

# Organic Farming Business Sourcing Guide

Revised: June 2004



**Canada / British Columbia Business Service Centre**  
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## ***Legal / Regulatory***

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### **Basics for Starting a Business**

Several basic regulatory requirements are likely to affect you when starting your business. Basic requirements include registering your business name, obtaining a business license and paying taxes. For more information on basic regulatory requirements, visit the Canada / BC Business Service Society's web site at:

<http://smallbusinessbc.ca/workshop/checklist.php>

### **Acts and Regulations for Organic Farming**

Acts, regulations and by-laws that regulate the production of "British Columbia Certified Organic" produce may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act (of British Columbia)
- British Columbia Certified Organic Production Operation Policies and Farm Management Standards

Organic production must not contravene other acts, regulations or by-laws that legislate or otherwise control on-farm activity.

### **Farm Practices**

Organic farming involves the production of food and other agricultural products without the use of synthetic inputs such as chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, chemical growth regulators or hormones, and antibiotics.

Organic farming is regulated under the Food Choice and Disclosure Act of British Columbia. The Organic Agricultural Products Certification regulations enables farmers to obtain a certificate confirming that they are following prescribed production methods. Upon certification, farmers may advertise their produce as being certified organic.

### **Acts and Regulations**

*Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act*

[http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/A/00020\\_01.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/A/00020_01.htm)

*British Columbia Certified Organic Production Operation Policies and Farm Management Standards*

Standards are available online from the Certified Organic Associations.

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/Standards/index.html>

Or from your local Certified Organic Association, locations available on page 9

*Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC)*

4607A 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

Vernon, BC, V1T 4K7

Tel: (250) 260-4429

Fax: (250) 260-4436

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca>

For a copy of the document:

*Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries*

808 Douglas Street

Victoria, BC, V8W 2Z7

Tel: (250) 387-5121

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/Standards/index.html>

### **Farm Practices**

*Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries*

<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/fppa/Refguide/intro.htm>

*Legal / Regulatory continued*

The prescribed production standards were established by the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries. To be considered for certification, farmers wishing to market organic crops must have kept their land chemical-free for three years and continue to do so. Farmers wishing to market organic meat, poultry and other livestock products must use chemical free feed and no medication. To ensure standards are observed at all times, organic growers are subject to both regular scheduled and unannounced inspections.

*Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC)*

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia is an umbrella organization representing provincial organic certifying agencies. It is designated under the Act to implement the British Columbia Certified Organic Program. Organic produce is identified by the designation “British Columbia Certified Organic”.

## ***Funding / Financing***

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### **Small Business Financing**

You may want to use one or more types of financing in your small business. You may choose short-term debt financing, long-term debt financing or equity financing. For more information on financing your small business, visit the Canada/BC Business Service Centre's web site at:

<http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/financing>

### **Sources of Financing**

*Canadian Agriculture and Food International (CAFI) Program*

The Canadian Agriculture and Food International (CAFI) Program is designed to support Canada's agriculture and food industry by helping to build long-term international strategies that will help ensure the industry is well-positioned to succeed in key markets, and to respond to increasing consumer demands and global competition.

The CAFI Program matches industry funds dollar for dollar to support activities that enhance and promote Canada's reputation as the world leader in supplying safe, high-quality agriculture, agri-food, beverage, and seafood products that meet the changing demands of world markets.

*Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC)*

4607A 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

Vernon, BC, V1T 4K7

Tel: (250) 260-4429

Fax: (250) 260-4436

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca>

**Sources of Financing***The Canada/BC Business Service Society*

<http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/financing>

*The Canadian Agriculture and Food International (CAFI) Program*

[http://www.agr.gc.ca/int/cafi-picaa/index\\_e.php?page=intro](http://www.agr.gc.ca/int/cafi-picaa/index_e.php?page=intro)

### *Funding / Financing continued*

#### *Loans for Value-Added Agricultural Processors*

Western Canadian farmers and agricultural processors have long realized that greater growth and profits are possible through "value-added" processing. But, quite often, the main obstacle hampering these businesses and their growth is an inability to access financing. The Agricultural Value-Added Loan Program may provide debt financing for some projects where, until now, equity was the only alternative.

Eligible companies are involved in the processing of primary agricultural products in either food or non-food areas to add further value to the product. Primary products include grains and oil seeds, livestock, agriculture, seafood, specialty and forage crops, fruits and vegetables and livestock products such as milk, eggs and wool.

#### *Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC)*

Community Futures Development Corporations provide business loans to assist existing businesses expand, or to help entrepreneurs create new businesses. Loan amounts are up to \$125,000. There are over 30 Community Future Development Corporations located throughout rural British Columbia.

