

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** New Canadian Organic Standards 2020

**Country:** Canada

**Post:** Montreal

**Report Category:** Policy and Program Announcements

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**Report Highlights:**

On December 11, 2020, Canada published the first update of the Canadian Organic Standards since 2015, updating a range of livestock measures and permitted substances lists among other changes. These changes will be reviewed during future equivalence reviews with Canada, however they do not affect the status of current organic trade under the United States – Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement.

On December 11, 2020, the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) published a revised version of the [Canadian Organic Standards](#) – the set of principles, guidelines, and permitted substances at the heart of the [Canada Organic Regime](#) (COR). A concurrent Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) [notice](#) officially communicated the changes to organic stakeholders, highlighting the implementation period (generally 12 months) for the new versions of the standards.

All organic operators subject to the COR must be fully compliant with the new versions of the standards by November 26, 2021. Operations certified organic before the revised standards were announced on December 11, 2020, are encouraged to comply with the new versions of the standards throughout the implementation period. Organic products and ingredients certified organic under the previous standards (i.e., before December 11, 2020), can continue to be marketed as organic even after the implementation period ends on December 11, 2021.

Included within the 2020 revisions to the Canadian Organic Standards are measures to increase flexibility for organic operations during periods of natural disaster as well as to establish organic operators' responsibility to protect and promote biodiversity. The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) has published a [side-by-side comparison](#) of the original and revised sections of the Canadian Organic Standards, highlighting the 2020 modifications.

## **Background**

Organic products trade between the United States and Canada has been facilitated under an organic equivalency arrangement since 2009, when both countries recognized the other's organic certification system as comparable. Please refer to the [USDA](#) and [CFIA](#) websites for additional information on the United States Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement (USCOEA), including which products are excluded and how to market compliant products as "organic" in each country.

The [Canadian General Standards Board](#) is the government entity responsible for Canada's set of organic standards, in support of economic, regulatory, procurement, health, safety, and environmental interests. Implementing language for Canada's organic standards is found in [Part 13](#) of the comprehensive [Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#).

Canada defines organic production as a "holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock, and people. The principal goal of organic production is to develop operations that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment."

## **Attachments:**

No Attachments.