encourage visitors to become creatively engaged on the site.

In conjunction with other COABC projects, two Cyber-Help pages were updated by Resilient Solutions. These welcome and thorough additions were formatted and included on the site. Find them at:

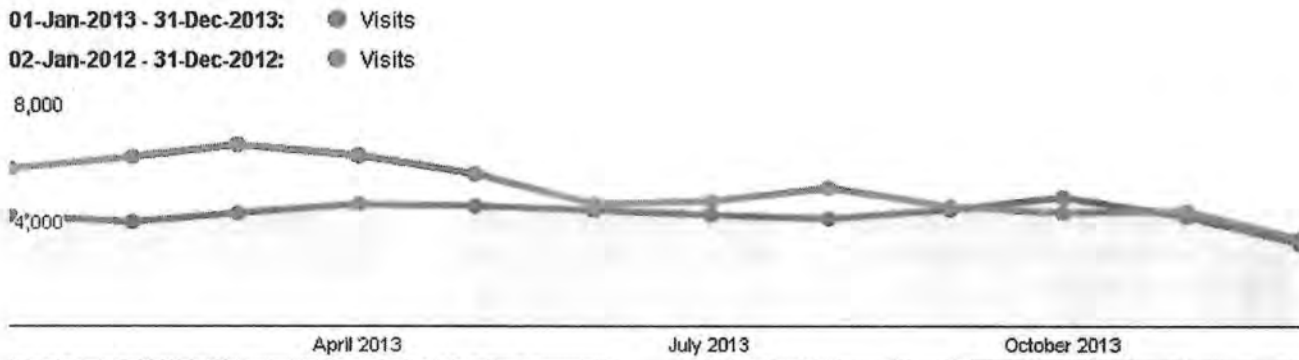
1. **Organic Certification** certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/training/certified.htm
2. **Grain Production** certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/training/grainforage.html

The Organic Farming Forum Discussion provides an opportunity for discussion on the national level and beyond. It creates a cross pollination of ideas for those not on the COABC listserve, especially when listserve members provide a little advice for those finding their way into organic farming.

An update notification box has been added to most of the more frequently updated pages. This service notifies those signed up when changes are made to their page of interest. More people are using this service, as indicated by the increase to 91 subscribers to the most popular page the Fruit and Vegetable Prices.



TRAFFIC



Using Google Analytics, a more comprehensive and reliable source, total visits were down this year, to 45,690 (v. 56,316 in 2012). This is a relevant number, but perhaps more so is the fact that the visitors who came in 2013 spent 24% more time per page - a big average change by Internet standards. It indicates proportionally more serious use of the site and/or less casual drop-ins. i.e. traffic made up of visitors more likely to find what they're looking for.

Cyber-Help is hosted as a sub-domain of the COABC website, certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/ and has been funded by COABC.

BC Organic Grower

2013 has been a year of transition for the BC Organic Grower. In July, the BCOG team welcomed a new editor, Marilee Peters. Marilee has taken over for Andrea Langlois, who had been with the BCOG for almost five years. The consistency and professionalism that Andrea brought to the publication is greatly appreciated. COABC extends our thanks to Andrea for her dedication and wishes her well in future endeavours.

The BCOG is fortunate to have found such a competent editor in Marilee to take over. She has edited publications in the environmental sector, including the bi-weekly Environmental Dimensions magazine.

Marilee has been able to step in and continue the publication smoothly. Marilee's first issue was Fall 2013 and is posted along with all the BCOG's on the COABC website.

Moss Dance continues as the Layout/Advertising specialist helping the publication maintain the professional look to which we have become accustomed.

Advertising

The Edible Vancouver partnership continued in 2013 and Edible was able to relieve the office of the additional billing process. Edible now bills directly and still offers the reduced rate to the Organic Sector. The ad is consistently one page and has room for new advertisers. With the reduced advertising rate, this is a valuable opportunity for all organic operators.

Events

2013 Conference & AGM

The conference held in Vernon at the Prestige Hotel, was well attended by the organic community and local residents.

Lucy Sharratt, our keynote speaker, delivered an inspiring presentation about how we can shape a future without GMO's. Lucy has extensive experience as a researcher and campaigner with organizations concerned about genetic engineering and global justice issues. She works as the Coordinator for the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN). With CBAN's many successes, she is confident that our voices can be heard in our effort to fight GMO's.

The importance of her message was even more evident with so many young farmers and children in attendance. The stand we take today will shape their tomorrows.



Other conference highlights included BC Seeds demonstration area, the Friday evening tasting reception, the high-energy Saturday evening band, Stuck on Honey and the many good conversations. We were honoured to have the Minister of Agriculture, Norm Letnick open the conference and to have the mayor of Vernon in attendance.

As usual, COABC shares as many of the fabulous presentations from the program as possible. Check the website certifiedorganic.bc.ca to find them.

Once again the conference was successful in bringing together diverse people, organizations and businesses to enhance the BC Organic sector. The conference aims to increase sector capacity through education and promotion of the BC Organic community. It is a unique opportunity to build the organic community and enhance the sector.

This conference happens only with the amazing support of the many volunteers and our sponsors. Thank you to all those who donated product, time and energy to the 2013 conference.

COABC also extends a heartfelt thank you to our co-ordinators, Peter LeBlanc and Andrea Lawseth. Their dedication and good humour gives the conference a welcoming atmosphere.

PAS Report 2013

Submitted by: Rochelle Eisen

The Pacific Agriculture Show held Jan 24-26 at Abbotsford's Tradex Centre continues to be one of the best opportunities to see old friends, make new ones, look over all kinds of new fangled farm equipment, talk to government representatives and even meet with a supplier or two. It is also one of the best opportunities to get up to date on the latest information on a vast array of agri- topics. Kudos to the Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association, who arranges the Short Course for this three-day marathon each year.

As usual, booth 549 was bursting at the seams with "organic-ness" for the entire show with many current and past members dropping in for a chat.

The COABC is famous at the PAS for having the best apples. Many people remember them from past years and come looking for "those fantastic organic apples". Amazingly, we remain the only booth throughout the event to offer a nutritious snack (organic at that) versus candy. What is also amazing is that we are one of the few booths with a couch, so many who visit linger. If the PAS gave out prizes, COABC would probably win for either having the freshest snack, the most comfy couch or probably the booth with the most number of visitors in a 10' x 10' space.



Karnail Sidhu & Brad Reid sharing a moment



Alec McErlich & Andrea Lawseth in deep debate

As usual we handed out info on the upcoming COABC conference in Vernon, as well as the Conference Program-at-a-Glance, CB Services and Contact handouts, back issues of the BC Organic Grower magazine, brochures on "What is Organic Farming", and other organic-related handouts. Both BCARA and FVOPA brought along some of their CB information pamphlets. Andrea Lawseth and I engaged anyone willing to discuss certification barriers and opportunities as we continue to gather insights for the COABC's Small-Scale Certification Research Project.

COABC would like to acknowledge Pro Organics and Unger's Appliance for their continued support. We thank Pro Organics for their donation of Fuji, Empire, Golden Delicious and Ambrosia apples and Unger's Appliance & Furniture for the use of a couch. Thanks to the COABC staff for making the arrangements. Lastly a big thanks to dedicated volunteers such as Jeremy Pitchford, Shauna Gavigan, David Reid, and Mary Forstbauer.

Other Events

- The **BCAC Gala** in January – represented by Mary Forstbauer and Rochelle Eisen
- **Ministry of Health Meeting** – represented by Mary Forstbauer
- **BC Associations of Farmer's Markets Conference** – represented by Rochelle Eisen
- **University of the Fraser Valley, Chilliwack Sod Turning Event** – represented by Mary Forstbauer
- **Organic Okanagan Festival**, Kelowna – represented by Jen Gamble

National Organic Week

Submitted by Jen Gamble

Now in its fourth year, Canada's Organic Week is a celebration of certified organic food, farming and the dedicated people who bring this great food to market. September 21-28, 2013 marked Organic Week this year.

For Organic Week this year, COABC made available on the website downloadable information and promotional materials. These materials feature the new national campaign logo as well as the BC certified organic logo. Visit certifiedorganic.bc.ca

It has also become a tradition for the BC Government to Proclamation Organic Week. This year the proclamation was presented by Boundary-Similkameen MLA, Linda Larson. MLA Larson presented the proclamation in Cawston, to COABC members Annamarie Klippenstein and Sara and Troy Harker.

Once again our retail sponsors, Organic Grocer, Nature's Fare, and Choices Market, eagerly helped distribute an extra 1,000 copies of the BC Organic Grower.

COABC attended the Organic Okanagan Festival in Kelowna with organic information for participants. This year the Organic Okanagan Festival attracted over 550 guests and 41 Okanagan businesses and organizations. The event highlighted green living awareness and raised \$375 in food and funds for the Kelowna Community Food Bank. Thank you to Summerhill Pyramid Winery for hosting this great annual event.

Organic supporters across the country celebrated the week in a myriad of ways. To see some of the events hosted in 2013, visit organicweek.ca.

Sector Connections / Membership

The Organic Federation of Canada

Submitted by Hermann Bruns, OFC Director for BC

The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) board, consisting of one delegate from each province, represents the interests of organic operators across Canada on national organic issues and initiatives. Listed below are the main projects the OFC has worked on in 2013:

1. Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC)

The SIC, consisting of seven elected organic experts, is funded by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) but managed by the OFC. Sixteen SIC meetings were held in 2013 to address numerous questions arising out of Canada Organic Standard (COS). The interpretations are translated into French and posted for a 60-day comment period before being accepted as official by the CFIA.

2. Organic Science Cluster (OSC)

The OFC is the official applicant for the OSC under the Growing Forward program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). While the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada carries out the actual selection and management of research projects, the OFC assists with financial supervision and the translation and promotion of organic research results. The OFC also assisted with preparing the application for the second multi-year OSC project.

3. Canadian Organic Standards Revision

By far the most important (and time-consuming) project undertaken by the OFC this year was to obtain funding under the AAFC Agri-Marketing program for a thorough review/modernization of the Canada Organic Standard. This began with numerous meetings with AAFC staff including the federal Minister of Agriculture, followed by preparation of a detailed work-plan and funding application, and ultimately resulted in the comprehensive two-year review—co-managed by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)—that started in September.

The OFC is coordinating all aspects of the organic producer community involvement by:

- managing eight working groups – coordinating tasks & meetings, translation, payroll, expenses
- fundraising \$80,000 industry cash to fulfill AAFC matching requirements
- preparing WG documents for the first meeting of the Technical Committee (Gatineau, Dec 11-13)
- preparing for the second TC meeting on Organic Agriculture (in Vancouver, April 14-16)
- communicating COS review activities to the Canadian organic sector

In addition, the OFC continues to assist with the development of OrganicInputs.ca. Canada's National Organic Inputs Directory translates many industry documents into French or English, communicates to Canadian organic industry through monthly bilingual newsletters, and works in cooperation with the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network to resist the further introduction of genetically modified organisms with potential to harm organic production.

In the coming year, OFC's two main priorities will be to continue coordinating the COS revision process and to assist with the initiation of the second Organic Science Cluster research program. If you have any questions or would like to become involved in any OFC projects, please contact Nicole Boudreau at info@organicfederation.ca.

BC Agriculture Council

Report Submitted by: Dennis Lapierre

The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) is a non-profit advocacy organization that was created in 1997 following the disbanding of the BC Federation of Agriculture (BCFA). The BCFA represented local agriculture at a provincial level and liaised with public and national organizations on agricultural matters. BCARA structure differed from the BCFA in its use of group representation rather than the individual organization approach.

One position was given to the Community Agriculture sector, which eventually came to represent the interests of the FARM Community Council, the COABC and First Nations producer organizations (COABC and the First Nations joined after the BCAC was created and in 2009 the First Nations quit). The Community Agriculture seat was the only seat not occupied by grouped commodity-focused organizations. It was intended to reflect the interests of small farms, aging farmers, Farmer's Institutes and niche-market approaches. These approaches reflected the many social and environmental values each of the three groups shared.

As a matter of practice, the BCAC Board meets four to six times a year, and as required participates in and/or arranges the facilitation of stakeholder consultations called by the Province on matters affecting agriculture in BC. In 2013, BCAC participated in Water Act Modernization consultations; consultations relative to proposed new legislation around Waste Management, Ag-Environment meetings, and others. In addition, the BCAC meets with elected representatives on occasion to carry forward matters of common concern to BC producers and maintains ongoing contact with government bureaucrats.

In this context, the BCAC can be said to hold a certain valued status as an institutional pressure group with the provincial government; a role that can only be developed over time, one based on earned trust and reliability. The BCAC is understood by the BC government as being able to provide a strong sense of the common interests of the BC agriculture producer community. In return, the BCAC takes care to exercise diplomacy in dealing with agriculture-oriented provincial issues and policy proposals to ensure that mutual interests are met. Because agriculture is a matter of shared responsibility by both the Federal and Provincial governments, the BCAC holds membership on the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), a federal equivalent of the BCAC, which comprises a membership of general farm organizations from all provinces and some national organizations. I represented the BCAC on the CFA Board through 2013.