#### *Canada Small Business Financing Program (CSBF)*

The Canada Small Business Financing Program was created to help small businesses reach their potential by making it easier for them to get term business improvement loans to finance the purchase or improvement of fixed assets, for new or expanded operations. Administered under the Canada Small Business Financing Act (CSBFA), the program is a joint initiative between the Government of Canada and private-sector lenders

#### *Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)*

The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) is Canada's small business bank. BDC plays a leadership role in delivering timely and relevant financial and management services, with a particular focus on the emerging and exporting sectors of the economy. BDC is dedicated to helping create and develop Canadian small and medium-sized businesses.

#### *Strategis Web Site – Sources of Financing*

Industry Canada's Strategis web site - Sources of Financing, offers an extensive database of financial providers and diversified resources to build your financing knowledge.

#### *Loans for Value-Added Agricultural Processors*

Western Economic  
Diversification Canada  
700 - 601 West Hastings St.  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 5G9  
Toll-free: 1-888-338-9378  
Tel: (604) 666-6256  
Fax: (604) 666-2353  
[http://www.wd.gc.ca/finance/prgrams/xavaf\\_e.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/finance/prgrams/xavaf_e.asp)

*To find the nearest Community Futures Development office in BC check:*

<http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/locations/>  
or call

*Canada/BC Business Service Society*

Toll-free: 1-800-667-2272

#### *Canada Small Business Financing Program*

For further information on the CSBF, contact the Lender of your choice or view the Web Site at:

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/csbfa>

#### *Business Development Bank of Canada*

505 Burrard Street  
Vancouver, BC, V7X 1V3  
Toll Free: 1-888-INFO BDC  
Tel: (604) 666-7850  
Fax: (604) 666-7859  
<http://www.bdc.ca>

#### *Strategis Web Site*

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sources>

## How-To / Educational

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### How-To Publications

#### *Getting Started in Organic Farming*

Contents include organic farmer experiences, information on farm management in organic farming, as well as certification and marketing of organic products. Environment Canada and Manitoba Agriculture jointly published *Getting Started in Organic Farming*.

### Web Sites

#### *Natural Life*

Natural Life is an interactive forum for the exchange of information and inspiration about organic gardening, healthy eating, wellness and numerous other related topics. Find a wealth of resources about organic gardening, sustainable farming, urban farming, rooftop gardening, alternatives to chemical pesticides and herbicides, permaculture, and other environmentally sound food production issues.

#### *Canadian Organic Growers*

The National Information Network for Organic Farmers, Gardeners and Consumers. This site includes networking possibilities, discussion groups, statistical information, and educational books and videos. As well, there is a quarterly periodical available to download or subscribe to.

#### *InfoBasket*

This site is produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries, and acts as a portal for Agri-Food information on the Internet. There is a section devoted to Organics, and includes loads of related business planning information.

#### *Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada*

The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) is dedicated to enhancing the environmental and social integrity of agriculture. This will be achieved through scientific analyses of methods to improve the sustainability of farming. The results of this research will be made available to farmers and the public through this web site and web-based courses.

### **How-To Publications**

#### *Getting Started in Organic Farming*

<http://www.gks.com/library/transition.html>

### **Web sites**

#### *Natural Life*

<http://www.life.ca/nl/index.html>

#### *Canadian Organic Growers*

<http://www.cog.ca>

#### *InfoBasket*

<http://infobasket.gov.bc.ca/>

#### *Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada*

<http://www.organicagcentre.ca>

## Marketing and Promotion

### *Buy BC*

BUY BC is a promotional program designed to increase usage of B.C. food and beverage products sold in retail stores and in restaurants throughout B.C. The program's objective is to increase consumer awareness and preference for B.C. products by building a B.C. brand identity.

### *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Marketing Basics*

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Marketing Basics tells you what you need to know about positioning and marketing your product. It provides step-by-step instruction on putting together a promotion plan, information on managing a sales force and steps for matching your product or service with the customers who need it.

### *Marketing for the Self-Employed*

Marketing puts you in contact with the people who want to buy your products and services. If you can reach these customers effectively, you can ensure the success of your business. By using this book, you will learn the art of marketing from someone who's done it himself. Topics include: effective marketing, tools and tactics and time and money management

### *Marketing Masters*

Marketing Masters: The Best Ideas, Tips and Strategies from Canada's Savviest Marketers, features Profit Magazine's most popular and practical marketing stories, profiles and interviews. These are new and classic stories of marketing genius that offer timeless advice every entrepreneur can learn from and be inspired by.

### *Smart Marketing on a Small Budget*

This is a comprehensive guide to marketing small business, from developing a marketing plan and persuasive marketing communications, to writing and producing effective marketing communications on the computer, to handling face-to-face marketing opportunities. Part of "SOHO Solutions for Canadians" series.

