



Guide to the Canadian Organic Standards 2026

***PART 1 - Guide 310 - General Principles and Management Standards
2026 | cog.ca/guide-to-cos***

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Preface

To label a product with the Canada Organic logo, producers are required, by law, to follow the Canadian Organic Standards. These apply whether you are growing vegetables, raising laying hens or processing convenience food. The standards, however, can be challenging to read, but it is critical that producers understand these documents. That's where *The Guide to the Canadian Organic Standards* comes in. Our goal is to help readers understand the standards. We explain what the standards mean and the reasoning behind them. Sometimes, we provide background information; other times, we give examples that are relevant to producers and help operators applying the standards.

Throughout the guide, we provide excerpts from the Canadian Organic Standards adjacent to our interpretation and guidance. Note that to understand the standards fully, readers should consult the entire standards. The most current editions can be found at: <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/food-labels/organic-products/standards>.

The 2026 Canadian Organic Standards come into force in March 2026, however current farmers, processors and other operators have a grace period of one year to adapt their practices to meet the new standard.

The guide includes the interpretation of the standards by the Organic Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC), which is overseen by the Organic Federation of Canada in partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. A link is provided in the footer of each page so readers can learn more about the Canadian Organic Standards by reading Q&As. The questions are submitted by the public and the SIC's answers are binding.

We hope *The Guide to the Canadian Organic Standards* will help Canadians understand the standards. Our goal is to help enable farmers, ranchers, processors and other producers to adapt their practices so their products can be certified as organic to the national standard. For consumers, the guide can explain how organic products differ from non-organic, and thereby highlight the value of choosing organic products.

For more information, contact Canadian Organic Growers at cog.ca or the Organic Federation of Canada at organicfederation.ca

Janet Wallace
Editor

Acknowledgements

THE GUIDE TO THE CANADIAN ORGANIC STANDARDS

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Published April 2026 by Canadian Organic Growers.

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The methods and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Canadian Organic Growers Inc. or the Organic Federation of Canada. Use of any products or methods mentioned in this book cannot be a guarantee that an operation will meet certification standards or that they will work on a particular farm. It is the responsibility of the organic farmer to ensure that any methods used meet Organic Standards of the export destination country.

Guide to the Guide

The Guide includes two documents:

- Part 1 - Guide to Organic Principles and Management Standards—CAN/CGSB-32.310
- Part 2 - Guide to Lists of Permitted Substances—CAN/CGSB-32.311.

In the left-hand column, you will find the wording of the 2026 Canadian Organic Standards. The right-hand column contains our guidance, including explanations, examples and clarifications regarding prescribed practices and permitted substances.

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0. Introduction



0. Introduction

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
0.1	Description 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. The principal goal of organic production is to develop operations that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment. CAN/CGSB-32.310, Organic Production Systems – General Principles and Management Standards, describes the principles and management standard of organic production systems. CAN/CGSB-32.311, Organic Production Systems – Permitted Substances Lists, provides lists of substances that are allowed for use in organic production systems. As is the case for all products sold in Canada, organic inputs—such as, but not limited to, fertilizers, feed supplements, pesticides, soil amendments, veterinary treatments, processing additives or aids, sanitizing and cleaning material—and products of organic agriculture, such as, but not limited to, feed and food, should comply with all applicable regulatory requirements.
0.2	General principles of organic production Organic Agriculture is based on the following general principles: Principle of health – Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plants, animals, humans and the planet as one and indivisible. Principle of ecology – Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them. Principle of care – Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment. Principle of fairness – Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.
0.3	Organic practices

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
	Neither this standard nor organic products produced in accordance with this standard represent specific claims about the healthiness, safety and nutrition of such organic products. Management methods are carefully selected in order to restore and then sustain ecological stability within the operation and the surrounding environment. Soil fertility is maintained and enhanced by promoting optimal biological activity within the soil and conservation of soil resources. Pests, including insects, weeds and diseases, are managed using biological and mechanical control methods, and cultural practices that include minimized tillage, crop selection and rotation, recycling of plant and animal residues, water management, augmentation of beneficial insects to encourage a balanced predator–prey relationship, the promotion of biological diversity and ecologically based pest management. Under a system of organic production, livestock are provided with living conditions and space allowances appropriate to their behavioural requirements and organically produced feed. These practices strive to minimize stress, promote good health and prevent disease. Organic products are produced and processed under a system that strives to preserve the integrity of the principles in this standard. Organic practices and this standard cannot ensure that organic products are entirely free of residues of substances prohibited by this standard and of other contaminants, since exposure to such compounds from the atmosphere, soil, ground water and other sources may be beyond the control of the operator. The practices permitted by this standard are designed to ensure the least possible residues at the lowest possible levels. In the development of the standard, it was recognized that differences between Canada's agricultural regions require varying practices to meet production needs. This standard is intended for certification and regulation to prevent deceptive practices in the marketplace. The certification process assesses operational compliance. Certification is granted to compliant products. Certification bodies must allow a period of up to 12 months after the publication date of an amendment to this standard and to CAN/CGSB-32.311 for an applicant to come into compliance with any changes to the requirements.
0.4	Notes and examples in this standard In this standard, notes and examples are used for giving additional information intended to assist the understanding or use of the document and are not a normative part of the standard.



1. Scope

COG
Canadian Organic Growers
Cultivons Biologique Canada

OFC FBC
ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA
FÉDÉRATION BIOLOGIQUE DU CANADA

1. Scope

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
1.1	This National Standard of Canada applies to the following organic products: a) Unprocessed plants and plant products, livestock and livestock products, to the extent that the principles of production and specific verification rules for them are described in the standard; b) Processed agricultural crop and livestock products intended for human consumption or use and produced from the items mentioned in Clause 1.1 a); c) Livestock feed; d) Processed agricultural crop and livestock products intended for animal consumption or use and produced from the items mentioned in 1.1 a).
1.2	Organic products referenced in this standard are produced from a production system that: a) seeks to nurture ecosystems through its management practices in order to achieve sustainable productivity; and b) 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.
1.3	Units of measure Quantities and dimensions in this standard are given in metric units with yard/pound equivalents, mostly obtained through soft conversion, given in parentheses. The metric units shall be regarded as being official in the event of dispute or unforeseen difficulty arising from the conversion.
1.4	Prohibited materials or techniques in organic production and preparation If producing or preparing organic products, the following materials or techniques are prohibited since they are incompatible with the general principles of organic production: a) all products of and materials from genetic engineering (GE), as defined in this standard, and as specified in subclauses 4.1.3, 5.1.2 and 6.2.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; b) all products, materials or processes intentionally using nanotechnology, as defined in this standard, with the following exceptions: 1) naturally occurring nano-sized particles or those produced incidentally through processes such as grinding flour; 2) contact surfaces, such as equipment, work surfaces or packaging, where the transference of nano-sized particles to organic crops,

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
	livestock or products is unintended and unlikely to occur; c) irradiation, as defined in this standard, for the treatment of organic products and inputs used in the production of organic products, except as specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311; d) cloned livestock (see definition in Clause 3) and its descendants; e) equipment, harvest and storage containers, storage facilities and packaging materials treated with fungicides, preservatives, fumigants and pesticides not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311, except as permitted in 8.2.3 and 8.3.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.310.
1.5	Prohibited substances in organic production and preparation In addition to Clause 1.4, when producing or preparing organic products, the following substances are prohibited since they are incompatible with the general principles of organic production: a) soil amendments, such as fertilizer or composted plant and animal material, that contain a substance not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311; b) sewage sludge; c) any crop production aids or substances not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311; d) plant, fungal and animal growth regulators, except as specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311; e) veterinary drugs, including antibiotics and parasiticides, except as permitted by this standard; f) non-organic ingredients, food additives and processing aids used in organic product preparation, including sulphates, sulphites, nitrates and nitrites, except as permitted by this standard or specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311; g) formulants except as specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311.
NOTE	See the Permitted Substances Lists Decision Tree in Annex B for a methodology that may assist in the completion of input reviews.

A close-up photograph of several speckled beans in their pods. The pods are red and yellow, and the beans are white with dark brown speckles. The background is a light-colored, textured surface.

2. Normative References

2. Normative References

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
2	Normative references The following normative documents contain provisions that, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this National Standard of Canada. The referenced documents may be obtained from the sources noted below.
NOTE	The addresses provided below were valid at the date of publication of this standard. An undated reference is to the latest edition or revision of the reference or document in question, unless otherwise specified by the authority applying this standard. A dated reference is to the specified revision or edition of the reference or document in question.
2.1	Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)
	CAN/CGSB-32.311 – <i>Organic production systems – Permitted substances lists.</i> CAN/CGSB-32.312 – <i>Organic production systems: Aquaculture—General principles, management standards and permitted substances lists.</i>
2.1.1	Source
	The above may be obtained from the Canadian General Standards Board, Sales Centre, Ottawa, ON Canada K1A 0S5. Telephone: 1-800-665-2472. E-mail: ncr.cgsb-ongc@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca. Web site: www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/index-eng.html.
2.2	Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
	<i>Health of Animals Act (S.C. 1990, c. 21)</i> <i>Health of Animals Regulations (C.R.C., c. 296)</i> <i>Safe Food for Canadians Act (S.C. 2012, c. 24)</i> <i>Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SOR/2018-108), Part 13.</i> <i>Seeds Regulations (CRC c1400)</i>

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
2.2.1	Source
	The above may be obtained from CFIA at http://www.inspection.gc.ca/ or from Justice Laws Web site at http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca .
2.3	IFOAM Organics International
	<i>Principles of Organic Agriculture.</i>
2.3.1	Source
	The above may be obtained from the IFOAM Web site at https://www.ifoam.bio/why-organic/shaping-agriculture/four-principles-organic .
2.4	National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)
	In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between this standard and a Code of Practice listed below, this standard shall take precedence. <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Rabbits</i> <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Bison</i>
2.4.1	Source
	The above may be obtained from the NFACC Web site at https://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice .
2.5	Animal Health Canada



	2026 Canadian Organic Standards
	<i>Canadian Livestock Transport Course</i>
2.5.1	Source
	The above may be obtained from the Animal Health Canada web site at https://campus.animalhealthcanada.ca/ .

3. Terms & Definitions



3. Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this National Standard of Canada, the following terms and definitions apply.

	2026 Canadian Organic Standards	Guidance
aeroponics	soil-free cultivation method whereby plants are suspended with their roots exposed to the air.	Aeroponics is not allowed under the Canadian Organic Standard.
agricultural products, agricultural ingredients	pertaining to crops and livestock and any products, including processed ingredients, resulting from crops and livestock. Processed agricultural ingredients and products may be manipulated physically or biologically but are no longer considered to be agricultural products or agricultural ingredients if they are more than minimally processed or if they are chemically altered in a way that creates new compounds. For guidance on what is considered "minimal processing," see Annex B - Minimum food processes of CAN/CGSB-32-310.	Agricultural products can include processed products made from agricultural raw ingredients. For example, milk and wheat are agricultural products, and so are cheese and bread. This does not include products resulting from wild harvesting/crafting. In 2025, this definition was fleshed out to help identify when a product or ingredient loses its "agricultural" status especially if heavily processed. This should reduce the misuse of the "commercially available" clause which allows the use of non-organic agricultural ingredients in place of organic versions in >95% products. This allowance was always intended for organic agricultural commodities not overly refined ingredients derived from agricultural commodities.
agro-ecosystem	system consisting of the form, function, interaction and equilibrium of the biotic and abiotic elements present within the environment of a given agricultural operation.	The agro-ecosystem is "the ecosystem composed of cultivated land and surrounding or intermixed uncultivated areas, the plants contained or grown thereon, and their associated animal," according to TERMIUM Plus®, the Government of Canada's terminology and linguistic data bank (2020). Biotic is defined as living components, such as plants and animals including bacteria, fungi and other micro-organisms. Abiotic elements are the non-living physical and chemical factors, such as water, air, sunlight and minerals. Organic agriculture strives to manage this balance.

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allopathic	use of allopathy.	“Allopathy” describes conventional Western medicine using drugs to counteract disease.
allopathy	method of treating disease with substances that produce a reaction or effects different from those caused by the disease itself.	
annual seedling	young plant grown from seed that will complete its life cycle or produce a yield and be able to be harvested within the same crop year or season in which it was planted.	
antibiotic	any drug or combination of drugs which is prepared from certain microorganisms, or which formerly was prepared from microorganisms but is now made synthetically, and which possesses inhibitory action on the growth of other microorganisms including fungi, bacteria and viruses.	
apiculture	management and production of honeybees, queens and their products. Examples are honey, beeswax, pollen, royal jelly, propolis and bee venom.	
beak treatment	blunting of the beak using a non-invasive procedure (i.e. infra-red).	
beak trimming	removal of a portion of the beak, usually by hot blade, an instrument that simultaneously cuts and cauterizes.	
bedding	material added to livestock housing environments for the purpose of adding comfort and to encourage natural behaviours. Examples: chopped straw, wood shavings.	Could also be non-agricultural material such as sand, cellulose, or paper products. Details are provided in 6.7.1.g, 6.13 and 7.7.4.7.
biobased	substance that is produced from a plant, animal or microbial source.	

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biodegradable	crop and livestock inputs and production aids capable of microbial decomposition within 24 months in soil (with the exception of plant biomass), one month in aerated water and two months in anaerobic water, with minimal impact on the environment.	The term “biodegradable” is used in reference to bio-based mulches and biodegradable planting containers and surfactants. For details, refer to the listings for “Mulches” and “Biodegradable plant containers in PSL Table 4.2 and “Surfactants, biodegradable” in Table 7.3.
biological	pertaining to multicellular or unicellular organisms (or their components), such as animals, plants, fungi, bacteria, proteins, nucleic acids and viruses, etc.	
buffer zone	clearly defined and identifiable boundary area that separates an organic production unit from adjacent non-organic areas.	Buffer zones are boundary areas that are established by the organic operator to reduce the potential for contamination of prohibited substances from neighbouring activities, such as spray drift of herbicides used on neighbouring crops, roadside maintenance, or run-off of prohibited fertilizers. The plants (including seed, cash crops and forage) grown on the buffer zone cannot be used or sold as organic. However, regarding seeds: if an organic version of the same seed variety cannot be found from another source, seed grown in the buffer zone can be used on the farm but not sold as organic. The farmer would need to conduct an organic seed search for the same seed in organic form and provide documentation to show an organic option was not possible. Alternatives, such as hedgerows, windbreaks or solid fencing, can eliminate the need for buffer zones, as well as declarations from neighbours that establish there is no risk posed by neighbouring activities. Many organic operations do not need buffer zones due to the site’s natural topography, existing vegetation, or roadside setbacks that help isolate organic activities. Buffer zones are not the same as isolation distances which require

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		a GE risk management program to be in place if there are GE crops planted within the isolation distance.
carbohydrate	sugar or starch compound, such as dextrose (glucose).	
cloned animals	identical animals resulting from human manipulation of embryos and embryo transfer, using techniques such as somatic cell nuclear transfer, embryonic cell nuclear transfer or embryo splitting	
colony	typically an aggregate of several thousand worker bees, drones, and a queen bee living together in a hive or in any other dwelling as one social unit.	Although “hive” and “colony” are sometimes used interchangeably, in the Standard, “hive” refers to the structure containing the colony of bees.
commercially available	documented ability to obtain a production input or an ingredient in an appropriate form, quality, quantity or variety, irrespective of cost, in order to fulfill an essential function in organic production or preparation.	When determining what substances are permitted, various factors are considered (see details in Clause 10 of CGSB 32.310). It is important that the standards have integrity but are also realistic. For example, if growers were required to use only certified organic seed, this would limit their choice of varieties (as of 2026). A compromise is to require certified organic seed unless it is not commercially available for particular varieties. In this case, operators need to demonstrate that they have searched for, but could not find an organic source. It doesn’t matter if the preferred source, such as the organic seed in the example above, is much more expensive than alternatives: cost is not a factor when determining commercial availability. But if an organic product or seed cannot be imported into Canada due to import restrictions, it would be considered to be unavailable commercially.
commingling	mixing of or physical contact between bulk, unbound or unpackaged organic products and non-organic products during	

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	production, preparation, transportation, or storage.	
compost	product of a carefully managed aerobic process by which biological materials are digested by microorganisms.	Details about composting can be found in Table 4.2 of the PSL.
compost tea	liquid soil amendment or foliar feed used to promote beneficial bacterial growth that is created by steeping mature compost in water.	For details, see Compost tea in Table 4.2 of the PSL.
compromised animal	as defined in Health of Animals Regulations Part XII (Transport of Animals), or generally an animal that exhibits any signs of infirmity, illness, injury, or of a condition that indicates that it has a reduced capacity to withstand transport.	Compromised and unfit animals are specific terms to describe animals that are not in sufficiently good condition to be transported, unless for veterinary care. These terms align with the federal regulations for livestock transport. The terms help operators judge whether an animal can be transported according to the COS and are used in clause 6.5.
crop rotation	practice of alternating crops grown in a specific field in a planned sequence and in successive crop years so that crops of the same species or family are not continuously grown in the same field. Perennial cropping systems employ techniques such as alley cropping, intercropping and hedgerows to introduce biological diversity in lieu of crop rotation.	A well-designed crop rotation has many benefits including: • controlling weeds, diseases and insect pests; • managing nutrients in a way that reduces leaching and loss, while providing a slow release of nutrients as needed; • fixing nitrogen from the air and making it available for following crops; • increasing or maintaining sufficient levels of organic matter in the soil, and • increasing both biodiversity and income diversity on the farm.
derived from biological or mineral sources	isolated/extracted from primary biological or mineral sources and arising directly from biological or geological processes without creating new chemical compounds. See CAN/CGSB: 32.310 Annex B Permitted Substances Decision Tree.	
disbudding	a procedure that removes the horn bud (from which the horn	

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	grows) before it attaches to the skull, which usually occurs at 2 months in cattle and at 21 days of age in goats. When horns are removed after the horn bud attaches to the skull, it is called dehorning.	
environmental enrichment (livestock)	provision of safe materials or objects to an animal's environment that encourage the expression of natural behaviour and exercise. The materials or objects shall be appropriate for the livestock production system and stage of production and do not include functional equipment or other objects or materials required by this standard.	
feed additive	substance added to feed in small quantities to fulfil a specific nutritional or non-nutritional need. Examples are essential nutrients in the form of amino acids or vitamins and minerals, and non-nutritive additives such as anticaking agents and antioxidants.	An example of a feed additive is a probiotic which aids in digestion of feed.
feed supplement	feed that is used in conjunction with other feeds to improve the nutritive balance of the total and that is intended to be: a) fed undiluted as a supplement to other feeds, b) available separately and offered free choice, along with other parts of the ration, or c) further diluted and mixed to produce a complete feed. NOTE: In Canada, the Feeds Act requires that the resulting feed is acceptable for registration.	An example of a feed supplement is a premix containing vitamins and minerals that may be missing in the feed.
fermentation	conversion of a carbohydrate into simpler or more complex carbon-based compounds by an enzyme or enzymes produced by microorganisms. For example, sugars can be fermented in the presence of yeast to produce alcohol or acetic acid along with carbon dioxide. Fermentation followed by extraction and purification can isolate the substance from other products of	

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	fermentation and impurities; this can be used to produce compounds such as enzymes, antibiotics, amino acids and organic acids (e.g., citric, gibberellic, lactic acids). Also known as microbial fermentation or biofermentation.	
fertilizer	single or blended substance composed of one or more recognized plant nutrients.	On organic farms, nutrients are supplied primarily through crop rotations, ploughdown crops (i.e., green manures); the application of compost; and the incorporation of other plant residues (such as mulch) into the soil. Certain fertilizers can be used at times to supplement nutrients. Table 4.2 (Column 1) of the PSL contains a list of permitted fertilizers and the conditions in which they can be used. In general, permitted fertilizers are made from mined or biological substances and are not chemically treated.
filtrate	liquid that passes through an osmosis filter in the production of maple or other tree sap syrup.	
flight zone	the flight zone is the distance at which an animal moves away from another animal or human. The size of the flight zone reflects the species, the animal's age and past experiences, and the relationship between the animal and the handler.	Flight zone is used in Clause 6.5 (regarding livestock handling and transport) to describe best practices for safe animal handling with minimal stress.
food additive	has the same meaning as in B.01.001 of the Food and Drug Regulations.	The Food and Drug Regulations (C.R.C. c.870 – laws-lois.justic.gc.ca) define “food additive” to mean “any substance the use of which results, or may reasonably be expected to result, in it or its by-products becoming a part of or affecting the characteristics of a food, but does not include: a) any nutritive material that is used, recognized or commonly sold as an article or ingredient of food; b) vitamins, mineral nutrients and amino acids, other than

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		those listed in the tables to Division 16; c) spices, seasonings, flavouring preparations, essential oils, oleoresins and natural extractives; d) agricultural chemicals, other than those listed in the tables to Division 16; e) food packaging materials and components thereof; and f) drugs recommended for administration to animals that may be consumed as food. Table 6.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 identifies ingredients classified as food additives that are permitted in organic preparation. In addition to the substances listed, any product which has been certified organic can also be used as a food additive.
food-grade	designation used to identify that a substance (for example, a cleaning material, gas, etc.) or material (for example, a counter, containers, a conveyor, etc.) may come in contact with food, food contact surfaces or is safe for human consumption.	
forage	vegetative material in fresh, dried or ensiled state that is fed to livestock, for example, pasture, hay or silage.	
formulants used in crop production aids	any component of a production aid (CAN/CGSB-32.311 Table 4.2 Column 2) added for its functional effect on the input substance, such as stabilizers, surfactants, or spreaders. These formulants will not have an active effect on pests.	The definitions clearly limit the formulant to a functional effect on the substance, thereby discouraging the misuse of formulants as active ingredients (i.e., formulants cannot be used as a primary source of nutrient or pest control).
formulants used in soil amendments	any component added to a soil amendment (CAN/CGSB-32.311, Table 4.2 Column 1) for its functional effect on the input substance, such as preservatives or pH adjusters. These formulants will not chemically react with the active components or otherwise modify the soil amendment's capacity to change soil fertility, chemistry or tilth.	

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frass	a mixture of insect excreta, insect parts and exoskeletons, as well as undigested feed and bedding.	
genetic engineering also commonly known as resulting in Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	artificial manipulation of living cells for the purpose of altering its genome constitutes genetic engineering and refers to a set of techniques from modern biotechnology by which the genetic material of an organism is changed in a way that does not occur other than through traditional breeding by multiplication or natural recombination. The genome is considered an indivisible entity; artificial technical/physical insertions, deletions, or rearrangements of elements of the genome constitute genetic engineering. Techniques developed in the future may be considered genetic engineering. Examples of the techniques used in genetic engineering include, but are not limited to: • genome/gene editing techniques, such as but not limited to CRISPR, that replace one DNA sequence with another, transposes, deletes or adds a gene sequence or a part of gene sequence; • recombinant DNA (rDNA) techniques that use vector systems; • Cisgenesis; • Intragenesis; • Agro-infiltration; • techniques involving the direct introduction into the organism of hereditary materials prepared by whatever means, inside or outside the organism; • cell fusion (including protoplast fusion) or hybridization techniques that overcome natural physiological, reproductive or recombination barriers, where the donor cells/protoplasts do not fall within the same taxonomic family or are created outside, or manipulated within, the organism through techniques such as, but not limited to,	One of the latest gene editing technologies is Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR). Many people argue that CRISPR is not genetic engineering because the change is made within an organism of a species. In the Canadian Organic Standard, the position is that even though CRISPR is done within a taxonomic family, it is not accomplished through traditional breeding and selection. Hence like the earlier techniques, CRISPR gene editing using the technologies of inserting, deleting, rearranging genes does not abide by the precautionary principle of respecting life as we know it. The older technologies include: • Recombinant DNA (rDNA) is DNA that has been constructed from multiple sources, creating DNA sequences that do not naturally occur within the taxonomic family. A vector system is a method of delivery of the GE transformation using an organism from outside of the plant's taxonomic family. • Cell fusion is a general term that includes protoplast fusion and cytoplasm fusion techniques. Protoplast fusion is the fusion of two somatic cells in vitro to produce a hybrid cell. Cytoplasm fusion does not change the nuclear DNA but introduces extra-chromosomal DNA from the cell organelles of the other cell. • Polyploidy induction is a technique used to overcome sterility that often results when a hybrid is created. • Mutagenesis is the application of irradiation or harsh chemicals to seed to produce a mutation in the plant. An

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	synthetic biology. Unless the donor/recipient organism is created from any of the above techniques, examples of techniques not covered by this definition include: • in vitro fertilization; • conjugation, transduction, transformation, or any other natural process; • polyploidy induction; • cell fusion (including protoplast fusion) or hybridization techniques where the donor cells/protoplasts are in the same taxonomic family and not created outside, or manipulated within, the organism through techniques such as, but not limited to, synthetic biology.	example is mutagenic imidazolinone-tolerant wheat. Targeted mutagenesis uses GE technology, such as zinc finger nuclease technology, to produce the desired mutation. Marker-assisted mutagenesis uses antibiotic markers to identify when a mutation has succeeded. • Cisgenesis is genetic engineering of the plant's own DNA or RNA. An example is RNA interference, which stops the plant's RNA from initiating a DNA sequence.
grazing season	the period of time when pasture is available for grazing due to local seasonal climate, available moisture, soil condition, availability of forage and other land access constraints. Grazing season dates may vary because of seasonal variations or extreme weather events and may not be continuous. The grazing season may be extended, for example by grazing stockpiled pasture or annual crops, as outlined in the operation's organic system plan.	The addition of a definition of grazing season helps clarify when ruminants, and other grazing animals, are expected to be getting forage from pasture.
herbivore	animal that feeds chiefly on plants.	
hive	human-constructed housing for bees including related components.	A colony of bees lives within a hive, but the term "hive" refers to the structure that houses the colony.
hydroponic production	plants grown in hydroponic production systems mainly draw their nutrients from supplied solutions of soluble nutrients. The hydroponic growing system is characterized by a growing medium which can vary and can be as diverse as an aqueous matrix, or an	Hydroponic production is not allowed under the Canadian Organic Standard.

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	inert material (e.g., rockwool), or carbon-based material (e.g., coir) and any combination thereof, and may or may not contain soil.	
incidental additives	substances used in organic processing facilities that have the potential to remain present in organic products as residues. Examples are: hand products (cleaners, antiseptics, lotions, barrier creams), boiler water treatment compounds, water treatment compounds, lubricants (release agents, solvents) and non-food chemicals (sanitizers, disinfectants, cleaning agents and detergents).	See CAN/CGSB-32.310 8.1.2 for details on what is permitted and what is not
ingredient	substance, including a food additive, used in the manufacture or preparation of a product. The substance is present in the final product, possibly in a modified form.	
input	substance used in production or preparation. Examples are: fertilizers, feed supplements, pesticides, soil amendments, veterinary treatments, processing aids, sanitizing and cleaning materials.	
irradiation	refers to treatment of food with ionizing radiation (see definition of 'radiation').	Food irradiation is the treatment of food with ionizing radiation for the purpose of killing bacteria, mould, parasites and insects. Prepackaged foods which have been irradiated are required to be labelled. Irradiation is not permitted in the preparation of organic foods (1.4.c.).
isolation distance	distance established to segregate an organic crop from a commercialized GE crop of the same crop type. An isolation distance is the shortest distance from the edge of an organic crop to the edge of the nearest GE crop of that crop type.	Whereas buffer zones separate an organic operation from various threats from neighbouring non-organic farms (e.g., herbicide drift, fertilizer run-off), an "isolation distance" is used to protect organic crops from contamination from GE crops. The term "isolation distance" comes from seed saving, where it refers to the distance two cultivars need to be separated to avoid

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		cross-pollination. The distance is determined by estimating how far genetic material (e.g., pollen) will travel, whether carried by wind or by pollinating insects or birds. An isolation distance does not have to be under the organic farmer's control but needs to be much larger than the typical 8-m (24-ft) buffer zone used to separate organic from non-organic fields. For example, the isolation distance for wind-pollinated organic corn is 300 m (984 ft), while the isolation distance for soybeans, which are primarily self-pollinating, is 10 m (33 ft). The operator monitors the isolation distance in all directions from the vulnerable crops and creates a risk management plan to ensure any potential GE contamination can be controlled through managing the rotation, delayed planting, border rows or other methods.
litter	a group of young animals born at one time to one mother. Example: a litter of piglets.	
litter material	a mixture of bedding material with animal excreta, such as manure, dust and feathers, collected from the floor of livestock housing (e.g., barn, coop).	For details on acceptable bedding materials and litter material requirements, refer to 6.7.1.g, 6.13 and 7.7.4.7 in CAN/CGSB-32.310.
livestock	any domestic or domesticated animal including bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine, equine, lagomorph (rabbits), poultry and bees raised for food or used in the production of food. The products of hunting or fishing of wild animals are not included in this definition.	
manure	livestock feces, urine and other excrement.	
microgreens	edible young plants that are harvested later than sprouts, generally when cotyledons are fully formed or when two or four true leaves are present.	Requirements for the production of microgreens is described in Clause 7.4 "Sprouts, shoots and microgreen production."

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mushroom mycelium	the main vegetative body of a fungus, consisting of a network of thread-like filaments called hyphae, from which mushrooms fruit or grow. In commercial mushroom production, mycelium is also used to colonize or inoculate spawn media to produce spawn and a subsequent crop of mushrooms (fruiting bodies).	
mushroom spawn	a combination of mycelium and substrate or growth media used to inoculate substrate to propagate mycelium and mushrooms.	
nanotechnology	manipulation of matter at atomic, molecular, or macromolecular dimensions typically between 1 and 100 nm to create materials, devices and systems with fundamentally new properties and functions. Nanoscale chemical substances, or nanomaterials, behave differently from their macroscale counterparts, exhibiting different mechanical, optical, magnetic or electronic properties.	In general, products and materials made using nanotechnology are prohibited; however, see 1.4 b) for details.
nutrient management plan	nutrient budget or plan in which the timing and rate of nutrient application is based on soil nutrient status (soil test results), crop nutrient needs, the amendment (manure, compost, plow-down crop or other permitted substance), nutrient content and expected nutrient release rates. The goal of a nutrient management plan is to minimize nutrient loss, protect water quality, maintain soil fertility and ensure effective use of permitted soil amendments.	A well-designed nutrient management plan is key to a successful organic farm. The goal is to provide enough nutrients to maintain healthy plants while avoiding an excess of nutrients. If nutrient levels are too low, crop health and yields may suffer. If they are too high, nutrients can be lost; this is a waste of nutrients and can possibly lead to water pollution. The balance is achieved by focusing on sources of nutrients that are slowly released in the soil, usually with the aid of microorganisms. For example, rather than relying on highly soluble and concentrated fertilizers to provide nutrients to crops in the field, organic farmers focus on building the soil through inputs of organic matter (e.g., green manures, compost, crop residue). These regenerative agricultural practices will build up the organic matter content in the soil and increase its nutrient-holding and water-holding capacity.

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operation	farm, company or organization that produces or prepares an organic product; an operation may have multiple production units (see definition of “production unit”).	
operator	person, company or organization that produces, prepares, packages or owns the brand of product(s) with a view to the subsequent sale, trade or marketing of products labelled as organic.	
organic integrity	maintenance of the inherent organic qualities of a product from the receipt of ingredients through to the end consumer.	Organic integrity means maintaining organic status of a product from field to plate. This involves ensuring that there is no contamination of the product at any step along the way. For example, when customers buy organic carrots at a grocery store, they can feel confident that care was taken to prevent contamination with prohibited substances (and observe all other aspects of the organic standards) at every step of the way including planting the seed, cleaning the carrots, packaging, and trucking the carrots to the store.
organic product	any commodity or output produced by a system compliant with this standard.	Whenever the term “organic” is used in the standard to describe a product, it is referring to a product that meets the requirements of the Canadian Organic Standard and is certified organic.
organic production	method of agricultural production in compliance with this standard.	
parallel production	simultaneous production or preparation of organic and non-organic crops, including transitional crops, livestock and other organic products of the same or similar varieties that are visually indistinguishable by the common person when the crops, livestock or products are positioned side by side.	Refer to 5.1.4 of CAN/CGSB 32-310 for the requirements and derogations.
parasiticide	pharmaceutical substance or veterinary drug, such as an anthelmintic (dewormer), used to control internal or external	

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	parasites in livestock.	
perennial crop	crop, other than a biennial crop, that can be harvested from the same planting for more than one crop year.	
pest	organism causing damage to humans or to resources used by humans, such as certain viruses, bacteria, fungi, weeds, parasites, arthropods and rodents.	Although the term “pest” is often used to refer to insect pests, in the Canadian Organic Standard, “pests” refers to any living organism that damages humans or human resources. This includes weeds, as well as, for example, insects that damage plants, parasites that affect livestock, birds that eat berries and microorganisms that cause disease in crops or livestock.
pesticide	substances used, directly or indirectly, to attract, prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate pests; or to alter the growth, development or characteristics of weeds. Includes any organism, substance or mixture of substances, and devices, such as lures or traps.	The term pesticide refers not only to chemicals but also to products such as vinegar used to control weeds or clean seeds, or bentonite clay used to deter insect pests. Only pest control products listed in Column 2 of Table 4.2 of the PSL can be used. All pesticides must bear a PMRA Pest Control Product (PCP) number and only be used in the way outlined on the product label.
planting stock	plant or plant tissue other than seedlings or transplants, used in plant production or propagation. Refers to plant material without soil or growth media. Examples are leaf or stem cuttings, bare roots, rhizomes, shoots, crowns, tubers, bulbs or cloves.	This definition now indicates the planting stock is unpotted, meaning without soil. Planting stock does not include transplants or seedlings.
prebiotics	fibre food and potential carriers for bacteria. Examples of prebiotic substrates are inulin, lactulose, various galacto-oligosaccharides, fructo-oligosaccharides, xylo-oligosaccharides and sugar alcohols.	
preparation	includes, with respect to an organic product, post-harvest handling, manufacturing, processing, treatment, preservation, and slaughter.	
probiotics	microorganisms that provide health benefits when consumed.	

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processing aids	substances added to food during processing for a technological effect but are not present in the finished product or are at insignificant and non-functional levels.	
production unit	identifiable portion of an operation as outlined in the organic plan in which production or preparation of an organic product occurs. For example, a production unit may be a field with clearly marked boundaries, a pasture, a greenhouse, a series of greenhouses, a building or buildings. A “livestock production unit” is a herd or flock of animals or birds with its associated infrastructure such as barns and pastures. An entire operation, even one with disconnected fields or buildings, may be considered one production unit if the whole operation is organic and following one organic plan. Where there is split or parallel production, organic production units are sufficiently segregated from non-organic production units to ensure that there is no cross-contamination.	If the entire operation is managed organically according to one organic plan, the whole operation is one production unit (even if there are different department managers running different parts of the operation). For example, if an operation has both a market garden and a grain operation and they fall under the same organic plan, this would be one production unit. There is no restriction on the scale or scope of an operation. The more complex the operation (for example, if it is a diversified operation and there is more than one scope), the more challenging it is to establish how many production units there are and how many organic plans are necessary. For example, if a market gardener also raises meat birds, this would be two production units unless the same land is used for both under one organic plan (e.g., the organic plan has a crop rotation involving years of crops and years of pastured poultry).
prohibited materials	materials prohibited by Clause 1.4.	
prohibited substances	substances prohibited by Clause 1.5 or not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311.	
radiation, ionizing	any type of electromagnetic radiation that does not carry enough energy to ionize atoms. Has longer wavelengths (>100 nm), lower frequencies, and lower energy (mega-electron volts (MeV)) than ionizing radiation. Includes ultraviolet light, visible light, infra-red, microwaves, radio frequencies, and low, very low and extremely low frequencies.	The definitions clearly distinguish between ionizing and non-ionizing radiation. Ionizing radiation, which alters DNA or chemical structure, remains prohibited. At the same time, the standards explicitly recognize that non-ionizing technologies, such as ultraviolet (UV) treatments, can

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radiation non-ionizing	any type of electromagnetic radiation that is capable of freeing electrons from an atom, causing the atom to become charged (or ionized). Ionizing radiation includes X-rays and gamma rays. Irradiated food is typically exposed to ionizing radiation generated from Cobalt-60 or Cesium-137; or X-rays generated by a machine source operated at or below an energy level of 5 MeV; or from electrons generated by a machine source operated at or below an energy level of 10 MeV.	be used for pest and pathogen management on crops and food-contact surfaces. To ensure clarity, these updates will be reflected in Table 4.2 (Substances for crop production) and Table 7.3 (Food-grade cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers permitted without a mandatory removal event) of CAN/CGSB-32.311.
records	information in written, visual or electronic form that documents the activities undertaken by an operator engaged in the production or preparation of organic products. See 4.4. for details.	
removal event	procedure performed prior to organic production runs, batches or loads, to prevent organic product from coming into contact with prohibited substances or commingling with non-organic products. Examples of removal events are rinsing with potable water, letting surfaces drip-dry, and purging a system with organic product.	Use of removal events allows for the manufacturing of organic products in shared facilities that are not 100% dedicated to organic production.
salt	sodium chloride, or low-sodium and sodium-free substitutes that serve the purpose of providing salt flavour, nutrition or microbial control in a product. When used as a soil amendment, the term "salt" also includes calcium chloride and potassium chloride.	This definition of salt allows operators to replace salt with sodium-free and low-sodium alternatives in their recipes without changing the calculation of organic content in the product. The use of "salt" in agricultural terms refers to cations and anions dissolved in soil water.
seed coating	a substance applied to the surface of a seed for a function distinct from seed pelleting.	Seed coating is a general term for substances applied to the outside of seed to aid in some way, such as protecting the seed from mechanical damage or covering the seed with beneficial microorganisms. See details about what is permitted in 5.3.
seed pelleting	augmenting a seed with substances to increase the size of seed to facilitate seeding.	Pelleting involves adding a substance, often a clay-based material, to the seed so that it is larger and easier to sow. See details about what is permitted in 5.3.