With this description in mind, the following are notable events of 2013 that relate to my role on the BCAC as the Community Agriculture representative. The information I am presenting is drawn from the bi-monthly reports I submitted to both the COABC and FARM Community Council through 2013.

1. Stemming from my participation as a BCAC appointed member of its Water Modernization Act working group, I participated in a meeting with other stakeholders and IAF staff to discuss potential support for IAF funding for local government Agriculture Area Plan planning processes. Stakeholders were supportive as long as the Plans were inclusive of the needs of agriculture and followed the directions proposed for the Water Modernization Act. Local government had not previously sought to draw from an agriculture funding source, so stakeholder input was felt to be important.
2. At the January BCAC Board meeting, discussions began about the continued membership of the BCAC with the CFA. This matter was raised by a new Board representative and resulted in a series of discussions that occurred throughout 2013. The matter has yet to be completely resolved.

The BCAC-CFA membership question resulted in visits by CFA principles to a special BCAC meeting and a visit by three western province general farm organization leaders to a second meeting, who together sought to keep the BCAC involved. It is probably fair to say that the problem was based on a lack of real appreciation for what the CFA did and what value it held for various BC producers, especially the new Board members. Two positive outcomes of these discussions were, changes to the CFA communications practices and improved delegate voting opportunities, which will be tested at the 2014 CFA annual general meeting. I attended four CFA meeting in different parts of Canada in 2013, participating in discussions that included trade policy development, federal tax policies, federal expenditures on research and a discussion involving major food retailers on consumer trends.

3. In February I attended the FARM Community Council annual general meeting, this time electronically. In prior years, the BCAC covered the cost of my personally attending this meeting but in this instance the Board decided it would not. Covering these costs had previously been an exceptional consideration made for the Community Ag sector only. This was the start of subsequent Board actions that have since resulted in policy in which the BCAC Board will no longer cover the cost of the Community Ag sector member to attend any but Board meetings. Through 2013, this gradually eliminated Community Ag sector participation in all stakeholder consultations, policy meetings, and meetings with elected officials because of expense. The only exception to this policy is my appointment to the CFA. Part of that expense is absorbed by the CFA.

Unless the Community Agriculture sector organizations are able to fill the cost void, the sector representative will continue to be left in a diminished and uncomfortably unequal role on the Board.

In the past two years especially, the BCAC has increasingly identified itself as representing commercial agriculture, thus the absence of a somewhat contrasting voice in stakeholder and other meetings could be problematic. To be truly effective, the BCAC needs to represent the full spectrum of BC producers.

4. In February I attended my first meeting as a member of the North Okanagan Agriculture Advisory Committee. While listed as a local producer on the committee, my presence is understood as being relative to my participation on the BCAC. That linkage is proving to be useful. For example, I was able to carry forward local perspectives on the GMO question to the BCAC Board and was able to bring to the advisory committee a CFA initiative concerning a federal tax policy affecting small farms.

I am one of two members who support the organic sector on that committee.

5. In 2013, the BCAC chose to allow an increase in the number of seats on its Board by permitting the horticulture sector to occupy two seats instead of sharing one. This matter resulted in objections raised by the FARM Community Council and by one of the poultry sectors. The concern is the extent to which an increase in individual commodity representation vs. grouped commodity representation could begin to influence collective thinking on the Board. Those expressing concern can recall the reason for the demise of the BC Federation of Agriculture, that being, apparently, that in the end, all were there only to support their own commodity interests.

This, I believe, is one of the many matters that will garner attention in 2014 during the course of an independently facilitated strategic planning session the BCAC is now committed to.

COABC also works to ensure organic sector representation at:

BC Agri Food Trade Council
The Organic Agricultural Center of Canada
International Federation of Organic Management IFOAM

VERIFICATION OFFICERS

VO training occurred in conjunction with the 2013 conference in Vernon. Members of the Accreditation Board led the well-attended training session.

RESEARCH & MARKETING

Organic Sector Research and Development Fund (OSRD)

It was the desire of COABC directors to facilitate research in the organic sector. Starting in 2006 funds have been set aside to be used for research projects.

In 2013, the OSRD supported the Small Scale Certification Research Project and the Organic Resource Toolkit Project. Small Scale Certification Research Project wrapped up in April and the Organic Resource Toolkit Project is ongoing.

One of the projects supported in 2010, research into wireworm, wrapped up in 2012 but has not yet received the final payment as a final report has not been submitted.

COABC Organic Toolkits Project

Submitted by: Rochelle Eisen, Project leader

In fall 2013, COABC launched the Organic Toolkits project to develop on-line resources designed to help support and grow the BC organic sector.

The toolkits project consolidated and enhanced existing resources, and created new tools, focusing on four main areas: Farmers' Markets, Organic Retailers, New Organic Entrants, and Organic Certification Bodies.

The Farmers' Markets and Retailer toolkits provide marketing info and ready-to-use organic branding materials to help differentiate certified organic products in the marketplace. These toolkits include innovative "Think Before You Eat" and Organic Week materials that have been customized for BC producers and markets.

The New Entrant toolkit provides user-friendly information to help new entrants navigate the BC world of organic certification, including a “Navigating Organic Certification” guide and a revamped “What is Organic” brochure, and improved access to extensive CyberHelp resources.

The toolkit for Certification Bodies (CBs) features a COABC Accreditation Board Q&A and communication aids designed to improve information sharing between CBs and their Accreditor.

Accompanying improvements to COABC’s website navigation system will include new “Growing Organic” and “Marketing Organic” buttons on the home page and launch pages, reorganization of website menus and content, all resulting in improved access to on-line resources on certification, logo use, and marketing. The consulting firms Resilient Solutions Consulting and Mediability will complete the project in 2014. The Organic Toolkits project was funded in part by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, Emerging Sectors Initiative, a provincial trust funded from money under the former federal-provincial safety nets framework.

Additional contributors include COABC, Vancity and the Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association.

Packaging and Promotional Materials

The COABC provides promotional, packaging, and educational materials to the membership at just above cost:

- Twist ties
- Stickers
- Two styles of hats
- T-shirts
- Two organic production guides

Free membership privileges:

- Promotional and educational pamphlets for use at agricultural and consumer events
- Professional display booths, complete with banners, photographs and posters

COABC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada Report

Submitted by: Rebecca Kneen: Representative for BC Organic Farmers on OACC

The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) conducts organic farming research and provides knowledge transfer and extension services for organic farmers.

The OACC educates through web courses in organic agriculture, organic farming methods, organic field crops, organic pest and weed management, organic livestock production, composting and transition to organic farming.

The primary job of the OACC is to facilitate and conduct practical research into organic agriculture all across Canada. This is done by linking producers, scientists, extension agents, and others in the industry. Through the Organic Science Cluster, industry funding is matched with government funds to conduct research both on-farm and in research stations. Since 2001, the OACC has worked with over 100 farmers across Canada and is currently facilitating research with over 50 scientists in at least ten universities and ten Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research stations.

For regular information, subscribe to the Organic Friends E-Zines, a monthly collection of new research in organic agriculture, courses, market information, events and job opportunities. This is a great resource for everyone, with new research reports in livestock, horticulture and processing coming in regularly. Some of this research is very specific and precise, some of it is more widely applicable, but all of it is directed to organic agriculture. oacc.info/FriendsE-zines/new_welcome.asp

A great deal of information is available through the OACC website, which is regularly updated. It should be the first resource for anyone looking for organic research anywhere in the country. After that, of course, check out COABC's own Cyber-Help pages!

Over the last year, the OACC has shifted its management to be within the purview of Dalhousie University. Since 2001, the OACC has been located in Dalhousie's Agriculture Campus in Truro, Nova Scotia, so this was an administrative shift only.

The OACC continues to wait for funding from Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC) from its last round of funding applications submitted in April 2013. The Organic Science Cluster funding would be in several millions of dollars for 53 activities. It included over 200 collaborating scientists from AAFC, Universities, Provincial Government research institutes, and the private sector. The reasons for the delay in funding are at this point unknown, as no information has been forthcoming from the federal government. Clearly, this has created major problems for the cluster, as some research projects have not been started because of the lack of matching funds, while others have proceeded on half-funding. We sincerely hope that the AAFC will step up quickly to support organic research in Canada, reflecting the importance of organic agriculture to our entire economy.

Organic Sector Development Program

Submitted by: Paddy Doherty

For more details on projects please visit the website at <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/osdp.htm>

SUMMARY

2013 was the final year of the OSDP. The programme has run continuously since 2002 and has provided \$1,627,000 direct cash contributions towards 99 BC organic projects during that time. The total value of all 99 projects is an impressive \$3,741,851.

The current iteration of the OSDP (the OSDP Strategic Initiative) began in Jan 2010 and ran for four years. In that time, the OSDP produced 36 projects for a total allocation of Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Programme funds of \$757,983. The total value of all projects including industry cash and in-kind support was \$1,461,666. The range of projects was impressive, from small on-farm research projects to large Pan-Canadian market research. All projects had some value for the organic sector; if only to show that a certain method or product did not work, or did not work as well as had been expected. The results from the projects have been equally impressive, creating lasting benefits for agriculture in BC for years to come.

There were 77 applications reviewed, of which 45 were initially approved. Of these, eight projects were withdrawn for various reasons, mostly because of a difficulty to secure matching funds. Generally, projects were declined by the OSDP Adjudication Committee because they did not meet the criteria of the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program, or the committee was not convinced the project was of broad value to the BC organic sector. One project was incomplete at the close of the programme.

OSDP Strategic Initiative Approved Project List

Project	Industry Cash	Industry in-kind	Gov Cash	OSDP Allocated	Current Status
I-106 Aphid Control – ES CropConsult	s.21		6,630	10,000	Complete
I-107 Cranberry Weed Control – ES CropConsult			0	5,365	Complete
I-108 Resistance to Late Blight – ES CropConsult			0	8,150	Complete
I-109 Botrytis – ICMS			0	3,912	Complete
I-110 Powdery Mildew – ICMS			0	3,875	Complete
I-111 Growing Organic Seed – FF/CF			0	26,000	Complete
I-112 Pythium Trials – ICMS			0	7,500	Complete
I-122 Virus Lit Review – ES CropConsult			0	3,000	Complete
I-123 Poultry Regimes – UBC Farm			0	20,000	Complete
I-124 Organic Cider – Cawston Cold Storage			0	5,200	Complete
I-129 Late Blight 3 – ES CropConsult			0	11,275	Complete
I-130 Caterpillar – ES CropConsult			3,400	3,075	Complete
I-131 Mineral Oil Test – ES CropConsult			0	8,025	Complete
I-134 SOIL Ambassadors – SOIL			0	2,320	Complete
I-139 Small-scale Composting – Net Zero Waste			0	97,000	Complete
I-140 Urban Fruit Trees – Evergreen			0	5,500	Complete
I-142 Edamame – The Sharing Farm			0	7,150	Complete
I-144 Late Blight 4 – ES CropConsult			0	12,525	Complete
I-145 Botrytis Beans – ES CropConsult			0	5,775	Complete
I-146 Vineyard Nutrition – Kalala Organic Vineyards			0	14,000	Complete
C-146 Certification Research – COABC			0	41,198	Complete
I-147 COG Info-bank – Canadian Organic Growers			0	17,165	Complete
I-148 Carrot Production – ES CropConsult			0	10,000	Complete
I-150 Biochar – Fraser Common Farm			0	27,711	Complete

I-151 Viticulture Training – Kalala Organic Vineyards	s.21	0	10,500	Incomplete
I-152 Young Agrarians – FF/CF		0	53,000	Complete
I-154 Market Research – Canadian Organic Trade Assoc.		0	163,699	Complete
I-160 Bunt – Fieldstone Organics		0	12,800	Complete
SP 195 Aphid-vectored Virus – BC Potato & Veg Growers		7,500	5,000	Complete
I-165 Carrot Seed – FF/CF		0	35,000	Complete
I-166 Edamame 2 – The Sharing Farm		0	9,030	Complete
I-172 Frass – Industrious Nature Technologies		0	42,082	Complete
I-174 SOUL Cert – Society of Organic Urban Landscape		0	7,475	Complete
I-175 Potato Storage – ES CropConsult		0	12,600	Complete
I-176 Berry GAP – ES CropConsult		0	12,908	Complete
I-177 Xen Teri – ES CropConsult		0	4,500	Complete
I-178 Free Choice Feeding – UBC Farm		0	33,668	Complete
Totals		17,530	757,983	
Total value	1,461,666			

Administration

Administration over the life of the OSDP Strategic Initiative cost \$84,764. This is good value when it is considered that the OSDP Adjudication Committee reviewed \$1,602,122 worth of project applications. Financial control was managed by Kristy Wipperman (COABC Office Manager), while programme administration was looked after by Paddy Doherty.

OSDP Adjudication Committee members

- Peter Stockdale – Ravenstoft Farm
- Philip Bergen – AAFC
- Susan Smith – BCMA
- Miriam Esquitín – IAF
- Linda Fogarty – Greenroom Organics
- Deb Foote – The Organic Grocer
- Phyllis Nelson – Tree Fruit expert
- Jen Cody – BC Food Systems Network

What is Next for the OSDP

The final reports from the completed projects will be posted on the COABC website. Now that the OSDP programme is complete, the OSDP page will be amended and the results of the projects will be made more prominent. Summaries from different projects will continue to be highlighted in the BC Organic Grower; project results will be searched-out by organic researchers from around the world and will add to the growing base of knowledge of organic farming and processing.

