

**RESOLUTION 10-23**  
**ORGANIC PRODUCTION CERTIFICATION STANDARDS AND**  
**PROVINCIALY REGULATED WEEDS**

**WHEREAS** organic producers must achieve organic certification through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and no other regulatory body; and

**WHEREAS** the CFIA establishes the Canadian Organic Standards and procedures for certification and maintenance of organic status; and

**WHEREAS** the provinces may enact legislation to control or destroy invasive species of concern; and

**WHEREAS** all producers, regardless of production method must comply with provincial invasive species legislation; and

**WHEREAS** the current organic management standards do not explicitly state that organic producers must be in compliance with provincial regulations regarding invasive species; and

**WHEREAS** an explicit standard for certification and maintenance of organic status regarding compliance with provincially mandated invasive species legislation would reinforce the need to effectively address regulated weeds.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**  
**THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST**

That Canada Food Inspection Agency add a requirement to the Canadian Organic Standards that requires the organic grower be compliant with any provincial legislation regarding invasive species in order to achieve and maintain organic certification.

**SPONSORED BY:** County of Grande Prairie

**MOVED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SECONDED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CARRIED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEFEATED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STATUS:** Federal

**DEPARTMENT:** Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
Agriculture and Agri Food Canada  
Minister of Health Canada

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Many municipalities in our province experience challenges with regulated weed control on certified organic lands. While it is important to be mindful that organic systems represent an alternative production system for producers to consider incorporating into their operations, the intent is not to remove the obligation that all agricultural producers have for sound environmental stewardship, including effective management of invasive species. The significant gap between organic regulations and the requirement to be compliant with provincial regulations is evident. To address this gap, we are proposing an addition to the Organic Standards as set out by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

Organic certification is obtained through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The Canada Organic Regime requires mandatory certification to the Canadian Organic Standards for organic products.

According to the Organic Production Systems - General principles and management standards, "Organic production is a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock and people."

CFIA delegates the authority for certification to specific certifying bodies that determine whether organic applicants meet CFIA's criteria for registration as a producer.

Certifying bodies also inspect for compliance with organic standards from time to time, for organic producers to maintain their organic certification. None of the standards specifically require addressing regulated weeds as governed by Provincial Acts. This is a concerning gap.

Active Certifying bodies in Alberta:

AOPA- Alberta Organic Producers  
Association CSI - Centre for Systems  
Integration ECOCERT  
Pro-Cert Organic Systems  
ICS - International Certification  
Services OCIA International Canada  
PACS Certified Organic - Pacific Agricultural Certification  
Society QAI - Quality Assurance International

According to the Standard, organic products referenced within are derived from a production system that provides control of pests including insects, weeds and disease through enhancement of biodiversity, recycling of plant

and animal residues, crop selection and rotation, water management, tillage and cultivation. Application of commercial herbicides is not permitted. Only substances listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311 - Organic Production Systems - Permitted Substances List may be used in organic production. In order to be compliant with the Standards, the producer must have an Organic Plan outlining the details of transition, production, preparation and management practices. This plan is updated annually to address changes to the plan, problems encountered in carrying out the plan and measures to overcome the problems.

Section 5.6 of the Standard states:

5.6.1 Practices to control pests, including insects, diseases and weeds, shall focus on organic management practices that enhance crop health and reduce losses due to weeds, disease, insects and other pests. Management practices include cultural practices (for example, crop rotations, establishment of a balanced ecosystem, and use of resistant varieties), mechanical techniques (for example, sanitation measures, cultivation, trapping, mulching and grazing) and physical techniques (for example, flaming against weeds and the use of heat against diseases).

5.6.2 When organic management practices alone cannot prevent or control crop pests, including insects, diseases and weeds, a biological or botanical substance, or other substance listed in Table 4.2 or CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used. Conditions that led to the use of substances shall be documented in the organic plan.

As can be seen, there is no specific direction or requirement to be compliant with Provincial Legislation. This can lead to the misunderstanding that the federal standards are the only ones that an organic producer needs to be in compliance with.

It is important to note that according to the CFIA, invasive species management costs the agricultural industry in Canada 2.2 billion dollars each year, in lost production, lower quality, and increased costs of weed control and harvesting. These costs do not capture the costs of reduced habitat and sustenance available for native species, be they plant, insect or animal, nor does it capture the costs of reduced property values due to invasive species, or increased costs for non-agricultural entities such as municipalities or individuals for weed control.

The *Alberta Weed Control Act* (WCA) enables the Minister's authority to declare noxious or prohibited noxious weeds. The WCA states that prohibited noxious weeds must be destroyed and noxious weeds must be controlled. The WCA directs all landowners to comply with control or eradication of noxious and/or prohibited noxious weeds. It is enabling legislation that allows municipalities to enforce the WCA.

There are other provinces in Canada that have legislated weed control, it is not just Alberta specific. Given that organic producers are federally regulated, and the various provincial Weed Control Acts are provincially regulated, there can be a misconception that organic producers are exempt from following provincial legislation. The standards for compliance with provincial legislation must be country-wide and stated explicitly.

We are requesting that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency add a requirement to the Canadian Organic Standards that requires the organic grower be compliant with the *Alberta Weed Control Act* and the Alberta Provincial Regulation in order to achieve and maintain organic certification to alleviate this confusion.