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seed priming	adding water-based solutions into seeds, before sowing, to improve the uniformity and speed of germination. Once wetted, the seed is dried to allow for shipping and short-term storage.	
seed treatment	adding pest control products, plant growth regulators or inoculants, etc., to seeds to assist with their field performance. Can be performed pre- or post-sowing.	Seed treatments can be applied by the seed companies or by the farmers themselves before or during seeding, or after seeding before the seed is covered up. See details about what is permitted in 5.3.
sewage sludge	solid, semi-solid and liquid fractions generated by municipal or industrial sewage treatment facilities including, but not limited to, domestic septage, scum or solids (biosolids).	“Sewage sludge” is prohibited, however, it is reasonable to distinguish sewage sludge (biosolids) from the wastewater after advanced treatment. The wastewater is not sewage sludge, but water cleaned or “treated” to release into the environment. Table 4.2 of the 2026 Permitted Substances Lists includes struvite that has been extracted from wastewater that has received advanced treatment.
soil	mixture of minerals, organic matter and living organisms.	Soil is the basis of organic crop and livestock production. An organic nutrient plan depends on nurturing and maintaining high levels of soil organic matter along with diverse and abundant soil life.
Specified Risk Material (SRM)	the skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia (nerves attached to the brain), eyes, tonsils, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia (nerves attached to the spinal cord) of cattle aged 30 months or older; and the distal ileum (portion of the small intestine) of cattle of all ages.	Specified Risk Material (SRM) refers to body parts that may contain the prions which can lead to Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), known as “Mad cow disease” or to Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in humans. The brains, spinal cord and other body parts specified in SRM cannot be used in bloodmeal, bonemeal or any other substance used in organic agriculture.
split operation	operation that produces or prepares organic and non-organic agricultural products, including transitional products.	
split production	production or preparation of both organic and non-organic	

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	agricultural products, including transitional products.	
symbiotics	combination of prebiotics and probiotics. Many contain a combination of probiotic culture with a prebiotic substrate that favours its growth.	
synthetic biology	broadly describes the design and construction of novel artificial biological pathways, organisms or devices, or the artificial redesign of existing natural biological systems.	Products of synthetic biology are prohibited. See definition of Genetic Engineering.
synthetic substance	manufactured substance, including petrochemicals, formulated by a chemical process or by a process that chemically alters compounds extracted from plant, microorganisms, animal or mineral sources. This term does not apply to compounds synthesized or produced by physical processing or biological processes, which may include heat and mechanical processing. However, minerals altered through chemical reactions caused by heating or burning are classified as synthetic.	By reducing dependence on synthetic substances, organic standards are striving to reduce environmental harm and build eco-system resilience. For example, rather than relying on a synthetic fertilizer to provide the bulk of the nutrients, an organic farmer will use complex crop rotations including green manures. The crop rotation not only provides nutrients to crops but also helps break pest cycles. When the green manure is incorporated into the soil, it adds much more than just nutrients. It can improve soil fertility in the long-term by adding stable organic matter, feeding the soil life, and increasing the nutrient- and water-holding capacity of the soil. This not only reduces the chance of water pollution but also mitigates erosion and helps crops resist extreme weather events such as drought.
traceability	ability to track product, backwards and forwards, through all stages of production and preparation.	
traditional breeding	traditional breeding has its basis in biological sexual reproduction. It occurs between closely related organisms, in reproductive cells, and between related chromosomes through homologous recombination.	7 Examples of traditional breeding include: • selection of naturally occurring variants in the wild; • selection of mutants in cultivated fields; selection of landraces – a population adapted to local conditions over numerous generations;

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		• selection of self-pollinated pure lines within a landrace and mass selection in open pollinated species; • controlled mating within a population; pedigree breeding; • backcrossing; recurrent selection breeding; and • hybrid breeding.
transition period	period of time between the start of an organic management program and the attainment of organic status by a production unit or operation.	
transplant	seedling that has been removed from its original place of production, transported and replanted.	
unfit animal	as defined in Health of Animals Regulations Part XII, or generally an animal that exhibits any signs of infirmity, illness, injury or of a condition that indicates it cannot be transported without suffering.	Compromised and unfit animals are specific terms to describe animals that are not in sufficiently good condition to be transported, unless for veterinary care. These terms align with the federal regulations for livestock transport. They help operators judge whether an animal can be transported according to the COS and are used in section 6.5.
veterinary biologic	helminth, protozoa or microorganism; or a substance or mixture of substances produced from animals, helminths, protozoa or microorganisms; or a substance of synthetic origin that is manufactured, sold or represented for use in restoring, correcting or modifying functions in animals or for use in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of a disease, disorder, abnormal physical state, or the symptoms thereof, in animals. Veterinary biologics include vaccines, bacterins, bacterin-toxoids, immunoglobulin products, diagnostic kits and any veterinary biologic derived through biotechnology.	
veterinary drug	substance or mixture of substances represented for use or administered in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention	

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	of disease, disorder, abnormal physical state or its symptoms in animals; restoring, correcting or modifying functions in animals.	
wild crop	plants collected or harvested in their natural habitat.	
yeast	single-celled microorganisms that produce enzymes, carbon dioxide (CO ₂), and other metabolites from carbohydrates, whose functional roles are frequently used in the processes of fermentation, baking and flavouring foods, adding nutritional value and providing health benefits.	
yeast autolysate extract	water-soluble components of the yeast cell, generally produced by autolysis, a process in which the rupture of the cell wall is induced mechanically or chemically.	

4. Organic Plan



4. Organic Plan

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4.1	The operator shall prepare an organic plan outlining the details of transition, production, preparation and management practices.	The purpose of record-keeping on organic farms is to track everything that takes place or is used on the organic operation. It sounds like a huge job but most farms already keep very good records to monitor their productivity and to track income and expenses for tax purposes. By adding documentation about the products that are used and a daily log of farm activities, they have the basics for a solid recordkeeping program. The first organic plan is essentially the initial application for organic certification. For farms, the organic plan includes information about field histories, crops (including pasture and forage) to be grown, the size of the operation, detailed maps, location, water sources and use, neighbouring activities, seeds, planting stock, soil amendments and other inputs used to produce the organic crops, as well as production practices and intended markets. The program for crop protection, post-harvest handling and nutrient management program (including a soil-building plan) need to be described. For specialty crops, the certifier will want to know the details of the practices and inputs being used to bring the organic crop to market. For preparation, the plan will include (i) details of the composition of all organic products, (ii) use of additives or processing aids, and (iii) the measures in place to ensure the integrity of the organic products is maintained through to packaging, labelling and final sales. For livestock operations, records on the origin of livestock as well as their inventory identification numbers, health records and sales, must be maintained. Once you have organized your records, it is easy to use the same system every year and to track inventory from year to year. The changes in 2026 enhance traceability for both domestic and imported organic products and improve the ability of Certification Bodies to conduct

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		accurate mass balance calculations. They also provide clearer expectations for record-keeping, ensuring greater consistency across operators.
4.2	The organic plan shall be updated, at a minimum, on an annual basis to address changes to the plan or management system, problems encountered in executing the plan, and measures taken to overcome such problems. If there are any other changes throughout the year, the organic plan will need to be updated and submitted to the Certification Body. Examples of such changes include growing a new crop, processing a new organic product, adding or dropping a field from production, or adding new inputs.	The annual update to the organic plan is completed at the beginning of the second year and every following year. Changes are recorded and new strategies to deal with problems are identified.
4.3	The organic plan shall include a description of the internal record-keeping system, with documents sufficient to meet the audit requirements specified in Clause 4.4, and other record-keeping requirements indicated throughout the standard.	A record-keeping system must be developed (and described in the organic plan) which enables an inspector to be able to track a product from final sale back to the field and seed which produced it– this is traceability.
4.4	Identification and record keeping	
4.4.1	The operator shall record the lot code or other unique identifier, such as harvest date, manufacture date, best-before date, animal ear tag number, or flock number, etc., that was assigned to an organic product, animal or flock for the purposes of identification, traceability and accountability. Lot codes or other unique identifiers shall be apparent on all non-retail and retail final consumer sale units. Documentation indicating lot codes or other unique identifiers shall accompany bulk products.	
4.4.2	The operator shall maintain records and relevant supporting documentation in sufficient detail to ensure they are readily understood and auditable. These records shall include documentation on inputs and materials, production, preparation, storage, transport and sales related to:	

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	a) organic unprocessed plants and mushrooms, and plant and mushroom products; b) organic livestock and insects, and livestock and insect products; c) organic processed agricultural crop and livestock products; d) organic livestock feed; and e) organic seed.	
4.4.3	The records shall reflect the scope, complexity, and activities of the operation and are not limited to: a) visual aids, such as maps and flow charts; b) common operational records, such as: 1) purchase and sales records; 2) receiving logs; 3) records of inputs and substances used, including remaining inventories; 4) sanitation logs and checklists; 5) inventories of raw ingredients and finished goods; 6) training records; and 7) inbound and outbound transportation and distribution records. c) other crop and livestock production records, such as crop rotations, planting, tillage, harvest, herd or flock records, livestock health and storage; and d) preparation and handling records, such as manufacturing logs and production records.	
4.4.4	Records, supporting documentation, and organic certification documentation, shall be readily available and auditable to demonstrate compliance with this standard. They shall fully disclose all activities and transactions allowing for complete traceability and accountability. They shall identify:	This describes in more detail the specific records necessary to ensure traceability (also called the “audit trail”), such as: a) receipts, invoices and expense journals for all materials or products used in production or preparation. b) invoices, copies of receipts, bills of lading, sales journals and

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	a) the origin, nature, composition and quantity of organic products, including ingredients that have been delivered to, used, and/or produced on the production unit or operation; b) the origin, nature and quantity of inputs, non-organic ingredients, and processing aids used in organic production and delivered to the production unit; c) all international shipment documents upon import (e.g., phytosanitary certificates, transaction certificates, and other applicable documents) to ensure organic integrity is maintained; d) the nature, quantity and consignees of products that have left the production unit or operation; e) for incoming shipments, all the roles and activities of intermediaries (such as brokers, traders, distributors, third party storage, repackers, conditioners, or cross dockers) involved in handling or moving shipment to the operation; f) for outgoing shipments, intermediary details are required only up to the change in ownership; g) organic certification documentation is required for any repacking, conditioning or relabelling activities.	financial (tax) records. In particular, sales records must ensure the traceability of the product, including such information as batch or lot numbers, production dates, label SKU, livestock tags and slaughterhouse documentation, or any other invention that will allow the purchaser (and further consumers in the supply chain) of a product to identify the origin of the product. The records identified in a) and b) also facilitate an “input/ output” verification; that is, to ensure that an operation has not produced more “organic” product than is possible from the organic ingredients it purchased. Records should allow an inspector to compare the volume of crop produced to the volume of crop sold. For example, a farmer might show that enough land was planted in carrots to grow 500 kg of carrots. If the sales records show that 1000 kg of carrots were sold, the farmer will need to provide a credible explanation. In addition, the records required by c) allow the certifying body to evaluate a product to ensure that it has been produced according to these standards and allow the inspector to carry out a mass balance exercise using one or more organic ingredients purchased to make an organic product.
4.4.5	An identification system shall be implemented to distinguish non-organic crops, livestock, and products from their organic counterparts. For example, organic and non-organic crops or livestock could differ in their general appearance, colour or type.	In the case of a split operation where a farm has both organic and non-organic production (of crops, livestock or products, even production for home use), an identification system must be in place to ensure that the separation between organic and non-organic is maintained. For example, ear tags can separate livestock. Exterior permanent numbers on grain storage bins can ensure that the organic crop is kept separate. When a genetically engineered crop of the same crop type is stored on the farm, there is an additional requirement of a sign identifying the bin as organic; this is critical to ensure that the two crops are not commingled (see Clause 8.1.5).

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		Manufactured organic products must be distinguishable from non-organic products. The most common way to achieve this is through the use of product labels. Bulk organic products must be labelled in such a way that they cannot be confused with non-organic products.
4.4.6	The operator shall design and implement a risk management plan to prevent GE contamination which may include strategies such as physical barriers, border rows, delayed planting, testing of seeds, isolation distances; and equipment and storage sanitation protocols. When transition is preceded by GE crop production, the operator shall implement a risk management plan to prevent emergence of GE seed after the 36-month transition period.	A GE risk management plan requires the maintenance of records that demonstrate the success or failure of the plan. If seed or crop testing is done, records of the tests must be kept. If the farmer has contacted neighbours to learn the planting date of an adjacent GE crop, a note should be written up in the daily log. If delayed planting is used, recording the two planting dates is required. Equipment and storage sanitation protocols need to be noted in the daily log. Vulnerable crops, such as corn, will retain their organic status if a certifier determines that the farm has implemented well-timed and well-designed risk mitigation strategies. The last line, added in 2026, outlines GE risk management measures in case GE seed remains in the soil after transition.
4.4.7	Records shall be maintained for at least five years beyond their creation.	
4.4.8	If a pest control substance that is not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311 is used under any mandatory government program, the operator shall monitor and document its use.	If a government-mandated spray program using prohibited substances takes place on an organic operation, the affected area will likely require a 36-month re-transition period.
NOTE	In the event of an emergency pest outbreak, Canadian operators are required to notify their certification body immediately of any change that may affect organic product certification.	

5. Crop Production

COG
Canadian Organic Growers
Cultivons Biologique Canada

OFC FBC
ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA
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5. Crop Production

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	Clause 8.4 on Transport applies to the transportation of plants and harvested crops.	
5.1	Land requirements for organic crop production	
5.1.1	This standard shall be fully applied on a production unit for at least 12 months before the first harvest of organic products. Prohibited substances shall not have been used for at least 36 months before the harvest of an organic crop. When transition is preceded by GE crop production, the 36-month transition period is calculated from the date on which the growth of the GE crop is terminated (e.g., by harvest, tillage, etc.). The operator shall implement a risk management plan to prevent emergence of GE seed after the 36-month transition period (per 4.4.4).	“Fully applied” means an Organic Plan is submitted to an organic certification body, which reviews and approves the Organic Plan. The plan should demonstrate the lack of use of prohibited substances and outline the operation’s best management practices. There needs to be a minimum of at least 12 months after that initial approval and before the first harvest to allow for further oversight and inspection by the certification body and its inspector. “First harvest of organic products” refers not only to crops that are marketed but also includes harvest of feed crops for the operation’s livestock and consumption of pasture or forage by livestock. Note that details on raising livestock can be found in Clause 6. The initial application form for organic certification is usually considered to be, or includes, the Organic Plan. Production units listed on a valid certificate under one operator do not need further transition time when transferred to a new owner. The certification body must be informed about the change in ownership to ensure a seamless transfer, otherwise future crops may lose their organic status. To ensure organic integrity is ongoing under the new owners, a certification body may schedule additional inspections. If there is an accidental use, application or leak of a prohibited substance, the area where this occurred must go through a 36-month transition, in which there must be an 8-metre buffer separating the area from organic crops. For example, if treated seeds were planted accidentally, the plants would need to be killed (e.g., by mowing or tilling) once the error was

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		realized; the 36-month transition would then begin. The end of the clause (added in 2026) describes how to calculate the 36-month transition period following GE crops (e.g., after harvest/destruction) and the need for a risk management plan.
5.1.2	When new production units are added to an existing organic operation, the operator shall provide records to show that prohibited substances have not been used for at least 36 months (see 5.1.1) and verification shall be conducted before the first harvest of products from this new production unit.	Land can be added to an existing organic operation without further transition provided no prohibited substances have been applied in the last 36 months and there is documentation/records to substantiate the claim. The added fields must be inspected prior to the first organic harvest, and again with the rest of the operation in each year of organic production.
NOTE	Part 13 Organic Products of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations requires that the application for the organic certification of crops grown in fields, gardens or pastures be filed at least 15 months before the day on which the food is expected to be sold. During that period of time, compliance with this standard will be assessed by the certification body and this assessment must include at least one inspection of the production unit, during production, in the year before these crops may be eligible for certification and one inspection, during production, in the year these crops are eligible for certification.	If the operator is applying for certification for the first time, 5.1.2 requires the operator to apply for certification 15 months before the expected sale date of organic crops. The 15-month period allows time for pre- inspections and time for the operator to adjust the Organic Plan if necessary. This 15-month minimum requirement is applicable to all first-time applicants even if the land has not been recently treated with prohibited substances (e.g., hayland, native pasture or abandoned farmland).
5.1.3	The operation shall aim at a complete transition of its production. During the transition period, the operation can maintain, in addition to the production in transition, a non-organic system of production (split operation) that shall be entirely separate and identified separately, pending its incorporation into the overall transition process.	The intent is as stated – that the entire operation aims (through planning) to become organic. In the enforcement of this requirement, there is the understanding that this: • does not intend to prohibit non-organic production for home use; • applies to all crop production (which includes forage and pasture) and in-ground greenhouse production. It does not include product preparation or any of the following specialty production systems (apiculture, maple, mushroom, sprouts/shoots/microgreens, greenhouse containers, wild crops, insects).

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		When making this decision, certifying bodies investigate the intent of the operators. Do they have a plan to transition their whole crop production to organic production? If not, do they have a credible excuse? Without a credible reason to maintain non-organic production, the split operation cannot be maintained indefinitely; eventually, the standard must be enforced.
5.1.4	The operation can be converted one production unit at a time, and each converted production unit shall respect the requirements of this standard. The exception to this norm, parallel production, is only allowed in the following cases: a) annual crops harvested during the final 24 months of the transition period when fields are added to existing operations; b) perennial crops (already planted); c) agricultural research facilities; and d) production of seed, vegetative propagating materials and transplants.	Parallel production means growing crops that look the same on both organic and non-organic land at the same time. Parallel production is not permitted except under certain conditions (which are described below) due to concern about accidental commingling of organic and non-organic products and concern that fraud would be more difficult to detect if parallel production was allowed. • It is not parallel production if the crops can be distinguished by the average person. For instance, growing a beefsteak tomato on organic land and a cherry tomato on non-organic land in the same year is not parallel production. • Growing two different but similar-looking cherry tomatoes, one on organic land and one on non-organic land in the same year is parallel production. If the cherry tomatoes did not look similar, for example, if one was red and one was yellow, this would not be parallel production. • Growing hard red spring wheat on non-organic land and Kamut on organic land in the same year is not parallel production. However, growing two different varieties of hard red spring wheat that look the same, one on organic land and one on non-organic land, in the same year is parallel production. Another issue is timing. In annual cropping, parallel production means growing the crops in the same growing season. Growing, for example, Kamut on organic land in one year and on non-organic land in the following year is not parallel production.

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		For shorter season crops, like lettuce, this becomes more complicated. For instance, early in the season, growing butterhead lettuce on organic land and Romaine lettuce on non-organic land is not parallel production. Growing butterhead lettuce on organic land early in the season and growing butterhead lettuce on non-organic land late in the season is not parallel production, provided that early and late season lettuce crops do not overlap. Parallel production is allowed only under specific circumstances, listed in 5.1.4 and 5.1.5. • Perennial crops (already planted) including perennial vegetables (e.g., asparagus), trees, shrubs, perennial forage and pasture, etc. • Research facilities are allowed to be certified organic with parallel production to ensure that organic research can take place, including comparisons between organic and conventional production methods. • The rationale behind the exemption for seeds is that seed houses also might not expand their organic offerings if there is not an allowance for parallel seed. This does not mean that a farmer who grows a crop that is harvested for seed can access parallel production. Only seed companies are eligible.” In subclause 5.1.4, for existing organic farms, parallel production is allowed during the last 24 months of the transition of land added to the farm. Consider, for example, a certified organic grain farm that increases its acreage by renting a neighbouring non-organic field. During the first transition year of the leased field, the organic farm must grow crops that are visually distinguishable from organic crops. For example, six-row barley can be planted in the field in transition while two-row barley is grown in the organic field. During the last 24 months of transition, the farmer will be able to grow identical crops on both the organic fields and the fields in transition.

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		However, it is essential that the crops are completely separated at harvest and storage. Meticulous records must be kept. The transitional crop is considered and sold as non-organic. In addition, the transition plan must be described in detail in the organic plan.
5.1.5	The following special conditions shall be observed for parallel production: a) The operator shall clearly demonstrate that the identity of the crops produced in this manner can be maintained during their production, harvesting, storage, processing, packaging and marketing; b) The operator shall maintain verifiable, accurate records of both non-organic and organic produce and product storage, transportation, processing and marketing.	Post-harvest operations are not subject to the prohibition on parallel production. For example, seed cleaning plants may process both organic and non-organic seeds provided that there are systems in place to protect organic integrity. Good record keeping is required to maintain the identity of crops through storage, processing, packaging and marketing. Although the products are visually distinct on the farm, that distinction may be lost during processing. For example, it is easy to distinguish between a red-skinned and yellow-skinned apple, but the applesauce made from them might look the same.
NOTE	Parallel production crops, both organic and non-organic, are inspected just prior to harvest and an audit of all parallel production crops occurs after harvest.	
5.1.6	All production units shall have distinct, defined boundaries.	Organic crop fields and pastures must be distinguishable from neighbouring fields and pastures. For example, maps may indicate GPS coordinates of boundaries, or farmers can install fences, use hedges, roadways, mowed areas, etc.
5.1.7	Production units shall not alternate between organic and non-organic management	Deliberately switching between organic and non-organic production is generally prohibited. It would result in decertification of the affected field or possibly the entire operation, and refusal to accept a reapplication.
5.1.8	By exception, due to catastrophic or uncontrollable factors, an operator may temporarily take land out of organic management, provided that: a) the operator submits written notice to the certification body of the	However, the change made in 2026 allows alternating between organic and non-organic production on a production unit by exception for catastrophic or uncontrollable factors but only with full disclosure and an action plan in place. The production unit must complete a 36-month transition period

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	intent to remove temporarily a production unit from organic management, justifies why organic status cannot be maintained, and receives conditional approval prior to the use of substances or methods prohibited by this standard. The final decision of the certification body to approve alternation between organic and non organic management will be based on a written action plan that includes: 1) a description of the intended change in management, including a timeline and details of the substances and practices that will be used during the period of non-organic management; 2) a timeline for transitioning the land back to organic management; and, 3) a description of how the organic plan will be amended to avoid future recurrence, if applicable. b) The operator shall maintain verifiable, accurate records of both non-organic and organic production and product storage, processing, transportation, and marketing. c) The land shall comply with requirements established in 5.1.1 to transition back to organic status and comply with 5.1.3. Without prior approval by the certification body as described in 5.1.8 a), the production unit shall not be eligible for organic status for five (5) years following the last use of a prohibited substance or prohibited practice.	before regaining organic status. This exception might apply when the loss of certification was beyond the producer's control (for example, the mandated use of a prohibited substances by authorities, spray drift of a prohibited substance, natural disaster, or financial failure) or where there are personal issues (for example, the death of a family member, divorce, or inter-generational transfer). If certification lapses, the rules for new operations apply: 36 months is required between the last use of prohibited substances and the first organic harvest, and the operation is required to be under organic supervision for a minimum of 15 months. To keep the transition time to the minimum 15 months, lapsed farmers need to maintain documentation that shows that the farm management was in compliance with the standard in the years without certification.
NOTE	Operators are required to notify their certification body immediately of any change that may affect organic product certification.	
5.2	Environmental factors	
5.2.1	Measures shall be taken to minimize the physical movement of prohibited substances onto organic land and crops from:	Movement of prohibited substances from neighbouring fields, roads, waterways, etc. should be minimized. See 5.2.2 for suggested methods of

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	a) adjacent areas; and b) equipment used for both organic and non-organic crops.	minimizing the risk of movement. Equipment used on organic land should be well-maintained to avoid leaks and spills. If equipment is used on non-organic land, it must be adequately cleaned to prevent seed or prohibited substances from spreading to the organic land.
5.2.2	If unintended contact with prohibited substances is possible, distinct buffer zones or other features sufficient to prevent contamination are required:	5.2.2 Organic farms must be proactive and work towards minimizing contamination especially when neighbouring land is used in ways not conducive to the organic status of an operation. Certifying bodies should develop a risk assessment tool. This can be as simple as a list of questions asked by the inspector: • Is it likely that the neighbour is using prohibited products that would contaminate organic crops? For example, a horse paddock next to an organic farm provides little risk of contamination in contrast to a conventional orchard. • Is there a busy highway next to the organic farm? What is the distance from the highway to organic farming activities? • Is there a source of airborne contamination (e.g., jet fuel, sour gas plant) close by, but not adjacent? • Are there prohibited fence posts or wood? If yes, where (paddocks, trellis infrastructure, feed bins, in-ground greenhouse foundations)? When were they installed and by whom? Refer to 5.2.3 for more details. • Are genetically engineered crops grown next to or close to organic crops? If yes, refer to 4.4.6 and 5.2.2 d).
	a) buffer zones shall be at least 8 m (26 ft 3 in.) wide;	Buffers are also required if there is an accidental spill or leak of a prohibited substance which has the potential to contaminate surrounding organic crops. The area would also require a 36-month transition.

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	b) permanent hedgerows or windbreaks, artificial windbreaks, permanent roads, or other physical barriers may be used instead of buffer zones;	A buffer zone (8 metres or more in width) is one of several ways to prevent contamination. Other physical barriers can be used. Buffer zones are measured from the edge of the treated crop to the organic crop. This detail is significant particularly in orchard settings with large tree canopies as the buffer zone would be measured from the edge of the non-organic tree canopy (aka the drip line) to the drip line of the organic tree. The distance is not from tree trunk to tree trunk, or even property line to tree trunk. If contamination, such as herbicide drift, exceeds the limits of the buffer zone, additional means may be needed to contain the problem. The choice of these is left to the operator but must be “sufficient to prevent contamination.”
	c) crops grown in buffer zones shall not be considered organic whether or not they are used on the operation; and	Crops (including seeds and forage) in buffer zones are considered non-organic, and are managed and sold outside the organic stream. Operators should be able to document what they have done with a crop grown in a buffer zone. Examples: “I sold it to a neighbour as non-organic. Here is the receipt with ‘non-organic’ clearly indicated,” or “I fed the hay to my non-organic milk cow. I stored it separate from my organic hay in this shed.”
	d) crops at risk of contamination from commercialized GE crops shall be protected from cross-pollination. Mitigation strategies such as, but not limited to, physical barriers, border rows, strategic testing or delayed planting shall be implemented unless generally accepted isolation distances for the at-risk crop type are present (see Note below).	Isolation distances for crops that can be pollinated by GE crops are provided. If vulnerable crops are grown within that distance, other methods of mitigation are required. For example, planting corn two weeks later than neighbouring corn can minimize the likelihood of cross-pollination with neighbouring corn. In this case, no buffer is required.
NOTE	Generally accepted isolation distances for crops at risk of contamination from commercialized GE crop types include: soybeans – 10 m (33 ft);	Certifying bodies need to re-assess the contamination risk each year depending on changes in neighbouring land use. Operators with consistently problematic neighbours should consider planting windbreaks

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	corn – 300 m (984 ft); canola, alfalfa (for seed production) and apples – 3 km (1.8 mi.).	or installing fences to control wind-borne contamination.
5.2.3	Untreated wood or wood treated with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 is permitted, such as for fence posts. a) For new installations or replacement purposes, fence posts or wood treated with prohibited substances are not permitted. Alternatives, such as metal, plastic, concrete or protective sleeves, may be used. b) An exception, fence posts treated with prohibited substances are permitted as perimeter fencing of production units to manage non-organic livestock or keep wildlife out. Treated fence posts shall not come into contact with an organic crop (including roots). If the livestock is organic, see 6.7.9. c) Recycling of previously used fence posts treated with prohibited substances within the operation is permitted provided that they were installed prior to the operation's initial certification or installed per exception b) and there is no contact with an organic crop (including roots).	Up until recently, “treated wood” referred to wood treated with either creosote or a combination of chromium, copper and arsenic, namely chromated copper arsenate (CCA), ammoniacal copper arsenate (ACA), and acid copper chromate (ACC). Due to the toxicity of creosote, chromium and arsenic, the industry has developed somewhat safer treatments, namely copper azole (CA) and alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ). This may be an improvement but these chemicals are toxic and consequently prohibited from being used on organic farms except in a few specific circumstances. Almost all uses of wood are affected by this prohibition including, for example, wood that is (i) in contact with the organic crops (e.g., trellises), (ii) used for fencing organic livestock and (iii) used for storage (seed, feed). However, due to the important contribution of livestock on an operation, an exception was added to allow perimeter fencing using treated posts under certain conditions. The treated wood can't come into contact with an organic crop, not even its roots. If wood treated with a prohibited substance was installed by a new applicant and it was the last prohibited substance used, the 36 months of transition would be counted from the installation date. If alternatives are available but the treated wood is installed by the organic producer – this would qualify as a non-compliance leading to de-certification because it is the use of a prohibited substance. If the neighbour installed the treated fence, a buffer zone (8 metres) is required to the edge of the closest crop. No matter the installation date (more than 36 months before applying for certification), some certification bodies require setbacks from existing treated posts.

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		Reuse of treated wood materials within an operation is encouraged as it is not possible to dispose of treated wood in an environmentally benign manner. In 2026, the caveat was added that re-used treated wood should not have any contact with an organic crop, including the roots of an organic plant. Treated wood materials acquired from outside the operation are not permitted. Stockpiles should be stored in a way to minimize groundwater contamination. There are alternatives to toxic treated wood. For example, rot-resistant wood, such as cedar or tamarack, can be used but these are not available in all parts of the country. Also, new wood treatments are being developed, such as boric acid treatment. If the wood has been treated only with substances listed in Table 4.2 of the PSL, it would be permitted.
5.2.4	The operator shall include, within the operation, measures that protect existing biodiversity and shall intentionally promote and protect ecosystem health by incorporating one or more of the following features (in addition to the organic practices of cover cropping, green manures, responsible tillage, and diversified crop rotation): a) agroforestry; b) biomass plantings, such as for biofuel or bedding; c) grassed waterways; d) pollinator habitats or insectary plantings (such as interplanting, companion planting, or banker plants to provide habitat for beneficial organisms, including beneficial insects); e) wildlife habitat or avian sanctuary; f) tree and shrub establishment; g) vegetative barriers and field borders, wind breaks, or shelter belts; h) water conservation practices;	Biodiversity is essential for healthy ecosystems and productive organic farms. For example, trees provide nesting sites for birds which devour cabbageworms. Wildflowers provide food for bees which pollinate crops, and provide habitat for beneficial organisms, such as tachinid flies which attack sawfly and armyworm larvae. Maintaining a diverse community of soil organisms increases nutrient uptake and retention, improves soil structure, and promotes symbiotic relationships between plants and soil microorganisms. Regardless of the size or type of their farm, farmers need to demonstrate that they promote and maintain biodiversity. For example, the operator of a greenhouse on leased land can plant wildflowers around greenhouses. A rancher can fence off lakes and streams to prevent livestock from grazing and trampling the banks of water bodies. Field crop producers and market gardeners can leave wild areas on their farms: these include woodlots, shelterbelts and hedgerows between fields, and strips of flowering plants between crop rows.

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	i) restoration and maintenance of wetlands; j) perennial forage or perennial plantings; or k) pasture.	Operators are required to implement certain ecological measures beyond organic agricultural practices (keeping in mind that all agricultural practices disturb natural ecosystems).
NOTE	Existing native prairie, parkland, or wetland habitats should be maintained and enhanced whenever possible.	
5.2.5	Inorganic waste materials shall not be left to accumulate on, or be incorporated into organic fields. Examples include baler twine, irrigation drip tape, agricultural tarps, potting containers and row cover.	Within the context of protecting and enhancing sustainable agricultural production (ecosystem health), it is reasonable to expect operators to have measures in place to avoid the build-up of debris that can degrade into the soil.
5.3	Seeds, seedlings and planting stock	Ideally, organic production begins with certified organic seed, transplants or planting stock. This applies to everything from vegetable seed, cover crop seed, herb plugs in greenhouses and saplings used in orchards. However, as of 2026, the organic industry is not producing enough planting material of the desired varieties to meet demand. Consequently, non-organic planting material can be used in certain situations, particularly if non-organic forms are not commercially available (“commercially available” is defined in the COS as the “documented ability to obtain a production input or an ingredient in an appropriate form, quality, quantity or variety, irrespective of cost, in order to fulfill an essential function in organic production or preparation”). It’s not enough to simply claim that there is no organic source of a certain variety commercially available. You must show that you have looked for the variety by providing documentation that you have contacted organic suppliers and they confirmed they didn’t have the variety available. Many CBs require documentation to show that you contacted at least three suppliers. Documentation could be in the form of email correspondence, records of phone calls, or records of searches of seed catalogues on the Internet.
5.3.1	Organic seed, annual seedlings/transplants, planting stock, (such as bulbs, tubers or cuttings) or other propagules (such as tissue culture) shall be used. See definitions for "annual seedling," "perennial crop," "planting stock," and "transplant" in Clause 3.	
5.3.2	Organic seed and planting stock may be treated, primed, pelleted, or coated with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	
5.3.3	Perennial transplants propagated from non-organic planting stock, shall be managed in accordance with this standard for at least 12 months before the consumer prepackaged transplant (for retail) may be organic. Transplants for use as an input to organic crop production (subclause 5.3.6 e) may be organic in a shorter period of time.	
5.3.4	Non-organic seed (or planting stock) produced on transitional land within the operation or in buffer zones may be planted within the same operation providing the buffer zone is managed within the operation.	

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5.3.5	Non-organic seed and annual or biennial planting stock from outside the operation is permitted provided that: a) the seed or planting stock variety is not produced on or available from within the operation; b) organic seed or planting stock of that variety is not commercially available, and a documented search involving potential, known organic suppliers has been conducted; and c) when treated, primed, pelleted or coated, it is with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 with the following exceptions: 1) seed primed with substances not listed on Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 is permitted providing that the priming process does not contain substances that are not listed on Table 4.2 (Column 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; 2) seeds and planting stock treated with substances necessary for compliance with international, federal or provincial phytosanitary or food safety regulations and approved for use by regulatory agencies such as Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) are permitted.	(Note this exception does not apply to Sprouts, shoots and microgreens production. Only organic seed can be used for these with no exceptions (see 7.4.1)). It doesn't matter if the preferred source, such as the organic seed in the example above, is much more expensive than alternatives: cost is not a factor when determining commercial availability. But if an organic product or seed cannot be imported into Canada due to import restrictions, it would be considered to be unavailable commercially. Whether non-organic planting material is permitted or not and under what restriction varies depending on the type of material (e.g., seed, transplant, tuber) and type of treatment (if any). To understand the nuances of this part of the standards, it is critical to know how various terms are defined in the COS, specifically: annual seedling: young plant grown from seed that will complete its life cycle or produce a yield and be able to be harvested within the same crop year or season in which it was planted. perennial crop: crop, other than a biennial crop, that can be harvested from the same planting for more than one crop year. planting stock: plant or plant tissue other than seedlings or transplants, used in plant production or propagation. Refers to plant material without soil or growth media. Examples are leaf or stem cuttings, bare roots, rhizomes, shoots, crowns, tubers, bulbs or cloves. transplant: seedling that has been removed from its original place of production, transported and replanted. See also the definitions of seed coating, seed pelleting, seed priming and seed treatment.
5.3.6	Non-organic perennial seedlings/transplants and perennial planting stock are permitted permitted (see “perennial crop” and “planting stock” definitions in Clause 3) provided that: a) the variety is not produced on or available from within the operation; b) organic seedlings/transplants or planting stock of that variety are not commercially available, and a documented search involving potential, known organic suppliers has been conducted; c) when treated, it is with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 except if the planting	

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stock has been treated with substances necessary for compliance with international, federal or provincial phytosanitary or food safety regulations and approved for use by regulatory agencies such as Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA); d) the land on which perennial planting stock or perennial seedlings/transplants are planted is subject to the requirements of 5.1.1; e) perennial seedlings/transplants, such as strawberry plugs or potted thyme, shall be organic when the first harvest of organic product is within 12 months of planting into the organic production unit. Operators are granted an exemption until the 2030 planting season allowing the use of non-organic perennial seedlings/transplants for harvest within 12 months of planting; f) non-organic perennial seedlings/transplants shall be managed in accordance with this standard for at least 12 months between planting into the organic production unit and the first harvest of organic products; g) non-organic perennial planting stock (which is without soil or growth media as defined in Clause 3) that has not been treated with prohibited substances post-harvest (e.g., treated during storage after being dug up from the non-organic field) may be used to produce organic product within 12 months of planting on the organic operation and being managed in accordance with this standard; and h) non-organic perennial planting stock (which is without soil or growth media as defined in Clause 3) that has been treated with prohibited substances post-harvest (e.g., during storage after being dug up from the non-organic field) shall be managed in accordance with this standard for at least 12 months between planting on the organic operation and the first harvest of organic products.	Note that for all seeds, seedlings, transplants and planting stock, regardless of whether they are annual or perennial, organic farmers are not penalized if the plant material had to be treated in order to meet “international, federal or provincial phytosanitary or food safety regulations.” In this case, planting material treated with prohibited substances can be used because there is no other option. Regarding 5.3.4: Buffer zone and transitional land is managed under organic practices provided the buffer zone is within the operation and not maintained by an adjacent landowner. Using resources from within the operation is preferable to purchasing organic or conventional seed from off-farm. To clarify the details in 5.3, we have described the requirements for each type of planting material below. <u>Seeds</u> (5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.4 and 5.3.5) For seeds, organic sources must be used unless: • The seeds were grown on an operation's own buffer zones or transitional land (5.3.4); or • The variety is not commercially available (5.3.5 a). In both cases, the seed cannot have been treated with prohibited substances unless the prohibited substances were: • used to prime seed (5.3.5 c1) and are not pesticides, or • are required by other regulatory bodies (5.3.5 c2). <u>Annuals and biennials: Seedlings</u> (5.3.1) All seedlings and transplants for annuals and biennials must be organic. The exemptions in 5.3.5 only apply to seeds and planting stock, which is plant material without soil or growth media.

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		<u>Annuals and biennials: Planting stock</u> (5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.4 and 5.3.5) For planting stock for annuals and biennials (e.g., garlic cloves, onion sets), organic sources must be used unless: • The planting stock was grown on an operation's own buffer zones or transitional land (5.3.4); or • The variety is not commercially available (5.3.5 a). • The planting stock is not permitted if it has been treated with prohibited substances (unless these were required by other regulatory bodies (5.3.5 c2)). <u>Perennial seedlings and transplants</u> (5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.6) Organic perennial seedlings or transplants (containing soil or another growth medium) are required for the resulting crop to be considered organic within twelve months of planting. There is, however, an exemption to allow operators (including nurseries) to adjust to this requirement. Until the 2030 planting season, growers using non-organic perennial seedlings/transplants not treated with prohibited substances can harvest the resulting crop as organic within 12 months of planting them on the organic operation. If non-organic perennial seedlings or transplants are used, they must be growing in the organic operation for at least a year before the crop can be considered organic. <u>Perennial transplants for sale</u> (5.3.3) When producing perennial transplants from non-organic planting stock for the retail market, the transplants must be under organic management for not less than 12 months before the transplants themselves can be labelled and sold as organic.



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		<u>Perennial planting stock</u> (5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.6) Non-organic perennial planting stock, such as strawberry or asparagus crowns, tubers or bare root plants, can be harvested as organic within twelve months after planting into the organic operation if it has not been treated with prohibited substances after being removed from the non-organic operation. This aligns with the allowance of product grown from non-organic, untreated and soilless tubers, rhizomes and cuttings (i.e., onion sets, garlic bulbs, potato seed) which may be considered to be organic within 12 months of planting. Example: If strawberries are grown from untreated non-organic crowns or runners, the first harvest of the berries would qualify as organic. If prohibited substances were used during the period between harvest from the non-organic operation and planting into the organic operation, it will take 12 months of being planted on the organic farm for it to be considered organic. For example, if bare-root raspberry canes were dipped in fungicide after being dug up from the soil or while in storage, the growers would need to wait 12 months between planting them on the organic operation and harvesting them as organic (5.3.6h).