There is potential for another organic research fund, from the Investment Agriculture Foundation. This is dependent on the COABC requesting such a thing, and the IAF both agreeing and securing the funding for it. In this case, that organic research fund would be administered by the IAF, though there might be an advisory role for the COABC.

FINANCE

Financial statements were provided to the Board quarterly.

Sponsorship Program

The sponsorship program is a vital part of COABC. As a non-profit organization, COABC relies on donors to continue and expand outreach activities like the BC Organic Grower, the annual conference, the website and Cyber-help.

In 2013, COABC sponsors were

- **Diamond:** Vancity
- **Gold:** Horizon Distributors and the Organic Grocer
- **Silver:** Discovery Organics, ProOrganics, Left Coast Naturals, Eatmore Sprouts and Greens and Nature's Fare Markets
- **Bronze:** Choices Markets

Thank you to our generous 2013 sponsors.

Financial Report & Statements

can be viewed on the following pages

**CERTIFIED ORGANIC
ASSOCIATIONS OF B.C.**

**Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2013
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

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Tel: 250 545 2136
Fax: 250 545 3364
www.bdo.ca

BDO Canada LLP
2706 - 30th Avenue
Suite 202
Vernon BC V1T 2B6 Canada

Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Certified Organic Associations of B.C. as at December 31, 2013 and the statements of financial position, changes in net assets and revenue and expenditures for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Accountants

Vernon, British Columbia
January 29, 2014

Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Financial Position
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

December 31	2013	2012
-------------	------	------

Assets

s.21

Current

Cash and term deposits
 Accounts receivable
 Inventory
 Prepaid expenses

Equipment (Note 1)

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current

Accounts payable
 Deferred revenue

Net Assets

Invested in equipment
 Internally restricted for research purposes (Note 2)
 Unrestricted

Approved on behalf of the Board:

_____ Director

_____ Director

Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

For the year ended December 31	Invested in Equipment	Restricted for Research	Un- restricted	2013	2012
Balance, beginning of year					s.21
Revenue over expenditures for the year					
Investment in capital assets					
<u>Balance, end of year</u>					

Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

For the year ended December 31	2013	2012
--------------------------------	------	------

Revenue

s.21

- Fees and subscriptions
- Publications
- Advertising
- Conference and workshop
- Sponsorship
- Grant
- Administration fees
- Investment
- Other

Expenditures

- Advertising and promotion
- Amortization
- Bad debts
- Bank charges and interest
- Conference and meetings
- Contract fees
- Donations and subsidies
- Memberships, dues and fees
- Office and miscellaneous
- Rent and utilities
- Telephone and fax
- Travel and meals
- Wages and employee benefits

Revenue over expenditures for the year

Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Notes to Financial Statements
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

December 31, 2013

1. Equipment

2013

2012

s.21

Furniture and fixtures
Computer equipment

Net book value

2. Restrictions on Net Assets

s.21

Organic Sector Development Program 2
Balance Sheet As at 12/31/2013

ASSET

Assets

s.21

Valley First Credit Union-Trust2...

Cash Drawer

Accounts Receivable

Advances Paid

Total Assets

TOTAL ASSET

LIABILITY

Liabilities

Accounts Payable

Government Grants Received

GST Paid

HST Paid

Total Liabilities

TOTAL LIABILITY

EQUITY

Equity

Accumulated Earnings/Deficit

Current Earnings

Total Equity

TOTAL EQUITY

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Organic Sector Development Program 2
Income Statement 01/01/2013 to 12/31/2013

REVENUE

Revenue	s.21
Government Grants	
Other Revenue	
Total Revenue	

TOTAL REVENUE

EXPENSE

Expenses
Advertising
Accounting & Legal
Bank Charges & Interest
GST expense-non refundable
Contractors
Travel/Accommodation
Meals/Entertainment
Admin Expenses from COABC
Advances paid-COABC
Advances Paid
Suspense
Total Expenses

TOTAL EXPENSE

NET INCOME

Organic Sector Development Program 2
General Ledger Report 01/01/2013 to 12/31/2013

2013

5700 Advances Paid

I-109	Botrytis Cinerea Control	3,912.00
I-110	Powdery Mildew in Sweet Cherry	3,875.00
I-111	Growing Organic Seed	8,000.00
I-112	Phythium spp Greenhouse Veg	7,500.00
I-123	Poultry Regimes	10,000.00
I-140	Urban Fruit Trees	2,500.00
I-142	Edamame	3,575.00
I-144	Late Blight 4	4,525.00
I-145	Botrytis Beans	2,775.00
I-146	Vineyard Nutrition	7,000.00
I-147	COG info-bank	7,165.00
I-150	Biochar	18,711.00
I-152	Young Agrarians	36,000.00
I-154	Market Research	103,000.00
I-160	Bunt Research	12,800.00
I-165	Carrot Seed	24,000.00
I-166	Edamame 2	9,030.00
I-172	Frass	30,000.00
I-174	Certification Model for Small Scale Org Farmer	7,475.00
I-175	Post-Harvest Life of Organic Potatoes	6,600.00
I-176	Organic Cranberry & Blueberry Production in BC	6,908.00
I-177	Caterpillar Pests in Cole Crops	2,500.00
I-178	Free Choice Feeding	13,000.00
		<u>390,851.00</u>

Generated On: 02/14/2014

**Certified Organic
Associations of BC**

Annual Report 2014



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Mary Forstbauer, Co-President

"As organizations grow and mature, they naturally change. The question that leaders of those organizations need to ask is, 'When should we let change happen on its own, and when should we drive the change?'" –Scott Ramsey

The organic sector has seen a lot of changes since the 1980s, when we sat around kitchen tables trying to organize ourselves as an association. In 1993, with support from the BC government, we incorporated the Certified Organic Association of BC (COABC) under the Food Choice and Disclosures Act (later to be renamed the Food Choice and Quality Act). The government of the day, however, was not prepared to require all products sold as organic in BC to be certified.

More mainstream agriculture is moving toward organic production practices yet not becoming certified. With the onset of the Canadian Organic Regime in 2009, BC farmers and consumers were left with a lot of confusion. ISO certified operators were no longer allowed to use "certified organic" to describe or market their products. The provincial government announced in January of this year that they are looking at legislating the use of the term "organic". Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick stated in his press release: "Once the system is in place, producers and processors that are not certified under either the provincial or federal certification program would not be able to use the term "organic" to describe or market their products."

This past year has seen many steps forward in the organic sector. COABC undertook a number of projects to ensure trust and integrity for the entire organic product supply chain. Two components of these projects together increased access to and awareness of organic certification. We have made improvements to our website and have created better communication and outreach tools. We are looking at the next steps to an online application process that will help streamline paperwork.

We would like to thank our staff and contractors for the dedication they have shown to the COABC and the organic sector. Thank you to the executive and directors for the work that you do as volunteers on behalf of our membership. We look forward to 2015 and beyond as the organic sector in BC continues to grow and gain respect in the agriculture industry.



Mary Forstbauer



Susan Snow

THE ORGANIZATION IN 2014

COABC Board of Directors

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. BCARA | British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture
Chris Bodnar Alternate: Jim Henderson |
| 2. Bio-Dynamic | Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Society of British Columbia
Mary Forstbauer (COABC Co-President 2014) Alternate: Gabe Cipes |
| 3. BOPA | Boundary Organic Producers Association
Leta Bak Alternate: Roly Russel |
| 4. FVOPA | Fraser Valley Organic Producers
Susan Snow (COABC Co-President 2014) Alternate: Doug Luder |
| 5. IOPA | Islands Organic Producers Association
Arzeena Hamir (COABC Secretary 2014) Alternate: Mary Alice Johnson |
| 6. KOGS | Kootenay Organic Growers
Abra Brynne Alternate: Alys Ford |
| 7. LEOGA | Living Earth Organic Growers Association
Karl Erikson Alternate: Clive Johnson |
| 8. NOOA | North Okanagan Organic Association
Michelle Tsutsumi Alternate: Michael Rudy |
| 9. PACS | Pacific Agricultural Certification Society
Andrea Turner (COABC Interim-Treasurer 2014), Terra Park, Walter Makepeace, Linda Edwards, Ed Clark, Ezra Cipes
Alternates: Gay Hahn, Charlie Lasser, Yvonne Kosugi |
| 10. SOOPA | Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association
Corey Brown (COABC Vice-President 2014) Alternate: Moses Brown |
| 11. STOPA | Shuswap Thompson Organic Producers Association
Ed Basile Alternate: David Comrie |
| 12. BCFSN | BC Food Systems Network
Rosemary Plummer Alternate: Carol Kergan (Consumer/Environment) |

Associate Members

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 13. BCSPCA | BC Society for Protection of Animals (non-voting) |
| 14. BCMA | BC Ministry of Agriculture
Susan Smith (ex-officio) |

COABC Committees

The COABC Board of Directors convened the following committees:

Executive

Susan Snow (Co-President), Mary Forstbauer (Co-President), Corey Brown (Vice-President), Andrea Turner (Interim-Treasurer), Arzeena Hamir (Secretary)

Advocacy Committee

Susan Snow, Mary Forstbauer, Corey Brown, Andrea Turner, Arzeena Hamir

Capacity Development

Inactive

Communication & PR (Awareness)

Mary Forstbauer, Andrea Turner, Annie Moss

Events

Mary Forstbauer, Annie Moss, Rebecca Kneen, Corey Brown, Andrea Lawseth, Susan Smith, Jen Gamble, Kristy Wipperman

Human Resources (HR) Adhoc

Mary Forstbauer, Rebecca Kneen, Susan Snow, Clive Johnson, Jen Gamble, Kristy Wipperman

Levies Committee

Inactive

Research and Education

Inactive

COABC Restructuring Proposal Committee

Inactive

Accreditation Board

Molly Thurston (Director/Chair), Anne Macey, Cindy Hartford, Renee Prasad, Navneet Gill, Rochelle Eisen, Kristy Wipperman (AB Coordinator)

Administration & Human Resource Support

The COABC operates a staffed office in Vernon. Office staff members:

- Jen Gamble – Executive Director of Operations
- Kristy Wipperman – Office Manager

In general, the COABC office:

- Managed correspondence
- Respond to daily enquiries about certification
- Responded to daily enquiries from Membership
- Attended BoD and Exec meetings
- Acted as reporting liaison to the board
- Maintained relationships with BCMA, BCAC, OFC as well as others in the sector

- Managed insurance renewals
- Kept the bookkeeping in order
- And tended to the many, many other details of such a large organization!

COABC has also contracted with the following individuals:

- Molly Thurston – Accreditation Board Director
- Rob Korbynn – Information Technology Technician
- Jeffery Newman – Cyber-help Technician
- Marilee Peters and Moss Dance – Organic Grower Production team
- Michelle Tsutsumi – COABC 2015 conference
- Rochelle Eisen, Gunta Vitins & Brenda Frick – Organic Resource Toolkit Project (Completed March 2014)
- Cara Nunn, Marilee Peters, Rochelle Eisen – Organic certification and Public Education Project (Vancity grant completed September 2014)
- Greg McLaren – Board Retreat Planning Session

Insurance

The COABC maintains liability insurance for the Board of Directors and contents coverage. As a service to its membership, the COABC has arranged for CB's to have their own D&O insurance at a reduced rate. COABC also carries E&O and Commercial General Liability as part of being a recognized accreditor under the Canada Organic Regime.

The Purposes of COABC

Reprinted from CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The purposes of the society are:

1. To promote organic agriculture and to provide public education on organic agriculture
2. To represent members in matters relating to the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act of British Columbia
3. To develop and administer an organic certification accreditation program for members
4. To grant permission for use of the phrase "British Columbia Certified Organic" on agricultural product labels by agri-food enterprises certified by members
5. To facilitate research and marketing activities on behalf of members
6. To provide information to the public on behalf of members;
7. To be responsible for incidental matters related to the above-referenced activities

BC CERTIFIED ORGANIC PROGRAM

COABC Accreditation Board Report

Submitted by: Molly Thurston, COABC Director of Accreditation

PROGRAMS

The COABC Accreditation Board is the body responsible for assessing the competence of certification bodies, which in turn verify that operators are following the Canadian Organic Standard. The system is intended to give confidence and maintain the integrity of organic claims thus providing a guarantee for consumers.

The COABC Accreditation Board (AB) is also one of the four Conformity Verification Bodies (CVBs) operating under a recognition agreement with the CFIA. These CVBs assess CBs who wish to operate within the Canada Organic Regime (COR). Operators certified under the COR are able to use the Canada Organic Logo on their product.

In 2014 the COABC AB continued to provide accreditation under the BC Certified Organic Program. This BC program provides the authorization for CBs to permit operators to use the program symbol (the checkmark) and the phrase “British Columbia Certified Organic” to identify organic product.

Together these programs provide flexibility to allow operators to choose from three different levels of certification to verify that their products are grown or produced in accordance with the Canadian Organic Standard:

- BC Certified Organic ISO-compliant Program—Canada Organic Regime, which allows product to move out of BC.
- The BC Certified Organic Regional Program for product sold only in BC markets.
- The BC Certified Organic Low Risk Program, which allows for reduced frequency of inspection for operations where there is no identified risk to organic integrity and the product is marketed locally.