### *12 Simple Steps to a Winning Marketing Plan*

This book is designed to help people who don't know much about marketing learn enough basic concepts to develop a good first draft of a marketing strategy for a company product.

### *Buy BC*

BC Agriculture Council  
#102 – 1482 Springfield Road  
Kelowna, BC, V1Y 5V3

Tel: (250) 763-9790

Fax: (250) 762-2997

<http://www.bcac.bc.ca/buybc>

Marketing Publications

### *The Complete Idiot's guide to Marketing Basics*

Published By: Alpha Books

ISBN: 0-02-861490-9

### *Marketing for the Self-Employed*

Publisher: Prima Publishing

ISBN: 0-7615-0592-X

<http://www.primapublishing.com>

### *Marketing Masters*

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons  
Canada Ltd.

ISBN: 0-471-64274-6

### *Smart Marketing on a Small Budget*

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Ryerson

ISBN: 0-07-560469-8

### *12 Steps to a Winning Marketing Plan*

Publisher: Probus Publishing

ISBN: 1-55738-297-2

*How-To / Educational continued****Strategic Marketing for the Digital Age***

As traditional mass marketing models do not hold up in a digital marketing environment, this book offers a new marketing model that uses digital and online technology. Includes information on the marketing applications of computer, digital, and online technologies, the use of digital and online marketing tools such as the internet, smart cards, e-mail, BBS systems, and CD-Roms, the importance of the customer database, and the hardware and software necessary to manage digital marketing.

**Training Programs*****Organic Gardening – Increasing Your Yield***

Bumper crops of fresh, organic produce can be a reality for you this harvest season. Learn the techniques organic farmers use to raise beautiful nutritious vegetables and fruit year round. Find out how to build your soil, avoid pests, plan your calendar year, save your own seed and plant difficult crops you thought you couldn't grow. Includes reference materials and a Saturday fieldtrip to a local organic farm.

***Strategic Marketing for the Digital Age***

Publisher: HarperCollins  
ISBN: 0-00-638637

***Training Programs******Organic Gardening – Increasing Your Yield***

Camosun College,  
Interurban Campus  
4461 Interurban Rd. RR3  
Victoria, BC, V8X 3X1  
Tel: (250) 592-1556  
Fax: (250) 370-3749  
<http://www.camosun.bc.ca>



## Contacts / Directories

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### Contacts

#### *Industry Competitiveness – Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries*

As one of the core business areas, the Industry Competitiveness Branch has the following:

**Mission:** To provide the business climate for a competitive market-responsive agri-food and fisheries sector, and safeguard the quality of British Columbia's agri-food products for consumers.

**Goal:** An agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food sector that is competitive in a global economy and provides economic benefit and stability to British Columbia's rural and coastal communities.

#### *AgriWeb Canada – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*

AgriWeb Canada is a national directory of Canadian agriculture and agri-food information resources available via the Internet. It is produced by librarians and information professionals and is regularly updated with new additions. Suggestions for additions of resources are welcome. Users can search AgriWeb Canada for resources by keyword, subject, author, geographic region. Users can also select recent additions of the last four weeks.

#### *Agri-Food Trade Services*

The Agri-Food Trade Service (ATS) improves government services to the British Columbia agri-food industry by providing a "single window" for service. Within the centre, marketing and trade officers assist agri-food companies to increase their exports by providing market intelligence and information by country and product, export training and counseling, and news about promotional events and shows.

### Contacts

#### *Industry Competitiveness – Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries*

808 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC, V8W 2Z7  
Tel: (250) 387-5121

<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/indcomp/index.htm>

#### *AgriWeb Canada*

[http://www.agr.gc.ca/agriweb/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.agr.gc.ca/agriweb/index_e.cfm)

#### *Agri-Food Trade Services*

Suite 420 – 4321 Still Creak Dr.  
Burnaby, BC, V5S 6S7  
Tel: (604) 666-6344  
Fax: (604) 666-7235

e-mail: [atsbc@agr.gc.ca](mailto:atsbc@agr.gc.ca)

<http://ats.agr.ca/region/home-e.htm>

*Contacts / Directories continued*

## **Certified Associations**

### *Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia*

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC) works on a voluntary basis to maintain a credible set of organic production and processing standards. COABC ensures compliance with the standards by administering the accreditation and auditing process in partnership with the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (BCMAFF).

The following are organic associations certified under the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia umbrella organization.