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Non-organic perennial plants and planting stock are permitted in the following situations:					
Clause	Plant type	Does the operation grow this variety?	Is there a commercially available organic source of this variety?	Has it been treated with prohibited substances?	How long to wait between planting in organic operation and organic harvest?
5.3.6 e & 5.3.6 f	Seedlings/ transplants	No	No	No (except as necessary to meet other regulations (5.3.6c))	At least 12 months (but see exemption) ¹
5.3.6 g	Planting stock	No	No	Possibly while growing but not after being harvested from the non-organic operation (except as necessary to meet other regulations (5.3.6c))	No wait necessary
5.3.6 h	Planting stock	No	No	Yes, it was treated after being harvested from the non-organic operation	At least 12 months
1. “Operators are granted an exemption until the 2030 planting season allowing the use of non-organic perennial seedlings/transplants for harvest within 12 months of planting.”					
5.3.7	Seedlings and transplants				
Seedlings and transplants shall be produced under the following conditions:					
a) all subclauses of 7.5 apply to the soil used for production (except soil volumes specified in subclauses 7.5.5.2, 7.5.5.3, and 7.5.5.4). A soilless substrate/growth media may be used at first seeding without nutrient supplementation;					

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	b) seedlings/transplants that are started in winter or spring for use within the operation may be grown by the operation in structures under 100% artificial lights from seeding to final transplanting, meaning moving a seedling into the production unit (container or soil); and c) substrates used in the production of propagules produced through plant tissue culture or micropropagation shall comply with 1.4 a) of this standard.	
5.4	Soil fertility and nutrient management	A well-designed nutrient management plan is key to a successful organic farm. The goal is to provide enough nutrients to maintain healthy plants while avoiding an excess of nutrients. If nutrient levels are too low, crop health and yields may suffer. If they are too high, nutrients can be lost, this is a waste of nutrients and can possibly lead to water pollution. The balance is achieved by focusing on sources of nutrients that are slowly released in the soil, usually with the aid of microorganisms. For example, rather than relying on highly soluble and concentrated fertilizers to provide nutrients to crops in the field, organic farmers focus on building the soil through inputs of organic matter (e.g., green manures, compost, crop residue). These will build the organic matter content in the soil and increase the nutrient and water holding capacity of the soil.
5.4.1	The main objective of the soil fertility and nutrient management program shall be to establish and maintain a fertile soil using practices that: a) maintain or increase levels of soil organic matter; b) promote an optimum balance and supply of nutrients; c) stimulate biological activity within the soil; and d) mitigate excess nutrient build-up in the soil or leaching into the environment.	Requires organic operators to establish a soil fertility and crop nutrient management program. This program should be part of the farm plan, and should be updated every year. Coupled with 5.4.2, this requires organic farmers to work actively to improve the quality of the soil on their farm. It is not enough to have good soil and to 'settle' for whatever yields result – organic farming is an active soil improvement process.
5.4.2	Soil fertility and biological activity shall be maintained or increased through:	One of the foundations of organic soil management is crop rotation. A well-designed crop rotation can provide much, if not all, of the nutrients

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		required for crops. The COS has always required that farmers practice crop rotation. Subclause 5.4.2 of 2026 COS, however, provides more details on what is required. In addition to using “plow-down crops, legumes, catch crops and deep-rooting plants” as required in the 2020 COS, growers must also use “cover crops to prevent erosion.” As well, the crop rotation can have “no more than two consecutive years of the same annual crop species (when intended for sale).”
a)	crop rotations or sequences that are diversified, including: 1) plow-down crops, legumes, catch crops and deep-rooting plants; 2) cover crops to prevent erosion; and 3) no more than two consecutive years of the same annual crop species for use on-farm or intended for sale;	Although rotations are to be as varied as possible, this does not preclude the possibility of growing the same crop for two years in a row provided the producer can show that soil fertility, nutrient management and pest management can be maintained. A well-designed crop rotation has many benefits including: • controlling weeds, diseases and insect pests; • managing nutrients in a way that reduces leaching and loss, while providing a slow release of nutrients as needed; • fixing nitrogen from the air and making it available for following crops; • increasing or maintaining sufficient levels of organic matter in the soil; • increasing both biodiversity and income diversity on the farm.
b)	incorporation of plant and animal matter in compliance with this standard and with Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311, including: 1) composted animal and plant matter; 2) non-composted plant matter, specifically legumes, plow-down crops or deep-rooting plants within the framework of a multi-crop rotation; and 3) unprocessed animal manure, including liquid manure and slurry, subject to the requirements of 5.5.1; and	Plant material does not need to be incorporated immediately, just incorporated within the overall rotational plan. Plant material can be applied in the form of plant/food processing byproducts. For example, spent brewers’ grains can be used as a soil amendment, even if non-organic, as long as it is non-GE and any non-agricultural substances added during the brewing process are listed on Table 4.2 (Column 1) of 32.311 and comply with 1.4 and 1.5 of 32.310.

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	c) where appropriate, perennial cropping systems employ techniques, such as alley intercropping with permanent cover, cover crops or plow-down crops.	
5.4.3	Plant and livestock materials, as well as supplemental minerals and fertilizers, shall be managed to maintain or improve soil organic matter content, crop nutrients and soil fertility, while minimizing negative environmental impact. This shall be done in a manner that does not contribute to the contamination of crops, soil or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals or residues of prohibited substances.	Manure, and even green manures (e.g., plowdowns of alfalfa or clover), can cause an excess of nitrogen that can result in pollution to the surrounding environment. In situations where leaching is likely, application rates and timing should be managed to minimize risk; catch crops (heavy-feeding cover crops) should be used to reduce nutrient losses to the environment. Vegetated setbacks to water ways are necessary to minimize surface runoff. Riparian areas on livestock operations should be fenced off to keep livestock out of waterways. Material brought onto the farm should be compliant with 5.5.1 and listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of the PSL.
5.4.4	The organic matter produced on the operation shall be the basis of the nutrient cycling program. It may be supplemented with other nutrient sources described in this standard or listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311. However, water-soluble sources of nitrogen and phosphorus shall be limited to 20% of the crop's needs of each nutrient based on realistic projected yields for the crop. Manure, anerobic digestate, and compost or compost tea are not included in the 20% limitation unless fortified with water-soluble sources of nitrogen and phosphorus. Manure is subject to the requirements of 5.5.1, and, in all cases, subclause 5.4.3 shall be respected.	On organic farms, nutrients are supplied primarily by on-farm nutrients through crop rotations, ploughdown crops (i.e., green manures), the application of compost and the incorporation of other plant residues (such as mulch) into the soil. Certain fertilizers can be used at times to supplement, not replace, nutrients. Table 4.2 (Column 1) of the PSL contains a list of permitted fertilizers and the conditions in which they can be used. In general, the permitted fertilizers are made from mined or biological substances and are not chemically treated. As of 2026, there is a restriction on the application rates of nitrogen and phosphorus. These water-soluble nutrients can be used to address immediate issues, but should not be the basis of the nutrient plan.
5.4.5	Tillage, when practiced, shall be conducted in a responsible manner in order to: a) maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological condition of soil;	Responsible tillage has been defined in detail with the goal of reducing soil degradation and to emphasize that tillage, if used, should be used wisely and responsibly. Tillage practices should be planned to minimize soil damage by paying attention to soil moisture (i.e., not tilling when the soil is

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	b) minimize damage to the structure and tilth of soil; c) reduce soil salinization; and d) minimize soil erosion. The operator shall maintain records of tillage events. Responsible tillage to mitigate risks of soil degradation from erosion, compaction/plow pan formation, salinization, and soil organic matter loss is described as: The use of tillage strategically and purposefully within cropping systems to enhance management and productivity in cropping systems while minimizing soil degradation. Practices may include reducing the frequency, intensity, aerial extent, and depth of tillage, as well as minimizing topsoil inversion and maintaining surface residue.	too wet or too dry), minimizing the disruption of the soil profile, avoiding the creation of hardpans and other methods. Tillage should be done within a management regime that seeks to maintain or improve the condition of the soil, such as a well-designed crop rotation which incorporates green manures, cover crops, catch crops and perennial forages. Tillage and cultivation practices should maintain or improve the overall structure of the soil. The operator needs to maintain records of tillage. Applications of manure, and even the use of green manures (e.g., plowdowns of alfalfa or clover), can cause an excess of nitrogen that can result in pollution to the surrounding environment. In situations where leaching is likely, application rates and timing should be managed to minimize risk; catch crops (heavy-feeding cover crops) should be used to reduce nutrient losses to the environment. Vegetated setbacks to water ways are necessary to minimize surface runoff. Riparian areas on livestock operations should be fenced off to keep livestock out of waterways.
5.4.6	Burning to dispose of crop residue produced on the operation is prohibited. However, burning may be used for documented problems with pests, including insects, diseases or weeds (see 5.6.1), or to stimulate seed germination.	“Crop residues” include straw from annual crops, as well as prunings from woody crops. Burning is only considered acceptable if operators can verify a legitimate need for burning, such as destruction of wood-bearing fire blight or vines bearing powdery mildew. Burning is not a first line of defense against pest insects, diseases and weeds, and should only be used where this is the only method available for control.
5.5	Manure management	
5.5.1	Manure sources	The order of preference of manure source is as follows (from most preferred to least acceptable):
5.5.1.1	Animal manure produced on the operation shall be used first. When all available manure is used up, organic manure from other sources may be used. If organic manure is not commercially available, non-organic	1. Organic livestock on the farm. 2. Non-organic livestock on the farm.

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	manure is permitted provided that: a) the non-organic source is not a fully caged system in which livestock cannot turn 360°; and b) livestock is not permanently kept in the dark; and c) the source and quantity of manure, type of livestock, and evaluation of the criteria in 5.5.1.1 a) and 5.5.1.1 b) shall be recorded.	3. Organic livestock from other farms. 4. Livestock from a transitional or extensive livestock operation (where animals are primarily out-of-doors). 5. Livestock from a landless livestock operations 6. Livestock from an operation using GE ingredients in animal feed. “Extensive livestock” refers to animals that are raised primarily out-of-doors. Non-organic sources may only be used from sources where animals can turn around. This is the intended meaning of “not fully caged.” Manure from veal crates and hog farrowing crates are prohibited. This does not prohibit manure from caged poultry. If an operation has some fully caged livestock and other animals that are not fully caged, manure may be used from the livestock that are not fully caged provided that the manure is kept separate from that of the fully caged livestock.
NOTE	Organic operations should make it a priority to use manure obtained from transitional or extensive livestock operations, not from landless livestock production units or from livestock operations that use genetically engineered (GE) ingredients or GE derivatives in animal feeds.	
5.5.2	Land application of manure	
5.5.2.1	The manure application program shall address land area, rate of application, time of application, incorporation into the soil and retention of nutrient components.	Many organic growers use composted manure to provide nutrients to their crops. Composted manure has many advantages over raw manure. For example, the nutrients in composted manure are less water-soluble and less vulnerable to leaching. In addition, the process of composting can destroy many pathogens, including microorganisms that can cause disease in humans and those that cause plant diseases. At times, however, farmers may want to apply non-composted manure -

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		either fresh or aged. Aged manure is often defined as manure that has been piled for at least six months but not been turned or monitored to ensure that the material has passed through a thermophilic phase. To avoid nutrient loss and the risk of subsequent water pollution, the COS has strict limits on the use of non-composted manure. For example, according to 5.5.2.3, manure, whether fresh or aged, can only be applied when the ground is warm and moist. (“Sufficiently warm” soil is generally considered to be around 10C.) This is because the bacteria required to break down manure and release its nutrients are most active in a warm and moist environment, generally at the same time plants are actively growing. When these bacteria are less active, nutrients can be lost, possibly resulting in pollution of nearby water bodies or ground water. Catch crops can be used to ‘hold’ nutrients if land is not cash-cropped immediately. Manure should not be applied to frozen soil or when heavy rains are imminent.
5.5.2.2	Soil amendments, including liquid manure, slurries, compost tea, solid manure, raw manure, compost and other substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311, shall be applied to land in accordance with good nutrient management practices.	Manure applications should meet provincial requirements. An online search for “manure management” and the province should lead to a detailed list of requirements. Farmers should be prepared to prove to certifying body inspectors that they have assessed their crop nutrient needs, the nutrient value of their soil, and the nutrient value of their soil amendments (they can calculate the value of amendments or get such information from product manufacturers). Farmers should be prepared to prove they are applying the appropriate amount of soil amendments for their particular crop needs. Much to their dismay, many organic farmers only realize after a proper soil assessment that they have been applying too much compost to their soil. In an attempt to increase the nitrogen content (for yield), they often increase phosphorus levels beyond the capacity of the soil (which can result in phosphorus leaching and environmental damage).

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		The key goal in nutrient management planning is to achieve a proper nutrient balance in your soil, and to maintain that balance over time. Soil assessment methods include: soil tests, plant symptom analysis, plant tissue analysis, assessing crop yields, and evaluating weed characteristics and weed pressure.
NOTE	In Canada, some additional provincial requirements may also apply.	
5.5.2.3	Where manure is applied, the soil shall be sufficiently warm and moist to ensure active bio-oxidation.	Manure, whether fresh or aged, can be applied only if the ground is warm and moist. Aged manure is manure which has been piled for at least six months but has not been turned or monitored to ensure that the material has passed through a thermophilic phase. “Sufficiently warm” soil is generally around 10C. Manure is broken down and nutrients are released through bio-oxidation. Bio-oxidation requires bacteria, which are most active in warm and moist environments, generally the same time plants are actively growing. When such bacteria are not active, nutrients can be lost, resulting in pollution off-site. Catch crops can be used to hold nutrients if land is not cash cropped immediately. Manure should not be applied to frozen soil or when heavy rains are imminent.
5.5.2.4	The seasonal timing, rate and method of application shall ensure that manure does not: a) contribute to the contamination of crops by pathogenic bacteria; b) create significant run-off into ponds, rivers and streams; and c) contribute significantly to ground and surface water contamination.	To avoid polluting water bodies and groundwater, incorporate manure as soon as possible after application, and grow a crop or catch crop as soon as possible after that.
5.5.2.5	Animal manure that is neither composted (according to Table 4.2	This requirement for manure management applies to growing human food

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	Compost of CAN/CGSB-32.311) nor dried (according to Table 4.2 Animal manure, dried), nor otherwise specifically listed in Table 4.2 Column 1, shall be: a) incorporated into the soil at least 90 days before the harvest of crops that do not come into contact with soil and are intended for human consumption. As an exception, the manure may be incorporated into the soil at least 70 days before the harvest of grain crops that do not come into contact with soil and are intended for human consumption when not consumed in their raw state; or b) incorporated into the soil at least 120 days before the harvest of crops that have edible parts that come into direct contact with the surface of the soil or with soil particles.	only; it does not apply to growing livestock feed. For example, 70 days would be required between applying manure and harvesting crops such as grain or corn. A longer period of at least 120 days is needed between the application of manure and the harvest of the following: • root crops (because they are grown in the soil); • crops that might touch the soil; and • crops that might have soil splashed onto the edible parts. For example, 120 days are needed for carrots, salad mix and tomatoes. Rather than applying manure to bare soil or food crops, farmers can apply the manure to a green manure crop the year before the food crop is grown. To address human health concerns related to the use of non-composted manure, the COS requires that farmers wait a period of time between the application of manure and the crop harvest. The duration of time varies depending on the type of crop. As stated in 5.5.2.5 b), the manure must be “incorporated into the soil at least 120 days before the harvest of crops that have edible parts that come into direct contact with the surface of the soil or with soil particles.” This would be relevant for most vegetable crops. The exception for grain was added in 2026 since cereal crops are considered a low-risk crop because they are processed and are not eaten raw. As well, recent studies have indicated low to no pathogen presence at 70 days after applying manure. The change from 90 to 70 days will permit the application of manure in more favourable soil conditions. In some regions, the soil is too wet or cold to apply the manure 90 days before grain harvest.
NOTE	Operators should ensure compliance with federal, provincial, and commodity association on-farm food safety regulations and guidelines.	

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5.5.2.6	If livestock are used as part of the cropping or pest control program, a management plan shall be in place to ensure that livestock are controlled and that manure or manure-related contamination does not reach the portion of the crop intended for harvest.	Applies to the intentional use of livestock in cropping situations (field crops, vineyards, orchards), and does not apply to droppings from wild animals. A manure management plan is required if animals are present where food is grown. For example, strawberry growers may use geese to weed their fields in the establishment year, but keep the geese out in the fruiting year. Sheep or pigs may be pastured in the orchard following the harvest to clean up fallen apples to help both with pest control and provide nutrients with their manure droppings. A manure management plan may include using a manure bag on draft horses when they are used to cultivate the vegetable garden. Animals may be used for stubble grazing, but the farmer needs to be very careful about using animals to spring graze a winter annual crop like fall rye. Livestock removal dates should be recorded, and harvest delayed appropriately.
5.5.3	Manure processing	
	Processing of animal manure using physical treatment (for example, dehydration), biological treatment or treatment with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 is permitted. Loss of nutritional elements due to processing shall be minimized.	
5.6	Management of crop pests, including insects, diseases and weeds	Although the term “pest” is often used to refer to insect pests, in the Canadian Organic Standard, “pests” refers to any living organism that damages humans or human resources. This includes weeds, as well as insects that damage plants, parasites that affect livestock, birds that eat berries and microorganisms that cause disease in crops or livestock.
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.	Managing insect pests, weeds, diseases and other pests is primarily a matter of management, not inputs. Many resources, including books, conferences and on-line courses, are available to help organic farmers

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	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).	learn about pest management. Examples of common mechanical or physical methods: • Increasing or introducing populations of natural predators and parasites of pest species; • Promoting conditions conducive to establishing, protecting, encouraging and maintaining natural predators and parasites of pests (e.g., hedges, nesting sites, and ecological buffer zones that maintain the original vegetation to sustain natural pest enemies); • Mowing; • Using stale seedbeds; • Grazing of animals; • Mechanical cultivation and hand weeding; • Flame weeding or heating if alternative methods of soil renewal or rotation are not feasible; • Mulching – plastic mulch, tunnels, hay wrappers and other plastics used for crop production or protection are permitted provided they are not incorporated into the soil or left in the field to decompose. They shall be removed at the end of the growing season. In perennial crops, plastic mulches may be left for more than one season but shall be removed before the plastic decomposes. The use of polyvinyl chloride as plastic mulch or row cover is prohibited. Biodegradable mulch must meet the criteria outlined in the PSL listing annotation (see Mulch in Table 4.2 of the Permitted Substances Lists (PSL)).
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 (Column 1 or 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used. Conditions that led to the use of substances shall be documented in the organic plan (see clause 4).	Inputs are considered only after management practices have fallen short of the desired control. Reasons for the use of inputs should be documented, as well as details of product use.
5.6.3	If application equipment, such as a sprayer, is used to apply prohibited	If chemical smells remain after cleaning spray equipment, this means that

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	substances, it shall be thoroughly cleaned prior to use in an organic crop.	chemical residue has been left behind. Where cleaning is insufficient to eliminate a contamination risk with a used sprayer, certain parts (such as hoses, tanks, nozzles) may need to be replaced. Cleaning procedures can generally be obtained from the manufacturer.
5.7	Irrigation	
	The irrigation of organic crops is permitted provided that the operator documents the precautions taken to prevent contamination of land and products with substances not included in CAN/CGSB-32.311.	If a prohibited substance (e.g., Magnicide) had been used in the irrigation system, testing for Magnicide residues and/or documentation (such as exclusion dates and treatment schedules) is required to show that sufficient time has passed to allow the substance to dissipate from the irrigation water before irrigating the organic land.
5.8	Crop product preparation	
	Wherever organic product preparation takes place, 8.1 and 8.2 apply.	Prepared products must maintain organic integrity and accurately label product composition. See 8.1 and 8.2 for details.
5.9	Facility pest management	
	Subclause 8.3 applies to pest management practices in and around crop facilities.	



6. Livestock Production

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	Livestock excludes apiculture which is covered in 7.1, and insect production, which is covered in 7.7.	
	Subclause 8.4 on Transport applies to the transportation of organic livestock.	
6.1	General	For the most part, the livestock standards do not tell an operator exactly what needs to be done because there are many different ways to meet the standards. There are different types of livestock and different husbandry systems which can promote animal health and meet the behavioural needs of livestock in accordance with the basic organic principles of fairness and care. It is therefore important to understand the intent of the standard.
6.1.1	Livestock can make an important contribution to an organic agricultural system by: a) improving and maintaining the fertility of the soil; b) managing the flora through grazing; c) enhancing biodiversity; and d) facilitating complementary interactions on the operation.	The statements described in 6.1.1 emphasize the holistic approach of organic agriculture in which all parts of the farm are interconnected. These statements are not requirements.
6.1.2	Livestock breeds, strains and types shall be: a) suitable for, and able to adapt to, site-specific conditions within the local environment and production system; b) known for their absence of disease and health problems, specific to breeds or strains; and c) recognized for their vitality and resistance to prevalent diseases and parasites.	The objective of organic livestock management is to eliminate the need for health interventions. It follows that hardier breeds are often more suited to organic production than those bred for high performance in confined livestock systems. Livestock bred to perform well in non-organic management systems (particularly those with controlled-environment housing) do not necessarily perform well under organic management or in alternative pasture-based systems. Assuming no animal welfare issues have been identified, certifying bodies should question the choice of breed

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		when there is a high incidence of health problems requiring intervention, or when there are requests to allow an exception to a particular part of the standard. The issue of slower-growing breeds for meat chickens and turkeys is addressed in a note to 6.13.6.
6.1.3	Livestock production is a land-related activity. Herbivores shall have daily access to pasture during the grazing season (see definition in Clause 3) and access to the open air at other times whenever weather conditions permit. - Calculated on the basis of daily dry matter intake, the consumption of grazed forage by ruminants that have reached sexual maturity shall represent a minimum of 30% of the total forage intake. - Consumption of grazed forage shall rise above 30% of forage intake during high forage growth periods. - Consumption of grazed forage below 30% of forage intake is permitted at the beginning and end of the grazing season. - Producers shall record the following details of the grazing season: - date of the beginning and end of the grazing season; - dates of confinement periods and reasons for confinement; and - rotation details including entry and exit dates, size of area, and number of animals on each paddock or pasture. For example, a grazing calendar or grazing chart can be used. - A minimum of 0.13 ha (0.33 ac.) per animal unit shall be devoted to grazing. [One animal unit = one cow or one bull, or two calves each 102 to 227 kg (225 to 500 lb), or five calves, each less than 102 kg (225 lb), or four ewes and their lambs, or six does and	An organic system recognizes the interdependence of soil, plants and animals. “Land-related” means that the production methods must have a connection with the land. If not, the operation does not meet the intent of the standard. For example, a chicken barn without outdoor runs is on land, but given that the production of chickens has no relationship to the land, this would not meet the intent of the standard. Access to the outdoors is fundamental to organic livestock production and means that organic livestock cannot be confined to indoor facilities except in certain situations (as defined by the standard). 6.1.3 b) This means more than just an open door. The intent is that all livestock are able to venture outside. Whether or not outdoor access is appropriate in different weather conditions depends on the type of livestock and the potential for degradation of the pasture or range. In keeping with their natural behaviour, herbivores must be allowed to graze when there is forage available. The minimum requirements described under 6.1.3 a) are to ensure that when determining the size of the herd/flock, the farmer takes into consideration the area of pasture land and its ability to provide feed during the grazing season. The standard ensures producers actually meet the intent rather than just providing an open door or an outdoor area consisting of little more than bare ground. Information about the grazing season in a particular region will be needed for the calculations in a)1, a)2 and a)3. The length of the grazing season may vary from year to year with changing climatic conditions, and may or

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	their kids]. f) Other livestock, including poultry, shall have access to the outdoors whenever weather conditions permit; g) Winter-only production of poultry is restricted to operations that are able to comply with land-related requirements for the specific livestock type, regardless of the time of year (see subclause 6.13.13); h) Exceptions in subclauses 6.7.2 and 6.11 may apply.	may not be continuous. The calculation is relatively simple for livestock consuming a 100% forage-based diet but more complicated for dairy herds where rations are more complex. Steps in calculation: 1. Determine “daily dry matter demand,” by using expected Dry Matter Intake (DMI) from referenced tables or published data for different classes of animals, or use a percentage body weight value. For example, a lactating dairy cow of 1200 lbs. (544 kg) will consume (on a daily basis) approximately 3% of body weight in dry matter intake or 36 lbs. (16 kg). 2. Determine “daily dry matter fed” from hay, silage or other forages fed. For example, 5 lbs. (2.27 kg) per day of hay = 4.5 lbs. (2.04 kg) DM plus DMI from other sources (e.g., grain). 3. Subtract “dry matter fed” from “dry matter demand” to determine the amount of DM from pasture on a daily basis. 4. Calculate DM from pasture as a percentage of total DM from forages. 5. Compare values at different times during the grazing season. Pasture should supply the majority of dry matter intake and nutritional requirements for cattle and sheep during the grazing season even though the minimum is only 30% of the total forage to be consumed on pasture. It is expected that forage intake from grazing will be greater during times of high grass growth than in periods of slow grass growth. Pasture can, however, provide less than 30% of forage intake during the transition into and out of the grazing season for all ruminants (6.1.3 a 3) as described below. Various changes were made in 2026 to this section to meet the following objectives: 1) clarify how to calculate the dry matter requirement from pasture. It

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		needs to be done on a daily basis; 2) address the issue of milking cows that are transitioning onto pasture; they cannot have an abrupt change in diet. Consequently, they are not able to attain 30% of forage intake from pasture on day 1; 3) encourage producers to put animals out on pasture even when their consumption from grazing would make up less than 30% of forage intake (for example, cleaning up a pasture at the end of the season). Operators are now required to record details about grazing, such as the timing. This is more important with the modification of the definition of grazing season in the 2026 COS, and with the uptake of robotic milkers, which change the way dairy cows are sent to pasture. It is important for producers to document precisely when grazing is happening given the need to calculate forage intake from the start of the grazing season. Although 1/3 acre (0.133 ha) per animal unit is a minimum requirement, there are regions of Canada where a larger area will be needed for pasture to provide at least 30% of the total forage intake during the grazing period.
6.1.4	Livestock stocking rates shall correspond to local agri-climatic conditions in Canada and take into consideration feed production capacity, stock health, nutrient balance and environmental impact.	The number of animals per hectare (acre) should be calculated to: • Minimize the risk of manure polluting soil, surface water or groundwater; • Prevent overgrazing of pastures or damage caused to the grass cover or soil structure by hoof action (soil poaching); • Prevent the build-up of parasites. Integrated management of livestock and crop production should allow for the spreading of manure without adverse effects. Evidence of land degradation or excess nutrient runoff could indicate that stocking rates are

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		too high.
6.1.5	Livestock management shall aim to utilize natural breeding methods, minimize stress, prevent disease, progressively eliminate the use of chemical allopathic veterinary drugs, including antibiotics, and maintain animal health and welfare.	A high standard of animal welfare is essential in organic production in order to minimize stress and avoid disease or injury.
6.1.6	As a general principle, the operator shall demonstrate their commitment to animal welfare. When an animal welfare issue is identified, the operator shall develop a corrective action plan. The operator shall document demonstrated improvements in animal welfare practices and shall make available upon request any documents or assessments mandated by industry associations.	Increasingly, animal welfare issues are being addressed in the conventional sector and many organic farmers also participate in programs such as the Dairy Farmers of Canada proAction program or the Chicken Farmers of Canada Animal Care Program. It would be redundant to duplicate welfare assessments in an organic inspection if other organizations have already visited the farm for this purpose. Instead, there is an expectation that the organic farmer strives to maintain high welfare standards and take corrective actions, if needed, to improve conditions. Identification of an issue is not limited to the observations of an inspector or industry assessor – it could be the farmer, farm employees, a vet or anyone observing the animals. When a problem is identified, any subsequent actions to improve the situation must be recorded and the records must be available for the organic inspector to review. For information on animal welfare in the context of the standards, see the work of the Animal Welfare Task Force (posted on Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada’s website at https://www.dal.ca/sites/oacc/en-home/resources/livestock/animal-welfare.html).
6.1.7	The health and welfare of organic livestock shall be monitored, as well as	To ensure the equivalency to relevant welfare standards, including the

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	their housing, feeding, watering and fencing systems, at the frequency required in the applicable Code of Practice (see 2.4) or an equivalent or superseding welfare program. a) Where the Code of Practice or equivalent programs do not regularly require daily checks, at a minimum, all confined livestock (those not on pasture or extensive rangeland) and livestock reliant on a mechanical feed or water source shall be monitored at least once daily. b) Individuals responsible for monitoring livestock shall be trained.	National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) Codes of Practice (see 2.4), requirements regarding the frequency of checking animals has been added. The type of monitoring has not been specified and may include by drone, automated system, or in person. Most animals should be checked daily.
6.2	Origin of livestock and livestock products	Organic methods respect natural behaviours and reproductive cycles. If non-organic animals are introduced into an organic operation for breeding, the rules of 6.2.2 must be followed once the new animals are on the organic farm. Artificial insemination should be performed by a person who is proficient in the procedure. If semen is collected for semen testing of breeding males, do so in a manner that minimizes stress and distress. Electro-ejaculation is not acceptable. Human manipulation using hormones or technologies, such as embryo transfer, are not allowed. If there is a chance that the livestock could be cloned, the origin or lineage of an animal will need to be checked before being brought onto the organic farm to ensure it is not a product of cloning or a descendant of cloned individuals. Calving aids may be used to assist delivery when needed but not to produce a calf as quickly as possible.
6.2.1	Origin of livestock	
6.2.1.1	Breeding stock shall: a) be bred using natural methods of reproduction or artificial insemination, including mechanically separated sexed semen; b) not be bred using embryo transfer or breeding techniques using genetic engineering or related technology; c) not be administered reproductive hormones to trigger and synchronize estrus; d) be permanently identifiable and traceable to their birth on an organic operation or to their date of entry into organic management.	
6.2.1.2	Livestock shall be continuously managed organically from birth or their	

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	transition date. a) Breeding stock and dairy animals shall only enter organic management once, either at birth or when transitioned into organic management. When a non-organic breeding animal enters into organic management, its meat shall never be organic. b) Livestock removed from an organic operation and subsequently managed on a non-organic operation shall be considered non-organic and shall not be re-transitioned into organic management.	are specified allowances for a transition period after treatment with a veterinary drug (e.g., a dairy cow treated with antibiotics for mastitis). See 6.6.10 for details. Once removed from an organic operation, an animal ceases to be organic. Sales receipts and other livestock records should allow for the tracking of animals, including their destination upon leaving an organic operation.
6.2.1.3	Animals purchased for breeding shall be organic, except in the following circumstances: a) when suitable organic breeding stock is not commercially available, non-organic breeding stock may be integrated into the organic operation provided that: 1) a documented search of potential, known organic breeding stock suppliers has been conducted; and 2) females are non-gestating and non-lactating at their time of arrival on the organic production unit, except replacement gilts, which shall be integrated before the last third of gestation; or b) in case of catastrophic events, such as a barn fire or disease leading to repopulation, non-organic breeding stock (excluding poultry) may be brought onto an organic operation before the last third of gestation if suitable organic animals are not commercially available (as defined in Clause 3).	Commercial availability is not well-defined in a livestock context, but in the interests of animal welfare, it should include the notion of proximity. Before using non-organic breeder stock, a producer must have a written record of the efforts made to find organic breeder stock. For example, transporting organic heifers over several days from Quebec to Alberta would be stressful for the animals and would justify sourcing non-organic animals from within the province. From an animal welfare perspective, if transit time is more than 12 hours, producers should be allowed to purchase local non-organic stock. The 2026 COS contains a new requirement for a documented search for commercially available organic breeding stock before non-organic breeding stock can be brought into the operation. This is similar to the requirements for purchasing non-organic seed in organic crop production. To increase a breeding herd, non-organic female animals can be purchased but only if they are not already in gestation or lactating. (Note that an exception is made in 6.2.4 e) in the case of a catastrophic event.) When on the organic farm, these females will be considered organic for breeding purposes only. If a non-organic animal that was acquired for breeding on an organic farm is sold, full disclosure of the origin of the animal must be provided to the buyer so that the animal doesn't end up

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		being inadvertently processed for organic meat. In the case of a dairy cow transitioned on one organic farm and sold to another organic farm, an additional 12-month transition time is not needed provided that proof of the time under organic management accompanies the sale. Males brought onto an organic farm for breeding purposes must be managed organically while on the farm. An exception is made for non-organic gilts, which can enter organic management as late as the second trimester of gestation. (A gilt is a female pig that has not had a litter.)
6.2.1.4	Organic ruminant producers shall produce sufficient suitable replacement stock within the organic operation. When suitable replacement stock cannot be produced on the operation in sufficient numbers, purchase of replacement stock may be supplemental (less than 50%) to on-farm production of ruminant breeding stock.	Organic operators are expected to raise as much of their own replacement breeding stock as possible and avoid being reliant on external breeding stock.
NOTE	It is expected that breeding stock replacement rates in organic farms be low and breeding stock lifespans be long and healthy. If a significant portion of the breeding stock on an operation requires replacement each year, operators are encouraged to review their organic management practices and investigate potential changes to improve sustainability and increase breeding stock longevity.	Organic principles show a preference for all livestock on organic farms to be certified organic: both the breeding stock and the animals that are producing organic products. However, the standards cannot require operators to produce 100% of their own breeding stock for many reasons, including the need for genetic diversity. For ruminant farmers, it is relatively easy to raise at least some of their own breeding stock. However, most poultry and swine producers currently do not raise their own breeding stock, and instead rely on non-organic breeding stock to produce hybrid offspring. Consequently, the requirement for replacement stock does not apply to poultry or swine.
6.2.2	Organic livestock products	
6.2.2.1	Organic livestock products shall be from livestock raised according to this standard.	The intention is that organic livestock products come from an organic production unit where all the animals (parents and offspring) are raised organically.