There are three CBs in the COABC ISO-compliant program and on the CFIA list of recognised certification bodies: BCARA, FVOPA and PACS. The COABC AB is the interface between these CBs and the Canada Organic Office (COO). The AB is responsible for making recommendations for accreditation and the ongoing surveillance of the CFIA accredited CBs.

In 2014, there were 495 operators in the certification programs of the three ISO-compliant CBs, which is more than last year’s certified operations. These numbers represent 74 percent of operators under the COABC umbrella with the majority located in BC; although, PACS also has a few members in Alberta and the Yukon. The numbers include farms in transition as well as producers, processors and handlers of certified products. The ISO program provides these enterprises with access to organic markets in BC, the rest of Canada and, through the equivalency arrangements, with the United States, the European Union, Costa Rica and Switzerland. Japan and Canada also reached Organic Equivalency Recognition on September 16, 2014; this new arrangement came into effect on January 1, 2015.

In 2014, COABC AB renewed accreditation for eight certification bodies in the regional program. The Regional CBs certify a total of 177 operators, or 26 percent of the total operators under the COABC umbrella. The number of regional operators increased to 177 in 2014 from 164 in 2013. Unfortunately, declining membership in some regional CBs continues to be a concern; although, positive steps have been taken by a number of small CBs to share administrative duties, thereby reducing costs and increasing

efficiency. In 2014, BOPA and KOGS began to offer the low risk program to its membership, joining IOPA and NOOA as regional CBs offering this program.

ACCREDITATION BOARD MEMBERS AND AUDITORS

In 2014, there were 8 members:

1. Molly Thurston, AB Director/Producer Rep
2. Anne Macey, Past Chair and Inspection/Certification Rep
3. Cindy Hartford, Processor Rep (Retired, November 2014)
4. Renee Prasad, Consumer/Environmental Rep
5. Rochelle Eisen, Inspection/Certification Rep
6. DeLisa Lewis, BCCOP Producer Rep
7. Lynn Lashuk, Consumer/Environmental Rep
8. Navneet Gill, ex-officio BC Ministry of Agriculture

Thanks are extended to all these individuals for volunteering their time and expertise to the program and also to Kristy Wiperman, the COABC office manager who continues to provide excellent administrative support.

Special thanks to Cindy Hartford, Processor Representative who retired in November 2014. Cindy was an enormous asset to the AB, providing expertise in organic processing and auditing. As a result of Cindy's retirement, the AB is seeking a new processing member.

The COABC Accreditation Board contracted the International Organic Accreditation Service for the ISO on-site evaluations in September 2014. Jan Deane carried out the re-assessment audits of PACS and FVOPA and a surveillance audit of BCARA. The COO also attended the PACS audit.

The 2014 on-site audits for the regional program were conducted by AB members - Cindy Hartford and Rochelle Eisen and included visits to STOPA, LEOGA and BOPA.

AB members also participated in several document reviews for CBs in both accreditation program streams, as well as in the AB Internal audit in August 2014.

The Accreditation Board met by three times by teleconference throughout the year and for two-days, in person in November 2014 to review reports and make accreditation decisions. There were no new CB applications for accreditation in 2014 and no withdrawals from the program.

TRAINING & INFORMATION SESSIONS

In conjunction with the 2014 COABC conference in Nanaimo, the Accreditation Board held a half-day roundtable information session for CB administrators, CC members and VOs led by the AB Director Molly Thurston and AB member Anne Macey. This has become an annual event, and all personnel involved in the certification process are encouraged to attend.

CVB REASSESSMENT

The COABC Accreditation Program is subject to auditing by the CFIA to ensure the operations of our program remain in line with the requirements of the Organic Products Regulation and the COO Operating

Manual. In 2014, the COABC AB underwent a full reassessment by the COO to mark the fifth year of our participation as a CVB under the COR.

Valeriya Staykova and Brian Burns of the CFIA conducted a document review (January – March 2014) covering of all policies and procedures implemented by the COABC AB. The AB has worked from March to August 2014 to review and revise AB policies and procedures to ensure that issues of non-compliance were addressed and updated to meet the expectations of the COO, and the changes resulting from the switch from ISO 65 to ISO 17065.

In September 2014, the COO performed a three-day, on-site audit of the COABC AB as part of the COABC's 5-year CVB reassessment cycle. The COO was also present to conduct a witness audit during the PACS reassessment and surveillance visit in September 2014. The audit of COABC AB operations resulted in 5 non-conformities, which were closed by the end of the November. The COABC signed another 5-year agreement with the CFIA on December 27, 2014.

Another requirement of the COO is the continued participation of the COABC AB in the annual CVB consultation meeting in Ottawa (November 2014) and to take part in periodic conference calls. The COO updated the CVBs on changes to the Canada Organic Regime, including the current updating of the COO Operating Manual and other new procedures being implemented by the COO. Guidance on these changes is provided on an on-going basis throughout the year to the accredited CBs in the form of a memo from the AB and/or COO.

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

In 2014, four complaints were directed to the COABC AB. Three of the complaints are closed, while one complaint remains open. There were no appeals of accreditation decisions in 2014.

FINANCES

Program expenditures in 2014 were \$61,808, which covered the costs of two part-time staff plus some contract work (43 percent of the budget), the audits (28 percent) and a share of the office costs. In 2014 the certification bodies paid 100 percent of the average annual audit costs.

The intention of the Accreditation Board has always been to keep the costs as low as possible without compromising the integrity of the program. The cost of 2015 audits is not anticipated to change from 2014.

2015 ACTIVITIES

In addition to the regular annual renewal and accreditation activities, the AB has scheduled three document reviews and three audits for CBs in the Regional program. One ISO/COR surveillance audit is also planned for 2015.

The AB will continue to work on providing information and training support to the CBs, including ISO 17065 specific training and through the deliverables of the online tool kits (Standards Questions and Answers). The AB is also working to develop additional information to support CB administrators in their understanding of Accreditation requirements.

A minimum of one new Accreditation Board member (processing experience is required) will be required in 2015. Interested persons are encouraged to apply with an expression of interest, including CV to the COABC office: office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca

COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION & EDUCATION

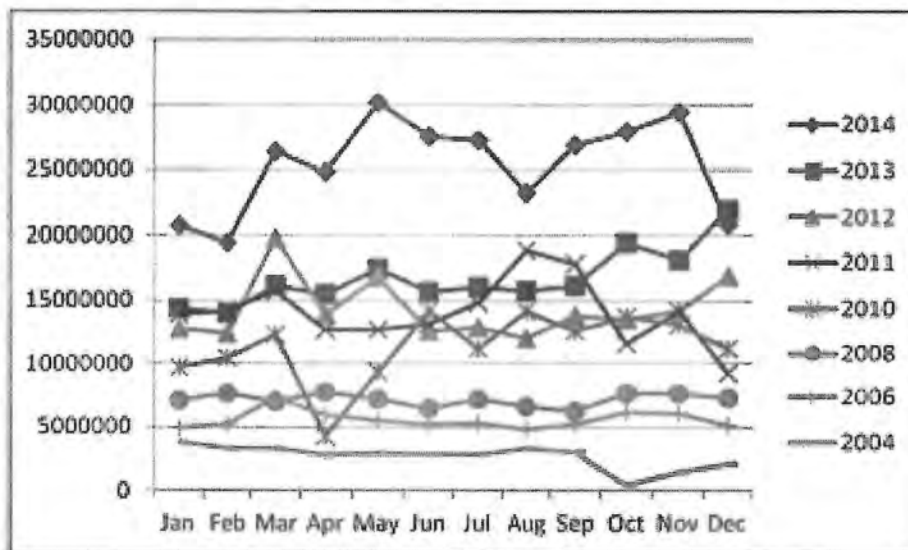
Submitted By Jen Gamble, EDO

E-News: Keeping You Informed

The E-News, the member newsletter, is sent out every month and is a key source of information. The E-News is sent directly to members and posted on the COABC website under the News & Events tab. COABC updates, coming events and information about the sector are included in the E-News. This monthly newsletter provides a point of connection for all members.

Website

In 2014, the COABC website continued to be one of the main sources of organic information that COABC supports. The look of the website changed considerably in March as the Organic Sector Resource Toolkit Project was launched. The new look allows for better flow and access to information.



Traffic has jumped dramatically from last year. This may in part be a result of the concentrated communications effort to drive traffic to the site, as well as the new Organic Sector Resource Toolkits.

Social Media

Over the summer of 2014, an active social media campaign was initiated as part of the lead up to National Organic Week. A key goal for the campaign was to broaden the COABC's online network and increase the level of engagement among its online audience.

Over the course of the campaign, the numbers of Twitter followers were increased from 40 to over 300, a YouTube channel was launched, and the reach of the COABC's already active Facebook page increased substantially. Reaching out to engage farmers and consumers through social media is an important method of reaching new young farmers to educate them about the benefits of organic certification, and the COABC will be working to maintain these engagement levels in 2015 and beyond.

#icertifybc Campaign

This focused social media campaign was launched to challenge BC's organic farmers to share their reasons for choosing organic farming. Certified farmers were asked to share a picture or story about why

they chose to farm organically and the benefits of certification, to inspire other prospective organic farmers to get certified. Photos and excerpts from tweets, facebook and blog postings generated as part of the campaign were featured in the winter issue of the BC Organic Grower. Tweets and Facebook postings received as part of the campaign included the following:

“We choose certification because... We are part of Team Planet!”

“I certify because I believe the consumer needs to be assured that what they are purchasing and eating is truly organic—non-certified organic means nothing, as no one is watching or verifying the process.”

“Organic certification means that I can have faith that my food is grown without pesticides, artificial fertilizers, and is non-GMO. Plus it keeps my farmer healthy!”

Response to the campaign was enthusiastic, more than doubling the reach and engagement with the COABC’s Facebook page during the first week of the campaign, and increasing the engagement levels substantially. As an outreach method specifically targeted at engaging a demographic of young farmers, the campaign has benefited from the support of partners such as the Young Agrarians and Farm Folk City Folk, who distributed notices of the campaign to their networks and encouraged their supporters to participate.

We encourage members of COABC and supporters of Organics to join our online community. Check out our facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Certified-Organic-Associations-of-BC/208548192519986> and look for us on twitter username: coabccanada.

Cyber-help

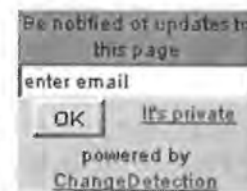
During the past year, Cyber-help has continued to offer online resources to organic farmers and provide updated resources like the fruit and vegetable price list. Highlights this year include the following:

- Substantial additions to the seed chart
- The Organic Farming Forum Discussion, with 26 new posts (27 last year), provides a cross-pollination for those not on the Listserv. The service requires my occasional monitoring, removing commercial posts, and finding sources of information for inquiring visitors. Where relevant and practical I will refer the latter to active Listserv participants. Most of our inquiries are BC based.
- The Announcements page currently includes information on the upcoming COABC Conference.

Interactivity

Forum: Our Organic Farming Forum Discussion provides an opportunity for discussion on the national level and beyond. We had 17 new posts this year with over 500 views and 11 replies. Where applicable, visitors are steered to one of the Cyber-help or COABC pages.

Change Detection: Most of the more frequently updated pages have this little form (right) to be notified when changes are made. More people are using this service, with the Fruit and Vegetable Prices page the most popular, currently reporting to 104 subscribers—up from 100 last year.

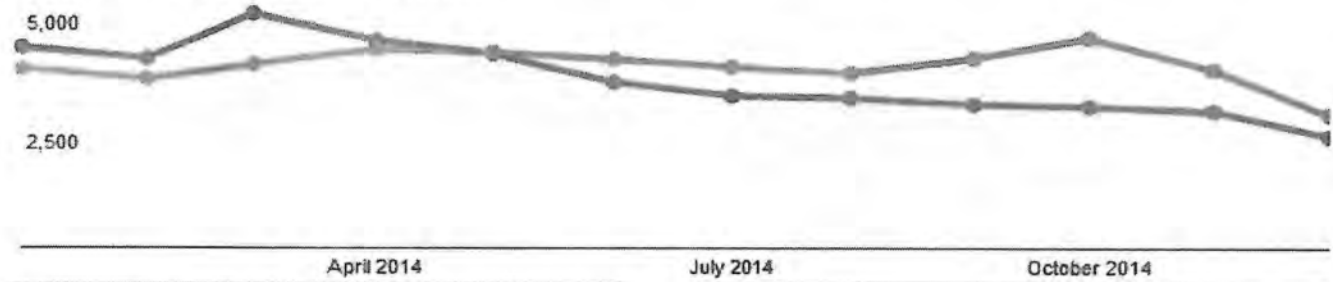


Links: More links have been added this year, by request. Only those providing information/services directly relevant to organic farming and available to Canadian farmers are accepted.

Traffic

Jan 1, 2014 - Dec 31, 2014: ● Sessions

Jan 1, 2013 - Dec 31, 2013: ● Sessions



Using Google Analytics' measure of "Sessions", we have a very stable traffic profile, even though annual visits are down by about 2,500 with total sessions just over 35,000. The decline is largely explained by the ageing of what was our top site "Who Owns What".

