

# Funding of the Canadian Organic Standards

## The Ask:

- We are calling on the federal government to commit to **consistent, multi-year financial support for the Canadian Organic Regime.**
- The estimated cost to the government for the recurring, 5-year review and maintenance of the Canadian Organic Standards (CAN/CGSB 32.310 and CAN/CBSB 32.311) is \$1,000,000.
- Without the Standards, there would be no Canadian Organic brand. The basis of the brand, the Canadian Organic Logo, is owned by the Government of Canada. It is time for the Canadian Government to invest in its own success. **Standards funding should be the responsibility of the Government of Canada**, as it is elsewhere in the world.

## The Issue:

The Organic Products Regulations (OPRs) are enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). All agricultural products represented as 'organic' destined for import, export or inter-provincial trade must comply with the OPRs which in turn require compliance with the Canadian Organic Standards (COS or Standards). The OPRs were established in 2009 through an industry-government partnership.

The Standards are the backbone of a growing domestic and export-oriented industry, ensure Canadian agricultural production is sustainable, they protect consumers against misleading claims and ensure food safety.

Both Standards (CAN/CGSB 32.310 and CAN/CGSB 32.311) must undergo a technical committee review every five years. The penalty for failing to do so is non-compliance and Standards that are deemed unenforceable. If this occurs, *Canada will not be able to maintain the equivalency arrangements with our international trading partners.*

The Canadian organic industry is already at a disadvantage with our largest international competitors. The United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program invests

\$500,000 per year for the maintenance of the US organic standards. The EU also accepts financial responsibility of the maintenance of its organic standards.

The last review was published on November 25, 2015. The next full review must be completed by November 25, 2020. The cost of this review is approximately \$1,000,000. <sup>1</sup> In Canada, industry stakeholders are actively involved in the review of the Standards, contributing over \$500,000 of in-kind expertise, time, and travel expenses to participate in Standards' Working Groups. The sector carries its fair share of the cost of maintaining the Standards and is asking the Government of Canada to fund its portion.

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<sup>1</sup> Of this amount, the CGSB collects \$600,000 in services fees (daily rate of \$1400). There is an additional cost of \$400,000 for organizing industry consultations and conducting environmental impact assessments of the agricultural practices that can modernize organic agriculture.

2