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6.2.2.2	Organic milk shall be the product of lactating ruminants born on organic production units and under continuous organic management, except in the following circumstances: a) when operations initially transition into organic production following the requirements and allowances in 6.3; or b) during integration of non-organic breeding stock following the requirements and allowances in 6.2.1.3, and under continuous organic management for at least 12 months.	When a dairy farm transitions to organic production, the dairy animals on the farm must be managed according to the standards for at least 12 months before their milk can be considered organic (with some exceptions for feed in the first 9 of the final 12 months, see 6.3.3). Individual non-organic dairy animals that are introduced into an organic herd must be managed completely organically for the full 12 months before their milk is organic. This does not provide an exception for replacement animals raised on the farm; they should always be managed according to the standard. Herds cannot be rotated in and out of organic production. Note that organic dairy farms cannot sell calves to non-organic feeding operations and then buy the heifers back just before breeding. When converting existing non-organic livestock operations to organic management, some exceptions are allowed. Animals that are the product of embryo transfer cannot be sold for slaughter, but can be used for breeding or dairy, subject to the transition requirements of 6.2.1.3 and 6.3. The exception is only applicable when a farm decides to convert to organic production or when individual non-organic animals are brought into an organic livestock production unit.
6.2.2.3	Organic meat and slaughter by-products (e.g., bones, gelatin, etc.), excluding poultry products, shall be the product of animals born on organic production units and under continuous organic management from the start of the dam's gestation period, except in the following circumstances: a) when operations initially transition into organic production following the requirements and allowances in 6.3; or b) during integration of non-organic breeding stock following the requirements and allowances in 6.2.1.3.	The dams on the farm at the start of a whole-operation transition can never be sold or processed as organic meat animals. However, as long as they are managed according to the timeline given in 6.3, their offspring will be organic. All breeding females must enter organic management by the start of gestation to produce organic offspring, with the only exception being for gilts first entering into organic management, covered in 6.2.1.3.a) 2. This clarifies that if a farmer feeds an animal with conventional feed during pregnancy, their offspring will not be considered organic. This applies only to the transition of whole herds or individual animals used as new breeding stock (whether from within the operation or from another

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		operation). For animals already under organic management, the feeding of non-organic feed at any time during gestation would render the mother and offspring non-compliant (i.e., non-organic). Beef cattle and dairy breeding herds cannot be rotated in and out of organic production.
6.2.2.4	Organic poultry products (e.g., eggs, meat and slaughter by-products) shall be the product of birds under continuous organic management beginning no later than the second day of life. No medication other than vaccines shall be used to treat fertilized eggs or day-old poultry.	Non-organic day-old chicks are permitted because, as of 2026, there are not yet enough established operations supplying organic chicks in the quantities required for commercial production. However, chicks and pullets must be raised organically if they are to become an organic layer flock. Birds that have been raised to the organic standard from the beginning of life will be better suited to organic management when they reach production age. When purchasing day-old chicks, the operator is responsible to ensure the chicks have not been given any medications and have not been hatched from eggs treated with antibiotics. Operators will need to communicate with the hatchery or supplier to obtain written confirmation. When given at the hatchery (i.e., before the start of organic management on day two), all types of vaccines, including those that are genetically engineered, are allowed, as are vaccines for Marek's disease and Newcastle disease that may contain antibiotics as a preservative at a concentration of less than 1%.
6.3	Transition of livestock production units to organic production	6.3 describes the process of transitioning entire operations. The clause divides the requirements into three time periods: the moment of certification, three months before, and 12 months before (6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.3 respectively). Good records are needed to demonstrate when organic management of parent animals began.
6.3.1	Production of organic livestock products may begin, and offspring born of	

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	transitioned breeding stock may receive organic status, only when the livestock production unit has met the following requirements: a) all land to which livestock have direct access, including pastures and outdoor areas, has completed organic transition as per 5.1; b) all rations meet organic feeding requirements in 6.4, with the exception for transitional feed in 6.3.5; and c) all applicable organic livestock production practices are implemented and documented.	
6.3.2	During the final three months of the 12-month transition of livestock production units: a) feed shall be organic, or produced within the operation on lands that are in their final year of transition into organic production; and b) all applicable organic livestock production practices are implemented and documented.	
6.3.3	During the first nine months of the 12-month transition of livestock production units: a) at least 80% of feed (dry matter basis) for transitioning breeding stock shall be either organic, or transitional feed produced within the operation; 1) the remaining 20% of feed for transitioning breeding stock may be non-organic; 2) use of non-organic feed shall be documented and traceable; and b) plans shall be in place to comply with all applicable organic livestock production requirements.	Producers in transition are encouraged to provide certified organic feed or transitional feed for the 12 months before the production of organic milk. However, for the first nine months of the transition year, non-organic sources of feed are allowed for up to 20% of the total, calculated on the basis of dry matter intake. Detailed records of feed sources, quantities and the dates when non-organic sources were fed will be necessary to verify the actual percentage of conventional feed used. This only applies when an entire herd or flock is being converted for the first time, and does not apply to replacement females or single animals that are brought onto the farm.
6.3.4	Pasture, feed and forage that is produced on the operation in the final 12 months of the land transition period may be consumed by livestock in the	This clause makes it possible for all parts of a production unit in transition to reach organic status at the same time, instead of waiting until all

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	same production unit. When this feed and forage is stored, it: a) may be fed as organic within the livestock production unit for up to 36 months following the completion of transition; and b) shall not be considered organic outside the livestock production unit.	forages are certified before starting the transition of the dairy or beef herd or sheep flock. Without this allowance, transition time would increase by 12 or more months depending on the date of the hay harvest. For example, feed harvested from fields in the 3rd year of transition can be considered organic when fed to the dairy cows on the same farm during their 12-month transition period. It is also still considered organic feed once the herd transition is completed. However, this feed cannot be used as organic feed on another farm. Also, 3rd-year transitional feed cannot be purchased from another farm and fed as organic.
6.3.5	When transitioning additional land and expanding existing organic herds, transitioning breeding stock brought onto the operation may graze third-year transitional pasture until the beginning of the last third of gestation.	This allowance does not make it possible to produce organic milk or meat from livestock before the land has organic status. Offspring of meat animals will only be considered organic if they were born after the land transition is complete. Accurate harvest records will be important to verify the status of both feed and livestock. If new land is brought into the operation after the initial transition is complete, transitional feed from this land does not have organic status on the farm until it meets the 36-month requirement. Feed from buffer zones is not considered transitional feed – it is non-organic. In situations where the land base has to be increased to support herd expansion, third-year transitional pasture can be used for new breeding stock that are transitioning. If they are bred, females can continue to graze the third-year transitional pasture until the end of their second trimester. If they graze the third-year pasture in their third trimester, their offspring will not be considered organic. Note also that the existing herd cannot graze the transitional pasture and maintain organic status. There is an allowance for transitional feed produced on the same operation to be used for 36 months after transition.
6.4	Livestock feed	

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6.4.1	The operator shall provide an organic feed ration that is balanced to meet the nutritional requirements of the livestock.		Feed supply is one of the limiting factors on the size of a livestock production unit. If organic feed cannot be sourced in sufficient quality and type to provide a balanced ration suitable for the type of livestock, the livestock cannot be considered organic. Livestock may be fed organic food waste (≥ 95% organic content) if it is part of a healthy, balanced diet. Food products containing 70-95% organic ingredients can only be fed according to the exception in 6.4.8.
6.4.2	Livestock feed shall consist of substances that are necessary and essential for animal health, well-being and vitality, and that meet the physiological and behavioural needs of the species in question.		As well as providing the necessary amounts of protein, energy, vitamins and minerals, the feed must be suited to the type of animal including their different behavioural needs at different stages of life. Examples are given in 6.4.4.
6.4.3	Operators shall hold relevant professional qualifications, or maintain a relationship with a qualified expert or registered professional, such as an agrologist, nutritionist or experienced peer, who can assist with nutritional needs of animals as described in 6.4.1 and 6.4.2.		Livestock producers need to have a working relationship with an animal nutrition expert . There are many options for this type of advice. It is not restricted to a formal client relationship because of cost (there is a fee associated with being a documented customer). Good nutrition is key to animal health and wellbeing, and a relationship with a qualified nutritionist or equivalent helps ensure the animals' nutritional needs are being met. If a producer is a nutritionist themselves, they do not need to consult someone else.
6.4.4	Specific livestock rations shall take the following into account:		
	a)	for young mammals, the need for natural milk, including colostrum, within the first day of life;	Feeding dairy calves at least 4 litres (1.06 gallons) of good quality colostrum within 12 hours of birth is recommended. The recommended amount for kids is 150 ml/kg (2.3 oz/lb) of body weight over the first 24 hours; for lambs, the recommended amount is 200 ml/kg (3.07 oz/lb) of body weight over the first 24 hours.
	b)	in dairy operations, offspring may be taken from their dam at the age of 24 hours, provided that they receive colostrum. If	Prolonged periods of contact between dams and offspring, or the use of a foster animal (e.g., nurse cow) offer species-appropriate natural behaviour

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		contagious diseases are present in the herd or flock, removal can occur sooner than 24 hours provided that the calves, lambs or kids receive colostrum.	and address consumer concerns. These practices have been shown in studies to improve both calf weight gain and social behaviour, and decrease both suckling on other calves and concentrate intake. The 2026 COS recommends, but doesn't require, a prolonged suckling period; this note will be revisited in the next review. Although it cannot be considered natural, the standard allows offspring of dairy animals to be removed 24 hours after birth and after having received colostrum through suckling and supplemental feeding. When there is disease in the herd that can be spread via the mother's milk, such as caprine arthritis encephalitis (CAE) or Johnes' disease, there is the option to remove the newborn immediately to prevent nursing. In this case, farmers will need to provide the young with sufficient colostrum according to the recommended amounts.
NOTE	It is recommended to allow prolonged suckling, or contact, beyond 24 hours between dairy offspring and dams, for example by keeping offspring with dams for some portion of the day (calf-sharing) or using foster animals (nurse cows). This note will be reviewed in 2031;		
	c)	in meat operations when removal of calves, lambs or kids from their dam is necessary to prevent the spread of a contagious disease, the use of non-organic milk or non-organic milk replacer is permitted as part of a veterinary-approved plan of disease eradication if organic alternatives are commercially unavailable. The veterinary-approved plan of eradication shall include a timeline and preventative measures such as testing milk, blood or manure, or pasteurizing milk. In order of preference, the following can be used (provided it is free of medication): 1) organic milk (including pasteurized);	In ruminant operations raising animals for meat, there is no readily available source of organic milk on the farm like there is in a dairy operation. It is generally not feasible to milk a beef cow, for example. In these situations, operators can use non-organic milk as described in the clause. On an organic dairy operation, organic milk is much more accessible, so 6.4.3 c) does not apply.

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	2) organic milk replacer; 3) non-organic milk; or 4) non-organic milk replacer;	
	d) calves shall be given fresh, whole, organic milk or organic milk replacer provided that it is free of medication until the age of three months;	Calves are naturally motivated to consume large volumes of milk; it is important to provide sufficient quantities. The 2023 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle recommends that operators “offer calves at least 9 L of milk/milk replacer daily when ambient environmental temperatures are around 10°C (50°F) and offer at least 10 L daily when temperatures are around 0°C (32°F). Reconstituted organic milk free of medication is an acceptable alternative to fresh whole milk.
	e) calves can be fed milk from an organic cow that received treatment with antibiotics if a withholding period of twice the label requirement or 14 days, whichever is longer, is applied;	This clause was added to reduce the amount of milk being wasted when antibiotics have been required. Milk replacer can only be used in emergencies.
	f) lambs and kids shall be given fresh, whole, organic milk or reconstituted organic milk until the age of two months or a weight of 18 kg (39.7 lb);	
	g) ruminants shall be weaned gradually to minimize stress; dam-raised calves, lambs, and kids shall be weaned by limiting dam contact or nursing using strategies such as fenceline weaning, nose paddle/two-stage weaning, or natural weaning; calves, lambs, and kids that are separated from their dams shortly after birth and fed milk (hand-raised) shall be weaned from milk gradually by reducing the quantity or frequency of milk feeding over at least five days;	Reducing milk feeding over time rather than cutting it off abruptly has significant benefits to the welfare and health of young ruminants, and is in line with organic principles. This change would require young ruminants for both dairy and meat production to be weaned from milk gradually. This is a relatively new requirement in the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle and is not regularly used for other types of livestock. For some beef, lamb and non-dairy goat producers, this change will require a change in management, but there are different options available to fit different systems. Meat animals gradually move from milk to solid food, as the offspring are with the dam for much longer than for dairy animals. But abrupt separation from the dam is still very stressful even though the nutritional transition is

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			gradual. A survey of beef producers in Canada in 2022-2023 found that 51% are using traditional weaning while 32% using fenceline weaning and 12% used nose paddles, so these methods are already coming into use. With this change, gradual weaning will be a way for organic producers (of non-dairy ruminants) to differentiate themselves from conventional producers.
NOTE	Research on the benefits and methods of gradual weaning in non-ruminants is still growing, and operators are encouraged to monitor developments in this area.		
	h)	if they are not nursing, young animals shall be fed to meet their nutritional requirements and to achieve optimal growth and health by using artificial teats to satisfy their motivation to suck;	
	i)	dairy calves, kids, and lambs shall have access to forage at all times;	High-quality roughage (e.g., hay) should also be available free choice to promote rumen development and achieve optimal growth and health. Refer to growth curves for young animals to verify that their growth rate and condition is optimal. There is no requirement to provide free-choice access to grain.
NOTE	Refer to the <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle</i> (see 2.4) for recommendations on colostrum feeding and the quantity of milk to be fed to dairy calves. ¹		
	j)	for ruminants, at least 60% of dry matter in daily rations shall consist of: hay; fodder that is fresh or dried; or ensiled forage,	Ruminants are naturally adapted to a diet based on roughage. A high proportion of grain or concentrate reduces the pH in the rumen which can

¹ In this standard, Codes of Practice or Code of Practice refers to Canada's best practices for the care and handling of livestock (<https://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice>). See 2.4.

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	for example, fermented grass, legumes, or corn plants. An increased grain ration is permitted to ensure that nutritional requirements are met during uncommonly cold periods or when forage quality is compromised due to extraordinary weather events;	lead to health problems. The only time increasing the grain ration can be justified is in extreme cases when extra energy is needed to prevent a serious loss of body condition.
	k) when ensiled corn is fed, unless there is analysis to the contrary, it shall be considered 40% grain and 60% forage. The proportion of grain in ensiled corn shall be included in the percentage of grains in the ration [see 6.4.4 j)];	To help ensure that all organic livestock have suitable diets, all organic livestock producers must have access to nutrition advice.
	l) in the finishing phase, poultry shall be given grain;	
	m) poultry and pigs shall have daily access to organic plant material other than grain (i.e., the cereals, pulses and oilseeds normally found in the concentrate portion of a ration). Acceptable sources include but are not limited to pasture, hay, straw, alfalfa pellets, corn cobs, vegetables or fruit;	This plant material must be organic and refers to fruit, vegetables, the associated crop waste, and forages (straw, hay, pasture) but not grain seed screenings. Green matter can be a natural source of vitamins, minerals and amino acids for poultry and pigs. For example, a grass/clover forage with chicory can contribute 70% of requirements for lysine and methionine for poultry and significantly contribute to the amino acid requirements of dry sows. This plant material is separate from grain and that it shall be provided daily. Vegetable matter, particularly roughage, provides many benefits. It supports a healthy gut biome (intestinal microorganisms) in pigs and poultry. As well, fibre provides a sense of satiation. Basically, the pigs and chickens feel 'full,' not hungry, and this reduces the frequency of aggressive behaviours such as feather picking. In addition, vegetable matter enriches the environment by giving livestock something to manipulate, whether it is hay or vegetables, but environmental enrichment is addressed specifically in other clauses.
	n) poultry shall be fed daily. A "skip-a-day" feeding regime for breeding birds is prohibited;	In conventional production, from 2-3 weeks of age, feed is usually restricted for broiler breeds that have been genetically selected for high

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			feed conversion rates. This practice reduces high body weights and their associated welfare risks. However restricted feeding programs will result in chronic hunger which adversely affects welfare. This illustrates how these high productivity breeds are unsuitable for organic production systems. Many organic standards around the world require slow-growing poultry breeds. Bio Suisse defines these as breeds in which “The average daily weight gain may not exceed 27.5 g up until the 63rd day of age.” The Soil Association defines slow growing breeds as ones in which the daily weight gain averaged over the life of the bird is no more than 35 g per day (these figures should be taken from published breed data), and the maximum daily weight gain measured on the farm is never more than: i) 60 g in the case of chickens; ii) 105 g in the case of male turkeys; or iii) 75 g in the case of female turkeys.” Slow-growing breeds, such as the Sasso, tend to be hardy birds and better at foraging than the common breeds selected for rapid weight gain in intensive poultry operations.
	o)	rabbits shall be given forage, such as grass and hay, and have access to material that keeps teeth healthy, such as gnawing blocks, root vegetables and tree branches. Substances in gnawing blocks shall be listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	Rabbits are herbivores and their teeth grow continuously throughout their lifetime. The chewing of tough, fibrous plant material keeps their teeth properly worn down.
6.4.5	The following feed, feed additives and feed supplements are prohibited:		
	a)	feed and feed additives, including amino acids and feed supplements, that contain substances not listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311;	
	b)	feed medications or veterinary drugs, including hormones and	These prohibitions ensure that livestock are fed as naturally as possible

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	prophylactic antibiotics, to promote growth;	without the use of drugs to promote growth. Also, feeds cannot contain veterinary drugs, such as coccidiostats or antibiotics, used to prevent disease or promote growth.
c)	approved feed supplements or feed additives used in amounts greater than those required for adequate nutrition and health maintenance for the species at its specific stage of life;	The Permitted Substances Lists (CAN/CGSB-32.311) describe the types of additives and supplements that are allowed and the conditions that apply to their use. Recognizing that the feed available for rations may not always provide the trace minerals and vitamins needed for good health and adequate nutrition, supplements are allowed. They should be of non-synthetic origin whenever possible. Probiotics, enzymes and microorganisms are allowed. In general, supplements of synthetic origin are only allowed when non-synthetic ones are unavailable. In the 2020 COS, the terms “synthetic” and “non-synthetic” were often replaced with more detailed descriptions of what is and what is not permitted. The intent of the standard remains the same but the new wording clarifies the sources of permitted substances on a case-by-case basis.
d)	feeds that are chemically extracted or defatted with prohibited substances;	
e)	feed that contains mammalian or avian slaughter by-products; an exception applies to insects (see 7.7.2.2);	The prohibition of the by-products of mammalian or avian slaughter does not preclude the use of milk, milk products, eggs, or egg products as poultry feed. Fish products are allowed as supplements to provide needed amino acids or vitamins. Organic sources of fish products are preferred but other sources can be used provided that all the preservatives and other ingredients are listed in Table 5.2: Feed, feed additives and feed supplements.
f)	feed that contains preservatives unless they are listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311;	
g)	silage preservation products unless they are listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311;	Permitted preservatives are those derived from non-GE bacteria, fungi or food by-products (such as molasses or whey), as well as lactic, propionic

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		and formic acid.
h)	appetite enhancers or flavour enhancers unless they are listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311;	
i)	feed formulas that contain manure or other animal waste; an exception applies to insects (see 7.7.2.2); and	
j)	feed that contains colouring agents unless they are listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	
6.4.6	Livestock of all ages shall have access to clean, fresh water on demand. Livestock water sources shall be tested according to livestock drinking water quality guidelines and procedures outlined in quality assurance programs mandated by industry associations, if available, otherwise water testing shall be conducted according to the relevant Code of Practice (see 2.4).	Certification inspectors will need to determine if water is readily accessible for the numbers of animals housed. The Codes of Practice provide recommendations for how many waterers should be provided for groups of each species, as do quality assurance programs for some types of livestock. The main water source used for livestock drinking water must be tested for potential water contaminants in the area where the farm or ranch is located. It is not necessary to test for every potential toxin at a cost of thousands of dollars. Identify the main water quality concerns for the livestock being raised and assess the risks. For example, farmers should test for arsenic in areas where arsenic is known to be in well water, if the well is the main source of water. Areas where there is industrial activity such as gas/oil wells might warrant testing for hydrocarbons. It is important to test for nitrates everywhere. Blooms of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) in stagnant water can be a problem in the summer and fall and could be the cause of unexplained livestock deaths.

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		If there is a recommended standardized test for livestock water in a given region or province, use that for an initial test. Check the drinking water requirements in the Code of Practice or quality assurance program for the specific type of livestock. <i>Livestock Water Quality – A field guide for cattle, horses, poultry & swine</i> (published by AAFC and the University of Saskatchewan) provides information about recommended upper safe levels. According to <i>Livestock Water Quality</i>, “In most jurisdictions, it is generally recommended that drinking water for livestock should contain less than 100 coliforms/100 mL... Dugouts in rural areas that are not contaminated usually have <i>E. coli</i> counts of 20 to 100 per 100 mL, with wildlife being the predominant source. With direct watering of cattle, these counts may increase to greater than 10,000 counts per 100 mL for extreme cases.” Testing for bacterial contamination (total coliforms and <i>E. coli</i>) on a regular basis is important because of the potential for contaminated water to introduce pathogens into the food chain. The Code of Practice's guidelines on water are followed only in the absence of a quality assurance program that includes water guidelines. For some types of livestock, there might not be a need for testing if neither the industry quality assurance program nor the Code require it.
6.4.7	Force feeding of ducks and geese is prohibited.	Force-feeding ducks and geese by inserting a tube into the throat to enlarge the liver (to produce foie gras) is not compatible with the principles of organic production. It is considered cruel and stressful for the birds, negatively affecting liver function and potentially causing injuries.
6.4.8	By exception, non-organic feed is permitted under the circumstances described in 6.4.8.1 and 6.4.8.2. Exceptional use of non-organic feed or forage in the case of a catastrophic event or forage shortage shall not affect the organic status of livestock for milk or meat.	Organic livestock eat organic feed and forage. But what happens when, due to drought, there is no organic silage available? Or, what happens after the nightmare scenario when a barn burns down and the winter's worth of feed and hay is lost in the flames? And, what happens when a pandemic interrupts international trade leaving farmers and feed suppliers

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6.4.8.1	If organic feed is unobtainable as the result of a catastrophic event with a direct impact on the production unit (for example, fire, flood, or extraordinary weather conditions), non-organic feed may be used for a maximum of ten consecutive days (or up to 30% non-organic feed for up to 30 consecutive days), to ensure a balanced livestock ration. Non-organic feed from land in transition to organic production and free of prohibited substances shall be used in preference to non-organic feed.	unsure of when the next imports will arrive? When developing the Canadian Organic Standard, there is both a need for compassion for the farmers facing disastrous conditions, and a need to maintain organic integrity. The 2015 COS contained a certain level of flexibility in terms of the use of non-organic feed and forage for exceptional circumstances. Non-organic feed could be used for a maximum of 10 days after a catastrophe (e.g., fire or flood) that destroys or makes the feed supply unavailable. This enabled a farmer to use whatever non-GE feed is available in a short-term emergency situation to maintain the health of animals without losing organic status.
NOTE	The certification body should be notified as soon as possible after non-organic feed is used.	
6.4.8.2	Non-organic, non-genetically engineered forage is permitted as follows, by exception, in the event of a regional forage shortage that is documented by the operator and, when possible, confirmed by a regional authority: a) Non-lactating cows, ewes and does, and replacement females may be given non-organic forage provided that the animals are segregated; are visually distinguishable (for example, have ear tags and age verification records); record keeping is maintained; and the non-organic forage is chosen with the following order of priority preference: 1) non-organic forage from land in transition; 2) non-organic forage grown without the use of prohibited substances; 3) non-organic forage grown without the use of prohibited substances for at least 60 days prior to harvest; 4) non-organic forage provided it is not a genetically engineered crop.	Generally, a commercial or logistical challenge, such as feed shipments being held up at the border, would not be considered a catastrophe because these can be avoided with better advance planning. A pandemic, however, is a different story and raises new questions. In the spring of 2020, the global distribution system was severely disrupted by COVID-19; organic farmers and inspectors questioned whether this was considered a catastrophe. The use of non-organic feed in the 2015 COS was restricted to 10 days because that was considered enough time to find a replacement supply of organic feed. While 10 days may be appropriate after a barn fire, it doesn't apply after a major disruption in the global supply chain. Given that so many products were unavailable in the spring of 2020, some farmers found that it took more than 10 days to find everything they needed for balanced organic feed rations. On top of that, the whole supply chain was unstable and some farmers were afraid of recurring shortages of feed.

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	b) If the quantity of forage allowed in 6.4.7.2 a) is insufficient, non-organic forage may comprise up to 25% of the forage ration for the entire ruminant herd in order of priority preference as outlined in 6.4.7.2 a). c) The operator shall design a contingency plan to address future forage shortages which may include strategies such as growing more climate-adapted varieties, improving grazing practices, stockpiling a supply of forage, identifying alternative supply chains, varying herd size, and improving the resilience of on-farm forage production.	In response to requests from farmers, the COS now allows up to 30% non-organic feed for up to 30 consecutive days after a catastrophe in case farmers can't obtain all the feedstuffs needed for a complete feed ration within 10 days. The operator does not need to get specific permission from the certifier (but should notify the certifier about the change in the Organic Plan as soon as possible). The subclause about regional forage shortages raised more questions. How large an area needs to be facing a shortage for it to be called a regional shortage? What authority needs to define a regional forage shortage? What happens to organic meat animals during a drought: do they all need to lose their organic status if there is no organic hay in the region? The COS allows for non-organic forage to make up to 25% of the forage for the entire ruminant herd, including animals destined for slaughter if the operator meets certain conditions. The operator must document the forage shortage. Ideally, the farmer should seek out a second opinion from a competent authority to confirm the shortage. The appropriate authority can include a crop insurance organization, a provincial forage specialist, or a conservation authority. Unlike the catastrophic situation, for forage shortages, it is recommended (but not required, as it is in a non-mandatory note) that the operator get permission from the certifier before feeding non-organic forage. The order of preference of forage sources is outlined. Drought, flooding and other weather irregularities are becoming more common due to global climate change. To avoid having farmers and operators using non-organic forage year after year, operators must develop a plan as to how they will try to avoid forage shortages in the
NOTE	The certification body should be notified before non-organic forage is used.	

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		future. Examples of options are outlined in 6.4.8.2 c. For either a catastrophe or forage shortage, if operators adhere to the requirements outlined in these clauses, their animals will not lose their organic status.
6.5	Handling and transport	
6.5.1	Livestock shall be managed responsibly, with care and consideration. Stress, injury and suffering shall be minimized in all livestock handling practices, including transport and slaughter.	The COS highlights low-stress handling that puts a focus on animal welfare and wellbeing. People who handle animals on certified operations must now be trained in low-stress handling methods. As well, handling areas must have good traction underfoot and a lack of visual distractions to ensure smooth animal movement (6.5.2 and 6.5.3). The new text prohibits moving or pulling animals by their fleece or hair, or by their tails, skin, ears or limbs (6.5.6). The recommendations of Temple Grandin are the gold standard for low-stress handling facilities and methods. Producers are encouraged to consult her website, books and publications for more information.
6.5.2	Operators shall demonstrate that all persons involved in handling livestock are trained in and use low-stress, calm handling methods to safeguard animal health and welfare.	Producers are advised to study the recommendations of Temple Grandin to learn about handling facilities and methods which are the least stressful for livestock and handler. Consider both the design and the methods used. For example, pens, races, crates and shackles need to be in good condition so as not to cause injury.
6.5.3	Handling areas shall be maintained to provide good traction. Distractions that cause animals to balk shall be minimized or removed.	

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6.5.4	When moving animals, operators and staff shall use the following techniques in order of preference: a) working with an animal's flight zone (see “flight zone” in Section 3); b) visual aids, such as alternative driving aids (e.g., flags or sticks with plastic ribbons); or c) gentle use of paddles or boards.	Flight zone is defined as “the distance at which an animal moves away from another animal or human. The size of the flight zone reflects the species, the animal's age and past experiences, and the relationship between the animal and the handler.”
6.5.5	When small animals other than poultry are picked up, they shall be moved in an upright position while fully supporting their body and/or placing them in a container or small vehicle (e.g., cart, sled).	Poultry have different considerations from animals that are herded, and are included in all but clauses 6.5.3, 6.5.4 and 6.5.7. Larger birds, such as turkeys, that can be herded fit under all the clauses in the section.
6.5.6	Animals shall not be pulled or lifted by the fleece, hair, tail, skin, ears or limbs. Birds shall not be picked up solely by the head, neck, one wing or feathers.	For poultry, the ideal situation is to ensure that they remain upright and supported by the breast, or lifted by both legs. However, to accommodate large-scale situations, allowance is given for lifting them by one leg or both wings (6.5.6). When professionals are catching a full barn of 10,000 birds, they move quickly (which also means that the bird is not held for very long) and are audited to ensure that birds are not harmed during the process. There is also a trade-off of catching the birds more slowly (which using two legs would require), in that they would then wait longer on the truck to depart, putting their welfare at risk in another way.
6.5.7	The use of electric prods is prohibited except when human or animal health or safety is at risk. In this case, electric prods can only be used: a) as a last resort; b) when the animals have a clear path to move; and c) following the requirements in the applicable Code of Practice.	Electric prods are not completely prohibited because in rare circumstances they may be needed for human and animal safety. For example, if a large animal becomes stuck in a handling facility such as a chute, the animal's life may be at risk and electric prod use could save it. The handling section now requires documentation if an electric prod is used, and requires the operator to have a plan to avoid its use in the future. The use of an electric prod requires that the requirements of the

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6.5.8	Any use of electric prods shall be documented. The operator shall develop a plan to avoid using the electric prod in the future. For example, the operator could identify issues that are triggering dangerous behaviour in livestock and remove such triggers, and/or improve handling facilities.	applicable Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals are followed. Therefore, if an operator keeps an electric prod on hand, they should be familiar with the Code of Practice requirements for the type of animal in question. All the Codes can be found on the National Farm Animal Care Council's website.
6.5.9	For the duration of the transport period (starting when feed, water, or rest are restricted until slaughter or until restoration of free access to feed, water and rest), the health and welfare of animals shall be protected. Factors that shall be taken into consideration to prevent harm in transport include: a) selection and condition of transport equipment (truck, trailer, container, crate, etc.) appropriate for the species and size of animals and environmental conditions; b) transport densities, taking into account temperature and environmental conditions, animal health, body condition, horn and coat status, and journey length; and c) compatibility of animals in the transport group, including species, size, age, horn status, sex and familiarity of individuals.	Inspections should verify the modes of transportation and determine if they are suitable for the type and number of livestock being moved, while also taking into consideration the time of year. Producers should strive to keep the transportation time as short as possible. This means, for example, that livestock being sent to slaughter must be sent to the closest facility approved for handling organic livestock and inspected for the intended market (provincial or federal). This clause lines up with the federal regulations on animal transport, the Health of Animals Regulations (HAR), Part XII. The guidelines in the HAR are based on how long animals have been without food, water and rest, so these factors have to be carefully documented. Sufficient floor space is required to allow for adequate ventilation and a reasonable level of comfort, as well as enough space for the animal to be able to assume a natural position without coming into contact with the roof. Density in poultry crates must permit all birds to rest on the floor at same time if evenly distributed and to move their heads freely when sitting. Only approved haulers should be used.
6.5.10	The use of allopathic tranquillizers is prohibited during transportation.	

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6.5.11	For the duration of the transport period as described in 6.5.9, animals shall have shelter against inclement weather, such as wind, rain and excessive heat or cold.	
6.5.12	Fitness for transport shall be assessed before loading. a) Compromised animals (see definition in Clause 3) have a reduced capacity to withstand transport, and shall not be transported except directly to the nearest place, other than an assembly centre, where they can receive care or be humanely killed, and with special provisions required by Part XII (Transport of Animals) of the Health of Animals Regulations. b) Unfit animals (see definition in Clause 3) cannot be transported without suffering and shall not be transported other than for veterinary care and with special provisions required by Part XII (Transport of Animals) of the Health of Animals Regulations.	
6.5.13	If livestock is unfit for transport and euthanasia is necessary, it shall be performed by competent personnel with appropriate equipment. The method used shall be an approved method from the relevant Code of Practice (see 2.4).	
NOTE	It is recommended that all persons involved in transport participate in training to ensure competency in essential skills such as animal handling and knowledge of animal transport regulations. Available courses include Animal Health Canada's Canadian Livestock Transport Course (see 2.5).	
NOTE	Operators must comply with all applicable provincial and federal regulations related to transport and slaughter. For transportation and federal slaughter establishments in Canada, see the Health of Animals Regulations under the Health of Animals Act (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations under the Safe	

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	Food for Canadians Act (Canadian Food Inspection Agency). For additional guidance, refer to the transportation sections in the relevant Code of Practice (see 2.4). For provincially regulated slaughter, refer to provincial legislation.		
6.6	Livestock health care		
6.6.1	The operator shall establish and maintain preventative livestock health care practices, including:		This outlines the combination of management practices that are necessary to prevent disease, develop a strong immune system, and promote wellness. A balanced diet, adequate housing, gentle handling and careful observation all contribute to good health. If there are health problems, it is up to the producer to look at all aspects of the operation to determine the contributing factors and develop a plan to prevent and/or solve the problems. A certifying body should ensure that producers have reviewed the operation in its entirety, and that the operators consult with a licensed veterinarian when there are recurrent health problems. Check livestock regularly, particularly for lameness and foot ailments which are often associated with inadequate housing, pen or pasture conditions. Lameness in more than 10% of a herd (or flock), for example, is an indicator of poor welfare standards and requires corrective action on the part of the producer. Producers should be aware of the possible risk factors and provide adequate foot care for all animals. For dairy cattle, for example, this would include regular feet trimming at least twice per year.
	a)	the choice of appropriate breeds or strains of livestock, as specified in 6.2.1;	
	b)	a feed ration sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of the livestock, including vitamins, minerals, protein, fatty acids, energy sources, and fibre;	
	c)	housing, pasture conditions, space allowance and sanitation practices that minimize crowding and the occurrence and spread of disease and parasites;	
	d)	conditions appropriate to the species that allow for exercise, freedom of movement, and minimal stress;	
	e)	prompt treatment for animals with detectable disease, lesions, lameness, injury or other physical ailments;	
	f)	vaccines, in accordance with this standard and Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, if it has been documented that the targeted diseases are communicable to livestock on the production unit or operation and cannot be combated by other means;	

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	g) monitoring livestock Body Condition Scores (as defined in the relevant Code of Practice, see 2.4) and documenting any corrective actions taken;	This means that operators need to take action if animals are too thin. Organic animals should have superior welfare, and good body condition is an indicator of good health and welfare. Thin animals indicate something is wrong in the system and that must be rectified.
	h) holding relevant professional qualifications or maintaining a relationship with a qualified expert or registered professional, such as a veterinarian, experienced peer, or expert at a provincial animal health centre, who can assist in the event of health issues.	Livestock producers need to have a working relationship with an animal health expert. There are many options for this type of advice. It is not restricted to a formal client relationship because of cost (there is a fee associated with being a documented customer) and limited availability of vets in many regions. Prevention is the key for managing animal health organically and having an existing relationship is very important in both preventative and emergency situations.
6.6.2	The operator shall not administer: a) veterinary drugs, in the absence of illness, other than vaccines. Anaesthetics and analgesics are permitted, subject to the requirements for physical alterations in 6.6.4; b) synthetic substances to stimulate or retard growth or production, including hormones for growth promotion; c) synthetic parasiticides, except by way of an exception provided in 6.6.11; d) antibiotics to meat animals or to birds for meat or egg production; e) chemical allopathic veterinary drugs (see definition in Clause 3), for example, pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, hormones and steroids, for preventative treatments.	The only veterinary drugs other than vaccines that can be used in the absence of illness are those used to reduce pain and stress when dehorning, castrating or carrying out other allowed physical alterations as outlined in 6.6.4. Veterinary drugs in feed, whether for disease prevention or to promote growth, are prohibited. If a meat animal is treated with an antibiotic, it loses its organic status permanently. However, that animal may remain in the herd, provided it is permanently marked. Eggs and meat from laying poultry that have been treated with antibiotics are considered non-organic. Vaccines grown on GE substrate may be used if no alternative is commercially available. (See Table 5.3 of the PSL.) Day-old birds and fertilized eggs can be given any type of vaccine. GE vaccines that are products of genetic engineering (as defined in Clause 3), cannot be used on birds older than one day if non-GE alternatives are commercially available. This exception reflects the fact that organic health care relies on preventing illness, and vaccines are an important preventative tool.

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6.6.3	Hormonal treatment shall only be used for therapeutic reasons and under veterinary supervision. The meat from treated animals shall not be organic unless the treatment is listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	Oxytocin is the only hormone that can be used without affecting the organic status of an animal sold for meat. It can only be used to treat post-parturition conditions such as retained placenta and failure to let down milk. Although there is no withdrawal period on the Oxytocin label, the organic standard requires a 14-day withdrawal period. (See Table 5.3 of the PSL.)
6.6.4	For all livestock, physical alterations are prohibited unless they are essential for animal health, welfare or hygiene; for identification; or for safety reasons; and are listed below in subclause 6.6.4. Operators shall take steps to avoid physical alterations and should work towards phasing out routine alterations, other than for identification as required by law. All physical alterations are subject to the following:	
6.6.4.1	Except for poultry, regardless of age or method, anesthetics and non-steroid anti-inflammatory analgesics shall be used in consultation with a veterinarian to provide sufficient pain control; sedatives should be considered to further minimize stress.	By default, alterations are prohibited and should be avoided whenever possible. However, in certain situations, avoiding the physical alteration would result in inferior welfare outcomes for the animals. For all alterations, pain control must be used, the practitioner must be trained, and tools must be well-maintained and clean.
6.6.4.2	Physical alterations should be done at as young an age as possible. Other than for poultry, they shall be done after the first 24 hours of life.	In general, younger animals recover more quickly from physical alterations than older animals.
6.6.4.3	Physical alterations shall be performed by, or under the direct supervision of, competent personnel using proper, clean, sanitized, and well-maintained tools, and accepted techniques.	
6.6.4.4	Tagging for identification is permitted when required by law. One additional ear tag, or tail web tag (for goats) is permitted.	For example, animals can be identified using ear tags with numbers, ear tattoos, or RFID tags (ear tags containing a microchip and antenna).

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6.6.4.5	Physical alterations permitted by livestock type are listed in subclause 6.6.4.7. Physical alterations not listed are permitted by exception if they are required to protect the health or welfare of the animal and if they are done by a licensed veterinarian. They shall be on an individual basis rather than for a group of animals. Exceptional events that require physical alterations shall be documented and corrective action shall be taken to avoid recurrence.		This is for exceptions that are not listed below. These are one-off situations where a vet is needed. Examples are dehorning or castration of an older animal with a health issue that made it impossible to respect the age limit for these practices.
6.6.4.6	The following physical alterations are prohibited even under veterinary supervision: caustic paste disbudding, castration of cull boars, spaying of female beef cattle, and preventative tail docking of cattle.		Disbudding with caustic paste was added to the list of prohibited practices in 2026 because research shows it is very painful. Also, there are reasonable alternative methods for disbudding and they are listed in 6.6.4.7 by species.
6.6.4.7	Specifications by species:		
	a)	Poultry: 1) Infrared beak treatment is permitted for one-day-old laying hens. 2) Infrared beak treatment and spur removal are permitted for one-day-old turkeys.	Beak treatment is a routine practice in commercial production of laying hens and turkeys. At the hatchery, the beaks of chicks and poults less than a day old are blunted using infra-red energy. This form of beak treatment has replaced the more invasive process of beak trimming and many large-scale poultry producers consider that beak treatment is essential to avoid outbreaks of feather pecking and cannibalism. Beak treatment is a routine practice in commercial production of laying hens and turkeys. At the hatchery, the beaks of chicks and poults less than a day old are blunted using infra-red energy. This form of beak treatment has replaced the more invasive process of beak trimming and many large-scale poultry producers consider that beak treatment is essential to avoid outbreaks of feather pecking and cannibalism. The research suggests that if beak treatment is banned and no other changes are made, animal welfare suffers because of the increase in feather pecking and cannibalism. However, many studies have

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		demonstrated that feather pecking and cannibalism can be reduced or eliminated by other modifications to the birds' living conditions, for example, by providing roughage, reducing flock size, changing lighting, providing enrichments, etc. The challenge facing organic egg producers is that even if farmers want to have hens with intact beaks, they likely can't get them. The vast majority of large-scale organic egg producers buy day-old chicks from hatcheries and these have all received beak treatments. In Europe, however, there is a growing movement to prohibit all forms of beak treatment. This is accompanied by improved living conditions of the birds and support from poultry breeders who are developing less aggressive breeds. Unfortunately, these breeds are not currently available in Canada. Because this situation might change in the next several years, the clause allowing beak treatment will be reviewed in 2030. Unlike physical alterations in other livestock, pain control is not required for poultry as there are no approved drugs in these classes for food-producing birds at this time. The proposed changes include two definitions to help clarify the distinction between beak trimming and beak treatment. Beak Treatment: Blunting of the beak using a non-invasive procedure (i.e. infra-red). Beak Trimming: Removal of a portion of the beak, usually by hot blade, an instrument that simultaneously cuts and cauterizes. Beak trimming is only allowed for chicks ten-days-old or younger "when infrared beak treatment has failed or in flocks where infrared beak treatment is not available. Beak trimming shall be done in a way that no more than one-third of the upper beak is removed, as measured from the

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			tip to the entrance of the nostrils.” However, if there is an outbreak of cannibalism, beak trimming can be permitted, by exception, on older birds under veterinary supervision. If beak trimming is used, it shall be documented. Due to rapid development in research and practices regarding feather pecking and cannibalism, this standard will be reviewed in 2030. Analgesics and anesthetics are not required for poultry as there are no approved drugs in these classes for food-producing birds at this time.
		3) Beak trimming is allowed by exception until birds are ten days old in situations when infrared beak treatment has failed or in flocks where infrared beak treatment is not available. Beak trimming shall be done in a way that no more than one third of the upper beak is removed, as measured from the tip to the entrance of the nostrils. In case of cannibalism outbreak, beak trimming is allowed after ten days of age under veterinary supervision. If beak trimming is used, it shall be documented.	Beak trimming is only permitted if outbreaks of cannibalism occur and cannot be addressed with other methods. Documentation of such an outbreak, the methods used to treat it and how the operator intends to prevent it in the future are required. Beak trimming would also be allowed if a flock does not have access to infrared beak treatment or the treatment failed. These situations will be part of the review of this clause in 2030.
NOTE	See definitions of beak treatment and beak trimming in Clause 3. This clause (6.6.4.7 a)) will be reviewed in 2030.		Use of peepers/binders to prevent or control cannibalism is prohibited if pins are used because this is an unnecessary physical alteration. Without pins, they would still be considered an animal welfare issue.
	b)	Pigs:	
		1) Castration is permitted for piglets under ten days of age.	For pigs, castration is needed to avoid boar taint in the meat. In 2026, the age limit for castration of piglets was lowered from 14 days to 10 days. Castration is painful for piglets at any age and this brings the Standards in line with practices required in the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs regarding use of pain control, and brings the Organic Standards to a level above the Code of Practice by requiring castration to be completed by ten days.