Cyber-Help is hosted as a sub-domain of the COABC website, www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/ and has been funded by COABC.

BCOG

The BC Organic Grower magazine experienced a successful and productive year in 2014. Contributors over the year included representatives from a diverse array of organizations, including the Invasive Species Council of BC, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, WorksafeBC, the Society for Organic Urban Land Care, and Farm Folk City Folk, among many others. Academics and researchers from Kwantlen University and the University of Northern BC contributed articles on new organic agricultural research projects underway in BC, and organic farmers from across the province sent in their stories and photos of on-farm innovations, challenges faced, and successes enjoyed. A selection of articles from the past year includes the following:

- Fine Tuning Your Pruning: How to Avoid Musculoskeletal Injuries
- Bringing Soil to Life: A Soil Management Plan with Room to Grow
- What Organic Farmers Can Learn from Permaculture
- Organic Farmer Accreditation Project
- Kootenay Farm School: Creative Education for Grassroots Agriculture
- Organic Revival: A Vision for Agricultural Revitalization in the Comox Valley

In addition to its role informing and educating its readership, the Organic Grower Magazine has traditionally been the voice of the organic community in BC, a place where controversies are raised and divergent opinions are debated. In 2014 it continued to fulfill this role with the publication of an article that expressed concerns about the developmental path of organic farming and organic certification in BC. The article, "The Paradox of the Organic Tent", appeared in the spring 2014 issue of the magazine.

Future plans for the Organic Grower include the establishment of an advisory committee to assist in developing an editorial calendar for the magazine.

Advertising

The partnership between Edible Vancouver and COABC continued to thrive in 2014. Edible Vancouver offers a reduced rate to the Organic Sector to advertise on the COABC page. The ad is consistently one page and often more. There is always room for new advertisers to take advantage of this great marketing opportunity. With the reduced advertising rate, this is a great avenue for smaller organic operators to access a wide audience.

Events

2014 Conference & AGM

The 2014 COABC conference held in Nanaimo this year was well attended despite the snowy weather. It was great to renew acquaintances and make new connections throughout the weekend. These connections are one of the most valuable aspects of the COABC organic conference.

Melissa Coleman, our Saturday keynote, spoke about growing up during the years when her father, Eliot Coleman, was becoming a well-known organic farmer and activist. Her message of perseverance is one the organic community knows well.

Clara Coleman, Melissa's sister, got Sunday rolling with her presentation on four season farming. Clara, like her father, believes that small is better as a farm model. Clara provided practical and technical information along with many personal experiences.

Numerous speakers addressed the conference theme Work-Life Balance in their presentations, and many of the presentations are posted on the COABC website.

As in past years, the BC Seed Room was a busy gathering place. This year the room was supported by Farmfolk Cityfolk and featured an array of seed saving information.



Another gathering place was the Saturday afternoon beer tasting. The tasting featured selections from four breweries across the province. A special thank-you goes to Crannog Ales for all their help in coordinating and running this aspect of the conference.

The Brad Reid Memorial award was presented for the first time at the Nanaimo conference. The award was created to recognize members of the organic community who demonstrate innovation in moving organics forward. Dave Reid presented the award to Carmen Wakeling of Eatmore Sprouts & Greens. Carmen has dedicated many years to the organic movement and recently spearheaded the creation of a logo identifying certified organic products from the Comox Valley.

The COABC conference happens because of the support from so many amazing volunteers and sponsors. Thank you to all those who donated product, time, and energy to this year's conference. COABC also extends a heartfelt thank you to our coordinators, Andrea Lawseth and Diane Elliot-Buckley. They were instrumental in ensuring the success of the 2014 conference.

PAS Report 2014

The Pacific Agriculture Show held Jan 30 to Feb 1, 2014, at Abbotsford's Tradex Centre continues to be one of the best opportunities to connect with the agriculture community in BC. The Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association once again arranged an informative Short Course program, which included an Organic stream.

This year COABC was able to showcase the new online brochure created under the Toolkit Project. The "Navigating Certification" brochure helps new entrants to the Organic Sector. In addition the array of other organic information available included COABC conference details, the Conference Program-at-a-Glance, CB Services and Contact handouts, back issues of the BC Organic Grower magazine, brochures on "What is Organic Farming", and other organic-related handouts.

COABC is well known at PAS for having the best organic apples. We thank Pro Organics for their donation of Fuji, Empire, Golden Delicious and Ambrosia apples and Unger's Appliance for the use of a couch. Thanks to the COABC staff for making the arrangements. Lastly, a big thanks to our dedicated volunteers.

Other Events

- The **BCAC Gala** represented by Mary Forstbauer and Gloria Chang
- **Minister's Agri-food Advisory Committee (MAAC)** represented by Jen Gamble and Dennis Lapierre
- **BC Agriculture Days in Victoria** represented by Dennis Lapierre, Heather Pritchard, and Jen Gamble
- **BC Food Systems Network Gathering in Sorrento** represented by Jen Gamble and Cara Nunn
- **BC Ministry of Agriculture ALR Consultations** represented by Arzeena Hamir and Jen Gamble
- **Organic Week Proclamation Presentation** represented by Jen Gamble
- **Organic Okanagan Festival in Kelowna** represented by Jen Gamble

National Organic Week

Submitted by Jen Gamble

2014 marked the 5th annual National Organic Week in Canada. The celebration continues to grow with the support of National organizations like the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) and the Canadian Organic Growers (COG). A new regional partners recognition page was created this year on the COTA website and included COABC.

Once again, COABC was busy promoting organics throughout the week. To kick off the week, the BC Government presented an Organic Week Proclamation to the COABC EDO Jen Gamble. MLA Greg Kylo attended the Sorrento Farmers Market to make the presentation.

The annual Organic Okanagan Festival in Kelowna was another highlight of organic week. This year the festival changed venue and was held downtown in the performing arts centre. COABC partnered with COTA to share an information table. Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick spoke to a crowded room about the Organic Week Proclamation and the importance of Organics in the BC Agriculture sector.

Through the Vancity Certification and Public Education project, COABC was also able to host two workshops aimed at new farmers over the course of the week. The Certification Made Easy workshop

conducted by Cara Nunn and Rochelle Eisen traveled to the UBC Farm and the Comox Valley. The presentations proved to be very popular.

In addition, COABC set up information booths at some lower mainland farmers markets during Organic Week. These booths promoted organics and the #icertifyBC campaign. The #icertifyBC campaign was the first COABC social media campaign. See some of the ways that others across the country celebrated in 2014 at organicweek.ca.

Sector Connections / Membership

The Organic Federation of Canada

Submitted by Hermann Bruns, OFC Director for BC

The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) consists of one representative from each province and aims to reflect the full diversity of organic operators from across the country on issues and initiatives of national significance. The main focus is to ensure that the Canada Organic Regulation & Standards continue to serve the greater organic agriculture community. This year the OFC has been active on the following projects:

1) Canadian Organic Standards (COS) Review

This project has been a major focus for the OFC in 2014 and will continue well into 2015. While the Canadian General Standards Board is conducting the overall review process, the OFC has been performing the key role of coordinating the tasks, meetings, and budgets of 8 working groups. In total there were 72 working group teleconference meetings and 3 meetings of the entire Technical Committee (TC) meetings adding up to a total of 5,532 hours of work. One additional working group has just been launched to merge the organic aquaculture standards into the overall COS.

The OFC was also tasked with raising up to \$85,000 (\$67,000 raised so far) in organic industry funds to match with a grant from Agriculture & Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC). There will be one more TC meeting in May 2015 before the revised COS is voted on in a final ballot and adopted in late summer.

2) Organic Science Cluster II (2013-2018)

After some delay, the OSC II was officially announced in August 2014. The Organic Science Cluster II is an industry supported research and development endeavour initiated by the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada in collaboration with the OFC, the industry applicant. OFC staff person Nicole Boudreau plays an integral role in preparing funding agreements with the 60 industry partners to collect the required matching funds, managing overall project finances, and translating OSCII communication of activities and results.

3) Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC)

The SIC continues to perform a crucial role in clarifying ambiguous clauses in the COS and providing guidance to certifying bodies and producers on how to interpret the standards consistently. The OFC coordinates SIC member elections and contracts, translates the Q&As issued by the SIC, and manages the public comment periods and final web-posting of the final standards interpretations. Thirteen SIC teleconference meetings were held in 2014.

4) National Brand Name Directory

The OFC entered into a contract with an Ontario based company called Peppersoft to build an online directory for allowable brand name inputs. This was accomplished a few years ago, and most certifying bodies have contributed their brand name lists. The challenge now is to find a way to fund ongoing maintenance of the list and website so that the information remains relevant and searchable.

The OFC continues to play a vital role in liaising with the federal government on issues arising out of the implementation of the COR. And as we know from our experience in BC, a strong cohesive organization representing organic operators with a unified voice can achieve remarkable results with government. Thanks to the COABC for its continued leadership and financial support for the OFC.

BC Agriculture Council

Submitted by Dennis Lapierre

The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) is a non-profit advocacy organization that seeks to influence agriculture policies of both the federal and provincial governments of Canada on behalf of BC's farmers and ranchers. As such, it primarily focuses on interests and issues in common to all BC farmers. Its Board of Directors comprises representatives of key BC commodity producer organizations and one non-commodity specific group, the Community Agriculture sector.

The Community Agriculture sector includes the COABC and the FARM Community Council. The FARM Community Council is an aggregation of BC Farmer's Institutes and the BC Sheep Federation. The FARM council and COABC are represented on the BC Agriculture Council via the Community Agriculture sector Director.

The BCAC meets four to six times per year, and (as required) participates in stakeholder consultations on matters affecting agriculture in BC. Through 2014 that included participating in *Water Modernization Act* consultations, *Waste Management Act* consultations, hosting a general Ag Day at the BC Legislature wherein directors met with groups of MLAs from both provincial parties to discuss a range of topics. It also provides the opportunity for both formal and informal personal contact between directors and politicians.

Much of 2014's excitement was taken up with discussions, arguments, disputes, and finally some degree of consensus on the position the BCAC was to take on the proposed changes to the *Agriculture Land Reserve Act*. The change resulted in the creation of two agricultural zones in BC, which created some differences in land use regulation. When proposed, strong differences of opinion emerged among BC's farmers, farm organizations, and other parties whose interests in retaining farmland for farming purposes were suspect. While the BCAC initially expressed a strong objection to the creation of two zones, it settled in the most diplomatic way possible. Though not supporting the legislation, it was not willing to risk damaging its relationship with the province by taking an overly aggressive stance, either. The matter has now been put to bed through legislation, and it remains to be seen whether it will adversely affect farming in BC to any extent.

As a bit of a spin-off from the BCAC this year and as a result of the Minister of Agriculture creating a Minister's Agriculture Advisory Committee, the Community Agriculture representative was invited to sit on that committee along with a variety of other individual producers, representatives of processing organizations, the COABC, and others. Of specific value was the opportunity being on that committee provided the organic sector representatives to press for the regulation of the word "organic". With the goal of the Ministry being to increase the financial value of the agriculture industry by 2017, meetings provided the opportunity to present an argument suggesting that regulation of the word was necessary to ensure both economic growth as well as public confidence in certified organic products. The province is now seriously exploring this suggestion.

COABC also works to ensure organic sector representation at:

BC Agri Food Trade Council

The Organic Agricultural Center of Canada

International Federation of Organic Management IFOAM

VERIFICATION OFFICERS

VO training occurred in conjunction with the 2014 conference in Nanaimo. Members of the Accreditation Board led the training session. As a result of feedback at the Nanaimo session, work has begun on a VO Mentorship proposal to present to the COABC board. The board approved the initial stage of the program to start in 2015.

COABC MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Packaging and Promotional Materials

The COABC provides promotional, packaging, and educational materials to the membership at just above cost.

- Twist ties
- Regular & freezer adhesive stickers
- Two styles of hats
- T-shirts
- Two organic production guides

Free membership privileges include the following:

- Promotional and educational pamphlets for use at agricultural and consumer events
- Professional display booths, complete with banners, photographs and posters

COABC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Organic Sector Research and Development Fund (OSRD)

It was the desire of COABC directors to facilitate research in the organic sector. Starting in 2006 funds have been set aside to be used for research projects. In 2014 the OSRD supported the Organic Resource Toolkit Project and the Organic Certification and Public Education Project. Both projects wrapped up in 2014. One of the projects supported in 2010, research into wireworm, wrapped up in 2012, but has not yet received the final payment as a final report has not been submitted.

COABC Organic Sector Resource Toolkit Project

Excerpt from final report

The toolkit project generated new materials, updated existing materials and improved access to resources for retail marketing, farmers' market marketing, new entrants to certification, existing participants and certification bodies.

The new marketing tools will help promote certified organic products and BC producers at retail & in farmers' markets. These new tools include Organic Week promo materials Think Before You Eat / Local & Organic—better together, a mini-guide to organic retailing practices, a Farmers' Market info-sheet on organic integrity, and a Market Organic Food launch page for the COABC website.