- British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture
- Cariboo Organic Producers Association
- Island Organic Producers Association
- North Okanagan Organic Association
- Organic Producers Association of Cawston and Keremeos
- Peace River Organic Producers Association
- Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association
- Comox Regional Organic Producers Society
- Boundary Organic Producers Association
- Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Society of BC

## **Certified Associations**

### *Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia*

4607 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 Vernon, BC, V1T 4K7  
 Tel: (250) 260-3006  
<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca>

### *British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture*

Box 1601,  
 Aldergrove, BC, V4W 2V1  
 Tel: (604) 322-1215  
 Fax: (604) 301-1017

### *Cariboo Organic Producers Association*

3680 Sunshine Crescent  
 Prince George, BC, V2N 5Y2  
 Tel: (250) 963-7398  
 Fax: (250)561-4434

### *Island Organic Producers Association*

Box 1000, Lasqueti Island, BC,  
 V0R 2J0 Tel: (250) 333-8785

### *North Okanagan Organic Association*

4607A 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 Vernon, BC, V1T 4K7  
 Tel: (250) 260-4429  
 Fax: (250) 260-4436

### *Organic Producers Association of Cawston and Keremeos*

RR #1 River Road  
 Keremeos, BC, V0X 1N0  
 Tel: (250) 499-7887  
 Fax: (250) 499-7889

### *Peace River Organic Producers Association*

Enterprise Centre,  
 10805 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4V6  
 Tel/Fax: (780) 353-3960

*Certified Association  
 Continued. next page*

## **Market Data / Statistics**

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### **Sales Forecasting**

Sales forecasting is the process of organizing and analyzing information in a way that makes it possible to estimate what your sales will be. For more information on sales forecasting, visit the Canada/BC Business Service Centre's web site at:

<http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/workshop/salefore.php>

### **Sources of Market Data**

#### *Agriculture Economic Statistics*

This publication presents annual estimates of net farm income; farm cash receipts; farm operating expenses and depreciation charges; the index of farm production; current values of farm capital; farm debt outstanding; the farm product price index; direct program payments; the production account; the balance sheet of the agricultural sector; the cash flow account; and wage rates for hired agricultural labour. Notes on the concepts and methods plus a listing of CANSIM databank numbers are included. Twice each year, updates are released which include new and revised estimates of these indicators.

#### *Census of Agriculture*

The Census of Agriculture collects and maintains comprehensive data on farms and the farm population. Data are available at the national level; by province and territory; at the census division level; at the census consolidated subdivision level; by federal electoral district; by enumeration area; and by user-determined areas.

### **Certified Associations cont'd**

#### *Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association*

Box 577 Keremeos, BC  
V0X 1N0  
Tel/Fax: (250) 499-7040

#### *Comox Regional Organic Producers Society*

PO Box 3609 Courtenay, BC,  
V9N 5M8  
Tel: (250) 334-9693  
Fax (250) 334-0216

#### *Boundary Organic Producers Association*

Box 1773, Rossland, BC,  
V0G 1Y0  
Tel: (250) 362-3386  
Fax: (250) 362-7375

#### *Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Society of BC*

49350 Prairie Central Rd, RR#1  
Chilliwack, BC V2P 6H3  
Tel/Fax: (604) 794-3999

### **Market Data / Statistics**

#### *Agriculture Economic Statistics*

Publisher: Statistics Canada  
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/21-018-XIE.htm>

#### *Census of Agriculture*

Advisory Services  
Statistics Canada  
600 - 300 West Georgia St.  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 6C7  
Toll Free: 1-800-263-1136  
Tel: (604) 666-3691  
Fax: (604) 666-4863  
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/census96/agri.htm>

*Market Data / Statistics continued**Research and Analysis Directorate (R&A)*

The mandate of the Research and Analysis Directorate (R&A) is to provide the department with top quality, relevant and timely economic information and advice on the agri-food sector and public policy, and to ensure that accurate, objective and credible information on the structural, economic and financial situation in the sector is generally and widely available.

*Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Corporate Strategic Plan*

The Agriculture and Agri-Food sector is the third largest employer in Canada. This publication contains information about the future of the agriculture sector, including exports, markets, the environment and statistical information.

*Organic Food and Farming in Canada*

Ecological Agriculture Projects of McGill University has assembled or summarized in this web site, some of the most interesting Canadian reports of the past decade related to organic farming in Canada.

*Research and Analysis**Directorate (R&A)*

Publisher: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

[http://www.agr.gc.ca/spb/rad-dra/home\\_e.php](http://www.agr.gc.ca/spb/rad-dra/home_e.php)

*Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Corporate Strategic Plan (latest edition)*

Publisher: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/csb/rpp/rppe.html>

*Organic Food and Farming in Canada*

[http://www.eap.mcgill.ca/rm/rm\\_p.htm](http://www.eap.mcgill.ca/rm/rm_p.htm)