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			Immuno-castration products, which use the pig's own immune system to control substances that cause boar taint, are not permitted.
		2) Tail docking is permitted only if a documented outbreak of cannibalism occurs and the issue cannot be addressed by other methods. The docked tail shall be at least 2.5 cm in length and the operator shall follow the method outlined in written instructions by a veterinarian.	Tail docking is only permitted in exceptional circumstances as described in 6.6.4.7, but can be performed by the operator. Tail biting is related to welfare deficiencies such as overcrowded pens without bedding. It can be prevented by providing an appropriate and comfortable environment that allows for natural behaviours. An appropriate setting allows nosing, chewing and rooting in straw, for example, rather than having the pigs redirect this behaviour towards companions in an aggressive manner.
	c)	Cattle:	
		1) Disbudding (defined in Clause 3) by hot iron is permitted for calves under two months of age.	In certain types of animals, horns can be hazardous to fellow animals, human handlers, and the horned animal itself. The situation varies between species. For example, having beef cattle with horns is a common practice but if ranchers don't want that, they can choose polled breeds. When it comes to dairy cows and goats, however, the situation is different. Disbudding dairy calves and goat kids is the norm because a horned milking animal can be dangerous to handle. Even the gentlest cow can inflict serious injury to a person by accident. With dairy breeds, it can be a challenge to find semen from polled dairy sires. In terms of goats, all goat breeds have horns (although there are rare cases of certain individual goats, and possibly bloodlines, without horns). The nature of goats, however, can be particularly problematic: an inquisitive and playful animal can become a danger when horns are involved. Although some farmers (including biodynamic farmers) have

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			goats with horns, other goat farmers have found that horned goats have injured other goats, as well as humans. The 2026 COS does not permit the painful process of dehorning animals (removing horns after the horn bud has attached to the skull) but does allow disbudding, which is defined as “a procedure that removes the horn bud (from which the horn grows) before it attaches to the skull, which usually occurs at 2 months in cattle and at 21 days of age in goats.” The process is only allowed on goat kids under 21 days of age and only if a hot iron is used. The more painful process of using caustic acid is prohibited. Dehorning is not permitted except by a veterinarian as covered under 6.6.4.5. Note that a definition for disbudding has been added to Clause 3.
		2) Clamp castration and rubber ring castration are permitted for calves under two months of age.	In many types of livestock production, almost all male animals are castrated - only a small minority of male animals are kept intact (not castrated) so that they can be used for breeding stock. This practice is required to prevent unwanted breeding, such breeding females when they are too young and inbreeding. Castration also can reduce aggressive behaviour, such as fighting between bucks or ram lambs chasing ewes to the point of exhaustion, and between the male animals and human handlers. Lastly, castration is sometimes practiced to improve the quality of the meat. Meat from intact boars and goat bucks, for example, can have an off-flavor. As with other physical alterations, pain control is required for castration. The proposed changes to the COS also put age limits on the practice. Younger animals recover more quickly than older animals. Castration is generally permitted with specific methods that are least

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			painful for the animal as per the research. An age limit for castration is provided for each type of livestock. Castration above these age limits would only be permitted by a veterinarian under 6.6.4.5. Castration allows male and female meat animals to be kept together in the same herd or flock without early pregnancies, aggressive behaviour and harassment of the females. For some livestock types, operator safety is improved by having as few as possible intact males.
		3) Tail docking of cattle is permitted only when necessary to treat injured animals.	Tail docking is only permitted in exceptional circumstances as described in 6.6.4.7, but can be performed by the operator. Tail docking of dairy cattle in the case of a severe injury to the tail falls under this category (6.6.4.7 c) 3)). It is a time-sensitive procedure that needs quick action by the operator to address bleeding, and pain control is required.
		4) Branding is prohibited unless required by law. If required by law, freeze branding with pain control shall be used, and the operator shall provide documentation showing that it is required by law.	Branding is a painful practice and alternatives exist (tagging). There are certain situations, like community pastures or rangeland, where animals must be branded. In those situations, the operator must provide documentation showing that it is required by law and freeze branding, the less painful option, must be used. For freeze branding, a branding iron is chilled in liquid nitrogen or dry ice and alcohol. The extreme cold kills the skin cells responsible for pigmentation in the hair follicles leaving a white pattern on the skin. This is painful but the pain can be minimized by veterinary-approved pharmaceuticals.
	d)	Sheep:	

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	1) Clamp castration is permitted for lambs under two months of age and rubber ring castration for lambs under seven days of age.	See guidance for 6.6.4.7 c2).
	2) Tail docking is permitted for lambs under seven days of age, with the following methods in order of preference (the least painful technique is listed first): i. hot iron, ii. rubber ring in conjunction with a clamp, or iii. rubber ring.	Tail docking refers to the practice of shortening the tail of an animal. The practice is most commonly used on lambs to prevent the build-up of manure on their long, woolly tails. (Docking isn't required for sheep breeds that have short tails or hair rather than wool.) Docking can reduce the incidence of fly-strike, a horrific and potentially deadly condition in which maggots accumulate in the manure on the lamb's tail and eventually consume the flesh of the lamb itself. Given this scenario, organic farmers can dock the tails of sheep but with the following caveats: "Tail docking is permitted for lambs under seven days of age, with the following methods in order of preference (the least painful technique is listed first): hot iron, rubber band and clamp, or rubber band." This clause reflects the latest scientific literature regarding which methods are the least painful.
	3) Docked tails must cover the vulva in ewes and the equivalent length in rams. Tails must be docked no shorter than the distal end of the caudal fold.	
e)	Goats:	
	1) Disbudding (defined in Clause 3) by hot iron is permitted for kids under 21 days of age.	See guidance for 6.6.4.7 c1).
	2) Clamp castration is permitted for kids under two months of age and rubber ring castration is permitted for kids under 14 days of age.	See guidance for 6.6.4.7 c2).
NOTE	The National Farm Animal Care Council's Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep and Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of	

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	Beef (see 2.4) are under revision at the time of publishing the 2026 Canadian Organic Standard. Operators are expected to keep up to date with current Codes of Practice, as this standard is expected to meet or exceed the current published Codes of Practice at their time of implementation.	
6.6.5	Biological, cultural, and physical treatments and practices outlined in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 are permitted, if preventative practices and vaccines are inadequate to prevent sickness or injury and treatment is required.	Even with preventive measures in place, it is probable that one or more animals will need treatment for disease or injury. As the first course of action, operators are encouraged to use treatments that do not require the use of antibiotics or other veterinary drugs. Permitted treatments include homeopathy, the use of Ayurvedic and herbal products, acupuncture, provision of trace elements or vitamins, and the use of probiotics if the products are included in the PSL. Early intervention is essential to the success of such treatments.
6.6.6	Medical treatment shall not be withheld from sick or injured livestock to preserve their organic status. If methods acceptable to organic production fail, all appropriate medications shall be used to restore livestock to health.	If the animal is not responding to alternative treatments such as those mentioned above, then appropriate antibiotic or other veterinary drugs must be given to prevent further pain and suffering, even if it means the animal can no longer be considered organic.
6.6.7	If the presence of injured or diseased livestock presents a health risk to individual animals or birds, the injured or diseased animals shall be separated from the herd or flock, and/or euthanized, if necessary (see 6.6.13). Isolated animals shall be kept in spaces that adhere to the requirements of 6.7.1. Where possible, the isolated animal shall have physical contact with other conspecifics. If physical contact with conspecifics endangers animal health or welfare, the operator may provide visual and auditory contact with conspecifics instead. In case of an emergency, the animal may be isolated temporarily until its condition improves sufficiently to rejoin other conspecifics.	Monitor animals regularly for health. Sick animals or those undergoing treatment do not have to be separated from other livestock unless there is a risk of (i) the disease being spread or (ii) injury to the affected animal if the animal is kept with the flock or herd. Contact with other animals is required, whenever possible, when an animal is isolated. Livestock are herd/flock animals and it is stressful for an animal to be separated from the group.

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6.6.8	Shipping diseased livestock to slaughter is prohibited if the end product is intended for human consumption.		
6.6.9	Products from sick animals or those undergoing treatment with restricted substances shall not be organic or fed to organic livestock.		Meat or milk from a sick animal should not be given to other animals. However, there is an allowance in 6.4.4 d) that allows calves to drink milk from cows that received anti-biotics as long as the last treatment was at least 14 days before milking or double the withdrawal period on the label (whichever is longer).
6.6.10	The use of veterinary medicinal substances shall comply with the following (see definitions of “veterinary drug,” “veterinary biologic,” “parasiticide” and “antibiotic” in Clause 3):		Any livestock treated with a veterinary drug must be clearly identified. Record all types of treatments, including treatment with homeopathic or natural remedies, including: • The details of all treatments, such as their duration and the trade names of substances used; • Tracking of treated animal/flock/colony through all stages of production, transportation, slaughter and processing; and • The disposal methods of milk, waste or other products from treated livestock.
	a)	If no alternative treatments or management practices exist, veterinary biologics, including vaccines, parasiticides or the therapeutic use of medications may be administered, provided that such medications are permitted by this standard and Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 or are required by law.	Vaccines are allowed for a known disease risk.
	b)	Phytotherapeutic medicines, that is, botanical compounds such as atropine, butorphanol and other medicines from herbaceous plants, excluding antibiotics; and homeopathic or similar products, shall be used in preference to chemical, allopathic veterinary drugs or antibiotics, provided that they are effective for the species and the condition for which the treatment is intended.	The standards encourage the use of alternative treatments (e.g., homeopathy and herbal treatments) over regular veterinary drugs. However, if the animal is not responding to alternative treatments or if alternatives are known to be ineffective, the use of antibiotics, parasiticides and other medications is allowed with the additional restrictions outlined in 6.6.10 b. “Chemical, allopathic veterinary drugs” refer to synthetic, pharmaceutical drugs used in mainstream veterinary

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		practice.
c)	If the products permitted by 6.6.10 a) and b) are ineffective in combating illness or injury, prescribed veterinary drugs not listed in this standard or in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be administered to breeding stock, layers or dairy animals with written authorization by a veterinarian. Some restrictions apply (see 6.6.2, 6.6.11 d) and 6.6.12). With the exception of parasiticides administered according to 6.6.11, meat from animals treated with veterinary pharmaceutical drugs not listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 shall not be organic, and meat from offspring of animals treated in the last third of gestation shall not be organic.	The intent of 6.6.10 c) is to allow the use of any veterinary drug when needed to treat an animal even if not specifically mentioned by the standards. Restrictions apply. For example, any animal that receives antibiotics even just once or receives more than two treatments of parasiticides can never be sold for organic meat (see details in 6.6.11).
d)	If a veterinary drug is administered and it does not have specific withdrawal requirements, a withholding period of twice the label requirement or 14 days, whichever is longer, shall be observed before livestock products from treated animals may be considered organic.	The label on any veterinary medication states the length of time required after the use of the medication before a livestock product (e.g., meat, milk) can be consumed. In organic production, this time must be doubled. In cases where there is no withdrawal listed or it is very short, a minimum of 14 days is required unless the annotation in the Permitted Substances Lists (PSL) states otherwise. There are no exceptions to the length of the withdrawal period even if no residues are detectable in the product. There are, however, restrictions on when, if ever, the animal products can be considered organic.
e)	Animals that require the use of antibiotics or other substances restricted in 1.5 e) for the same disease for three consecutive years shall be removed from the herd within nine months following the last course of treatment.	If an animal has to be treated repeatedly for the same condition, it is not well adapted to the production system and must be removed from the organic herd or flock. For this reason, the standards specify that if an animal was treated with prohibited substances for the same problem three years in a row, it must be removed from the herd.
f)	In emergencies, antibiotic treatment of dairy animals is permitted under the following conditions:	Antibiotic treatment of dairy animals is allowed only in emergencies, not on a regular basis. It is not possible to keep the animal in organic

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	1) the operator shall have written instructions from a veterinarian indicating the product and the treatment method to be used; 2) treatment shall result in a milk withdrawal period of at least 30 days after the last day of a course of treatment, or a withholding period that is twice the label requirement, whichever is longer; 3) antibiotic use shall be documented in herd health records; 4) if dairy animals receive more than two treatments of veterinary drugs annually, whether antibiotics, parasiticides or one of each, they shall lose their organic status and go through a 12-month transition period.	production if it has to be treated more than twice during any year. It makes no difference whether the treatments are with antibiotics or parasiticides. If two drugs are used at the same time, it counts as two treatments. After a third treatment the animal must undergo a 12-month transition before milk can be organic.
6.6.11	Organic livestock operations shall have a comprehensive plan to minimize parasite problems. The plan shall include preventative measures, such as genetic selection, pasture management, fecal monitoring and assessments of tissue at slaughter, and emergency measures in the event of a parasite outbreak. Hygienic cleaning and disinfection methods for barns, such as power washing, steam washing, floor burning and lime washing, shall be included in the plan as well as down time (i.e., when the barn is vacant). By way of an exception, if preventative measures fail due to, for example, climatic conditions or other uncontrollable factors, the operator may use parasiticides that are not listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, provided that:	The written plan has to clearly state all the measures that are in place to prevent parasites reaching a level that negatively affects the welfare of the animals. The plan cannot rely on the regular use of synthetic parasiticides (anthelmintics). Regular pasture rotation is a key element of any plan; the length of the rotation required depends on the particular parasite and the climate. Another strategy is selecting animals that are resistant to infection as breeding stock. Thorough disinfection of barns is critical to control parasites in pork and poultry production. An exception is allowed in recognition that internal parasites are problematic for young livestock, particularly for lambs under certain climatic conditions. The operator must prove that parasites are the problem and consult with a licensed veterinarian before any treatment occurs. This exception was not intended for external parasites, such as lice and ticks.
	a) observation of the animal, fecal test results, or assessment of tissue as appropriate for the species indicates that livestock is infected with parasites;	

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	b) the operator provides a written action plan, with a timeline, describing how they will amend their parasite control plan to avoid similar emergencies;	Such treatments cannot be a regular part of the annual management cycle. Operators need to provide a detailed plan describing how they will prevent future parasite problems. The exception can't be applied for the same herd or group of animals or the same production unit two years in a row.
	c) the operator has written instructions from a veterinarian indicating the product and method to be used, including provisions to avoid developing parasite resistance, such as rotation of parasiticides;	
	d) withdrawal times are twice the label requirement or 14 days, whichever is longer; If these conditions are met, the following restrictions apply:	
	e) the exception cannot be granted for a group of animals or an entire production unit for more than two years in a row for the same problem;	
	f) a dam from any species may receive only one treatment of parasiticides during gestation;	If a cow, ewe or sow is treated with parasiticides during gestation, this treatment does not affect the organic status of the offspring.
	g) meat animals from any species less than 12 months old shall receive at most one parasiticide treatment. Meat animals 12 months of age or older that receive more than two parasiticide treatments in their lifespan shall lose their organic status;	Animals sent to slaughter before they are one year old cannot be considered organic if they were treated more than once with dewormers. Older meat animals can maintain organic status as long as they are not treated with parasiticides more than twice during their lifetime. Treated livestock must be clearly identified and precise records kept of any treatment.
	h) dairy animals that receive more than two treatments in a 12-month period, whether of parasiticides, antibiotics or one of	

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	each, shall lose their organic status and go through a 12-month transition period;	
	i) dairy cull animals that receive more than two treatments with parasiticides over their lifespan shall never be considered organic for meat;	If an animal is culled from the dairy herd and has received more than two parasiticide treatments during its lifetime (or just one antibiotic treatment), meat from the animal would not be organic.
	j) dairy cull animals that receive antibiotics shall never be considered organic for meat;	
	k) swine breeding stock animals that present with a high parasite load may receive up to three parasiticide treatments in a year as part of a parasite reduction plan. This exception cannot be applied systematically [refer to 6.6.11 b) and e)];	
	l) laying hens that receive more than two parasiticide treatments in a 12-month period shall lose their organic status. Treatment of the flock, rather than individual hens, is permitted.	In situations where parasites are identified as the cause of increased mortality or other health issues in a layer flock, two treatments in a year are allowed without loss of status. There is no exception for meat birds (i.e., parasiticides cannot be used on the birds). The operator must develop a new plan which addresses the failure of preventative measures that were already in place to prevent parasite build-up.
6.6.12	Meat from poultry or breeding livestock treated with a parasiticide, or veterinary drug not listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 shall not be organic. Exceptions pertaining to parasiticide use may apply (see 6.6.11).	If it is necessary to use veterinary drugs that are not listed in Table 5.3 of the PSL, livestock can be considered organic for breeding purposes but meat from those animals or birds cannot be considered organic meat. The only exceptions are those listed for parasiticide use in 6.6.11.
6.6.13	Injured, diseased or sick animals shall be given individual treatment designed to minimize pain and suffering, which may include euthanasia.	An animal cannot be left to suffer; it must be treated. If there is no other alternative, it is expected that the animal will be humanely euthanized.
6.6.14	Forced moulting of poultry is prohibited.	Forced moulting involves withdrawing feed for 5-14 days in order to trigger a flock to moult simultaneously with the intention of rejuvenating the hen's egg production capabilities. It is considered inhumane.

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6.7	Livestock living conditions	
6.7.1	The operator shall establish and maintain animal living conditions that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of animals, including:	The basic requirements for any livestock production unit are outlined in 6.7; these are applicable (as appropriate) to any area used for livestock including: • Barns- roofed structures for animal confinement; • Runs- exercise areas connected to barns with little or no pasture; • Corrals- fenced areas without pasture; • Paddocks- fenced areas with or without pasture; • Pastures- fenced areas with grass that animals can eat; • Rangeland- large areas of unfenced and uncultivated pasture. The opening sentence states the intent; 6.7.a to 6.7.j expand on the aspects that need to be considered to determine if the intent has been achieved. These requirements are described in more detail for specific types of livestock in later sections of the standard. The operator and the certification inspector need to be aware of the natural behaviour patterns of the type of livestock being raised in order to interpret the standards as intended. For example, pigs should be raised in an environment which recognizes that they are strongly motivated to (i) graze, forage and root for food; (ii) explore and socialize with other members of their herd or litter; and (iii) build a nest at farrowing. The availability of straw is important in this regard. They also need access to a means of cooling (e.g., wallows, sprinklers or fans) whenever temperatures exceed 18C. Although not explicitly stated, operators should consider other factors that potentially have negative effects on livestock health, behaviour or comfort. For example, negative factors may include poor construction design, spurious electrical discharge, excessive noise (louder than 100 dB) and toxic materials (e.g., lead paint, treated wood).

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		All facilities used to confine livestock must protect the animals' health and welfare. They should be conducive to the animals' normal social behaviour (including the ability to contact other animals and to escape from aggression), as well as allowing for normal feeding and bedding behaviour. In addition, facilities should provide the animals with hygienic, comfortable surroundings, fresh air and opportunity for exercise. Facilities must be designed to reduce the potential for injury, hence the requirement for non-slip flooring.
a)	access to the outdoors, shade, shelter, rotational pasture, exercise areas, fresh air and daylight, suitable for the species and stage of production taking into consideration the climate and the environment;	Access to the outdoors is necessary for all livestock, but it is also recognized that in the Canadian climate, there are times when outdoor access is problematic for some types of livestock. The fact that the weather is cold is not a good enough reason to keep animals confined. Protection (such as shade or windbreaks) is needed from excessive exposure to sunlight, extreme temperatures, precipitation and wind. Poultry do not use outdoor runs when there is snow on the ground and it is therefore unreasonable to enforce the outdoor access requirement from November to March in many parts of Canada. However, poultry will venture outside, even in cold temperatures, if enriched verandahs or covered patios are provided.
b)	access to fresh water (see 6.4.6) and high-quality feed that meets the needs of the animal;	
c)	sufficient space and freedom to stretch out while lying down, stand up, stretch limbs and turn freely, and to express normal patterns of behaviour;	
d)	space allowances in proportion to local conditions, feed production capacity of the operation, livestock health, nutrient balance of livestock and soils, and environmental impact;	

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e)	production techniques that foster the long-term health of livestock, especially when high levels of production or growth rates are required of animals;	
f)	good air quality. Operators shall prevent humidity, airborne dust particles and ammonia from reaching levels that can impair the well-being of animals. If ammonia levels exceed 20 ppm, remedial action shall be taken. Ammonia levels shall not exceed 25 ppm. In addition, air quality shall be managed according to the relevant Code of Practice (see 2.4);	Aerial contaminants inside barns (e.g., dust, ammonia) should not reach sustained levels that can be deleterious to livestock or human health. Good air quality is important for both welfare and productivity. Problems occur particularly in the winter months if animals are confined and more often with swine and poultry operations. Wet litter is an indicator of potentially high levels. Exposure to ammonia levels above 25 ppm is hazardous for humans as well as livestock. Hydron ammonia test paper is the simplest method of measuring if ammonia has reached harmful levels. Ideally levels should be kept at or below: • Ammonia: ≤ 10 ppm • Carbon dioxide: ≤ 3000 ppm • Hydrogen sulphide: ≤ 0.5 ppm • Dust: ≤ 10 mg per cubic metre (1 m³=1.3 yd³) Of livestock housing types, poultry barns are the most prone to ammonia issues. This is reflected in the Codes of Practice, which give required maximum ammonia levels for only certain types of livestock. The COS sets an ammonia level limit for all types of livestock and housing, reflecting the fact that all housing structures may encounter air quality issues, which reflect manure and bedding management, and, in the case of mobile coops, the frequency of movement of the structure. The method used to test ammonia levels is intentionally left undefined so that producers can use the method that best suits their budget and operation.

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g)	appropriate resting and bedded areas that meet the needs of the animal. Indoor areas shall be large enough, solidly built, comfortable, clean and dry. Resting areas shall be covered with a thick layer of dry bedding that absorbs excrement. If organic bedding is commercially unavailable, bedding material from non-genetically engineered sources that is free of prohibited substances for at least 60 days prior to harvest may be used. Non-agricultural absorbent bedding sources (for example, minerals, cellulose, sawdust, and wood shavings) can be used for livestock bedding as long as they meet the requirements in 1.4 and 1.5, and do not contain, or have not been treated with, prohibited substances;	
h)	housing with non-slip floors. Solid flooring is preferable. Where non-slip slatted floors exist, the floor shall not be entirely of slatted or grid construction. The floor design shall ensure that the feet of the smallest animal cannot get caught in a void. Areas between voids shall be at least as wide as the feet of the animals;	There is a higher incidence of foot and leg injuries on slatted floors than on solid ones. Consequently, not all of the floor can be slatted. While the standards do not specify the allowed percentage, it is generally recommended that no more than one-third of the total floor area be slatted. The prohibition on totally slatted or gridded floors applies to all livestock facilities including poultry barns. In the case of poultry, “bedding” means a layer of litter material. Litter, such as straw or wood shavings, which the birds can use in natural pecking and foraging behaviour, is particularly important if birds do not have access to outdoor runs or enriched verandas in the winter.
i)	animals that give birth indoors shall be provided with sufficient space and a clean, dry, well-bedded space with stable footing. Birthing facilities shall allow for separation from other animals and all the dam’s needs shall be accommodated, including milking and nursing, until the dam is recovered from the birthing process. Animals shall not be tied or tethered when giving birth;	The space provided for birthing indoors must allow for the behavioural needs of the animals to be met.
j)	construction and management of outdoor exercise areas and pasture to encourage appropriate use by livestock to prevent	A livestock operation cannot negatively impact the environment and meet the requirements of the standards.

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		animal discomfort, and to avoid soil degradation, long-term damage to vegetation and the contamination of water.	
6.7.2	Access to the outdoors and freedom of movement may be restricted for the following reasons, provided that confinement is temporary:		
	a)	inclement weather;	If the weather or outside conditions are bad enough to seriously compromise the health of the animals or birds, they can be confined temporarily. For example, young birds are usually confined until fully feathered. Otherwise, operators must be able to identify specific risks (such as high parasite loads on the pasture) to justify keeping livestock confined. Farmers must also identify how they will address these issues to avoid or reduce confinement in the future. A difference in temperatures between inside and out does not constitute a legitimate reason unless the temperature difference is extreme. It is also not acceptable to confine livestock for the entire winter – most species will benefit from outdoor access, even in cold weather.
	b)	conditions in which livestock health or safety is jeopardized, given the stage of production; and	A hypothetical risk with no scientific justification or substantive evidence is not considered justification for restricting outside access for poultry. For example, the threat of avian flu posed by wild birds is not sufficient; however, a barn located under a flyway might be considered high risk during spring or fall migration.
	c)	conditions in which soil, water or plant quality would be compromised.	Systems should be designed such that livestock and stocking densities do not negatively affect soil, water or plant quality. Also, organic livestock operations should not be located where there are known risks which would prevent animals from being allowed outside. Certifying bodies would only allow exceptions related to the risk of degrading the quality of water, soil or plants in exceptional circumstances.

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NOTE	The operator shall document the reasons for, and duration of, confinement. Measures taken to reduce the need to restrict outdoor access in the future shall also be documented when circumstances are within the operator’s control.											
6.7.3	When livestock are housed indoors, at least one form of environmental enrichment shall be provided so that all animals in the group have daily access. For dairy cows in tie stalls (are permitted under 6.12.1), enrichment shall be provided during the exercise period if not provided in each stall. Enrichment does not include functional equipment or other objects or materials required by this standard. Environmental enrichments suitable for different types of livestock <table><tr><th>Type of Livestock:</th><th>Examples of suitable enrichments</th></tr><tr><td>Poultry:</td><td>Hanging peck objects, ramps, tunnels, straw/hay bales, pecking block products</td></tr><tr><td>Pigs:</td><td>Suspended chew toys, chains, rubber hoses, rubber toys, cloth strips, hanging knotted cotton ropes, scratch pads, straw/hay bales</td></tr><tr><td>Cattle:</td><td>Brushes, hanging ropes or chains, straw/hay bales</td></tr><tr><td>Sheep and goats:</td><td>Brushes, platforms, opportunities for climbing and hiding, brush or branches, straw/hay bales</td></tr></table>	Type of Livestock:	Examples of suitable enrichments	Poultry:	Hanging peck objects, ramps, tunnels, straw/hay bales, pecking block products	Pigs:	Suspended chew toys, chains, rubber hoses, rubber toys, cloth strips, hanging knotted cotton ropes, scratch pads, straw/hay bales	Cattle:	Brushes, hanging ropes or chains, straw/hay bales	Sheep and goats:	Brushes, platforms, opportunities for climbing and hiding, brush or branches, straw/hay bales	A fundamental principle of animal welfare is ensuring that livestock can exhibit natural behaviours. When animals are outside, this usually isn’t a problem. For example, chickens can peck at insects, sheep can rub against trees, and pigs can wallow in the mud. But when animals have to be kept inside, such as during our long winters, it becomes more difficult for them to exercise and express a variety of behaviours. When animals are, essentially, bored and can’t behave naturally, they sometimes develop unhealthy, often aggressive, habits. For example, chickens might peck the feathers of other birds and this can lead to cannibalism within a flock. Pigs might bite the tails and ears of their companions. This is one reason why organic livestock producers create a more complex indoor habitat through environmental enrichment.
Type of Livestock:	Examples of suitable enrichments											
Poultry:	Hanging peck objects, ramps, tunnels, straw/hay bales, pecking block products											
Pigs:	Suspended chew toys, chains, rubber hoses, rubber toys, cloth strips, hanging knotted cotton ropes, scratch pads, straw/hay bales											
Cattle:	Brushes, hanging ropes or chains, straw/hay bales											
Sheep and goats:	Brushes, platforms, opportunities for climbing and hiding, brush or branches, straw/hay bales											

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6.7.4	The continuous tethering of livestock is prohibited, with an exemption for dairy cattle under conditions specified in 6.12.1.	
6.7.5	Housing, pens, runs, equipment and utensils shall be cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross infection and build-up of disease-carrying organisms. Appropriate cleaners and disinfectants listed in Tables 5.3, 7.3 and 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 shall be used. If these substances are not effective, other cleaners and disinfectants are permitted on the recommendation of a veterinarian and with confirmation of a disease issue. In the event of a reportable disease, any effective disinfectant may be used to clean housing, pens and runs. Such uses shall be documented. For equipment that comes into contact with food products, the requirements in 8.2 apply, and substances listed in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 are permitted.	The issue of parallel production in livestock differs from the requirements regarding parallel production in crops. A production unit includes the livestock, the barn where they are housed, feed and input storage areas, runs and pasture. A breeding herd and offspring are considered a single production unit. Individual animals that have lost organic status may remain in the production unit as long as the non-organic animals are clearly identified and managed organically. Organic and non-organic production can coexist for different livestock types on the same farm as long as they are clearly different production units (e.g., organic layer hens and non-organic hog production). If similar types of livestock are kept in different production units and not managed organically, complete separation must be ensured. This would require separate records, barns, separate feed and input storage areas, separate runs and separate pasture, etc. For example, if there are two layer flocks housed in different barns on the same property, one organic and one non-organic, all aspects of the operation need to be clearly separated including egg cleaning and packing. Ideally the organic products would also be clearly distinguishable (e.g., brown eggs for the organic operation and white eggs for the non-organic one). The same applies to meat birds or turkeys: complete separation of all aspects of rearing and processing is required if one flock of meat birds (or turkeys) is organic and the other is not. If an operator has an organic and non-organic dairy herd of Holsteins, for example, the herds should be on different farms or at the very least in different barns with separate feed storage areas, separate pastures and different milk tanks that are clearly identified. If the herds use the same

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		milking parlour, specific protocols are needed to prevent unintended contamination or commingling. Operators should milk the organic cows first and use only the permitted products for teat dips, cleaners and sanitizers for the whole operation even when milking the non-organic cows.
6.7.6	All livestock in a production unit shall be managed organically. Individual, non-organic animals may be present in the production unit if they are clearly identified and managed organically. Non-organic livestock production units may be present on an operation if they are clearly identified and kept separate from organic livestock production units.	If herds are run on common land, operators will need to provide documentation from the relevant provincial or regional agency. Assurance will also be required from other producers with livestock on the common land to show that all the health care and feed products that they use (e.g., mineral licks) are permitted in the standard.
6.7.7	Organic animals may graze with non-organic animals on common land, that is, crown range or community pasture, provided that: a) documentation confirms that the land has not been treated with prohibited substances for at least 36 months; b) documentation confirms that health care and feed products available to organic livestock while on common land are in accordance with this standard; and/or c) identification permits a clear distinction between organically and non-organically raised animals.	
6.7.8	For new installations or replacement purposes, wood for livestock barns and shelters treated with prohibited substances is allowed if livestock or feed does not come in contact with the wood. For existing barns and shelters, operators shall take measures to prevent contact, such as applying a barrier or establishing a buffer zone.	Most treated wood has been treated with a prohibited substance. It can only be used in barns or shelters if the livestock cannot come into contact with the wood.

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6.7.9	Wood used for livestock fencing shall be untreated or treated with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311, except in the circumstances listed below: a) existing fence posts treated with prohibited substances are permitted if they are in use on the production unit at the start of the organic transition. These posts may be reused within the operation as allowed in 6.7.9 b) and c); b) new or reused fence posts treated with prohibited substances are permitted for exclusion or inclusion of livestock or wildlife on the perimeter of production units, but are not permitted for interior subdivision (e.g. for rotational grazing); and c) new or reused fence posts treated with prohibited substances are permitted if the operator provides documentation showing that they are required by law.	See guidance for 5.2.3. New or re-used treated fence posts are only allowed for perimeter fencing and in situations where the law requires treated fence posts. Use of treated posts for perimeter fencing would improve the situation for operations that have been struggling with (and sometimes losing certification due to) the lack of alternatives to treated posts for structural elements of a fence. For the purposes of 6.7.9, a fence is considered a perimeter fence if it borders a Production unit, which is defined in Clause 3.
6.8	Manure management	
6.8.1	Manure management practices used to maintain areas in which livestock is housed, penned or pastured shall be implemented in a manner that minimizes soil and water degradation, and maintains animal health.	
6.8.2	Manure storage and handling facilities, including composting facilities, shall be designed, constructed and operated to prevent contamination of ground and surface water. See also 5.5.2.	Ensure the quantity of manure produced by the livestock can be handled so it does not become a liability. Aspects of manure management to be reviewed include: • location and type of storage areas (covered/uncovered); • location of wintering feeding sites; • distance from watercourse; • timing of spreading; • area of land available for spreading manure;

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		• frequency of scraping pens or yards; • collection of run-off; and • specific climate considerations (e.g., heavy rainfall or timing of snow melt). In most parts of Canada, storage should be large enough to accommodate several months' worth of manure production. Environmental Farm Plan programs provide detailed guidance. Provincial governments provide guidelines and/or regulations for manure storage and handling facilities that are intended to prevent pollution.
6.9	Livestock product preparation	
	Wherever organic livestock product preparation takes place (for example, facilities used for milking), 8.1 and 8.2 apply.	Organic integrity has to be maintained at all times both on the farm and in any processing facility. For example, the requirements of 8 “Maintaining organic integrity during cleaning, preparation and transportation” apply to: • milking parlours, bulk tanks and transportation of milk to the processor; • egg cleaning and packing; and • slaughter of livestock for organic meat.
6.10	Pest management in livestock facilities	
	Clause 8.3 applies to pest management practices in and around livestock facilities.	Clause 8.3 outlines methods for prevention and control of pests on farms. Preventive pest management includes the removal of feces, urine and spilled feed as often as necessary to minimize smells and attractants for insects and rodents. For fly control, acceptable methods include the use of parasitic wasps that kill immature stages of flies; sticky traps; and traps baited with an attractant.

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		Details on options for rodent control were updated in 2026. See Clause 8.3 for details. Document all methods used. If permitted methods or substances are not effective, substances that are not on the PSL can be used if measures are taken to ensure there is no risk to organic product status or integrity.
6.11	Additional requirements for cattle, sheep and goats	
6.11.1	Herbivores shall have access to pasture (see definition in Clause 3) during the grazing season. At other times, including the finishing phase, they shall have access to an outdoor exercise area, weather permitting. The operator shall document the reasons and duration of confinement. Exceptions to the pasture requirement can be made for: a) breeding males; or b) young animals, when it can be documented that their health and welfare are jeopardized. This clause will be reviewed in 2030.	As a general rule, herbivores cannot be kept in a barn and fed organic forage during the grazing season. Research has shown that providing dairy cattle access to pasture can reduce the incidence of health problems such as mastitis, metritis and lameness. It is recommended that cattle be pastured for a minimum of 120 days per year during the appropriate seasons. Access to shade is needed to prevent heat stress during hot sunny days. Pasture should supply the majority of dry matter intake and nutritional requirements for cattle and sheep during the grazing season (even though in 6.1.3 the minimum requirement is only 30%). Whenever pasture conditions become inadequate to meet the body condition needs of the livestock, supplementary forage must be provided as needed. When growing conditions during the grazing season are not conducive to pasturing (e.g., drought), the animals should still spend time outdoors, even during the finishing stage. At least 4-5 hours a day are recommended. Examples of allowed exceptions to the pasture requirement: a) Bulls or rams may be kept without access to pasture when separated from the rest of the herd/flock outside of the breeding

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		season or to ensure operator safety. b) Young animals, lambs in particular, may be kept off pasture at times when parasite loads are high enough to create health issues for them. Evidence will be needed to show the existence of a problem. Also, a plan will need to be developed to reduce or avoid this situation in the future. The COS only allows "temporary" confinement (indoor housing without an outdoor exercise period) of livestock (6.1.3, 6.7.2 and 6.11.1). This clause is based on the perspective that outdoor access should be prioritized for animal health reasons in alignment with organic principles, and that steps should be taken to increase outdoor access if it is being regularly restricted (such as improving the surface of the exercise area). This is the current intent of the standards and it is in line with all main organic certification programs in the world. However, there are arguments against this reasoning, including that there will always be periods of confinement outside of the grazing season in Canada's harsh winters. Secondly, in new free stall barns, cows have ample exercise and good ventilation, footing and lighting without going outside. The welfare benefits of access to outdoor and exercise time for dairy cows in tie stalls are clearly identified and researched, but not for dairy cows in free stall housing. This is an area that needs more research. In Quebec, the major organic dairy area of Canada, the provincial Ministry of Environment has strict and complex requirements for the construction of outdoor exercise areas to limit environmental contamination, which has added to the expense of the construction of such exercise areas. Clause 6.11.1 will be reviewed in 2030 when, hopefully, there will be more research available about the reasons for and frequency of restricting outdoor access on Canadian organic dairy farms, and the advantages and

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		disadvantages of outdoor access for cows in free stall barns.																		
6.11.2	Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for cattle are shown in Table 1: Dairy and Table 2: Beef below.																			
	Table 1 — Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for dairy cattle <table> <tr> <th>Cattle</th><th>Indoor Space</th><th>Outdoor runs and pens</th></tr> <tr> <td>Free stall</td><td>Ratio of cows to stalls shall not exceed 1:1*</td><td>No minimum area required</td></tr> <tr> <td>Bedded pack barn</td><td>11 m² (118 ft²)/head (of bedded area)</td><td>No minimum area required</td></tr> <tr> <td> Individual maternity pens NOTE: One maternity pen per 35 cows is recommended. </td><td>15 m² (161 ft²)/head (of bedded area)</td><td>Not applicable</td></tr> <tr> <td>Group maternity pens</td><td>11 m² (118 ft²)/head (of bedded area)</td><td>Not applicable</td></tr> <tr> <td>Calves and young cattle</td><td>2.5 m² (27 ft²)/head for young calves; increasing to 5 m² (54 ft²)/head for</td><td>5 m² (54 ft²)/head to 9 m² (97 ft²)/head, depending on the size of animals</td></tr> </table>	Cattle	Indoor Space	Outdoor runs and pens	Free stall	Ratio of cows to stalls shall not exceed 1:1*	No minimum area required	Bedded pack barn	11 m ² (118 ft ²)/head (of bedded area)	No minimum area required	Individual maternity pens NOTE: One maternity pen per 35 cows is recommended.	15 m ² (161 ft ²)/head (of bedded area)	Not applicable	Group maternity pens	11 m ² (118 ft ²)/head (of bedded area)	Not applicable	Calves and young cattle	2.5 m ² (27 ft ²)/head for young calves; increasing to 5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head for	5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head to 9 m ² (97 ft ²)/head, depending on the size of animals	Cattle do not need to have indoor space. However, if indoor housing is used, a minimum amount of space is required for each animal. The indoor space for bedded pack and maternity pens described in the table is the measurement of the resting area. It does not include the feed alley (which is concrete). The values shown in the table are minimums. All animals in a pen should be able to lie down and rest comfortably at the same time. Space allowances should also take into account the presence or absence of horns. It is not acceptable to have dairy cattle in tie stalls when giving birth; maternity pens are needed if cows are confined to barns for birthing. Outdoor runs and pens include any yard or exercise area where the animals are confined outside without free access to pasture. When the barn design allows for free movement between inside and outside, there is no minimum requirement of outdoor space per head, however the run should be large enough for all cattle to be outside at the same time. It is a good practice to have cows outside in the winter. When being outdoors is physically challenging in the winter, an open-sided barn can provide access to open air without the need to go outside. For the well-being of the animals in the winter, the most important requirement is to have exercise no matter where it happens. One free stall is required for every cow in the herd. This is a minimum; ideally you want to have 5% of the stalls not occupied to give space for cows that are low in the hierarchy, such as young cows. The clause will be revisited in 2030 to ascertain if the COS should reduce the ratio of cows to stalls in free stall barns, as a differentiation factor between organic and conventional. As of 2025, the Code of Practice
Cattle	Indoor Space	Outdoor runs and pens																		
Free stall	Ratio of cows to stalls shall not exceed 1:1*	No minimum area required																		
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	growing steers and heifers (12 months old)		requirement for conventional dairy allows fewer stalls than cows (maximum 1.2 cows per stall). However, the Code of Practice intends to require 1 cow per stall for conventional dairies starting in 2031, making it the same as the 2020 COS. The recommendation of the Code (best case scenario) is 0.9 cows per stall. This suggests that for organic producers to retain an advantage in this area, the ratio may need to be reduced in the future. There is certainly a benefit to having more stalls than cows in free-stall barns, but there is also a significant cost. The 2020 standard (1 cow per stall) is the same or better as the other organic standards around the world.
Tie stalls (see 6.12.1)	Stall size appropriate for size of cow	6.5 m ² (70 ft ²)/head in spring and fall when not on pasture	
NOTE: Table 1 reflects the space requirements for Holstein cattle; with justification, space requirements may be reduced for small breeds of cattle. *The indoor space of free-stall cattle shall be reviewed by March 2031.			