Online marketing tips and information for both retailers & farmers' markets and for producers selling in these markets were revised. Navigation to all of these resources was improved.

New certification tools developed include Navigating Organic Certification a web-based guide that simplifies the certification process for new entrants; a Glossary of Organic Initialisms - a must have for new and existing operators to understand the acronymic language of the organic sector; an Organic System Plan questionnaire for crop producers and certification bodies; and a COABC Accreditation Board Q&A page. This Q&A is a useful resource for new entrants, existing farmers, and certification bodies seeking clarification on specific issues.

Existing certification materials that were refreshed included the What is Organic Farming brochure, which summarizes key principles and benefits of organic agriculture; the Accreditation, Certification and Logo Use content on the website; and the certification orientation page on the Cyber-help for Organic Farmers website. Improved navigation was implemented for these certification resources, starting off with a Grow Organic Food entry point from the COABC homepage.

COABC Organic Certification and Public Education Project

Excerpt from final report

The Organic Certification and Public Education project aimed to increase the capacity of the local, sustainable food sector by providing local growers with a more accessible third-party certification process. It also intended to enhance the understanding of sustainable agricultural systems amongst growers, consumers and policy makers. The Organic Certification and Public Education project aimed to meet three overarching goals.

1. Increase access to organic certification process to offer growers and consumers clear ways of verifying the practices behind products in the marketplace, facilitating growth in local and organic food sales.
2. Increase the number of growers following organic standards and participating in a verification program and enhance their understanding of sustainable agriculture.
3. Develop a communication plan to articulate "What is organic agriculture?" to help increase the viability of the local and organic food sector.

To help achieve these overarching goals this project

1. Developed COABC's first attempt of an on online certification process for local growers.
2. Offered orientation workshops for growers that introduced certification options and educated them about organic standards and practices.
3. Implemented a communication plan articulating "What is organic agriculture?" including media resources with key messages that explain the value of the organic food system to the public and policy makers.

The project was separated into two main areas of activity. The Pilot Project focused on streamlining certification, and the Education / Outreach component on conveying key organic messaging.

Under the Pilot Project we developed an online certification process to help streamline organic applications, saving growers and certifiers time and money. During this process we discovered that there were more technical challenges to creating a streamlined and integrated database than we had originally anticipated. Through this exercise, we are now well placed to expand the online form system in to the next step.

The project offered orientation workshops for growers that introduced certification options, the online application and educated them about organic standards and practices. These education sessions became part of the overall outreach strategy to reach growers.

The COABC maintained an active presence at numerous agricultural and food security events throughout the year, in order to connect with stakeholders and communicate the benefits of the project activities. Everywhere COABC went, the outcomes of this project were showcased. In addition, a key focus of the communications for the project was to increase the reach and level of engagement of the COABC's online audience base.

The very positive feedback from events and sessions reinforced the importance of in-person interactions, especially for new farmers. To further project engagement, COABC increased our social media presence. Due to circumstances beyond our control, we were only able to run a short campaign about why farmers certify. The campaign has been quite successful and will be featured in upcoming issues of the BC Organic Grower Magazine.

Through the outreach and education aspect of the project a number of growers and consumers have gained information on organic principles and the differences in farming practices that will lead them to choose organic over conventional. These changes have a reduced impact on the health of our soil, water and air resources.

The Organic Certification and Public Education Project has enabled COABC to create a number of resources and outreach opportunities that have increased the engagement of new and young farmers. The online resource toolkits, prominently placed on our website, have been widely used as resources since being posted earlier this year. By streamlining our process, providing education and increasing our outreach, we have been able to work toward a better understanding of the important role that organic certification plays in creating a more sustainable agricultural system. This project has aimed to increase the capacity of the local, sustainable food sector by encouraging new and young farmers to become certified and by demonstrating the value and ease of the certification process. Enhancing the understanding of the organic agricultural systems helps bring growers, consumers and policy makers to the same conclusion; certified organic farming benefits the grower, consumer and the environment.

FINANCE

Financial statements were provided to the Board quarterly.

Sponsorship Program

The sponsorship program is a vital part of COABC. As a non-profit organization, COABC relies on donors to continue and expand outreach activities like the BC Organic Grower, the annual conference, the website and Cyber-help. In 2014, COABC sponsors were:

- Gold: Horizon Distributors, the Organic Grocer, Nature's Fare Markets and Choices Markets
- Silver: Discovery Organics, Pro Organics, Left Coast Naturals, Eatmore Sprouts and Greens, Olympic Dairy, BW Structures

Thank you to our generous 2014 sponsors.

Financial Statements (following pages)

**CERTIFIED ORGANIC
ASSOCIATIONS OF B.C.**

Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2014
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

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Tel: 250 545 2136
Fax: 250 545 3364
www.bdo.ca

BDO Canada LLP
2706 - 30th Avenue
Suite 202
Vernon BC V1T 2B6 Canada

Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Certified Organic Associations of B.C. as at December 31, 2014 and the statements of financial position, changes in net assets and revenue and expenditures for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Accountants

Vernon, British Columbia
February 2, 2015

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Financial Position
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

s.21

December 31

Assets

Current

Cash and term deposits
Accounts receivable
Inventory
Prepaid expenses

Equipment (Note 1)

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current

Accounts payable
Deferred revenue

Net Assets

Invested in equipment
Internally restricted for research purposes (Note 2)
Unrestricted

Approved on behalf of the Board:

_____ Director

_____ Director

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

For the year ended December 31	Invested in Equipment	Restricted for Research	Un- restricted	2014	2013
Balance, beginning of year					
Revenue over expenditures for the year					
Investment in equipment					
<u>Balance, end of year</u>					

s.21

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

For the year ended December 31

2014

2013

Revenue

s.21

Fees and subscriptions
Publications
Advertising
Conference and workshop
Sponsorship
Grant
Administration fees
Investment
Other

Expenditures

Advertising and promotion
Amortization
Bad debts
Bank charges and interest
Conference and meetings
Contract fees
Donations and subsidies
Memberships, dues and fees
Office and miscellaneous
Rent and utilities
Telephone and fax
Travel and meals
Wages and employee benefits

Revenue over expenditures for the year

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Notes to Financial Statements
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

December 31, 2014

1. Equipment

		2014		2013	
		Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Furniture and fixtures	s.21				
Computer equipment					
Net book value					

2. Restrictions on Net Assets

s.21

Organic Sector Development Program 2

Balance Sheet As at 12/31/2014

ASSET

Assets

Valley First Credit Union-Trust2Acc

s.21

Cash Drawer

Accounts Receivable

Advances Paid

Total Assets

TOTAL ASSET

LIABILITY

Liabilities

Accounts Payable

Government Grants Received

GST Paid

HST Paid

Total Liabilities

TOTAL LIABILITY

EQUITY

Equity

Accumulated Earnings/Deficit

Current Earnings

Total Equity

TOTAL EQUITY

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Generated On: 01/29/2015

Organic Sector Development Program 2
Income Statement 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014

REVENUE

Revenue

Government Grants

s.21

Other Revenue

Total Revenue

TOTAL REVENUE

EXPENSE

Expenses

Advertising

Accounting & Legal

Bank Charges & Interest

GST expense-non refundable

Contractors

Travel/Accommodation

Meals/Entertainment

Admin Expenses from COABC

Advances paid-COABC

Advances Paid

Suspense

Total Expenses

TOTAL EXPENSE

NET INCOME

Generated On: 01/29/2015

Organic Sector Development Program 2
General Ledger Report 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014

		2014
<hr/>		
5700 Advances Paid		
I-177	Caterpillar Pests in Cole Crops	s.21
I-176	Organic Cranberry & Blueberry Production in BC	
I-175	Post Harvest Life of Organic Potatoes	
I-148	Carrot Production	
I-139	Small Scale Composting	
I-154	Market Research	
I-165	Carrot Seed	
I-172	Frass	
I-178	Free Choice Feeding	
I-152	Young Agrarians	
I-178	Free Choice Feeding	
I-150	Biochar	
I-148	Carrot Production	

Generated On: 01/29/2015



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Certified Organic Associations of BC



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Carmen Wakeling, President

As we move into 2017 I want to wish all of you the very best success with all of your personal and business goals.

As well I would like to take a moment to say thank you to all the amazing board members that have taken time out of their busy schedules to help support and guide the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia over the last year. I feel that we have made a lot of progress and I have so appreciated the teamwork that has made the challenges of the year that much easier.

To the team of staff at the office: Thank you so much for all you do. The passion and commitment carried by all of you definitely shines through. It is an honour to be part of such a dynamic group of people.

This year has had its hardships and remarkable successes. The ongoing goal of COABC is to support the health of the organic sector here in BC. Through hard work, dedication and some fun we are taking on the challenge.

Here is an overview of the things we have been involved in during 2016—many of these are only just a beginning. I encourage all of you to spend some time thinking about what you can do to support the work being done.

Mandatory Organic: We have been moving forward quickly with our 3 year transition to Mandatory Organic here in BC. What this means is that as of 2018 if you use the word organic on your products in this province you will need to be Certified Organic. The last 7 years has been a confusing time for consumers. A lack of clarity about what is truly organic has made the water very murky. The goal is that consumers will be able to purchase Organic products with confidence knowing that our strong standards and principles are intact.

Through the change management plan we have developed, we are working to provide tools to make certification more accessible and to give the Certification Bodies the capacity to support those wanting to make this claim.

Organizational Development: As a growing sector it is very important that we set the organizations involved up for short medium and long term success. It is imperative to understand the needs of these partners at all stages so that we can work today on things that will benefit the future of organics. We had a very productive Strategic Planning session in November

which allowed us to both look backward and forward to make sure we are following the path laid out as well as allowing ourselves to make sure that the path is still firm.

Continuous Improvement in Communication: One of the short term goals for the COABC is to improve communication with our members. With all the work that happens at the office it appears that there are members out there who do not understand what we do. It seems important that we work with Certifying Bodies to more clearly communicate what we are up to so that they are able to share this with their members. We are working to develop an improved strategy to share the important stuff with all of you.

Understanding the needs of members: It is essential that as an organization committed to supporting our members that we hear from you. If ever you have a concern, comment or question feel free to get in touch with either a board member or the office. We need to understand what is keeping you up at night and how we can best support you.

Growing Forward Funding: 2017 is the last year of the federal Growing Forward II funding program. We will be moving into a new funding initiative at a federal level. The key areas of focus are laid out for you below. Currently the information can be found in the Calgary Statement.

There is a lot of opportunity for the organic sector to take advantage of this funding, as we are leaders in several areas identified in the overview. My wish for us is to work in collaboration with others in the organic sector to create a strong and resilient sector so that we can support a healthy planet.

The core areas are:

- Expanding domestic and international markets and trading opportunities for the sector
- Enhancing competitiveness and strengthening competitive advantages by advancing science and innovation capacity and encouraging the adoption of products, practices and processes
- Anticipating, mitigating and responding to risks in a manner that supports the sustainable growth of the sector
- Supporting the resiliency and environmental sustainability of the sector to ensure long term adaptation and growth
- Improving the growth of the value-added agriculture and agri-food processing sector
- Securing and growing public trust in the sector

Last but not least:

I just wanted to take a moment to communicate how valuable the COABC is. As I step out into the world I realize that there are a lot of pressures on our sector. This comes as there is a growing interest in the business of Organics. COABC is a strong voice that speaks powerfully to uphold the principles and standards of organics here in BC. It is so important to have a voice that can speak at a provincial, federal and international level! I am so grateful to have an organization that wants to make a positive impact.

Over the years I have met so many organic producers, it seems that most have the same end goal—to make the planet as healthy as possible.

This year while I was at the National Farmers Union conference a wise man told me that if we want to save the planet we need to get everyone at the table: Fishers, Farmers, Foresters, Environmentalists and the list went on. We need to engage fully now if we want to make a difference before it is too late.

I want to challenge you to be the change you want to see. Go and get to work! Each one of us can do it! Talk to neighbours, family, adversaries and friends. Let's see how we can impact change!

Hey, hey, we saved the world today!

Thanks for all you contribute to the health of the planet!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carmen Wakeling', with a stylized, flowing script.

Co-President
Carmen Wakeling

THE ORGANIZATION IN 2016

COABC MISSION:

To lead, support and enhance the certified organic food system in BC.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Promote BC agriculture from farm to fork with a focus on certified organics.
- Be respectful of all players in the food system.
- Be inclusive of all stakeholders in the organic food system.
- Lead by example, growing a sustainable tomorrow.
- Foster innovation.
- Maximize the use of external resources that meet the COABC mission.

