

## **Notice on the Coming Changes to the EU Organic Standards and Equivalency Arrangement**

(Summary prepared for COTA by Ash Street Organics)

After many years of negotiations, the European Union has passed the adoption of a new organic regulation (EC 2018/848) in an effort to create more clarity and level the playing field between EC countries in terms of their interpretation and application of the regulations. This regulation comes into force in January of 2021.

The EU is also making changes with respect to the importation of organic products. All existing administrative trade arrangements will expire in 2025 and will need to be replaced with 'legally binding bilateral / international agreements' that have the force of treaty law. If a country does not succeed in finalizing such an agreement with the EU before 2025, then any organic operators in that country wishing to import to the EU must acquire organic certification directly to the EU standards via an EU-accredited certification body.

To date only Chile has finalized an organic trade agreement of this nature with the EU. These agreements are to be independent and free-standing -- not tied to other trade agreements like CETA. All agreements must be mutual, in other words no unilateral or 'one-way recognition' will be allowed.

While Canada's trade representatives indicate that the EU has been vague about the details of the standards and whether or not the scope will change, a review of the new regulation EC 2018/848 indicates that the scope of the organic regulation will be extended to include the following products: yeast used as food or feed; edible parts of plants and products produced from them (e.g. maté, sweetcorn, vine leaves, palm hearts, hop shoots), sea salt and other salts for food and feed; natural gums and resins; beeswax; essential oils; plant-based traditional herbal preparations and a number of other products not currently in the scope of the COR (e.g. cork stoppers, cotton, wool, raw hides). In addition, a presentation prepared by the EC indicated that there will be 'new provisions on the authorization of non-organic ingredients of agricultural origin.'

In order to accurately assess the impact this will have on Canadian organic operators, a full technical review and comparison of COR against the new EU organic regulations will need to be undertaken. An important question for the EU is whether or not there will be additional regulations other than EC 2018/848 that will need to be assessed for compliance. Previously, the EU generated multiple separate Commission Regulations as 'implementing rules' for other organic regulations and so for the most efficient comparison Canada should have a clear understanding of ALL regulations on organics that will be in place in 2021.