Table 2 – Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for beef cattle		
Cattle	Indoor space (when provided)	Outdoor runs and pens
Adult beef cows	5.6 m ² (60 ft ²)/head for 500 kg (1,102 lb) cows increasing to 9 m ² (97 ft ²)/head for 900 kg (1,984 lb) cows (of bedded area) ^a	9 m ² (97 ft ²)/head
Cattle finishing phase	Indoor confinement is prohibited in grazing season Space requirements as per Calves and young cattle below	23 m ² (247.5 ft ²)/animal for 363 kg (800 lb) finishers and increase to 46.5 m ² (500 ft ²)/animal for 545 kg (1,200 lb) finishers

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	Calves and young cattle	2.5 m ² (27 ft ²)/head for young calves; increasing to 5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head for growing steers and heifers (12 months old) (of bedded area)	5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head to 9 m ² (97 ft ²)/head, depending on the size of animals
	Maternity pens NOTE: One maternity pen per 20 cows is recommended.	13.4 m ² (144 ft ²)/head (of bedded area)	
	a If construction of new infrastructure is required in order to comply with minimum indoor space requirements for 900 kg+ beef cattle of 9 m ² /head, operators are granted an exemption that permits 7.25 m ² /head for 900 kg+ beef cattle until the end of December 2028.		
6.11.3	Sheep and goat housing		
	Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for sheep and goats are shown in Table 3.		
	Table 3 – Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for sheep and goats		When indoor housing is used for sheep or goats, the animal must have at least the amount of space listed in the table. It does not mean that sheep and goats require indoor space. In Canada, sheep often have access to indoor housing during the winter months and at lambing. Depending on the predator threat, they may also be brought into pens or paddocks close to the barn at night.

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	<table><tr><td>and feeder lambs/kids</td><td>increasing to 1.5 m² (16 ft²)/head by one year of age</td><td>increasing to 2.25 m² (24 ft²)/head by one year of age</td></tr><tr><td>Rams/bucks over one year of age</td><td>3 m² (32.3 ft²)/head</td><td>4.5 m² (48.5 ft²)/head</td></tr></table>			and feeder lambs/kids	increasing to 1.5 m ² (16 ft ²)/head by one year of age	increasing to 2.25 m ² (24 ft ²)/head by one year of age	Rams/bucks over one year of age	3 m ² (32.3 ft ²)/head	4.5 m ² (48.5 ft ²)/head	
and feeder lambs/kids	increasing to 1.5 m ² (16 ft ²)/head by one year of age	increasing to 2.25 m ² (24 ft ²)/head by one year of age								
Rams/bucks over one year of age	3 m ² (32.3 ft ²)/head	4.5 m ² (48.5 ft ²)/head								
6.11.4	Milking parlors for dairy sheep and goats shall meet the requirements of 6.12.4.									
6.12	Additional requirements for dairy cattle housing									
6.12.1	Tie stalls in existing dairy barns may be used for lactating dairy cows, and for a period of one month for the training of heifers raised in loose housing. Tie stalls are prohibited in new construction and major renovations. All use of tie stalls will be phased out of organic dairy production by 2031. If tie stalls are used, dairy cows shall have an exercise period at least twice a week, preferably every day, for a period of at least one hour. An exercise period is defined as time when the cow is untied outside of routine handling procedures, such as milking.			For existing dairy barns designed for tie stalls, the tie stalls can be used until 2030 under strict restrictions as outlined. Tie stalls cannot be used for heifers except for a training period immediately before a heifer joins the milking herd. If a new barn is to be built or major renovations are planned, tie stalls cannot be part of the design. To help reduce the negative effects of tie stalls which restrict movement, regular exercise periods are mandatory in months when cows are not going out on pasture. The clause was changed in 2026. It now clarifies the length of the required exercise period for dairy cows housed in tie stalls (the change was made in response to reports of some producers calling the walk to the milking parlour an exercise period). The trip to the milking parlour could be as short as a few minutes' walk twice per day and an exercise period should be longer than that. The exercise period length is tied to the weather (as most barns do not include indoor space for exercising the cows) because if the cows are out of the barn for too long in cold weather, given that						

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		some barns are heated by the warmth generated by the cows themselves, pipes in the barn may freeze. Therefore, the exercise period, in addition to being outside of routine handling, must be at least one hour but could be shortened in extreme weather.
6.12.2	Electric trainers are prohibited. The tails of cows in stalls may be tied to prevent the tail from lying in the gutter, provided that the tying allows for natural behaviour, free movement of the tail and quick release when necessary.	
6.12.3	If milking parlours are in use: a) operators shall minimize animal waiting time between the time they are moved to the holding area and the time they return to the barn or pasture; b) portable milking units shall be available for sick or weak animals that are unable to make it to the milking parlour; c) electric crowd gates are prohibited; and d) non-slip flooring shall be used in the holding area, parlour and alleys.	These requirements ensure that cows are not subjected to unnecessary stress at milking. Gentle handling, as well as clean udders, contributes to the quality of milk. Also, cows should not have to wait more than an hour from when they are brought in for milking until they are returned to the barn or pasture.
6.12.4	Unweaned calves that are healthy, thriving, and compatible in age, size, and drinking speed shall be housed in pairs or groups. Operators currently raising calves individually are granted an exemption to allow them to transition to pair/group housing by December 2027 if changes to infrastructure are required. Unweaned calves may be housed in individual pens and hutches if they are sick, or if there are too few calves compatible in their age, size, and drinking speed. When housed individually, the following conditions shall be met:	Cows are herd animals and calves benefit from social interaction. Research shows that calves in pairs or groups engage more in play and other healthy behaviours compared to calves kept individually in hutches. This increase in activity improves bone and muscle growth, and is associated with less unhealthy behaviour (e.g., abnormal licking of objects). Just allowing calves to see each other or touch heads provides some benefits compared to complete isolation, but not nearly as much as if they have “full-body social contact with their companion.” This form of housing prepares the calf for life in a herd. The benefits are best realized when calves are grouped starting when they are no more

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	a) calves are not tethered and have enough room to turn around, lie down, stretch out when lying down, get up, rest and groom themselves; b) individual pens and hutches are designed and located so that each calf has physical contact with other calves unless they are sick; c) individual housing has an area of at least 2.5 m² (27 ft²) and a minimum width of 1.5 m (4.9 ft); and d) outdoor hutches shall have access to an enclosed yard or run.	than 2-3 weeks of age. The Code of Practice will require this form of housing for all dairy farms starting in 2031. The new requirement in 6.12.5 has caveats however. • The requirement only applies to “calves that are healthy, thriving, and compatible in age, size, and drinking speed” to avoid unhealthy competition between calves of different ages. If calves can’t be paired up, they can be temporarily housed in individual pens and hutches but these must be designed and located so that each calf has physical contact with other calves. • Calves that are sick may be housed individually temporarily to avoid spreading disease. • Dairy farms that currently use individual calf hutches have up until December 2027 to update their infrastructure. A hutch with smaller dimensions than those listed in “c)” cannot be used even if a fence encloses a larger area. When hutches are used outdoors, some form of fencing is required to confine calves – they cannot be tethered.
6.12.5	Calves shall be group-housed after weaning.	Group housing of calves is encouraged as early as a few days after birth and required after weaning. Calves are social herd animals; group pens provide the opportunity to socialize and exhibit natural behaviour. Freedom of movement and exercise are also enhanced in group pens. Group sizes should be sufficiently small to allow each calf uninhibited access to lying areas, feeders and water sources. Having small groups makes it easier for the farmer to observe the animals in order to detect health problems. Group sizes of less than 10 are recommended. At least 2.5 m² (27 ft²) per calf is required.

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			When very young calves are group-housed, try to minimize age and weight variation within the group (i.e., don't mix older, large calves with newborns). When milk is provided to group-housed calves only two to three times a day, each calf should have access to its own teat.
6.12.6	Dairy replacement calves over nine months of age shall have access to pasture, as appropriate for the season.		Pasture access is encouraged for all calves regardless of age. However, given legitimate concerns that parasite loads on pasture may negatively affect young replacement calves, it is not compulsory to provide pasture for grazing until calves are nine months of age. However, younger calves should have access to the outdoors when there are suitable weather and pasture conditions (i.e., the pasture has low levels of parasites, is not waterlogged, etc.).
6.12.7	During the grazing season, dairy cows on pasture shall have access to a water source within 200 m.		The 2026 COS requires that dairy cows are provided with water on pasture in order to ensure cow health and welfare. The change is necessary given the increase in robotic milking systems and in response to shifting strategies of grazing and milking management.
6.13	Additional requirements for poultry		
6.13.1	The operator shall establish and maintain poultry living conditions that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of poultry as follows:		
	a)	The keeping of poultry in row, battery, enriched or colony cages, is prohibited;	
	b)	Poultry shall be reared in open-range conditions and have free access to pasture, open-air runs, and other exercise areas, subject to weather and ground conditions. Outdoor areas shall: 1) have completed the necessary transition period and been granted organic status;	The intent of 6.13.b is that poultry are able to range freely both inside and outside; it does not allow for total confinement. Some flexibility is allowed on the type of range (it can be pasture or runs) and when access is given (depending on weather, ground conditions or presence of predators). Details are provided in other clauses of 6.13. Range can still be in transition when pullets are started, but the 36-month

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	2) be covered with vegetation, seeded if necessary, and periodically left empty to allow vegetation to regrow and to prevent disease build-up. To facilitate rodent control, a vegetation-free perimeter around poultry houses is permitted; 3) have effective overhead cover (for shade and protection from avian predators) distributed throughout the range area of barn-raised birds to encourage continual use by the birds. The cover may be natural (such as trees, shrubs and crops) or artificial (such as shade cloth, camouflage netting, screens or trailers). Roof overhangs over pasture may account for up to 50% of the required overhead cover if they are functional (i.e., they provide shade and protection from avian predators). Overhead cover shall represent at least 10% of the minimum required range area (as outlined in Table 5 of 6.13.13); and 4) show signs of use as appropriate for the season;	mark must have been reached by the time birds are ready to go outside. Leaving the barn to go out into a wide-open space can be intimidating for a chicken. Avian predators, such as hawks, can be a threat. Poultry are less likely to venture outside or to use all the range provided unless there is some cover in the form of trees, shrubs or constructed shade. Also, birds like a shady spot to escape the sun. The ultimate goal is to have more birds spend more time outside on the range. In clause 6.13.1.b 3), overhead cover on the range is required for both layers and meat birds to help meet this goal. A number of options are available: a farmer can plant trees in the range but until these are large enough to provide cover, artificial covers can be used. To avoid excessive pressure on the pasture in shaded areas, farmers can use portable structures or materials, such as netting, tent-like structures or shelters that can be moved by tractors. A large roof overhang, like a verandah, can help chickens feel more secure going out the popholes. This is not sufficient, however, to encourage the birds to explore more of the range. This is why the overhang (i) can account for only up to half of the required cover, (ii) must cover pasture, not just the gravel around a barn, and (iii) must be effective. For example, a small overhang (18-24 inches) that doesn't provide much cover might not be considered "effective." • Inspectors will look for droppings or signs of scratching as evidence that the range is being used on a regular basis. • The threat of predation cannot be used as a reason to keep birds confined inside at all times; the design of the range must take predation risks into account. In cold weather, it is not expected that birds have access to the outdoors.

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			Birds will also need protection in heavy rain or wind. In general, outdoor access is expected from May to September but the season could be longer or shorter depending on location. The outdoor areas required for organic poultry need to be certified organic land. The birds eat grass and soil, and therefore it makes sense for the land to be certified organic.
	c)	In an emergency, when outdoor access results in an imminent threat to the health and welfare of poultry, access may be restricted. Outdoor access shall resume when the imminent threat ends. Producers shall document periods of confinement; and	
	d)	Operators shall have an organic plan that describes outdoor access and how they will protect birds from disease and predators.	
6.13.2	General requirements for layers		
	a)	Layers may be confined during the onset of lay, that is, until peak production is reached. The laying flock shall have outdoor access for at least one-third of its laying life.	The reference to “at minimum of one-third of its laying life” recognizes the difficulty of providing outdoor access to poultry in the winter months in Canada. Although the standard provides an allowance to keeping layers inside until peak production (around 28-30 weeks of age), the birds are less likely to venture outside afterwards if they have not been trained to do so at an earlier age. Providing outdoor access, an enriched verandah or a covered porch helps pullets become comfortable with the conditions that will exist in the layer barn. Consequently, they will likely be more comfortable using the range when they are layers.
	b)	Rearing facilities that closely match the conditions that exist in the layer barn are recommended. Pullets, however, may be kept indoors until they are fully immunized.	In cases where large pullet flocks are undergoing an immunization program aimed at building immunity to known diseases, outdoor access is not compulsory. A compromise needs to be made balancing the value of

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			allowing pullets outside with the interests of keeping the birds healthy throughout their life. It is therefore recommended that pullets are raised in facilities which prepare the bird for the environment in the layer barn (such as having access to outdoor runs, enriched verandahs and/or covered porches) as this will help them adjust with minimal stress, thereby reducing the risk of feather pecking and susceptibility to disease.
	c)	Layer flocks shall be limited to 10,000 birds. More than one flock may be in the same building if the flocks are separated and have separate runs.	Division of larger layer flocks into smaller units encourages the use of range and helps minimize problems with feather pecking and stress. For stationary barns, two or more runs are recommended to make it easier to comply with 6.13.2c. Having two or more runs allows one or more to regrow while the other is in use. Before releasing the birds back into a run, be sure that the vegetation has regrown and provides complete ground cover.
6.13.3	Enriched verandahs for barn-raised layers		
	a)	Enriched verandahs shall be used when barn-raised layers do not have access to outdoor runs because of weather or disease constraints (presence of diseases).	Barn-raised laying hens need access to an enriched verandah to get fresh air, a bit of exercise and a chance to play at certain times whenever they can't go outside due to bad weather or risk of exposure to disease.
	b)	An enriched verandah is a covered, uninsulated, unheated extension to a poultry barn. Birds shall have access to the enriched verandah year-round during daylight hours, at least from spring through fall. The enriched verandah shall: 1) have an outdoor climate but offer protection from inclement weather (e.g., wind, rain), rodents, predators and disease threats; 2) represent at least one third of the footprint of the indoor barn area; 3) have natural lighting which may be supplemented with artificial lighting;	“Enriched verandahs” are sometimes called “winter gardens” but the space is not just used in the winter. In the summer, the birds may need access to the enriched verandah on rainy days or when Avian Influenza is a threat (e.g., a flock of wild geese are grazing in the run). In parts of Canada, it might be used mostly from early spring to late fall because it may be too cold to use during the mid-winter. The enriched verandah serves many purposes. Because it has natural lighting and a temperature similar to the outdoor temperature, the verandah is a transitional zone between the barn and the outdoors; this may help birds feel more comfortable going outside and using the range. The enriched verandah contains environmental enrichments such as

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		4) have a sand floor, a dirt floor or a solid floor covered with bedding, such as straw or wood shavings, for comfort and warmth and to encourage foraging, scratching and dust-bathing behaviours; 5) offer environmental enrichments (see definition in Clause 3: examples include perches, trays of greens, hay bales, pecking objects) to encourage natural behaviours; and 6) not count towards indoor or outdoor space allowance.	microgreens or hay to allow more natural foraging behaviour, and/or hanging objects (strings, corn cobs, balls) that the birds can reach up and peck. To stimulate jumping, perching and playing, farmers can provide perches, straw bales, step stools which birds can perch on or hide under, and/or pails with holes in the bottoms which are laid on their sides. These enrichments provide opportunities for the poultry to express their natural behaviour more fully and reduce anti-social activities (such as feather pecking). Enriched verandahs are not required either for pullets or broilers. Also, they are not needed for layers that go outside in chicken tractors or portable shelters during the summer, however all these birds would also benefit from having access to such facilities.
	c)	Enriched verandahs shall be provided in new construction for barn-raised layers. They shall be added to existing infrastructure when the operator cannot demonstrate that at least 25% of layers utilize the outdoor range when there are no weather or disease constraints.	
	d)	All existing enriched verandahs shall be accepted as they are as of December 2020; they are exempt from 6.13.3 b) 2) and 6.13.3 b) 6).	
	e)	If the operator can demonstrate that the addition of an enriched verandah of the size specified in 6.13.3 b) is not possible for an existing barn due to lack of space or because of design limitations of the existing barn: 1) a smaller enriched verandah shall be allowed provided it is as close in size as possible to the requirement of one third of the footprint of the indoor barn area; or 2) the enriched verandah shall be constructed in the uncovered outdoor area and, as an exception, may count as part of the outdoor space allowance; or 3) operators are granted an exemption that permits the use of existing infrastructure until March 2031, provided that	

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	a plan for the new construction or renovation is in place by March 2026.	
6.13.4	Layers shall have access to the nest space area listed in the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens for non-cage systems (see 2.4).	Nest box space requirements are aligned with the Code of Practice requirement, which is based on peer-reviewed research. The requirement of the Code of Practice is: "For Non-Cage systems: Each hen must be provided with nest space area at a minimum of 83.2 cm ² (12.9 sq in) [1.0 m ² (10.8 sq ft) for each 120 hens] - Nest space must not be included when calculating useable space allowance."
6.13.5	Perches shall meet the following criteria: a) In the first weeks of life, layer chicks shall have continuous access to perch space. b) During the pullet rearing phase, adequate perch space shall be appropriate for the final production system and accessible at all times and at varying heights. By six weeks of age, operators shall provide 10 cm of perch space or 100 cm² of platform space per pullet (a platform is an elevated surface for perching that is raised in height as chicks and pullets grow). c) Laying hens shall have a minimum of 15 cm (5.9 in.) perch space per hen, accessible at all times and at varying heights. d) Perches for laying hens shall be purpose-designed, such as alighting (landing) rails in aviaries, which allow birds to wrap their toes around the rail. Feed and water trough edges, slatted floors and ladder rungs are not considered purpose-designed perching objects, but may be used to provide additional perch space beyond what is required in 6.13.5 a), b) and c). e) Perches shall be a minimum diameter or width of 1.9 cm (0.75 in.). f) Other poultry are exempt from 6.13.5 a), b), c), d) and e).	The standard requires perches for layers and pullets but provides no information on the need for perches for other birds, even though turkeys like to roost. When perches are provided, the size, number and height of perches should allow all birds to roost comfortably. For example, a perch height of 18 cm (7 in) is recommended for hens and 40 cm (16 in) for turkeys.

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NOTE	Producers are advised to review the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens (see 2.4) to ensure they meet additional perch requirements for both pullets and adult layers contained therein.		
6.13.6	General requirements for meat chickens and turkeys		
	a)	Meat chickens that will be raised outdoors in shelters without indoor access shall have access to pasture on a daily basis by four weeks of age, unless weather conditions endanger the health or safety of the birds. Turkeys shall have outdoor access by eight weeks of age.	In organic poultry production, the goal is not just to provide access to the outdoors, but to have birds actually use the outside range. Ideally all the birds will go outside when weather permits and this is accomplished in certain types of production, such as chicken tractors or mobile production units that are moved frequently on pasture.
	b)	Barn-raised meat chickens shall have outdoor access on a daily basis by at least 25 days of age when there are no weather constraints. Operators shall take measures to increase use of the pastures and outside exercise areas and have a goal of a minimum of 15% of birds on range when there are no weather constraints. Operators shall document the use of the range and continue to strive to increase the number of birds on the range in future years. This will be reviewed by March 2031.	When poultry are raised in large flocks in barns, the birds are less likely to go out. The Standards require a goal of at least 15% of the birds being out on the range when there are no weather constraints. It's up to the farmer to encourage the birds to leave the barn and explore the outside. The COS provides several suggestions on how this can be accomplished. For example, farmers can choose breeds that are more active. Another approach is to slaughter at a later age (often using slow-growing breeds or lower-protein rations). This allows for more time for the birds to explore the outdoors.
NOTE	Potential measures for increasing the usage of pasture, outdoor range and outside exercise areas: • use slower-growing foraging (hardy) breeds (characterized by a growth rate of no more than 45 g/day); • use a ration that has been nutritionally adjusted for slower growth (i.e., lower in protein); • implement an older slaughter age (e.g., 60 days) provided the health of the birds can be maintained; • allow outdoor access before the minimum age specified;		Many organic standards around the world require slow- growing breeds. Switzerland's certifying body, Bio Suisse, defines these as breeds in which "The average daily weight gain may not exceed 27.5 g up until the 63rd day of age." The UK's Soil Association defines slow growing breeds as ones in which the daily weight gain averaged over the life of the bird is no more than 35 g per day (these figures should be taken from published breed data), and the maximum daily weight gain measured on the farm is never more than: i) 60 g in the case of chickens; ii) 105 g in the case of

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	- provide mobile units for summer production; - provide effective overhead cover on pasture; - provide environmental enrichment on the pasture (e.g., feed, water, perches, etc.); - improve pasture access (e.g., pophole changes, etc.); and - provide enriched verandahs [see descriptions in 6.13.3 b)].	male turkeys; or iii) 75 g in the case of female turkeys.” The slow-growing breeds, such as the Sasso, tend to be hardy birds and better at foraging than the common breeds selected for rapid weight gain in intensive poultry operations. Another approach is to make the outdoor range more inviting through the use of shade, overhead cover, environmental enrichment outside, different types of forage, etc. Also, birds are more likely to venture outside if there isn't a dramatic difference between the outside and inside barn environment. This can be facilitated by providing a transitional space, such as the enriched verandahs described in 6.13.3.
6.13.7	Poultry barns shall have sufficient exits (popholes) to ensure that all birds have ready access to the outdoors.	The design of the barn, including the location and size of exits, are important considerations determining whether or not birds use the outside range.
6.13.8	Exits shall:	The specific requirements are intended for larger-scale poultry operations to facilitate range access. Exit and entry pop holes must be large enough so dominant birds can't prevent others from using the openings. The poultry barn should be designed in a way to address other constraints to access, such as distance from the pophole, height above ground and the total numbers of birds. “Combined width” means adding up the width of each exit that is open to provide outdoor access. Exits that are kept closed (for example, those on the opposite side of the barn which might be used to access a second run when resting the first run) are not included in the calculation. For example, a flock of 6000 hens will require a total of 12 metres (13.1 yards) with openings at least 50 cm (20 in) wide evenly spaced along the side of the barn adjacent to the range. If small flocks are obviously accessing range easily at all times, changes do not have to be made in order to comply with “evenly distributed along the range of access.”

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a)	allow passage of more than one bird at a time, and be evenly distributed along the line of access to the outdoor range;			
b)	shall correspond to the requirements shown in Table 4 for the number and size of exits.			
Table 4 – Poultry barns minimum exit numbers and size				
Poultry	Combined width of popholes	Minimum width of each pophole	Minimum height	Minimum number
Layers	2 m (6.6 ft)/1000 hens	50 cm (20 in.)	35 cm (14 in.)	2
Broilers	1 m (3.3 ft)/1000 birds OR all birds within 15 m (49 ft) of an exit	50 cm (20 in.)	35 cm (14 in.)	2
Turkeys	2 m (6.6 ft)/1000 birds	150 cm (59 in.)	75 cm (30 in.)	2
6.13.9	When existing organic poultry barns do not meet the requirements of 6.13.8 b) (Table 4), either the distance from an exit from anywhere in the barn shall be no more than 15 m (49 ft), or the operator shall provide evidence that birds utilize outdoor range. Evidence shall demonstrate that 25-50% of birds are on range when there are no age or weather constraints.	Existing barns do not have to be modified providing there is nowhere in the barn which is more than 15 m (49 ft) from an exit complying with 6.13.8. Alternatively, evidence such as date-stamped photos is required to show a good proportion of the flock is regularly on range at any one time. Certification bodies may decide to conduct unannounced inspections to verify the fact.		
6.13.10	Bedding material shall be provided as litter material and kept dry. Houses with slatted floors shall have a minimum of 30% solid, bedded floor area to encourage dust bathing, scratching and foraging behaviours.	In order to accommodate the natural behaviour throughout the life cycle, indoor housing for poultry must provide an area of solid floor covered with dry litter materials such as straw, wood shavings, sand or turf, so that the birds can peck and scratch. Wet litter should be avoided because it increases ammonia levels and encourages darkling beetles.		

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6.13.11	Poultry shall have access to at least the number of waterers and feeders required by the relevant Code of Practice (see 2.4).	Enough feeder and drinker space should be provided to reduce competition and aggressive encounters. The amount available is also important; 100 layer pullets may drink 20 litres (5.3 gallons) per day under hot weather conditions, and 100 heavy turkeys may drink up to 180 litres (48 gallons) per day. Follow manufacturers recommendations if they require more space than the recommended minimums found in the Codes of Practice.
6.13.12	Poultry housed indoors shall be provided with natural light either with evenly distributed windows or light-permeable fabric. The total window area shall be no less than 1% of the total ground-floor area, unless it can be demonstrated that natural light levels are sufficient to read a document, such as a newspaper, anywhere in the barn. If day length is artificially prolonged, the total duration of light shall not exceed 16 hours, and shall be terminated by gradual reduction of light intensity followed by eight hours of continuous darkness. The following exceptions are permitted and shall be documented: a) periods of increased lighting are permitted due to the stage of production, for example, the arrival of chicks and turkey poults; b) decreased lighting intensity is permitted due to animal welfare concerns, for example, outbreaks of cannibalism.	Natural light is considered to be beneficial to bird welfare. It enriches the environment and allows birds to seek out different levels of light for different activities. Good light distribution with a minimum amount of shadow is important; patches of light will attract birds to those spots rather than allowing for an even distribution of birds in the barn. When windows are less than 1% of total ground floor area, the inspectors will determine if light levels are sufficient to read in the barn when all the lights are turned off. Light levels should be measured furthest away from the source of light. Although some people may be able to read at lower light levels, 20 lux (at bird height) is a recommended light level for broilers and layers. The brighter lighting is important for broilers to stimulate activity which can help reduce the incidence of leg disorders and contact dermatitis (hock and foot pad burn). In comparison, on a bright sunny day, levels might be 80,000 lux outside the barn. Smart phone apps for measuring light levels are available. Lower lighting levels cannot be used as a preventative method to prevent cannibalism, only to help deal with an actual problem.
6.13.13	The maximum indoor and outdoor densities are shown in Table 5.	The numbers in the table refer to the amount of space required for all birds in the flock, even if only a portion of the flock is using the outdoor range at any one time. There is a larger space requirement for outdoor areas because birds are more active in an outdoor environment. For broilers and turkeys, the requirements are given in “kg/m²” to allow for the
	Table 5 – Maximum indoor and outdoor densities for poultry^a	

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Poultry	Indoors	Outdoor runs	different sizes of birds as they grow and different finished weights. Both the amount and quality of space are important. Space requirements are based on the minimum needed for birds to perform all of their natural behaviours without negatively affecting birds around them. Generally, the more space birds are provided, the better they fare. The footnote allows for flexibility in exceptional circumstances. For example, maximum density may be increased if slaughter time is delayed due to regional flooding that leads to road closures or a pandemic causes an abattoir to shut down temporarily. If an operator needs to exceed maximum density more than once, steps must be taken to prevent this happening in the future. For example, if road closures are common due to spring flooding or winter snowstorms, the operator must take this factor into consideration by ensuring that maximum density will not be exceeded even if the birds must be kept for longer than expected. The permitted density for chicks/pullets under 4 weeks of age has been increased in order to improve health outcomes. Young chicks need to be kept in close quarters for warmth and access to feed and water, and the 2020 COS prevents that practice. The Code of Practice for Layers is currently under revision. To make sure that the COS would not be requiring a higher density than the Code of Practice, the lowest density of the two is required. The Code of Practice states that "Nest space must not be included when calculating useable space allowance" and this has been added to Table 5 to make it clearer how to calculate the density requirements for laying hens. There was a need to establish space requirements for waterfowl. With very little North American information available, the maximum densities are based on those in EU organic standards. There are few organic duck
Layers (19 weeks and older)^b	6 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	4 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	
Chicks and pullets 0-4 weeks^{c d}	35 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	16 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	
Pullets 5-8 weeks^{c d}	24 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	16 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	
Pullets 9-18 weeks^c	15 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	10 birds/m ² (10.76 ft ²)	
Broilers	21 kg/m ² (4.3 lb/ft ²)	21 kg/m ² (4.3 lb/ft ²)	
Turkeys/large birds	26 kg/m ² (5.3 lb/ft ²)	17 kg/m ² (3.5 lb/ft ²)	
Ducks	21 kg/m ² (4.3 lb/ft ²)	1 kg/m ² (0.2 lb/ft ²)	
^a Under exceptional circumstances, the maximum stocking density may be exceeded for individual flocks. These circumstances shall be documented and if they recur, actions shall be taken to prevent future flocks from surpassing maximum stocking density. ^b Nest space must not be included when calculating usable space allowance. ^c Outdoor runs are not required when flocks are undergoing an immunization program. ^d The maximum density for pullets aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 8 weeks shall meet the COS requirement or the requirement of the <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens</i> (see 2.4), whichever is the lower density.			

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		producers in Canada, but the one who was consulted considered that the suggested densities were acceptable.
6.13.14	Multi-level aviary systems for layers shall have no more than three levels or tiers above ground level. Total floor space, for calculation of solid-floor area and bird density requirements, shall include all usable floor levels (see 6.13.10 and 6.13.13). If enriched verandahs are used to provide required scratching areas, they shall be accessible year-round.	An enriched verandah is another name for a screened-in porch or winter garden which has natural light and fresh air. See details in 6.13.3.
6.13.15	For pasture-based operations with mobile units, stocking density shall be no more than 2000 layers/ha (800 layers/ac.), 2500 broilers/ha (1000 broilers/ac.) or 1300 large birds (turkeys/geese)/ha (540 large birds/ac.), based on the total amount of land used for rotational poultry pasture. When birds are in moveable field shelters, the shelters shall be moved daily, whenever possible, and at least once every four days, taking into consideration the impact on the birds and on the land. Density within the moveable shelters shall correspond to the indoor density described in 6.13.13.	“Pasture-based operation” refers to those operations that use pasture as a component of birds’ diets (as opposed to barns with runs that contain minimal amounts of forage). When birds are on pasture, two important environmental factors must be considered: • the potential for build-up of parasites and disease; and • the negative effects of high nutrient loads on soil and groundwater. For these reasons, the size of the flock must be appropriate for the amount of land available and mobile units must be moved regularly. The numbers given for pasture-based operations refer to the amount of land needed assuming that birds will be rotated through different pasture areas. They do not refer to the density of birds on a given area of pasture at one moment in time. For example, if a turkey producer has a hectare of land for pasturing, only 1300 turkeys can be raised at one time, which is equivalent to 7.69 m²/turkey. For broilers, the equivalent is 4 m²/ bird. Moveable field shelters which have to be moved daily restrict a large number of birds to a relatively small space. This is not the same as

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		moveable housing or mobile units from which the birds range. With moveable housing, the birds may be free range or enclosed by portable fencing. The fencing might be moved frequently, possibly daily, while the shelter is moved less often. If the producer uses mobile pens which are moved regularly, the actual density inside these units will be considerably higher. For the broilers, the density cannot be more than 21 kg/m²; for turkeys, the density cannot be greater than 26 kg/m². For optimal flock health and ongoing sustainability, larger areas are recommended, recognizing that maximum productivity per unit area should not be the primary goal of organic production.
6.13.16	When an operation raises poultry on pasture during the grazing season (subject to 6.13.6 a) and 6.13.15) and in a barn during the non-grazing season, the barn shall meet the housing requirements of 6.13. (See definition of grazing season in Clause 3.)	The indoor housing arrangement should always be set up for outdoor access because there can be good weather days, which are suitable for birds to go outside, outside of the grazing season.
6.13.17	Buildings shall be emptied, cleaned and disinfected, between flocks, and runs shall be left empty to allow the vegetation to grow back.	
6.13.18	Ducks and geese shall have access to a water area created for their use whenever weather conditions permit. Facilities shall be designed to prevent the commingling of wild waterfowl and domestic poultry.	Waterfowl need water, however allowing access to a stream, pond or lake used by wild ducks or geese is considered a serious health risk for avian influenza and must be avoided.
6.14	Additional requirements for rabbits	
6.14.1	If required for comfort and security, rabbits may be temporarily confined, for example, overnight, in cages or hutches. Continuous confinement is prohibited.	The intent of the standard is to provide rabbits with an environment that allows for natural behaviour and addresses their need for social interaction, comfort, and physical and physiological well being. Continuous confinement means keeping rabbits in a small cage or hutch whether indoors or outdoors; this method is not allowed for organic production. Overnight confinement is allowed to protect from predators.

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		If rabbits are confined individually for any purpose, the space available must still meet the requirements of Table 6, as well as allowing for visual and auditory contact with other rabbits. Bucks may need to be housed separately to prevent fighting. Temporary close confinement that may be required for performing certain procedures, such as vaccinations or marking, is allowed.												
6.14.2	The use of mobile pasture pens is permitted, provided that pens do not restrict natural behaviour and they are moved at least once every three days.	The use of large wire cages as a mobile pasture pen is not considered confinement in the context of the standard. Instead it is considered one solution for providing access to pasture. Consider the size of the group when using mobile pens or permanent pens. Welfare can be compromised if groups of breeding rabbits exceed 10 animals or when groups of meat animals exceed 40 animals. A regular movement of pens prevents pasture areas being eroded by the activities of the rabbits or degrading by overgrazing. Rabbits should be able to graze fresh pasture that has not been polluted with manure.												
6.14.3	Rabbits shall have space to run, hop and dig, and to sit upright on their back legs with ears erect. The minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements are shown in Table 6.	The need for sufficient space to allow for natural and instinctive behaviours apply whether the rabbits are in indoor housing or in covered pens on pasture. There is no one way to raise organic rabbits; the table provides for different housing options.												
	Table 6 — Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for rabbits													
	<table><tr><th>Rabbits</th><th>Indoor space</th><th>Outdoor – runs and concrete exercise areas</th><th>Outdoor – pasture</th><th>Mobile pens</th></tr><tr><td>From weaning to slaughter</td><td>0.3 m² (3.23 ft²)/ head</td><td>2 m² (22 ft²)/head</td><td>5 m² (54 ft²)/head</td><td>0.4 m² (4.3 ft²)/ head</td></tr></table>				Rabbits	Indoor space	Outdoor – runs and concrete exercise areas	Outdoor – pasture	Mobile pens	From weaning to slaughter	0.3 m ² (3.23 ft ²)/ head	2 m ² (22 ft ²)/head	5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head	0.4 m ² (4.3 ft ²)/ head
Rabbits	Indoor space	Outdoor – runs and concrete exercise areas	Outdoor – pasture	Mobile pens										
From weaning to slaughter	0.3 m ² (3.23 ft ²)/ head	2 m ² (22 ft ²)/head	5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head	0.4 m ² (4.3 ft ²)/ head										

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	Pregnant does	0.5 m ² (5.4 ft ²)/ head	2 m ² (22 ft ²)/head	5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head	0.5 m ² (5.4 ft ²)/ head
	Does and litters	0.7 m ² (7.5 ft ²)	2 m ² (22 ft ²)	Not applicable	0.4 m ² (4.3 ft ²)/ head in shelter 2.4 m ² (26 ft ²) for grazing area
	Bucks	0.3 m ² (3.23 ft ²)/ head	2 m ² (22 ft ²)/head	5 m ² (54 ft ²)/head	0.4 m ² (4.3 ft ²)/ head
6.14.4	Rabbits shall not be subjected to continuous lighting or kept in permanent darkness. During the day, rabbits shall be able to clearly see each other and their surroundings.			Rabbits naturally spend time in dark environments but also forage outside at different times of day.	
6.14.5	Does about to give birth shall be given secluded individual burrows or nest boxes for kindling (birthing).			This requirement ensures the provision of a secure environment for a doe and young, and allows a doe to be removed from a group setting in order to build her nest a few days before she gives birth. Nest boxes should be in a dark area and have ample fresh dry bedding. It is recommended they be at least 48 cm (18 in) long by 25 cm (10 in) wide and 23 cm (9 in) high.	
6.14.6	The doe and litter shall have free access to outdoor range and foraging areas once the kits reach 21 days of age.			Although not a requirement of the standards, kits should also be able to leave the burrow after 14 days.	
6.14.7	Weaning before the kits are 30 days of age is prohibited. However, if the welfare of the doe or kits is compromised, earlier weaning is permitted.			This requirement will limit the number of litters possible in one year. Kits begin to eat more solid food at about four weeks of age as their digestive systems mature and the does' milk yield drops. There are no requirements for the age of breeding in order to allow for operations based on a natural colony system where there is no intervention at mating. Keep records of weaning dates and reasons for earlier weaning. Newly weaned kits should be kept with their litter mates.	

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6.15	Additional requirements for pigs and farm-raised wild boar	
6.15.1	The number of animals on a production unit shall reflect the size of the available land-base, which comprises land owned, leased and available for spreading their manure, and based on a balance between animal units, feed production and manure management. Farrow to finish operators shall not exceed 2.5 sows/ha (1 sow/ac.).	This paragraph emphasizes the holistic nature of organic production. There is not a requirement that the farm produce all its own feed but there does need to be sufficient land for spreading manure without negatively impacting the environment. This land does not necessarily need to be part of the home farm.
6.15.2	Pigs shall have daily access to outdoor areas with the exception of sows with nursing piglets. Outdoor access can be temporarily restricted as stated in 6.7.2. a) Outdoor areas may include woodlands, other natural environments, soil or concrete exercise areas. Access to pasture is recommended but not mandatory. If pasture areas are degraded and cannot be used by the pigs, other outdoor exercise areas shall be provided in order to meet the requirements for outdoor access and rooting. b) An outdoor exercise area may be covered as long as at least three sides of the structure are open. c) When outdoors in open areas (e.g., pasture), pigs shall have access to shaded/sheltered areas suitable for the whole herd so they may take cover during inclement weather. d) Pigs shall not be confined exclusively to concrete yards without access to an indoor or outdoor bedded area. e) Guidelines around management of outdoor areas (6.7.1), preventing occurrence and spread of parasites (6.6.1 c), 6.6.11) and permitting rooting for pigs (6.15.7) shall apply.	Although the standards do not require that organic pigs be raised on pasture, the standards encourage access to pasture or fields from spring to fall, particularly for the breeding herd. Outdoor rearing is possible in Canada even in winter months if there is not deep snow and shelter is provided. The choice of breed is important for the success of these operations.