COABC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. BCARA | British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture
Rod Reid Alternate: Chris Bodnar |
| 2. Bio-Dynamic | Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Society of British Columbia
Gabe Cipes Alternate: Angus MacDonell |
| 3. FVOPA | Fraser Valley Organic Producers
Jane Kerner Alternate: Susan Snow |
| 4. IOPA | Islands Organic Producers Association
Arzeena Hamir (COABC Secretary 2016)
Alternate: Mary Alice Johnson |
| 5. KOGS | Kootenay Organic Growers
Judi Morton Alternate: Angela Weir |
| 6. LEOGA | Living Earth Organic Growers Association
Jordan Marr Alternate: Clive Johnson |
| 7. NOOA | North Okanagan Organic Association
Michelle Tsutsumi Alternate: Brian MacIsaac |
| 8. PACS | Pacific Agricultural Certification Society
Andrea Turner (COABC Vice-President 2016), Carmen Wakeling
(COABC President 2016), Ed Clarke (COABC Treasurer 2016), Paddy |

Doherty, Walter Makepeace, Linda Edwards, Charlie Lasser
Alternates: Yvonne Kosugi and Sam Quinlan

9. SOOPA **Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association**
Moses Brown Alternate: Corey Brown
10. BCFSN **BC Food Systems Network**
Abra Brynne Alternate: Brent Mansfield
(Consumer/Environment)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

13. BCSPCA **BC Society for Protection of Animals** (non-voting)
14. BCMA **BC Ministry of Agriculture**
Susan Smith (ex-officio)

COABC COMMITTEES

The COABC Board of Directors convened the following committees:

Executive: Carmen Wakeling (President), Andrea Turner (Vice-President), Ed Clarke (Treasurer), Arzeena Hamir (Secretary)

Events: Annie Moss, Rebecca Kneen, Susan Smith, Michelle Tsutsumi, Jen Cody, Jen Gamble, Kristy Wiperman, Eva-Lena Lang

Human Resources (HR) Adhoc: Walter Makepeace, Carmen Wakeling, Clive Johnson, Jen Gamble, Kristy Wiperman

COABC Restructuring Proposal Committee: Paddy Doherty, Susan Snow, Corey Brown, Carmen Wakeling, Michelle Tsutsumi, Arzeena Hamir, Rebecca Kneen, Molly Thurston, Jen Gamble

Inactive Committees: Advocacy Committee, Capacity Development, Communication & PR (Awareness), Levies Committee, Research and Education

Accreditation Board: Molly Thurston (Director/Chair), Anne Macey, Renee Prasad, DeLisa Lewis, Lynn Lashuk, Rochelle Eisen, Kristy Wiperman (AB Coordinator)

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE SUPPORT

The COABC operates a staffed office in Vernon. In general, the COABC office manages correspondence, certification enquiries, sector relations, insurance, bookkeeping and a myriad of other details involved in the functioning of a large organization.

Office staff members:

- Jen Gamble - Executive Director of Operations
- Kristy Wipperman - Office Manager
- Eva-Lena Lang - Administrative Assistant

COABC has also contracted with the following individuals:

- Molly Thurston – Accreditation Board Director
- Rob Korbynn - Information Technology Technician
- Jeffery Newman – Cyber-help Technician
- Darcy Smith & Moss Dance– Organic Grower Production team
- Darcy Smith - Communications Officer
- Jesse Johnston-Hill– COABC 2017 conference
- Darcy Smith - Sowing Seeds Video Project Coordinator
- Thomas Buchanan - Sowing Seeds Video Project Videographer
- Business Advisory Services - BC Buy Local Project
- Rochelle Eisen - Organic Research Needs Assessment

INSURANCE

The COABC maintains liability insurance for the Board of Directors and contents coverage. As a service to its membership, the COABC has arranged for CB's to have their own D&O insurance at a reduced rate. COABC also carries E&O and Commercial General Liability as part of being a recognized accreditor under the Canada Organic Regime.

BC CERTIFIED ORGANIC PROGRAM

COABC ACCREDITATION BOARD REPORT

Submitted by: Molly Thurston, COABC Director of Accreditation

PROGRAMS

The COABC Accreditation Board (AB) continues to be one of four Conformity Verification Bodies (CVBs) operating under a recognition agreement with the CFIA. These CVBs assess the competence of certification bodies (CB) which in turn verify that operators are following the Canadian Organic Standard (COS) and operating within the rules of the Canada Organic Regime (COR). The COABC AB also provides accreditation for certified operations, selling product only within British Columbia. This BC program provides the authorization for CBs to permit operators to use the Program symbol (the checkmark) and the phrase "British Columbia Certified Organic" to identify organic product. The COABC Accreditation Board continued to provide oversight to three COR ISO 17065 compliant CBs: BCARA, FVOPA and PACS in 2016.

In 2016, there were 481 operators registered in the certification programs of the three COR ISO 17065 compliant CBs and located in BC, although there are also members certified in Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Yukon, which is down approximately 10 operators from the number registered in 2015. This number includes farms in transition; as well as producers, processors and handlers of certified products. COR ISO 17065 CB membership represents approximately 70% of the total operators under the COABC umbrella. The COR program provides certified enterprises with access to organic markets in BC, Canada and globally, through equivalency arrangements with the United States, the European Union, Costa Rica, Japan and Switzerland.

The AB also provided accreditation to six Regional CBs: BDASBC, IOPA, KOGS, LEOGA, NOOA and SOOPA. The number of operators certified by Regional CBs increased from 195 operators in 2015 to 211 registered operators in 2016, including a number of new operations in transition. Regional CB membership represents approximately 30% of the total operators under the COABC umbrella.

Accreditation Board Members and Auditors

In 2016, there were 6 members of the COABC Accreditation Board:

1. Molly Thurston, AB Director/Producer rep
2. Anne Macey, Past Chair and Inspection/certification rep
3. VACANT, Processor rep
4. Renee Prasad, Consumer/Environmental rep
5. Rochelle Eisen, Inspection/Certification rep
6. DeLisa Lewis, BCCOP Producer rep
7. Lynn Lashuk, Consumer/Environmental rep

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Submitted by Jen Gamble, Executive Director of Operations and Darcy Smith, Communications Officer

E-NEWS: KEEPING YOU INFORMED

From COABC updates and announcements to coming events and sector news, the monthly E-News is a point of connection for COABC members. Current and previous issues are posted on the COABC website under the News & Events tab. In 2016, the E-News was redesigned to reflect COABC's evolving brand, to better share ongoing projects with members, and to showcase external communications achievements.

WEBSITE

The COABC website offers help for those exploring certification, updates for those already a part of the Organic sector, and general information for consumers. This year, we added the "Eat Organic Food" Toolkit to the website in order to provide content and marketing tools for organic farmers. In 2016, the website saw 125,228 unique visitors (averaging 10,400 unique monthly viewers), a 40% increase from 2015'. The website also saw a 21% increase in page views, with an average of 51,300 page views/month. In total, the website received more than 3.3 million hits in 2016.

SOCIAL MEDIA

After successfully rolling out a social media strategy in the second half of 2015, this year COABC's social media focused on further developing shareable content, amplifying our members' voices, and keeping our audience informed on organic sector issues.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Followers: In 2016, we increased our Facebook followers by 59%, from 1,849 to 2,948. We reach an average of 42,000 unique users per month; with peaks of 100,000+ in months we release new video content. As our social media audience grows, our reputation as an online thought leader in the organic sector grows too.

Organic Week: COABC collaborated with COTA to produce three videos featuring BC organic farmers that were viewed over 44,000 times. On the Organic Week blog, COABC shared a piece about how consumers can support organic farmers in transition, reaching 2,200 people on COABC's social media alone. A major takeaway for many was the growing demand for organic food, BC's leadership in the sector, and the importance of supporting farmers through the transition process.

Roadshow: COABC took organic expertise on the road this year for Organic

Week, emphasizing transition support. Online, the Organic Roadshow event series reached 12,000 people, the majority of whom were ages 25-44, showing a desire for mentorship and knowledge transfer in the next generation of farmers.

Video: Video continues to offer the highest return on investment on social media, and is a great way to engage people with local food systems and farmers. Our final New Horizons video, Organic Mentorship, was viewed 10,000 times. Working with footage captured for the New Horizons project, we were also able to release three additional video series for #BCBuyLocal, Organic Week, and the ThinkBCOrganic campaign, together garnering almost 200,000 views. These videos celebrate the achievements of organic farmers in BC while promoting certified organic to consumers.

Instagram: Our Instagram account increased in followers from 169 to 488 (189%) in 2016. Our strategy has been to amplify photos shared by COABC members, driving increased traffic to their profiles and raising awareness of certified organic in BC.

We encourage members of COABC and organic supporters to join our online community facebook.com/CertifiedOrganicAssociationsBC | [Twitter/Instagram @coabccanada](https://twitter.com/coabccanada)

CYBER-HELP

Cyber-help continues to offer online resources to organic farmers and provide updated resources like the fruit and vegetable price list. Site highlights include an active Beekeeping page, many business management resources, and listings of seed suppliers in Canada. Cyber-Help is hosted as a sub-domain of the COABC website, www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/ and has been funded by COABC.

BC ORGANIC GROWER

In response to feedback from COABC members, the BC Organic Grower has transitioned to themed issues: Organic Evolution (Winter 2016), Cooperatives (Spring 2016), Indigenous Food Sovereignty (Summer 2016), and Transition (Fall 2016). Themed issues allow us to tackle relevant issues and showcase farm projects in a cohesive way.

A selection of articles covered in 2016 include:

- Integrating livestock in the Farm Rotations: a Perspective on Pigs and Chickens
- Collective Marketing for Farmers
- Preserving and Restoring First Nations Foods and Medicines
- Wireworm: Know your pest to make the best control decisions
- Certification is More Than a Piece of Paper – It Comes With a Remarkable Community
- Transitions: Passing the Farm on to New Farmers

2016 also saw the launch of the BCOG's online edition. Articles can now be shared on social media by COABC, contributors, and other sector influencers, providing an increased audience for the content. During Organic Week, COABC featured an article by Michelle Tsutsumi on what transitioning to organic meant for Golden Ears Farm, reaching 2,600 people.

The Organic Grower magazine continues to be the voice of the organic community in BC and welcomes your input.

ADVERTISING

Edible Vancouver offers a reduced rate to Organic Sector members wishing to advertise on the COABC page. Through 2016, the ad continued to profile organic advertisers. This increases the value of the ads while also telling organic sector stories. This year the COABC Ad was consistently at one page or more. The COABC Ad grows as new advertisers join and there is always room to accommodate more. The reduced advertising rate offered under this program makes it a great marketing opportunity for smaller organic operators to access a wide audience.

EVENTS

2016 Conference & AGM

With Resilience as the focus of the 2016 COABC Conference, it became clear just how strong the organic community is. There were comments about how this conference had a real sense of togetherness, with a rich diversity of backgrounds in attendance, including a healthy mix of young and older alike.

A crowd favourite was the Storytelling from the Vanguard of Organics session, where the history of the organic community and commitment to get to where we are today was described. It was a powerful session to be a part of and provided a window into the roots of COABC.

Two tenacious and spirited women, who were persistent in facilitating organic agriculture and food sovereignty, both in BC and across Canada, were paid tribute to. The loss of both Mary Forstbauer and Cathleen Kneen is deeply felt within the organic community, and some reassurance is felt knowing that their good work is being carried on by many whom they mentored and encouraged.

The keynote address by Dr. Vandana Shiva was succinct and encouraging of our efforts in stewarding the land; bringing peace to the earth and to each other.

There was a strong seed component to this year's conference, with standing room only in the roundtable discussion, two presentations on seed saving, and a seed exchange on Saturday afternoon. Overall, session topics were well received, the trade show was packed, and people left inspired and uplifted.

This year, Carmen Wakeling described the Brad Reid Memorial Award recipient, Annie Moss, as an “enabler”, a “true change maker” and “one of the most generous, kind, and determined women that she’s had the privileged to get to know through the COABC community”.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the event sponsors, planning committee, volunteers, hotel staff, and food donors, who made this such a memorable weekend.

PAS Report 2016

The Pacific Agriculture Show, Jan 28 -30, 2016, at Abbotsford’s Tradex Centre provides a great opportunity for COABC to connect with the agriculture community throughout BC. Once again, the Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association arranged an informative Short Course program, which included an Organic stream, sponsored by the Fraser Valley Organic Producers Association.

This year, COABC highlighted the new Organic promotional material created in partnership with the national Think Organic campaign. In addition, the array of other organic information available included; COABC conference details, the Conference Program-at-a-Glance, and other organic-related handouts.

One of the best draws for the COABC booth is its reputation for having the best organic apples. We thank Pro Organics and Discovery Organics for their donation of BC Certified Organic apples.

The Pacific Ag Show is also where we unfurl for the first time, the sponsorship banner for the year. COABC is pleased to acknowledge the contributions of all our generous sponsors. We also extend a heartfelt thank you to all the organic producers who volunteer their time to staff the COABC booth. Thank you to everyone who helps make our participation in this event possible.

Other Events

BCAC Gala—represented by Corey Brown, Arzeena Hamir, and Jen Gamble
Minister of Agriculture’s Advisory Committee (MAAC) meetings, Victoria and Kelowna—represented by Jen Gamble

Finding Common Ground Summit, Vancouver—represented by Jen Gamble
Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture, Calgary—represented by Carmen Wakeling

Organic Okanagan Festival, Kelowna—represented by Jen Gamble and Eva-Lena Lang

COTA Parliament Day, Ottawa—represented by Jen Gamble

BCAC President’s Dinner, Kelowna—represented by Abra Brynne and Jen Gamble

NATIONAL ORGANIC WEEK

The seventh annual National Organic Week was celebrated across the country. Once again, BC celebrated with an Organic Proclamation issued by the Provincial government, with the COABC Organic Week Road Show and the Organic Okanagan Festival.