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NOTE	Pasture management practices implemented to avoid degradation and prevent parasite build-up may include: • rotation of pastures with annual crops; • having a paddock rotation plan depending on the season; • leaving a paddock empty for 5 years before repopulating with growing pigs; • keeping sows in a paddock for a maximum of 2 years before providing the paddock with a rest period.	
6.15.3	Sows and gilts shall be kept in groups, with the following exceptions: a) individual pens are permitted for the protection of females during estrus, or for other health reasons, for a period of up to five days; b) sows may be individually housed in a pen for up to five days prior to farrowing and during the suckling period.	Privacy at farrowing is important; it reduces stress and allows piglets and sows to become accustomed to each other. Stall designs which permit sows to come and go at will are allowed. Confinement is allowed during periods of high levels of aggression, for example, during estrus, to prevent injury which might occur in a group setting.
6.15.4	Confinement of sows in gestation crates or farrowing crates, or in another manner that prevents them from turning around is prohibited, except for periods of temporary restraint. Sows may be restrained for a maximum period of four consecutive hours to protect the piglets or to protect the operator during piglet processing or pen cleaning. Sows shall be directly supervised while restrained and released as soon as possible.	Additional restraint is allowed when piglets are very young and in danger of being crushed. The COS prohibits the practice of restraining the sow for up to 3 days for piglet protection, which was previously allowed. Instead, the sow can be restrained for a maximum of 4 hours. The producer must be present when the sow is restrained (i.e., direct supervision) and the sow must be released as soon as possible. Four hours is enough time to (1) protect the piglets in the situation of a nervous sow during farrowing (this addresses the risks of crushing or cannibalism), (2) allow the producer to clean the pen of an aggressive sow regularly and safely, and (3) work with the piglets (for example, when castrating). The producer could use any type of enclosure to restrain the sow in the conditions described above. The mention of farrowing crates was

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		removed in 2026 because they are prohibited already by the minimum pen size dictated in Table 7. Some farms have farrowing crate-style enclosures with a side wall that can be opened and closed within the larger farrowing pens. These were being used for temporary restraint in exceptional circumstances or for short periods of time. Therefore, the crate was acting as a handling system rather than a housing system. In summary, it is not the farrowing crate as a piece of equipment that needs to be prohibited, but how it is used. The length of the suckling period will determine the maximum time allowed for individual housing. It is better for the piglets to be in the same familiar environment until they are separated from the sow but that does not preclude a group of sows and piglets being housed together if piglets are about the same age.
6.15.5	When sows are expected to farrow or moved to the farrowing area, they shall be provided with a quantity of straw or other suitable natural material sufficient to enable them to build nests.	Nest-building behaviour is very strong and has positive welfare outcomes for the sow, such as reducing stress (as shown by the research). Straw is recommended as the first choice for bedding material, however the clause permits the use of other materials, such as hay or wood shavings, or for the sow to use natural materials found in the outdoor environment.
6.15.6	Piglets shall not be weaned before four weeks of age. However, if the welfare of the sow and/or piglets is compromised, piglets may be weaned earlier by exception. The operator shall document and provide justification for early weaning. The weaning age will be reviewed by March 2031.	This clause requires documentation and justification when piglets are weaned earlier than 4 weeks of age. This minimum requirement is lower than most other organic standards (e.g., in the EU). However, on farms in Canada, conventional pigs are weaned at around three weeks of age, so this maintains a longer suckling time for organic pigs. Further research must be done to evaluate and better understand why EU countries wean at a minimum of 40 days. It appears that EU farmers manage piglet feeding differently, and they may also have different breeds and husbandry systems that allow later weaning.
6.15.7	Piglets shall not be kept on flat decks or in cages.	Flat decks were devised as a method of housing small pigs in intensive

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		systems using early weaning to increase sow productivity. They are small cages or pens with slatted floors arranged in tiers or decks. This system is not allowed in organic production. At weaning, piglets should be able to transition directly to housing which accommodates natural behaviours (e.g., deep bedding, separate dunging areas and so on).
6.15.8	Boars may be housed in individual enclosures provided there is visual and tactile contact with other pigs.	
6.15.9	Indoor and outdoor exercise areas shall permit rooting.	For indoor areas or outdoor areas on concrete, there must be sufficient hay, straw or deep bedding to allow for rooting at any time of year. Similarly, organic production systems require the provision of ample hay or straw to allow for rooting when the ground is frozen.
6.15.10	The use of nose rings is prohibited.	
6.15.11	The minimum indoor, outdoor and total space requirements shown in Table 7 apply only to pigs when they are housed in barns. Within the total area, the minimum indoor and outdoor space shall be respected.	These are minimums; more space, particularly outside, would be beneficial. The footnote allows for flexibility in exceptional circumstances. For example, maximum density may be increased if slaughter time is delayed due to regional flooding that leads to road closures or a pandemic causes an abattoir to shut down temporarily. If an operator needs to exceed maximum density more than once, steps must be taken to prevent this happening in the future. For example, if road closures are common due to spring flooding or winter snowstorms, the operator must take this factor into consideration by ensuring that maximum density will not be exceeded even if the pigs must be kept for longer than expected. Table 7 does not apply to pigs housed in outdoor systems, only to pigs and wild boars housed in barns. The piglet exclusion area is a small area within a pen where sows farrow and suckle the piglets; it is small because its purpose is to keep the piglets warm (with a heat source) and give them a safe space to avoid being

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		crushed when the sow lays down. Discussion with pig producers and a review of schematics of commercial pens showed that 20% is a generous allotment of space to the piglets and this means that the sow has at least 6 m2 of space within the pen.																																				
Table 7— Minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for pigs and wild boars ^a																																						
	<table><tr><th></th><th>Indoor Space</th><th>Outdoor runs and pens</th><th>Total area</th></tr><tr><td>Sow and piglets (until weaning)^b</td><td>7.5 m² (81 ft²) for each sow and litter</td><td>Not required</td><td>7.5 m² (81 ft2)</td></tr><tr><td>Growing pigs a) up to 30 kg (66 lb)</td><td>0.6 m² (6.5 ft²)/head</td><td>0.4 m² (4.3 ft²)/head</td><td>1.0 m² (10.8 ft2)/head</td></tr><tr><td>b) 30–50 kg (66–110 lb)</td><td>0.8 m² (8.6 ft²)/head</td><td>0.6 m² (6.5 ft²)/head</td><td>1.4 m² (15.1 ft2)/head</td></tr><tr><td>c) 50–85 kg (110–187 lb)</td><td>1.1 m² (12 ft²)/head</td><td>0.8 m² (8.6 ft²)/head</td><td>1.9 m² (20.6 ft2)/head</td></tr><tr><td>d) >85 kg (187 lb)</td><td>1.3 m² (14 ft²)/head</td><td>1.0 m² (10.76 ft²)/head</td><td>2.3 m² (24.8 ft2)/head</td></tr><tr><td>Sows in group pens</td><td>3 m² (32.3 ft²)/head</td><td>3 m² (32.3 ft²)/head</td><td>6 m² (64.6 ft2)/ head</td></tr><tr><td>Sows in individual pens ^c</td><td>3 m² (32.3 ft2)/head</td><td>Not required</td><td>3 m2 (32.3 ft2)/ head</td></tr><tr><td>Boars in individual pens</td><td>9 m² (97 ft²)/head</td><td>9 m² (97 ft²)/head</td><td>18 m² (194 ft2)/ head</td></tr></table>		Indoor Space	Outdoor runs and pens	Total area	Sow and piglets (until weaning) ^b	7.5 m ² (81 ft ²) for each sow and litter	Not required	7.5 m ² (81 ft2)	Growing pigs a) up to 30 kg (66 lb)	0.6 m ² (6.5 ft ²)/head	0.4 m ² (4.3 ft ²)/head	1.0 m ² (10.8 ft2)/head	b) 30–50 kg (66–110 lb)	0.8 m ² (8.6 ft ²)/head	0.6 m ² (6.5 ft ²)/head	1.4 m ² (15.1 ft2)/head	c) 50–85 kg (110–187 lb)	1.1 m ² (12 ft ²)/head	0.8 m ² (8.6 ft ²)/head	1.9 m ² (20.6 ft2)/head	d) >85 kg (187 lb)	1.3 m ² (14 ft ²)/head	1.0 m ² (10.76 ft ²)/head	2.3 m ² (24.8 ft2)/head	Sows in group pens	3 m ² (32.3 ft ²)/head	3 m ² (32.3 ft ²)/head	6 m ² (64.6 ft2)/ head	Sows in individual pens ^c	3 m ² (32.3 ft2)/head	Not required	3 m2 (32.3 ft2)/ head	Boars in individual pens	9 m ² (97 ft ²)/head	9 m ² (97 ft ²)/head	18 m ² (194 ft2)/ head	
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^a Under exceptional circumstances, the maximum stocking density may be exceeded for individual groups. These circumstances shall be documented and if they recur, actions shall be taken to prevent future groups from surpassing maximum stocking density.																																						
^b The protected area for the piglets (nest or creep area) shall be no larger than 20% of the space provided for the sow and litter.																																						



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	° See 6.15.3 a for the circumstances in which keeping sows in individual pens is permitted.	

7. Specific Production Requirements





7.1 Apiculture

7. Specific Production Requirements

7.1 Apiculture

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7.1	Apiculture	
7.1.1	Bees may be introduced to an operation and managed for production benefits, such as pollination of organic crops. If managed as a livestock species for the production of organic products (for example, honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly, beeswax and bee venom), bees shall be managed in accordance with this standard.	Conventional honeybees can be used to pollinate organic crops. However, in order to collect organic products (e.g., honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly, beeswax and bee venom), hives need to be managed as described in this standard.
7.1.2	The operator shall prepare a detailed organic plan (see 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) that describes the source of bees; production methods; bee diet; control of pests, including diseases, mites and insects; breeding; and other related issues of colony management. Where applicable, the organic plan shall also describe crop management practices.	The beekeeper needs to prepare an Organic Apiculture System Plan (see 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3), which should include the following elements: • detailed map of the forage zone that shows the location of managed hives, organic land, wild land, and all non-organic areas; • description of the quantity of organic and/or wild forage to be provided for each colony; • honeybee colony density; • description of the water sources available in the forage zone; • listing of all land to which prohibited substances are applied; • all other sources of potential contamination located in the forage zone; • records that include the number, location, condition and management of colonies used in organic production; • details on practices that can help prevent and treat disease and pest problems; and • extraction, processing and storing of all bee products.

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7.1.3	Records that document all apiary management activities, including removal of supers and extraction of honey (see 4.4), shall be maintained.	A chronological log of all activity needs to be kept. Records include all written materials. A seasonal journal is usually the easiest way to record beekeeping activities, but beekeepers may comply with the standards in other ways. It can be as simple as notes on a calendar. In addition to records of beekeeping activities, maintenance of sales logs, invoices and other financial records are also required to comply with Clause 4.
7.1.4	The treatment and management of bee colonies shall be informed by the principles of organic production (see Introduction, clause 0.2).	Organic beekeeping follows the organic principles described in Section II (the introduction to the standards) and in the appendix, namely to: • protect the environment; • encourage biodiversity; • recycle materials; • provide attentive care to livestock (including bees); • protect the organic integrity of the product during processing; and • use renewable resources in local systems.
7.1.5	Organic plants and undomesticated, non-agricultural vegetation shall be the primary source of nectar, honeydew and pollen. Crops treated with prohibited substances and genetically engineered crops shall be avoided.	Organic honeybees need to forage on organic or wild vegetation.
7.1.6	Bee health shall be based on appropriate measures, such as selection of stock with disease-resistant traits, availability of suitable forage, and good apiary management practices.	Health is maintained by supplying access to suitable forage, using good management practices, and selecting for good stock. In particular, honeybees with disease-resistance, strong foraging ability and good housekeeping abilities should be selected for organic stock.
7.1.7	When bees are placed in wild areas, impact on the indigenous insect population shall be considered.	Bee yards should be situated so that they do not have a negative impact on wild insects in the area. Certifying bodies may wish to ensure that there is adequate forage available for colonies in wild sites; not just for the colonies, but also for wild insects that rely on flowers for their nourishment. “Adequate forage” does require some subjective judgment on the part of certifying bodies, but common sense should guide certifying body

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		inspectors in this regard.
7.1.8	Transition	
7.1.8.1	Colonies and hives (including brood and honey super frames) shall be under continuous organic management for at least 12 months before products may be considered organic.	A period of 12 months of organic hive management is required before organic products can be harvested. For certification purposes, the one-year transition only begins when an operator has submitted the Organic Plan to a certifying body (as part of the application for certification). When operators holding valid organic certification want to add new production sites, they don't need to wait a year. Instead, they should simply list new production sites (fields, gardens, etc.) on their annual application for certification to be inspected along with the rest of the operation. The operators must document that the new sites comply with organic standards, and include this documentation in their annual application for certification.
7.1.8.2	Colonies and hives shall not be rotated between organic and non-organic management systems. Bees treated with antibiotics are subject to the requirements of 7.1.15.7.	Once organic management has begun, beehives must be managed organically on a continuous basis. If hives are treated with an antibiotic, the hive must go through a 12- month transition period before being considered organic.
7.1.9	Introduced bees If commercially available, introduced bees, that is, replacement bees for established colonies, shall be organic. Replacement colonies shall be produced within the operation or come from another established organic apiary.	This first sentence defines “introduced bees” (also called “replacement bees”) to clarify that the standard is referring to bees only (e.g., queens) – not to the replacement of an entire colony (or nuc). If there are no organic bees available as replacements, non-organic queens can be used. A nuc (small colony) is relatively easy to produce and is the starting point for the beekeeper to make a full hive of bees. Bees coming into an organic operation as a colony or nuc must always be produced from within the operation or come from an organic apiary. Operators must keep accurate records for the introduction of bees coming into an organic operation from another organic apiary.

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7.1.10	Location of hives Where sources or zones of prohibited substances are present, that is, genetically engineered (GE) crops or environmental contamination, apiaries shall be protected with a buffer zone of 3 km (1.875 mi.). The following exceptions apply:	The standard requires a 3000-metre buffer zone between the hives and GE crops and other prohibited substances including agricultural pesticides, herbicides, systemic seed treatments and sewage sludge. Potential contaminants used by neighbouring homeowners and other non-agricultural prohibited substances can be assessed as to the risk they pose to the bees and the honey. Generally, low-density rural residences within the 3000-m buffer zone might not present a significant risk if it can be established (e.g., with an affidavit) that there is no use of prohibited pesticides or herbicides on forage plants.
	a) fertilizers (including those that are not listed in Table 4.2 Column 2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311) are permitted in the buffer zone, with the exception of sewage sludge;	
	b) buffer zones may be reduced if natural features that would restrict the likelihood of bee travel (such as forests, hills or waterways) and abundant compliant forage are present; and	Organic honey production typically cannot take place if any of the following are found within the 3000-m buffer zone: • high-density housing areas, such as subdivisions; • golf courses; • garbage dumps or landfill sites; • industrial complexes; • very busy roads; or • commercial non-organic greenhouses/nurseries. No transition period is required for the 3000-metre buffer zone. No prohibited substances, other than fertilizers, can have been applied to growing plant material within the 3000-m buffer. The size of buffer zones can be reduced if the presence of non-organic crops within the 3000-m zone is considered to pose only a minimal risk to the integrity of organic hive products; this decision must be assessed by certification agencies on a case-by-case basis. For example, bees are unlikely to collect pollen and nectar (which could be exposed to contaminants) from the conventional crops if there are (i) abundant high-quality forage throughout the season near the hives and (ii) natural barriers (such as forests, hills or water bodies) between the hives and the non-organic crops.

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		It may be appropriate to define the buffer zone by the outer perimeter of the bees' anticipated foraging area (the farthest the bees are expected to travel). Within this reduced buffer zone, all the restrictions in 7.1.10 apply (i.e., no use of prohibited substances or GE crops).
	c) during periods of reduced bee mobility and when forage is not generally available, the buffer zone around temporary preparation apiaries and wintering yards may be reduced to 100 metres.	The reduction of the buffer to 100 m when the bees are not foraging reflects the reality of hive management in Canada. Under the EU, the 3-km buffer does not apply where flowering is not taking place or the bee colonies are dormant.
7.1.11	Forage and feeding	
7.1.11.1	The primary food source for adult colonies shall be nectar and pollen collected from sources conforming to this standard and food sources stored by the bees in the hive (honey, pollen, etc.). a) In the event of a regional or seasonal shortage of sources of feed and for winter feeding of colonies, the following is allowed in order of preference: 1) organic honey from within the operation; 2) organic sugar (e.g., inverted, syrup, fondant); or 3) non-organic transitional honey from within the operation. b) The use of non-organic, non-GE refined sugar (in compliance with subclauses 1.4 and 1.5) is permitted under the condition that the operator: 1) maintain and document appropriate practices to prevent the mixing of organic and non-organic feeds in honey supers; 2) develop and provide a plan to replace the use of non-organic, non-GE refined sugar in the operation with organic sugar; and 3) feed a minimum of 5% of hives with organic sugar or	Surviving Canadian winters can be a challenge for honeybees, which originally came from Africa or Asia, and were domesticated in southern Europe. Non-organic beekeepers often add sugar syrup or fondant to the hives in late fall to provide the bees with enough energy reserves to survive our long, cold winters. For organic beekeepers, there are standards to comply with, and the issue is more complex. The Canadian Organic Standard (COS) states that organic honey and pollen shall be the primary food source for adult bees. From late spring to early fall, the bees collect their own food from flowers, but when the blooms are gone, they must rely on the reserves in the hive. This is in addition to the honey the beekeepers have removed in order to have a financially sustainable business. In areas with a short frost-free season, the food collected by the bees might not be adequate (in terms of quantity or quality) to enable the bees to withstand the winter. Beekeepers need to anticipate the winter needs of the bees and supply the food in the fall. There is no opportunity during the winter to provide more food because opening the hive can stress bees and lead to many problems.

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	organic honey by September 1, 2028. Operators shall note in their organic plan the potential impact of the use of organic sugar or honey, particularly on bee health and honey production. c) Feeding shall only occur between the last honey harvest and 15 days before the start of the next nectar or honeydew flow-period.	In December 2019, the Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC) ruled that feeding organic honey or sugar should not be a recurring annual event; winter alone is not considered “exceptional” enough to justify the routine feeding of bees. This interpretation by the SIC caused an outcry. The SIC soon discovered that a significant number of organic beekeepers provide honey or sugar every winter because they consider that our harsh, long winters are “exceptional” for bees adapted to warm European climates. In addition, many organic beekeepers are located in remote or northern regions of Canada, because in southern areas where there is more agriculture, there is a greater risk of contamination by agrochemicals and genetically engineered crops. In these colder areas with longer winters and shorter foraging seasons, there is a greater need to supply bees with food to survive the winter. No one wants to see mass mortality of organic bees due to starvation during the winter, but the issue is complicated. The COS states that most hives* may be fed organic honey, organic sugar or even non-organic sugar for winter feeding, as well as “in the event of a regional or seasonal shortage of forage.” So, feeding the bees every winter will be allowed. However, given that non-organic sugar is not permitted under any other organic standard, and that feeding non-organic feed to livestock is generally prohibited under organic management (except in the case of feed shortages or catastrophic events), a minimum of 5% of hives under organic management must be fed exclusively with organic honey or organic sugar during the winter months. The aim of this new requirement (as of 2026) is to gradually introduce organic feeding, enabling beekeepers to observe its impact on their operations and develop new sources of supply for organic sugar. The preference is for organic honey or organic sugar; however liquid organic sugar might not be available by tanker truckload in remote parts of the country. Consequently, beekeepers will be permitted to supplement 95% of hives with non-organic sugar provided it is not derived from

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		genetically engineered plants (such as genetically engineered sugar beets).
7.1.11.2	Sugar (organic or non-organic) shall not be supplied within 30 days of the harvest of honey. Organic honey from the farm is permitted at all times.	
NOTE	Clauses 7.1.11.1 and 7.1.11.2 will be reviewed in 2031.	
7.1.12	Colony management	
7.1.12.1	Hives shall be clearly and individually identified, and shall be monitored regularly, that is, at one- to two-week intervals, depending upon the colony, weather conditions and time of year.	Individual hives must be identifiable with a number or mark. Apiaries must be visited on a regular basis. Operators have some flexibility regarding how often they should inspect their colonies, but should not leave an apiary alone for months at a time. Organic beekeeping requires active management.
7.1.12.2	Wing clipping of queen bees is prohibited.	
7.1.12.3	Bees shall be removed from hives with bee escape boards, shaking, brushing or forced-air blowers.	Escape-boards, shaking, brushing and forced-air blowers are acceptable for removing bees from the hive. Chemical removal is not allowed. Any substance used in conjunction with bee escape boards must be listed in Table 5.3 of the Permitted Substances Lists.
7.1.12.4	Plant-based materials that have not been treated with prohibited substances (see 1.5) may be used in bee smokers.	Beekeepers should ensure that any materials they use in smokers are not contaminated. Used burlap should be washed before being burnt in smokers. Any plant or plant-based material that has been treated with a prohibited substance is not permitted.
7.1.12.5	Annual destruction of bee colonies, following nectar flows, is prohibited.	Beehives must be managed in a sustainable manner and not destroyed each year (e.g., to avoid the cost and risk of overwintering hives).
7.1.13	Hive construction	

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7.1.13.1	Hives shall be constructed of and maintained with natural materials, such as wood and metal. Pressure-treated lumber or particle board, wood preservatives or lumber treated with prohibited substances are not permitted.	
7.1.13.2	Exterior surfaces of the hive may be painted with non-lead-based paints.	Lead-based paints cannot be used on hives. Latex paint, paraffin and linseed oil are some alternatives to lead-based paint.
7.1.13.3	If dipped in organic beeswax, plastic comb foundation is permitted.	Plastic foundations are allowed, even if they are not coated. But if they are coated, they must be dipped in organic beeswax.
7.1.14	Health care	
7.1.14.1	Preventative health care practices shall be established and maintained, including the selection of bee stocks resistant to prevalent pests including mites and diseases; the selection of hive locations considering site-specific conditions; the availability of sufficient pollen and honey; the renewal of beeswax; the regular cleaning and disinfection of equipment; and the destruction of contaminated hives and materials when appropriate for pest management.	Beekeepers are responsible for maintaining good hive management practices to protect bee health at all times. This principle provides the basis for managing healthy organic colonies. Above all other considerations, beekeepers should actively seek healthy and resistant stock; breed for healthy characteristics; and maintain young, vigorous queens. Organic beekeeping is not simply a matter of not using antibiotics; organic beekeepers should strive constantly to develop and maintain healthy strains of bees.
7.1.14.2	The operator shall promote strong, healthy colonies. Management practices may include: merging weaker, albeit healthy, colonies; renewing queens, if necessary; maintaining adequate hive density; inspecting colonies systematically; and relocating diseased colonies to isolated areas.	
7.1.15	Managing pests including insects and diseases	
7.1.15.1	The operator shall be a knowledgeable beekeeper who is familiar with the life cycle and behaviour of bees and related disease-causing organisms, parasitic mites and other pests. In the presence of such	An experienced beekeeper must be involved with all organic beekeeping operations. Every effort must be extended to keep beehives alive and healthy. Organic beekeepers need to know about bees themselves, and

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	pests, every effort shall be made to restore the health of a colony.	not just about beekeeping. Organic beekeepers must strive continually to improve their knowledge over time. Though this passage may seem redundant (and difficult to enforce), the reason behind it is that beekeeping is difficult, and organic beekeeping is doubly difficult – beekeepers must therefore apply all their skills and knowledge if they hope to succeed.
7.1.15.2	Every effort shall be made to select and breed queen bees for resistance to diseases and parasites.	This paragraph deals with queen rearing, but it does not mean that every organic apiarist needs to be an expert in queen rearing. The intent of the paragraph is that beekeepers should constantly assess their queens, and either breed their own stock or obtain good stock from a competent queen breeder. Non-organic queens can be purchased if it can be demonstrated that there are no organic queens commercially available.
7.1.15.3	Comb foundation shall be obtained from beeswax within the operation or from other organic sources.	All materials used in the hive must be from organic sources.
7.1.15.4	Pests (including diseases) shall be controlled with management methods or modified equipment.	This statement of principle states that beekeepers shall manage their bees to produce healthy colonies (so that they do not need to use drugs). Pests and diseases must be controlled through good management practices.
7.1.15.5	Botanical compounds may be introduced into the hive provided that such remedies are listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, and are not used within 30 days of nectar flow or when honey supers are on the hive.	To avoid having residue from botanical remedies in the honey, botanical remedies can only be used after the last honey harvest of the season, and use must be discontinued 30 days before the addition of honey supers. Permitted botanical compounds to control pests and disease are listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. Botanical compounds are those produced from plants including plant oils.
7.1.15.6	Therapeutic applications of substances to control pests (including parasites and diseases) listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 are permitted. These applications shall be discontinued 14 days before harvesting the hive products.	Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 lists materials that are permitted for use in beehives, such as formic and oxalic acid. Many beekeepers treat hives with formic acid several times during the beekeeping season in order to control varroa mites, and thereby keep the colony alive. Health Canada states that "Maximum residue limits (MRLs) are not required for formic acid." Non-synthetic formic acid can be found in

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		nature; it causes the sting from ants and stinging nettles, and can even be found at low concentrations in wild honey.
7.1.15.7	Allopathic drugs (for example, antibiotics) are prohibited. However, where the imminent health of the colony is threatened, oxytetracycline is permitted (See Antibiotics, oxytetracycline in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311). Before treatment, hives and colonies shall be removed from the foraging area and taken out of organic production to prevent the spread of antibiotics within the apiary. Treated hives (containers present during treatment) along with the bees present during treatment (excluding queens) shall be placed in isolation and undergo a 12-month transition period. Wax present in the hives during treatment shall not be marketed as organic.	Antibiotics (e.g., oxytetracycline) are prohibited. However, in the case of a serious disease outbreak (e.g., American foulbrood) when hives are going to die without the use of an antibiotic, this treatment is allowed. Prior to an antibiotic treatment, hives must be removed from the apiary. Once treated, hives must be placed in isolation and undergo a 12-month transition period. All treatments must be recorded in detail.
7.1.15.8	Destroying the male brood is only permitted to contain infestation with varroa mites.	
7.1.16	Extraction, processing and storage	
7.1.16.1	Extraction of honey from a comb with live brood is prohibited.	Honey cannot be extracted from a comb containing brood. The use of dedicated honey supers and/or queen excluders will help to ensure the brood is not included with the honey harvest.
7.1.16.2	The quality and organic integrity of honey and other products of apiculture (see 7.1.1) shall be preserved and protected as specified in 8.1.	Quality and integrity rules described in 8.1 apply to honey processing. This requires organic apiarists to process their honey according to organic processing standards. The term “organic integrity” refers to the practice of not allowing any contamination of the organic product with non-organic (or prohibited) materials.
7.1.16.3	Surfaces in direct contact with honey shall be constructed of food-grade materials or coated with beeswax.	
7.1.16.4	Heating of honey for extraction shall not exceed 35 °C (95 °F) and the	Honey heated above the specified temperatures cannot be labelled and

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	decrystallization temperature shall not exceed 47 °C (116.6 °F). If organic honey is heated above those temperatures, then it can only be used as an ingredient in a multi-ingredient product.	sold as organic honey. It can, however, be used as an organic ingredient in a multi-ingredient organic product, such as cookies or snack bars.
7.1.16.5	Gravitational settling shall be used to remove debris from extracted honey. Sieves are permitted for removal of residual debris.	Gravitational settling is accomplished by allowing the honey to settle in large tanks, sometimes for days. Most of the foreign materials will float to the top where they can be skimmed off.
7.1.16.6	Honey shall be packaged in airtight containers.	The intent is to ensure that organic honey is not susceptible to contamination. Certifying bodies should allow organic beekeepers some flexibility in their choice of containers, as long as the honey is secure. Canadian Honey Regulations state that, “32. (1) Every container of honey shall be in clean, sanitary and sound condition, have a tightly fitting lid and be free from severe dents or buckling and from obvious signs of internal rusting. (2) Every container of prepackaged honey shall be new.”
7.1.16.7	Facility cleaning, sanitation and pest management are subject to the requirements in 8.2 and 8.3.	Prepared products must maintain organic integrity and accurately label product composition. See 8.1 and 8.2 for details.



7.2 Maple Products



7.1 Maple Products

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7.2	Maple products	
7.2.1	The standards for maple production also apply to syrup production in other tree types, such as birch.	Because it is also possible to produce syrup from birch sap and walnut tree sap, the same standards that regulate the production of maple syrup must apply. This includes clauses relating to equipment, cleaning products and guidelines regarding protection of the environment.
7.2.2	Organic maple products shall be from production units managed in accordance with this standard.	It is essential to ensure that neighbouring properties cannot contaminate the maple stand that is being managed organically. A protective buffer is required if there is no existing barrier to prevent contamination from an adjacent field where prohibited substances may have been spread. Potential barriers include windbreaks and a band of conifers. Sap from the 8-metre buffer zone cannot be used to produce certified organic products.
7.2.3	This standard applies to all stages of production and preparation — the maintenance and development of the sugar bush, collecting and storing sap, converting sap to syrup, making products out of syrup, washing and sterilizing equipment, and storing finished products.	Certain procedures are prohibited in the production of organic maple syrup because they will significantly alter the finished product. For example, the use of an air injector is not permitted. Air may not be injected into the sap, the concentrate, the reduction or the syrup to avoid contamination (because the air itself might be contaminated). This same procedure is not permitted in the evaporator pans because it produces an oxidation reaction which lightens the colour of the syrup. Use of an air blower system in the steam pans is also prohibited because of the risk of incorporating contaminated air into the sap during the evaporating process. These examples illustrate the care required to produce non-denatured syrup with a rich, characteristic maple flavour.
7.2.4	The production of maple syrup shall be characterized by good management practices of the sugar bush and its ecosystem. Development and maintenance shall focus, over the long term, on the	The forest that makes up the maple bush is a fragile environment. In organic maple production, the forest manager must protect the resource by avoiding, for example, the use of heavy machinery in the bush when

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	preservation of the sugar bush ecosystem and improvement of tree vigour.	the soil is wet because the resulting deep ruts could damage tree roots. Autumn is a good time for forest management work because the bark is less fragile and less subject to damage (trunk, branches and roots).
7.2.5	Tapping practices shall minimize risk to the health and longevity of the trees.	When tapping practices, ensure that the tap holes are not too deep. Spouts (spigots, taps or spiles) should not be inserted using force. This will help prevent the bark or even the tree from splitting during periods of extreme cold. When removing taps, care must be taken to prevent damaging the bark; it is preferable to remove the spout by rotating it once in the tap hole. If a spout remover is required, remove the spout using small pulls rather than one big pull.
7.2.6	Equipment and techniques used to collect and store sap shall lead to a prepared product of the highest possible quality. Equipment shall be in good condition, shall be composed of materials suitable for use in the manufacture of food products, and shall be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.	
7.2.7	During conversion of sap to syrup, the sap can take on the odour of anything it comes into contact with. Therefore, care shall be taken to avoid denaturing the product during preparation. The use of technology, such as magnetization, that is likely to alter the intrinsic qualities of the product is prohibited.	The organic maple producer is committed to producing an unadulterated product that preserves the qualities expected from organic maple syrup and its by-products. That is why certain technologies are not permitted, such as the use of anodes that magnetize maple water (which may alter the intrinsic qualities of the maple product).
7.2.8	Transition This standard shall be fully applied on a production unit for at least 12 months before the harvest of sap may be considered organic. Prohibited substances shall not have been used for at least 36 months preceding the first harvest. Parallel production is prohibited.	Contrary to popular belief, maple syrup is not organic simply because it comes from the woods. Between collection and packaging, there are many contamination risks. Also, in organic management, the resource must also be preserved. Finally, as with all other kinds of organic production, a one-year waiting period is required before the first certification to demonstrate a good understanding and mastery of the method and standards of organic production.

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		There is a mandatory 36-month waiting period to ensure that synthetic products applied in the past have been eliminated.
NOTE	Part 13 Organic Products of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations requires that the application for the organic certification of maple products be filed at least 15 months before the day on which the food is expected to be sold.	
NOTE	During that period of time, compliance with this standard will be assessed by the certification body and this assessment must include at least one inspection of the production unit, during production, in the year before maple products may be eligible for certification and one inspection, during production, in the year maple products are eligible for certification.	
7.2.9	Sugar bush development and maintenance	
7.2.9.1	Plant diversity Operators shall encourage a diversity of plant species in the sugar bush, particularly companion species to tapped maple trees. Companion species shall be encouraged by aiming for a minimum percentage of 20% of all trees in the sugar bush. Undergrowth and brush shall be protected. Partial cutting of this vegetation is authorized for the creation of paths to facilitate movement. Gap cutting is permitted if the overabundance of native understory vegetation prevents the establishment of maple regeneration.	Diversification of tree species in maple bushes is a protective strategy against invasive species, since parasites and invaders (insects, plants) often target a single species. A diverse stand is therefore more resistant to biological invasions. Increasing the requirement of plant species enables maple syrup producers to protect their operations while maintaining a level of biodiversity that is beneficial to the forest ecosystem. It is common to find maple stands that are made up of mostly maple trees. This poor biodiversity is often the result of several years of forest management that favour maple trees to the detriment of all other species of trees. When converting to an organic system, it is essential to re-establish companion species. Over the years, it is possible to establish 20% of the forest volume in species other than maple. Foresters describe the volume of wood in terms of basal area. In the case of very diversified

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		stands, at least 20% of companion species must be preserved during thinning operations. Abundant shrub vegetation must not be completely cleared because of its role in conserving moisture and protecting the soil. However, clearing a one-metre band, for example, on either side of the main and lateral tubing (5/16) is permitted; this creates corridors for moving around and carrying out work, such as tapping, finding leaks and cleaning tubing.
7.2.9.2	Thinning When it is necessary or when required by the forest administrator, thinning of the sugar bush shall be performed in accordance with current best practices in forest management in both private and public forests, and shall be evenly distributed throughout the sugar bush.	Avoid damaging trees during forest management. Injuring tree trunks as well as damaging roots from deep ruts is prohibited. Protecting the resource is a priority. Anyone working in an organic maple bush must be well informed.
7.2.9.3	Tree protection If livestock (for example, beef or dairy cattle, pigs or domestic deer) could harm sugar trees, livestock access to the bush shall be prohibited in order to preserve plant diversity and the growth of young trees. Pipeline networks shall be installed in a manner that shall not injure nor harm the growth of trees.	Ensure that support wires do not penetrate and strangle the trees. Guy wires and fasteners at the extremities of drop line tubes must not damage the trees.
7.2.9.4	Fertilization Fertility recommendations and applications shall be based on observed, diagnosed and documented deficiencies. Soil amendments permitted for maple production include wood ash, agricultural lime and fertilizers listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	The list of accepted supplements and fertilizers in organic maple production is very short: Not many products are permitted. The list of substances in Table 4.2 Column 1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 must be carefully consulted to ensure that any product being spread is permitted. An assessment of the health of the sugar bush may be carried out. Using forestry data and soil analysis, a qualified professional can indicate causes of decline and suggest effective interventions.
7.2.9.5	Pest control	Hunting and trapping nuisance animals are permitted when nuisance

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	Knowledge and understanding of pests (in the sugar bush and preparation facility), their habits, and solutions that maintain the bush ecosystem are the preferred basis for pest control. Within the sugar bush, substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 are permitted for control of pests including diseases and insects. Pests in preparation facilities can be controlled as described in 8.3 Facility pest management and post-harvest management. If an infestation occurs, vertebrate pests may be hunted. It is prohibited to use poisons of any kind to control vertebrate pests.	animals are causing problems. Use of poison in buildings or in the bush is prohibited, including to control rodents (e.g., squirrels) or any other kind of animal.						
7.2.10	Tapping							
7.2.10.1	Tree diameter and number of taps Table 8 indicates the maximum number of taps a healthy maple can support, based on its chest height diameter (CHD); CHD is the diameter measured at a height of 1.3 m (4.3 ft) above the soil surface. A tree shall not have more than two tap holes.	Debates over the number of sugar maple taps per tree touch on two essential aspects. Productivity shows that a second tapping significantly increases sap yield, while a third brings few additional benefits. As for tree health, multiple taps close together can compromise vitality in the long term, even if new spouts reduce damage. Standards are evolving: with Quebec adopting a minimum diameter of 23 cm for one tap and New Brunswick 24 cm. The general trend is towards a limit of two taps per tree, offering an optimal balance between yield and preservation.						
	Table 8 — Maximum number of taps per healthy maple tree							
	<table><tr><th>Diameter measured at a height of 1.3 m (4.3 ft) above the soil surface</th><th>Maximum number of taps</th></tr><tr><td>Less than 19.9 cm (8 in.)</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>20 to 23 cm (8 to 9 in) (applies to operations who have applied for certification or that were certified before the date of publication of this standard)</td><td>1</td></tr></table>		Diameter measured at a height of 1.3 m (4.3 ft) above the soil surface	Maximum number of taps	Less than 19.9 cm (8 in.)	0	20 to 23 cm (8 to 9 in) (applies to operations who have applied for certification or that were certified before the date of publication of this standard)	1
Diameter measured at a height of 1.3 m (4.3 ft) above the soil surface	Maximum number of taps							
Less than 19.9 cm (8 in.)	0							
20 to 23 cm (8 to 9 in) (applies to operations who have applied for certification or that were certified before the date of publication of this standard)	1							