The second annual Organic Week Road Show was hosted sessions around the province in locations such as Richmond, Langley and Courtney. COABC was fortunate to partner with Beyond the Market from Prince George to offer an extensive tour of the North. The road show, generously supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, hosted a number of presentations and drew many participants.

COABC wrapped up Organic Week at the Organic Okanagan Festival in Kelowna. As part of the Organic Week Road Show COABC hosted a transitioning to organic forum. Agriculture Minister, Norm Letnick, attended the festival to celebrate the organic sector and its role in BC Agriculture.

SECTOR CONNECTIONS / MEMBERSHIP

The Organic Federation of Canada

Submitted by Hermann Bruns OFC Director for BC and Current OFC President

The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) board, consisting of one delegate from each province, represents the interests of organic operators across Canada on national organic issues and initiatives. Listed below are the main projects the OFC has worked on in 2016:

1. Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC)

The SIC, consisting of seven elected organic experts, is funded by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) but managed by the OFC. Conference call meetings are held on a regular basis to address questions about how to interpret clauses in the Canada Organic Standard (COS). The interpretations are posted for a 60-day comment period before being accepted as official by the CFIA.

2. Organic Science Cluster (OSC)

As the official applicant for the OSC under the Growing Forward program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the OFC is in the midst of managing its second 4-year cluster of organic research projects valued at over \$10 million in total. While the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada carries out the actual selection and management of research projects, the OFC is responsible for collecting and accounting for industry cash contributions and quarterly reports to AAFC. OFC Coordinator, Nicole Boudreau, was also very involved in organizing the second Canadian Organic Science Conference held in Quebec City September 2016. Preparations to apply for a third science cluster are already underway.

3. Canadian Organic Standards Revision

This project just won't go away. After the revised Canada Organic Standard (COS) was published in November 2015, a number of errors and oversights were discovered. Since then, the OFC has been negotiating with the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) to re-convene relevant Working Groups and two standards amendment processes to address those faults. While there is still disagreement about who will pay for these amendment processes, the outstanding COS issues will be resolved by early 2017.

One particular focus of the OFC this past year has been to improve communication and cooperation with the other three national organic organizations, Canadian Organic Growers, Canada Organic Trade Association, and the Organic Value Chain Round Table. This initiative was embraced by the leaders of those organizations (who all happen to be from the BC Interior), and the result was unprecedented collaboration on: a letter to the new federal Minister of Agriculture, a joint meeting with the Minister's senior policy advisers, presentations to the House of Commons and Senate standing committees on agriculture, a meeting with Members of Parliament on Parliament Hill, and the publishing of a joint report entitled "Investing in Organic Agriculture: a path to clean, inclusive, economic growth."

Being proficient in both official languages also enables OFC's Nicole Boudreau to translate many industry documents into French or English, publish the monthly bilingual e-newsletter "InfoBio" to keep the Canadian organic sector informed about regulatory, standards, and government related issues, and establish close communication with French speaking government representatives.

OFC bylaws specify term limits for provincial representatives. As I have served as the BC representative for almost 8 years – the last 2 as president of OFC – BC will have to appoint a new representative this spring. During that time, the OFC has become established as a key national organization and continues to play an important role serving the organic sector in all of Canada. If you have any questions or would like to be become involved in any OFC projects, please contact Nicole Boudreau at info@organicfederation.ca.

BC Agriculture Council

The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) is a non-profit advocacy organization that seeks to influence agriculture policies of both the federal and provincial governments of Canada on behalf of BC's farmers and ranchers. As such, it primarily focuses on interests and issues in common to all BC farmers. Its Board of Directors comprises representatives of key BC commodity producer organizations and one non-commodity specific group, the Community Agriculture sector.

The Community Agriculture sector includes the COABC and the FARM Community Council. The FARM Community Council is an aggregation of BC Farmer's Institutes and the BC Sheep Federation. The FARM Community Council and COABC are represented on the BC Agriculture Council via the Community Agriculture Director. In 2016, the

FARM Community Council and COABC decided to share the Community Agriculture seat between their representatives, Megan D'Arcy and Jen Gamble. The two have alternated meeting attendance over the year.

The dominant topic of discussion this year for BCAC has been a public trust initiative. The campaign being adopted by BCAC is modeled on the national campaign for public trust.

BC Ministry of Agriculture

Consultation with BC's Ministry of Agriculture has continued in 2016 via two main channels.

1. Mandatory Organic Regulation Working Groups

In 2015, BC's provincial government solidified their commitment to regulating the term organic by 2018. COABC has been working with the Ministry of Agriculture to support this move. To ensure a smooth transition into the new regulation, two industry/government working groups were created.

Branding Working Group: responsible for the strategic decisions that guide the branding project objectives, targets and deliverables. The campaign links in with the National 'Think Organic' campaign but promotes BC specifically with unique materials. This working group wrapped up in June with the completion of the Think BC Organic Campaign.

Transition Working Group: discusses high level planning to move forward on Transition Programs and sets the stage for some input/review of policy and will move to detailed planning, development, implementation and delivery.

2. Minister's Agri-Food Advisory Committee

The Minister's AgriFood Advisory Committee (MAAC) was created in 2014 to recommend priorities and provide strategic advice on how to grow a strong agrifood economy and create sustainable jobs and careers for British Columbians employed in the agriculture, fisheries and food sector. The MAAC advises the Minister of Agriculture on economic trends, industry best practices, policy, programs and future initiatives to support a competitive and sustainable agriculture, fisheries and food sector.

MAAC is comprised of 15 to 20 industry representatives including leaders from the business community, the agri-foods sector, local food movement and opinion leaders. The Organic sector is well represented on this committee with members directly involved in the sector and others indirectly involved.

In 2016, the committee participated in working groups intended to provide guidance to the Ministry of Agriculture for implementing the Agri-food Strategy. In May, the Ministry of Ag hosted the inaugural BC Agri-Foods conference at the Coast Hotel in Kelowna. The conference was well attended and featured a range of speakers.

COABC also works to ensure organic sector representation at:

BC Agri Food Trade Council
The Organic Agricultural Center of Canada
International Federation of Organic Management IFOAM

COABC MARKETING AND PROMOTION

THINKBC ORGANIC

Excerpt from Case Study

In 2016, ThinkBC Organic launched as a BC spin-off of the national Think Canada Organic campaign. Developed by the BC Certified Organic Brand Working Group with support from the BC Ministry of Agriculture, the campaign supports preparation for upcoming regulation of the term organic.

As part of the Think BC Organic campaign, three videos and nine profiles of BC organic farmers have been shared on the national site. Think Before You Eat, Organic Week, and COABC promoted this content in a weekly social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram using the tags #FarmerFriday and #ThinkBCOrganic.

The public response was positive. Stories from BC organic farmers resonated with people, and many BC organic businesses were eager to support and share #FarmerFriday stories with their audiences. That support helped the campaign reach more than 250,000 on Facebook, with #FarmerFriday trending across social media platforms.

All of the print and digital materials developed through the ThinkBC Organic campaign are freely available for BC certified organic producers to use, including posters, postcards, templates, videos, and infographics.

PACKAGING AND MARKETING MATERIALS

Members of the COABC are eligible to purchase, at just above cost the following promotional, packaging, and educational materials:

- Twist ties with the BCCO Checkmark
- Freezer Adhesive Stickers of the BCCO Checkmark
- COABC Checkmark T-shirts
- COABC T-shirts, designed by artist Brian MacIsaac
- Two styles of hats
- The Organic Tree Fruit Manual production guide

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to the low cost items above, members also have access, free of charge, to the COABC promotional materials. These include pamphlets such as 'What is Organic Farming', 'Navigating Organic Certification and back issues of the BC Organic Grower as well as THINK BC Certified Organic promotional posters and postcards.

VERIFICATION OFFICERS

VO training occurred in conjunction with the 2016 conference in Vernon. Members of the Accreditation Board led the training session.

COABC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

ORGANIC SECTOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (OSRD)

It was the desire of COABC directors to facilitate research in the organic sector. Starting in 2006, funds have been set aside to be used for research projects.

In 2016, the COABC OSRD fund supported the following projects:

- Organic Online System (Ongoing)
- Sowing Seeds: Organic Trailblazers Share their Stories (Concluded 2016)
- Buy BC Certified Organic Campaign (Concluded 2016)

COABC ORGANIC ONLINE SYSTEM

Progress Report

With the upcoming regulatory changes to use of the term organic, we expect to see increased requests for certification, putting pressure on the certification system. In July 2016, COABC began consultations on the development of the Organic Online System, an innovative online transition tool that will directly populate a BC Organic database.

The new Organic Online System will benefit not only new entrants, but also current certified organic producers, as it will save time and administration, streamlining the application process while providing basic information about certification.

One of the aims of the Organic Online System is to introduce a level of standardization across the application process. Rochelle Eisen has been working in consultation with CBs to develop the content of application forms. Meanwhile, the project Steering Committee provided insights into the needs of different users of the system, from operators to VOs. In December, COABC in consultation with the Steering Committee selected Eligeo CRM Inc to develop the application portal and admin database.

We are currently on schedule to trial a beta version of the system on a limited basis in March 2017, with full rollout by January 2018.

SOWING SEEDS: ORGANIC TRAILBLAZERS SHARE STORIES

Final report

Mentorship was a major focus for COABC in 2016, and this project aimed to strengthen connections between experienced farmers and new farmers through a common interest in organic agriculture.

We created 4 high quality videos that engaged both experienced and new farmers in discussions about organic farming, mentorship, and knowledge transfer. Each video explores a different aspect of organic farming, mentorship, and community through in depth interviews about mentorship and organic farming with dozens of organic sector participants. The videos have a strong consumer appeal as well as functioning within the sector to raise awareness and promote collaboration between generations, and were shared by local BC farmers, both young and old, as well as by national and international industry partners, farmers, and consumers. We also hosted a panel engaging 7 founding members of the organic community with an audience of standing room only, which proved to be one of the most popular sessions at COABC's 2016 conference.

This project has created a platform to engage in discussions about the importance of sharing knowledge and valuing the contributions of organic forerunners that has given rise to a desire from both experienced and new farmers to continue highlighting mentorship. We have had many members of the organic community approach us asking how they can be involved in continuing the work of this project highlighting pioneers in the organic sector.

Funding for this project has been provided by the New Horizons for Seniors grant program, Nature's Path and COABC.

BUY BC CERTIFIED ORGANIC CAMPAIGN

Excerpt from Final report

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia, with help from the Provincial Government's Buy Local fund, completed a "Buy BC Certified Organic" Campaign in May. The campaign promoted BC Organics to consumers and helped eliminate confusion in the market place regarding the myriad of claims and symbols currently in use.

We have seen good progress and outcomes through this campaign and program. We concentrated our efforts on creating materials (promotional and trade event elements) for the COABC 2016 conference, which would have a life after the program. This tapped into the organic certification changes and will be beneficial to the organization moving forward. Based on an approval notification delay, we missed some key opportunities to push hard for Organic Week in September, however, as part of our back-up plan when we submitted our campaign and proposal, we shifted our focus to other events, and produced materials such as videos, ads, shopping bags, seed packages, banners, shelf talkers, retail display materials and more. All specifically targeting the organic consumer.

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Financial Statements
For the Year Ended December 31, 2016
(Unaudited - see Notice to Reader)**

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Vernon BC V1T 2B6 Canada

Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Certified Organic Associations of B.C. as at December 31, 2016 and the statements of financial position, changes in net assets, revenue and expenditures for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants

Vernon, British Columbia
January 23, 2017

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Financial Position
(Unaudited - see Notice to Reader)**

December 31	2016	2015
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Assets

s.21

Current

- Cash and term deposits
- Accounts receivable
- Inventories
- Prepaid expenses

Equipment (Note 1)

Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity

Current

- Accounts payable
- Deferred revenue

Shareholders' Equity

- Invested in equipment
- Internally restricted for research purposes (Note 2)
- Unrestricted

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
(Unaudited - see Notice to Reader)**

For the year ended December 31	Invested in Equipment	Restricted for Research	Un- restricted	2016	2015
Balance, beginning of the year	s.21				
Revenue over expenditures for the year					
Investment in equipment	—				
Balance, end of the year					

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
(Unaudited - see Notice to Reader)**

For the year ended December 31

2016

2015

Revenue

s.21

Fees and subscriptions
Publications
Advertising
Conference and workshop
Sponsorship
Grant
Investment
Other

Expenditures

Advertising and promotion
Amortization
Bad debts
Bank charges and interest
Conference and meetings
Contract fees
Education and training
Donations and subsidies
Memberships, dues and fees
Office and miscellaneous
Professional fees
Rent and utilities
Telephone and fax
Travel and meals
Wages and benefits

Income before other income (expenses)

Other income (expenses)

Loss on disposal of assets

Revenue over expenditures for the year

**Certified Organic Associations of B.C.
Notes to Financial Statements
(Unaudited - see Notice to Reader)**

December 31, 2016

1. Equipment

	2016		2015	
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Computer equipment	s.21			
Furniture and fixtures				
Net book value				

2. Restriction on Net Assets

s.21



Help Us Build a Better Food System

**COABC**

Certified Organic Associations of BC



www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca