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	23.1 to 39 cm (9 to 16 in) (applies to operations who have applied for certification after the date of publication of this standard and to expansions installed after the date of publication of this standard, and is mandatory for all operations after 2035.)	1
	39.1 cm and greater (16 in and more) (applies to all operations from the date of publication of this standard).	2
7.2.10.2	Depth and diameter of tap holes Depth of tap holes shall be no more than 5 cm (1.9 in.) from the surface of the bark for trees with a diameter less than 25 cm (9.8 in), or 6 cm (2.4 in.) from the surface of the bark for trees with a diameter equal or greater than 25 cm (9.8 in). Diameters shall not be greater than 7.93 mm (5/16 in). If a tree is diseased, infested with other pests, decaying, or if tap holes are not healing properly, stricter standards shall be implemented, such as: a) the number of taps per tree shall be reduced to one where 7.2.10.1 allows two; and b) when the chest height diameter is less than 25 cm (~9 7/8 in.), tapping is prohibited. If the trees are compromised by injury, insects, diseases or decay, Table 8 of 7.2.10.1 may be used in accordance with the standard, however, spouts with a smaller diameter shall be used or operators shall abstain from tapping.	When the maples are visibly unhealthy, operators must reduce the stress caused by the tapping operation. Stricter tapping standards are required; this is achieved by reducing the number of taps per tree and increasing the minimum diameter of the tree that can be tapped.
7.2.10.3	Disinfection of tap holes and tapping equipment	No germicidal product can be put in the tap hole. However, operators can

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	Food-grade ethyl alcohol may be sprinkled onto spouts and drill bits during tapping, but sprinkling in tap holes is prohibited. It is prohibited to use any other germicide, such as denatured alcohol (a mixture of ethanol and ethyl acetate) or isopropyl alcohol, in tap holes and on tapping equipment.	clean the spout and the drill bit when tapping. For this step, the only authorized product is food-grade ethyl alcohol. It is prohibited to clean the spout and the drill bit with denatured alcohol, isopropyl alcohol or any other cleaning or disinfecting product.
7.2.10.4	Renewing the tap and removal of spouts Maple trees shall only be tapped once a year. The practice of retapping a previously tapped tree during the same season or double tapping is prohibited. To allow trees to heal, spouts shall be removed no later than 60 days after the final, seasonal sap flow. Maple trees shall only be tapped during the sugar bush operation period (maple syrup season). Fall syrup production is prohibited.	You can only tap a maple tree once in a 12- month period. You cannot deepen or widen a cut. You cannot drill a second tap hole elsewhere on the trunk. When the season is over, spouts must be removed from the notches. Spouts must be removed within 60 days after the last sap flow.
7.2.11	Collection and storage of maple syrup	
7.2.11.1	Spouts Spouts shall be made of food-grade materials.	
7.2.11.2	Vacuum collection system All parts of the collection system that may come in contact with sap shall be made of materials suitable for use in the manufacture of food products. Pumps shall be well-maintained and used oil shall be collected and disposed of so as to not contaminate the environment.	Tubing in the bush must be made of food-grade material. The same applies to tubing within the buildings. Use of ABS, galvanized steel, green sewer cylinders and recycled piping is prohibited. Oil from vacuum pumps must not be released into the environment. An oil recovery system must be implemented for the type of dairy type pump (De Laval, Airablo, Surge, Universal etc.).
NOTE	It is recommended to recycle all materials of the components of the collection system.	
7.2.11.3	Storage	Plastic holding tanks must be made of food-grade material. Fibreglass,

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	All equipment that may come into contact with sap or its concentrate and filtrates, such as storage tanks, connections and transfer systems, shall be made of materials suitable for use in the manufacture of food products. This also applies to any surface coatings, such as paints and soldered joints. The use of air injection systems with a forced air blower in sap before, during or after its conversion to syrup is prohibited.	galvanized steel and cement holding tanks must be finished with a coating, gel or paint that is food grade. The solder used in stainless steel holding tanks must be lead-free. Certain techniques used in conventional production are unacceptable under organic management, in particular air injection (because the air is not sufficiently filtered and purified). There is a risk of contamination by this air supply. It is therefore not allowed to blow air with a blower in the sap or concentrate.
7.2.11.4	Collecting with buckets Pails or buckets may be made of aluminum or plastic. Galvanized steel is prohibited. Buckets shall be covered with a lid. The standards that apply to storage tanks also apply to reservoirs used to transport collected sap.	Buckets must be covered. Bucket covers may be made of plastic or galvanized steel because these do not come in contact with the sap. Containers for transportation may be made of: • food-grade plastic; • stainless steel; • aluminum; or • fibreglass painted with a food-grade coating. They may not be made of galvanized steel or plastic which is not food grade. White plastic 1000-litre (220-gal.) tanks covered with wire mesh are not necessarily made of food-grade material. It is essential to ensure that they are made of food-grade material. If the material is food-grade but previously used, it is essential to check what was stored in it previously to prevent contamination of the sap by residues that are unacceptable in organic production.
7.2.12	Conversion of sap to syrup	
7.2.12.1	Sap filtration Sap shall be filtered before processing. The filtration shall not compromise the sap's inherent qualities.	Maple sap must be filtered at least once. For a system using buckets, it may be filtered when filling gathering tanks in the bush. It may also be filtered when poured into pans in the sugar house. When using a tubing system, the sap may be filtered when leaving the releaser or when it is

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		transferred to a holding tank. If using a reverse osmosis system, the pre-filter on the osmosis system is an acceptable filtration process.
7.2.12.2	Sap sterilization Sterilization of sap with ultraviolet radiation or by adding a sterilizer prior to conversion is prohibited.	It is prohibited to sterilize maple sap using an ultraviolet treatment system. Ionizing maple sap or using any other procedure intended to reduce the accumulation of nitre (sugar sand) on the sides of pans is also prohibited.
7.2.12.3	Osmosis extraction and membranes The membrane concentration technique is acceptable for treating sap. Only reverse osmosis and nanofiltration (ultraosmosis) membranes are allowed. In the off-season, osmosis membranes can be stored with filtrate or potable water in the equipment or in a hermetically sealed container. Sodium metabisulfite (SMBS), potassium metabisulfite (PMBS) or citric acid may be added to the filtrate or potable water to prevent microbial growth. If sodium metabisulfite (SMBS) or potassium metabisulfite (PMBS) is used, the membrane shall be rinsed before the next use with a volume of water equal to the hourly capacity of the membrane (for example, 2,271 L [600 US gal/h] of water for a 2,271 L/h [600 US gal/h] membrane). When citric acid is used, the membrane must be rinsed before the next use with a volume representing at least 40 times the residual dead volume of the equipment. Off-site storage of the membrane (for example, by the membrane supplier) shall be documented. Food-grade lubricants are allowed as a lubricant for equipment used in maple production	Products permitted by the 2020 COS can cause corrosion in new generation equipment. Changes to the COS in 2026 have two objectives: to reduce the use of chemical products and to enable effective cleaning during the season, particularly during extended periods between two sap runs. The approval of less corrosive alternatives, such as citric acid (already approved for organic maple syrup production, allows for safe clean-in-place operations while preserving the organic integrity of the facilities.
7.2.12.4	Evaporator Evaporator pans shall be made of stainless steel. They shall be tungsten-inert gas (TIG) welded or soldered with tin-silver solder. Pans made of galvanized steel, copper, aluminum or tin-plated steel are	Evaporator pans must be made of stainless steel and the solder must be lead-free. Permitted fuels include fire wood, wood pellets, wood chips, grades 1 and 2 heating oil, propane and natural gas. Other materials, such as waxed

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	prohibited. Air and environmental quality shall be controlled in the evaporator room. Air injection systems with a forced air blower are prohibited in evaporator pans.	cardboard pellets, can be used as fuel as long as the operator can demonstrate that the fuel does not affect the integrity of the maple syrup. Evaporation using electric or steam heating is permitted. A special permit issued by the Federal Government is required to burn used oil. Blowing with an air blower air into the pans using an air injector system or through the use of a steam pan is prohibited.
7.2.12.5	Defoamers The level of foam can be controlled using an organic anti-foaming agent designed for this purpose, or by using organic vegetable oils with no allergenic potential. These products shall be used as processing aids and shall be listed in Table 6.5 — Processing aids of CAN/CGSB-32.311. Wood from Pennsylvania maple (<i>Acer pennsylvanicum</i> , also known as striped wood), from organic operations may also be used. As a last measure, if the use of one of these products proves ineffective, a food-grade anti-foaming agent without genetically modified components may be used; all anti-foaming agents used shall be documented.	Organic vegetable oils have a moderate anti-foaming capacity, therefore, in order to compensate, the heat must be reduced. By reducing the heat, the foaming decreases and the organic vegetable oils will have the desired effect. Avoid using oils that have allergenic potential. The nine priority food allergens in Canada are peanuts, nuts, sesame seeds, milk, eggs, seafood (fish, crustaceans and molluscs), soya, wheat and sulphites (see the CFIA website). Defoaming liquids based on mono- and di-glyceride propylene glycol are prohibited. Manufacturers of defoamers must comply with all the requirements of the organic standard, not just those for maple syrup production.
7.2.12.6	Syrup filtration and other treatments Organic maple syrup shall not be refined by artificial means, bleached or lightened in colour. Any manipulation on maple syrup carried out in order to mask defects in flavour, mainly that of the bud, is prohibited. Simple filtration via the following methods is permitted: through cloth or paper, a filter press or calcined diatomaceous earth; or use of silica powder or clay dust with a filter press to remove suspended solids. The use of air injection systems with a forced air blower in maple syrup is prohibited.	Filtration using equipment that alters the properties of maple syrup is prohibited. Filtration must only remove suspended solids. When filtering with a filter press, use of a food-grade powder, such as diatomaceous earth, silica or clay dust, is permitted.

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7.2.13	Cleaning of equipment for use in syrup production	
7.2.13.1	Maple sap collection systems, tubing and tanks Cleaning shall take place before or after each production season. Permitted sanitation substances are outlined in:	Since potable water and filtrate are used in the sugar house, these may be used for cleaning purposes during the season. A solution of hydrogen peroxide may also be used followed by rinsing with potable water or filtrate. As of 2026, sodium hypochlorite can no longer be used at any time (during or after the production season). Even after rinsing, chemical residues (chlorates) can remain on surfaces. These residues become problematic when maple sap is heated because they concentrate as the water evaporates. There is no cleaning product permitted for use on tubing during the season. Only potable water or filtrate is permitted. Between production seasons, the collection network may be cleaned with potable water, filtrate, fermented sap, a basic solution of peroxide or isopropyl alcohol. Cleaning may be done by suction, backwash or injection with a syringe without vacuum or pressure. Brushes and sponges are permitted. Rinsing is always necessary when using a cleaning solution. Rinsing must be done with potable water or by discarding the first sap flow of the season. Dry cleaning is also possible. This is carried out by draining the network and drying it by vacuum or using sponges. In this case, no product is used.
	Table 9 – Permitted sanitation substances for maple	

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	In-season	For all equipment except tubing Product based on acetic acid, hydrogen peroxide or peracetic acid Cleaning shall be followed by rinsing with drinking water, filtrate or sap before restarting the operations.
	Off-season	For all equipment including tubing - Sodium hypochlorite - Fermented sap - Product based on acetic acid, hydrogen peroxide or peracetic acid Cleaning shall be followed by rinsing with drinking water, filtrate or sap before the next season.
		For tubing only - Isopropyl alcohol - Fermented sap - Product based on acetic acid, hydrogen peroxide or peracetic acid Cleaning shall be followed by rinsing with drinking water, filtrate or sap before the next season.
	Other substances, including substances based on phosphoric acid, are prohibited.	
7.2.13.2	Osmosis extraction and membranes Reverse osmosis units and membranes shall first be cleaned using filtrate, according to the time and temperature recommended by the manufacturer. a) Cleaning during the production season: If after rinsing with warm filtrate (in an open or closed circuit), a Pure Water Permeability (PWP) test indicates that controlled efficiency is less than 85% of the controlled efficiency recorded at the beginning of the season, a caustic soda-based soap (NaOH)	Cleaning reverse osmosis units and membranes is carried out using filtrate. This cleaning must be followed by a simple, two-minute Pure Water Permeability (PWP) test. If the efficiency is equal to or above 85% in relation to the efficiency recorded at the beginning of the season, the unit cannot be cleaned with an alkaline soap. If, after this cleaning with filtrate, the efficiency remains below 85% with the PWP test, use of an alkaline soap is permitted. If, following this cleaning with an alkaline soap, efficiency remains below 75% with the PWP test, use of citric acid is permitted. A solution of acetic acid, peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide (e.g.,

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	recommended by the manufacturer for membrane cleaning is permitted. 2) If PWP test results stay below 75% of the efficiency recorded at the beginning of the season after the use of a NaOH-based soap, citric acid, acetic acid, peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide are permitted. 3) Cleaning or a cleaning sequence with substances permitted in 7.2.13.2 a) 1) and 2) shall be followed by a rinse with clean filtrate or potable water. The rinse volume shall be greater than or equal to 40 times the dead (residual) volume of the unit (total volume of the unit and its components after it is drained). 4) Daily efficiency readings and calculations shall be recorded. Membrane flush water shall be disposed of in a manner that does not harm the environment. b) For cleaning after the production season, off-season treatment of membranes with citric acid, acetic acid, peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide is permitted.	Oxysan) is permitted. Once alkaline soap, citric acid, or a solution of acetic acid, peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide has been used, the system must be rinsed with potable water or filtrate. The volume of water for rinsing must be 40 times the volume of the cleaning solution contained in the reverse osmosis unit and its parts, including the membranes. If the unit does not drain, this volume could be greater. If, on the other hand, the membrane and filters are drained, the required rinse volume will be much lower. For example, some units may contain 5 times less cleaning solution when they are drained (dead volume residual), compared to the volume when they are not drained (dead volume). In this case, the rinse volume will be greatly reduced. PWP test results must be recorded in the test log with a description of operations related to the reverse osmosis unit. If PWP tests are not carried out, no cleaning products are permitted for use during the season. Membranes will only be cleaned with filtrate or potable water. Once the season has ended, alkaline soap, the acids and hydrogen peroxide may be used for cleaning. When new membranes have been purchased, they must be cleaned with alkaline soap and rinsed before being used to concentrate maple sap. New membranes are often protected with a substance that will remain in the first syrup if the membranes are not first cleaned with an alkaline cleaner. Before reusing membranes that have been cleaned by a manufacturer, they must be rinsed well. Cleaning products authorized for use in organic production are reviewed to take account of changes in equipment and to ensure they are maintained without compromising the integrity of organic products. As equipment becomes more and more efficient, cleaning methods need to

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		adapt. Citric acid, acetic acid, peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide are being allowed for cleaning reverse osmosis units because they are already considered safe enough to be used for other cleaning stages in maple syrup production.
7.2.13.3	Evaporators At any time, evaporators may be cleaned with potable water or filtrate adding, if necessary, caustic soda, citric acid, acetic acid or products based on acetic acid, hydrogen peroxide or peracetic acid. Double rinsing is mandatory and the second rinsing shall be done with hot water or hot filtrate. Cleaning with fermented sap from the operation followed by a double rinse can also be used at the end of the season. The second rinse should be strictly with hot water or filtrate.	To dislodge the sugar sand (nitre), it is allowed to use potable water, filtrate or a solution based on acetic acid, citric acid or caustic soda. If cleaning is required for a microbial problem, the use of a peroxide solution is permitted. A thorough rinse is required. Once the season is over, vinegar or fermented sap may be used. No other types of products are permitted. From an environmental perspective, citric acid is a natural cleaning solution with a low environmental impact.
7.2.13.4	Reusable bulk storage containers Bulk maple syrup storage containers may be rinsed at any time with potable water or filtrate. If washing, sanitizing or deodorizing is required, baking soda or a mixture of acetic acid, hydrogen peroxide and peracetic acid may be used. A double rinse is mandatory after using a sanitizing or deodorizing product.	
7.2.13.5	Prohibited substances Substances other than those specified in 7.2.13.1, 7.2.13.2 and 7.2.13.3 are prohibited, including those with phosphoric acid content.	

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7.2.14	Food additives and processing aids Transformation of syrup into maple products (for example, maple butter, sugar and taffy) shall comply with this standard. Boiling with microwaves is prohibited. No other substances shall be added to syrup or maple products during production or preparation, whether to improve the taste, texture or appearance. Cones may be used if they constitute less than 5% of the weight of the final product	Defoaming products used when heating syrup to make other maple products must conform to section 7.2.12.5. The flavour of vegetable oil is not desirable in a maple product; by lowering the intensity of the heat it is possible to reduce the amount of foam and use of defoamers.
7.2.15	Transport, storage and conservation Maple syrup not intended for immediate consumption shall be stored in food-grade containers that do not alter the chemical composition or quality of the syrup. Permitted containers include barrels made of stainless steel, fibreglass, food-grade plastic or metal with an interior food-grade coating. Reusing single-use barrels is prohibited. Barrels shall carry a unique identification number that is used in all related records. The barrel fill-date shall be recorded.	Use of galvanized steel barrels is prohibited. Also, use of steel barrels without a food-grade coating on the inside is prohibited. “Single-use” barrels may only be used once. Record keeping is obligatory. Logs must be kept for five years. They must contain an account of all the barrels produced and retail sales of syrup batches. Filling dates for these containers are to be recorded in the log.
7.2.16	Preparation of maple sap	Maple syrup production has been modernized with the creation of centralized boiling centres. These facilities enable maple sap from several producers to be processed in a single location. To maintain organic certification, these centres must comply with specific cleaning and traceability requirements.
7.2.16.1	General Operations that prepare organic and non-organic maple sap in parallel shall have two separate production lines, from sap collection to barrel filling. Equipment or utensils used for non-organic production may not be used for organic production to prevent contamination of organic products.	
7.2.16.2	Preparation specifications The preparation of organic maple syrup shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of Clause 7.2. Prohibited products	



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	may not be present or used on the operation.	



7.3 Mushroom Production

7.3 Mushroom Production

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7.3	Mushroom production and mushroom products All relevant subclauses in this standard apply to mushroom production and mushroom products where this subclause has no specific requirements, including 5.1.3, 5.1.4, 5.1.5, 5.1.6 and 5.1.7. For outdoor production, 5.2.2 also applies.	This clause name incorporates all possible mushroom products. Not only mushrooms and spawn are produced, but the mycelium may also be harvested and made into products such as teas and powders. While mushroom production has its own section in the Standard, certain clauses of the Production Standard also apply to mushroom operations. In particular, 5.1.3, 5.1.4, 5.1.6 and 5.1.7 govern parallel production and outline the responsibility of operators to protect organic crops from contamination from pest control products, fertilizers and cleaners used in adjacent conventional production. To ensure that the organic mushrooms are not mixed with non-organic mushrooms, organic varieties shall be visually distinct from non-organic mushrooms grown in the same facility. Subclause 5.2.2 requires that an 8-metre buffer is established between an organic crop and non-organic crop in field production. This could apply in outdoor log production, for example, where oyster mushrooms were grown organically and shiitake mushrooms were grown conventionally. In an indoor facility, separate growing rooms for organic and non- organic would satisfy this requirement. Subclauses 1.4 and 1.5 also apply. These identify prohibited methods and substances, such as genetic engineering, nanotechnology, irradiation, sewage sludge and synthetic growth regulators, in addition to any soil amendments and crop production aids that are not listed on the Permitted Substances Lists.
7.3.1	Production sites and structures For organic mushrooms or mushroom products, the operator shall manage production units in a manner that ensures substrates and mushrooms do not come into contact with prohibited substances.	Each type of production site has specific restrictions to ensure the organic integrity of the mushroom production. Indoor facilities which have previously been used for industrial purposes should be assessed at the outset to ensure that there are no residues from the previous industrial activity. For example, treated wood used to construct growing beds would

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	Substrates shall be produced in accordance with this standard and applicable entries in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 such as Composting feedstocks and Compost produced on the production unit: a) For indoor facilities, organic mushrooms shall not come into contact with prohibited substances that would compromise the integrity of the crop. b) For mushrooms grown in soil, prohibited substances shall not have been used for at least 36 months before the harvest of an organic crop. c) For new installations or replacement purposes, lumber treated with prohibited substances shall not be used in structures, containers or other surfaces that come into contact with the growth substrate or mushrooms.	need to be replaced to prevent the wood treatment chemicals from leaching into the mushroom substrate. Peat moss containing substances permitted in PSL Table 4.2 Column 1 may also be used as a mushroom substrate/growth media or as a casing layer on top of a mushroom bed. For mushrooms produced in soil, a Prior Land Use Affidavit (signed statement) from the previous owner will be needed if the property has been acquired within the previous 36 months. In forest-grown mushroom production, the operator needs to provide documents which confirm that the forest has not been managed using herbicides to control off-type trees or weeds in the understory.
7.3.2	Substrates and growth media	
7.3.2.1	Wood substrates Logs, sawdust or other wood-based materials used as substrates shall come from wood, trees or logs that have not been treated with prohibited substances.	Wood substrates, such as sawdust for shiitake or oyster mushroom production, must be from untreated sources – for example, sawmills which produce sawdust from lumber production. Sources which recycle lumber from housing sites are likely to be contaminated with other building products, such as glue, pesticide treatments, staples, nails and/or insulation residue, or may have treated wood. Wood substrates do not have to be composted to be used in organic mushroom production.
7.3.2.2	Manure Subclause 5.5.1 applies to manure (including any non-organic agricultural substances in the manure) used in growth substrates. Manure shall be composted according to the requirements for Compost, Compost from off-farm sources or Compost produced on the farm in Table 4.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	Manure must be composted before it is used as a substrate for organic mushroom production. The requirements for composting are found in Table 4.2 of the PSL for “Compost produced on the farm.” Compost feedstocks must reach 55C (130F) for at least four days. The pile must be mixed to ensure that all parts of the pile are heated. If temperature records cannot be kept, the compost can be tested for human pathogens and can be used if (i) the fecal coliform level does not exceed 1000 MPN/g and (ii) Salmonella levels are below 3 MPN/4g (the limits set by the CCME)

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		Guidelines for Compost Quality). It is important to keep records of the source and details about compost feedstocks (ingredients). If the feedstock source cannot be confirmed, the certifier may ask for a test to check for persistent herbicides. If the compost is purchased, it must be accompanied by documents that provide the levels of metals and coliform bacteria.
7.3.2.3	Agricultural substances Agricultural substances, such as straw, grain or feather meal, shall be from organic sources. If organic sources are not commercially available, non-organic sources may be used, provided that they are composted according to the requirements for Compost, Compost from off-farm sources or Compost produced on the farm in Table 4.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	Agricultural substances are materials other than manure such as straw, hay and grain. It is required to compost non-organic agricultural substances. The process of composting can degrade most conventional agricultural inputs, such as herbicides and insecticides. Similarly, substances that are agricultural byproducts (such as feather meal, blood meal or alfalfa meal) do not need to be composted before being used if it can be confirmed that they are made from organic sources.
7.3.3	Spawn Organic spawn (seed) shall be used (see definition in Clause 3). Spawn grown or treated with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used if organic spawn is neither: a) available from within the production unit; nor b) commercially available. To be considered organic spawn, spawn shall be propagated from organic mycelium and produced on organic agricultural substrates, wood substrates or manure (as defined in 7.3.2 of this standard).	Non-organic spawn may be used if organic spawn is not commercially available. Operators need to provide documents (e.g., emails, website information) from suppliers to show they have conducted a search for organic spawn. If non-organic spawn is used, it must be grown or treated only with substances listed on Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2). The spawn cannot be genetically engineered. Now that a genetically engineered mushroom variety has been commercially released (with reduced browning after slicing), documentation that the spawn is non-GE is extremely important. Spawn is supplied in formats appropriate to the type of production. Sawdust spawn consists of sterilized sawdust inoculated with mycelium. Sawdust spawn can be used to form the wooden dowels to inoculate logs or used to directly inoculate outdoor mushroom beds or pasteurized straw. Sawdust spawn may be fortified to improve yields, but only with

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		substances that are listed on Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2). Grain spawn is composed of sterilized grain inoculated with spores or mycelium. As corn is sometimes used for grain spawn, a statement from the supplier that the corn is non-GE is required. As of 2026, the clause addresses the requirement when spawn (mushroom 'seed') is the output of the operation (i.e., the organic product for certification). In other words, it now states what is required if the operation wants to sell organic spawn on the retail market.
7.3.4	Crop pest control and sanitation Preventative pest control measures shall include the following: a) removal of infected materials. Infected mushroom strains shall be burned, moved at least 50 m (164 ft) from a production site (if, for example, the diseased logs are kept for research), or disposed of as recommended by good management practices; b) using cultivation sites that are free of debris from understory, diseased trees and trees infected by other pests; and c) sanitation with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311. Maintenance of production equipment between production cycles with cleaners, sanitizers and disinfectants listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2), Table 7.3 and Table 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 is permitted.	The focus should be on preventing, not treating, pest problems. However, if pest problems arise, crop production aids listed on Table 4.2 can be used in mushroom production. For example, salt (which is on Table 4.2 Column 2) is effective in stopping the spread of competing micro-organisms on the surface of the substrate.
7.3.5	Mushroom product preparation Wherever organic product preparation takes place, Subclause 8.1 and 8.2 apply.	Product preparation includes rinsing, slicing, dehydrating and packaging. Avoid practices which expose the organic mushrooms to conventional cleaners or processing aids.



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7.3.6	Facility pest management Subclause 8.3 applies to pest management practices in and around mushroom facilities.	



7.4 Sprouts, Shoots and Microgreens Production

7.4 Sprouts, Shoots and Microgreens Production

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7.4	Sprouts, shoots and microgreens production	
7.4.1	Subclause 7.4 applies to crops that are harvested within 30 days of imbibition, either to be consumed with roots attached (e.g., sprouts and nanoshoots) or to be cut from the roots for consumption (e.g., shoots, living greens and microgreens).	The COS defines microgreens as edible young plants that are harvested later than sprouts, generally when the cotyledons are fully formed or when two or four true dicot leaves are present. Shoots tend to be monocots, such as corn.
7.4.2	Subclause 7.4 does not apply to whole head products (e.g., heads of lettuce, mini cabbage).	Sprouts and nanoshoots are usually marketed with roots attached while shoots and microgreens are often cut from the root mass. Shoots and microgreens are produced in either soil or water, whereas sprouts are exposed to water only. Imbibition occurs when a seed swells after soaking up water.
7.4.3	Sprouts, shoots, and microgreens may be produced in water or in a growing media whether they are grown in a growth chamber or vessel, greenhouse or other structure used to grow crops.	
7.4.4	Organic seed shall be used. A water monitoring program should be in place to ensure water is potable.	Sprouts, shoots and microgreens are immature plants. Non-organic seed is prohibited because immature plant tissues may contain pesticides or residues of cleaners used to clean non-organic seed.
NOTE	A water monitoring program should be in place to ensure water is potable.	From a food safety perspective, it is important to verify the “potability” of the water, whether the operation is using municipal water or well water. “Potable water” means water that is safe to drink. To verify potability, operators can test the water on a regular basis according to the timetable in the operation’s water monitoring program. Municipal water agencies, health authorities or third-party independent laboratories can often provide potability water test results. Additional

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		testing for the organic program is not required. Table 7.3 of the PSL states that the levels of chlorine “shall not exceed the maximum level of chlorine in potable water, as per the <i>Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality</i> published by Health Canada, as well as any applicable provincial requirements” for water in contact with organic products or organic product contact surfaces. In Canadian municipal water systems, 0.04-2.0 mg/L is the range. Free chlorine test kits can be used to monitor chlorine residue levels.
7.4.5	Artificial lighting is permitted to supplement or replace natural light.	Sprouts, shoots and microgreens, which are all harvested within 30 days of seeding, are the only crops that may be produced using 100% artificial lights under this standard other than certain transplants (as described in 5.3.7 and repeated in 7.5.7 of 32.310). Supplemental heat is permitted, as well as CO ₂ enrichment.
7.4.6	Inert containers made of stainless steel and food-grade plastic are permitted in both water and growing media production systems.	Stainless steel or food-grade plastic containers are considered to be chemically neutral. These are permitted in water-based production systems because these containers won’t contribute nutrients to the crop.
7.4.7	Containers made of untreated plant-based materials (for example: burlap, coconut coir, fibre) are prohibited in water production systems, but are permitted in growing media production systems.	Containers made of agricultural materials, such as burlap, coconut coir or fibre, are permitted for sprouts, shoots or microgreens produced in a growing media but not for those grown in water. Sprouts, shoots and micro-greens can be produced in “growing media” rather than water. In this case, containers made of agricultural media, such as burlap, coconut coir or coconut fibre, can function both as the container and as part of the growing media, as long as no prohibited substances have been used on the containers.
7.4.8	Fertilizers in all stages of growing and harvesting are prohibited in water production systems.	Shoots and microgreens when grown in soil or growing media may be fertilized (see below) while sprouts, shoots and microgreens produced exclusively in water may not be fertilized.

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7.4.9	When growing sprouts, shoots or microgreens in a growing media, substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 are permitted as the growing media and for crop nutrition. The physical structure of the growing media shall include both a mineral fraction (sand, silt or clay, excluding perlite and vermiculite) and a biological fraction.	Perlite and vermiculite can be used in the growing medium, but they don't count as the mineral fraction. If soil is used, the soil may not contain prohibited substances; this means the soil must come from an organic operation which can verify at least 36 months has elapsed since the last application of prohibited substances to the soil (see PSL Table 4.2 Column 1). Fertilizers may be added to a growing media used to produce shoots and microgreens.
7.4.10	Substances used for cleaning or sanitation of seed shall be limited to substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	For disinfecting and cleaning seeds for sprouts, shoots or microgreens, only substances listed in Table 4.2 Column 2 or Table 7.3 can be used. These can include hydrogen peroxide, peracetic acid, and hot water (see water listing). Ascorbic acid and citric acid can also be used but are not used as often as the other substances for seed cleaning.
7.4.11	When growing sprouts, shoots or microgreens the operator shall: a) use reusable and recyclable containers and flats whenever possible; b) reuse or recycle growing media whenever possible; c) only use substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 if crop production aids are required; and d) use appropriate equipment cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers listed in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	
7.4.12	Sprouts, shoots and microgreens product preparation Wherever harvested organic product preparation takes place, 8.1 and 8.2 apply.	Preparation may include cleaning harvested product, cutting, rinsing, and packaging. See Clause 8 for requirements.
7.4.13	Facility pest management Clause 8.3 applies to pest management practices in and around facilities.	It is best to keep the operation clean and prevent pests from entering the facility, as outlined in 8.3 of 32.310, thereby eliminating the need to use any substances listed in Table 8.2 of the PSL.



7.5 Crops Grown in Structures or Containers

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7.5 Crops Grown in Structures or Containers (Previously Known as Greenhouse Crops)

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7.5		
7.5.1	Subclause 7.5 applies to: a) all organic crops grown in containers (indoors or outdoors). Containers include production systems that limit root contact with native soil, such as crops grown in pots, troughs and plastic-lined beds, etc.; and b) in-ground crops that are grown using supplemental lighting, heating or CO₂ enrichment within a structure, such as a greenhouse, tunnel (high or low), hoophouse, etc.	Clause 7.5 applies to the following: 1. a) All crops grown in containers, including pots, troughs and plastic-lined beds and any other system that limits root contact with the soil in the ground. This includes crops in pots within cold frames, tunnels and unheated greenhouses, as well as pots placed in the ground outside. 1. b) Crops grown with the use of artificial lighting, supplemental heating or CO₂ enrichment within a structure. The protective structure could be anything from a high-tech greenhouse to a simple cold frame; the key is that this section only applies if there is artificial lighting, supplemental heating or CO₂ enrichment.
7.5.2	Subclause 7.5 does not apply to: a) sprouts, shoots or microgreens (covered in Clause 7.4); b) in-ground crops grown in a structure, such as a cold frame, caterpillar tunnel, etc., without supplemental lighting, heating or CO₂ enrichment; or c) crops grown under row cover, insect netting or bird netting (covered in Clause 5).	
7.5.3	All relevant subclauses in this standard apply to crops grown in structures or containers where this subclause has no specific requirements, including clauses 1-4, 5.1.1, 5.1.2 (for in ground operations) and 5.1.3, through 5.9, but excluding greenhouse container systems from 5.1.8. Additional exceptions for container operators are as follows: a) crop rotations as part of a soil building program (5.4.2) are not	These systems are subject to the requirements of 7.5 and Clause 5 (except that 7.5.3 allows for an exemption from the crop rotation requirement in 5.4.1 a). Parallel production of annual crops is prohibited except for a few situations as outlined in 5.1.4. Maintenance of a split operation (5.1.3) cannot be permanent: complete transition to organic is eventually required.

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	required; b) mechanical tillage and cultivation practices as outlined in 5.4.5 are not applicable; and c) the requirement in 5.4.4 with regards to the organic matter produced on the operation is superseded by the allowance for disposal in 7.5.12 b1); and if manure is not used, 5.5.1 does not apply.	The organic portion of the greenhouse must be identifiable (5.1.6) and cannot be switched back and forth from organic to non-organic production (5.1.7). In addition, Clause 8 (Integrity) pertains to greenhouse production systems. Clause 9 is pertinent if further processing is done.
7.5.4	In a permanent, in-ground soil system, prohibited substances shall not have been used for at least 36 months before the harvest of an organic crop.	In-ground operations have crops rooted in the ground rather than in containers or pots. The soil and structures in these operations need to be free of the substances prohibited by 1.4 and 1.5 for at least 36 months before an organic crop can be harvested (and there must be documentation to support this). Note that if the in-ground operations do not have artificial lighting, heating or CO₂ enrichment, this section of the standard does not apply. Instead, operators should just follow the requirements of Clause 5. Greenhouse operators can move soil from other parts of the operation into the greenhouse as long as the soil has been free of prohibited substances for at least 36 months. When importing soil from off the farm, documents are needed to show the imported soil has been free of prohibited substances for at least 36 months. Soil mixes used in container systems cannot contain any substances prohibited by 1.4 or 1.5 (e.g., products of GE, products of nanotechnology, irradiated substances, sewage sludge or substances not listed in the PSL).
7.5.5	Hydroponic and aeroponic productions (see definitions in Clause 3) are prohibited.	The standard will not certify hydroponic or aeroponic production as organic because the foundation of organic production is based on a living, vital soil and the principle of ecology also applies to container production systems.

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		Note that the definition of hydroponics was changed in 2026. The definition of hydroponic production in the COS states: “plants grown in hydroponic production systems mainly draw their nutrients from supplied solutions of soluble nutrients. The hydroponic growing system is characterized by a growing medium which can vary and can be as diverse as an aqueous matrix, or an inert material (e.g., rockwool), or carbon-based material (e.g., coir) and any combination thereof, and may or may not contain soil.” Aeroponic production is defined as “soil-free cultivation method whereby plants are suspended with their roots exposed to the air.”
7.5.5.1	The soil used in a container system shall support and promote microorganism and macroorganism populations that contribute, like a living soil in the field, to nourishing plant via its roots. If necessary, the soil can be inoculated with non-genetically engineered microorganisms (see 1.4 a) of this standard and Table 4.2 Microorganisms and microbial products of CAN/CGSB-32.311). The soil shall: a) not contain prohibited substances (see 1.5 of this standard); b) be composed of substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311; c) contain a soil mineral fraction (sand, silt or clay, that excludes perlite and vermiculite) that makes up at least 2% of the soil mix as measured by dry weight or volume (whichever measure is appropriate) when initially mixed; d) contain compost compliant with this standard that makes up at least 10% of the volume of the soil mix. As an exception, seedling/starter mixes may contain less than 10% compost if needed to ensure adequate germination/rooting; and e) a biological fraction that supports root-soil interaction and supports soil health.	Soil is defined as a “mixture of minerals, organic matter and living organisms.” This means soil mixes (aka growth media, culture medium, potting mixes, etc.) used in containerized organic production must: • contain a mineral component such as clay, sand or silt; • contain organic matter; • be alive; and • provide the bulk of the nutrients to the plant throughout the crop cycle. For example, perlite or rockwool do not meet this requirement because they do not contain organic matter or provide the nutrients needed to support a crop without fertilizers. They are also missing the necessary mineral fraction even though perlite and rockwool are heated forms of mineral compounds. The Standard limits the mineral fraction to sand, silt or clay. As another example, a mix of peat moss, coir and compost doesn’t meet the requirement because it is missing the mineral fraction. However, soil, as defined in the standard, is not required for organic plant propagation or for transplant production.

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7.5.5.2	The starting and maintained volume of soil in containers shall be proportional to the overall plant size, growth rate, targeted yield, and length of crop cycle.	
	a) For crops grown in structures covered by Clause 7.5, the photosynthetic area comprises the floor area devoted to crop production including the aisles and spaces between plants but not including non-production areas, such as centre or header aisles, service ways, and storage areas, etc.	The growing area, calculated in either square metres or feet, is the overall area available for photosynthesis. This includes both plant rows and aisles, but not greenhouse service alleys (perpendicular to the rows), header houses, staff rooms, offices, propagation houses or storage areas. If part of the greenhouse is not occupied by crop production but has the potential for crop production, it can be excluded from the calculation for the current crop.
	b) For outdoor crops grown in containers, the photosynthetic area comprises the ground area devoted to crop production including the walkways, aisles and spaces between plants, but not including non-production areas, such as field access ways, turn-around areas, hedgerows and storage areas, etc.	
	c) The length of a crop cycle will vary across the country, particularly in unheated structures, and should be taken into consideration when determining the volume of soil required. For perennial crops, the length of the active crop cycle starts at the beginning of seasonal growth and ends at the end of harvest during the same season.	
NOTE	For container crops that are difficult to top-dress, for example strawberries, sufficient nutrition should be provided in the soil, prior to the start of the crop, to provide available nutrition continuously for the duration of the crop cycle. When this is not possible, liquid amendments listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311, and compliant with 5.4.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.310, may be used.	
7.5.5.3	7.5.5.3 The minimum amount of soil required for crops not covered by 7.5.5.4 is 2.5 L (0.66 gal) of soil per m ² of photosynthetic area per week of crop production time. The maximum amount of soil required in any case	The 60 L/m ² (1.2 gal/ft ²) soil volume must be maintained throughout the crop cycle.

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	is 60 L/m ² (1.2 gal/ft ²) of photosynthetic area. Crop production time is counted from the start of plant propagation (for example seeding, sticking of unrooted vegetative cuttings, divisions, etc.) until final harvest.	
7.5.5.4	The following conditions apply to containerized, semi-indeterminate and indeterminate staked crops (for example, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant):	
	a) additional compost applications shall be included in the fertility program;	
	b) the maintained soil volume shall be at least 60 L/m ² (1.2 gal/ft ²), based on the photosynthetic area. Interplanting short-lived crops among other crops (e.g., basil among tomatoes) or having multiple crop cycles within a year (i.e., cucumber) do not reduce this 60 L/m ² requirement; and	
	c) production units existing prior to November 2016 that have been continuously managed organically by the same operator, have not had major renovations, have not changed production area, and do not comply with 7.5.5.4 b) are permitted to continue producing staked crops using a soil volume smaller than 60 L/m ² (1.2 gal/ft ²).	Existing certified operations with soil volumes of less than the required 60 L/m² (1.2 gal/ft²) may continue as is. Soil volumes of 60 L/m² (1.2 gal/ft²) or more are required when existing production units expand their growing area or renovate their houses. NOTE Operators of in-ground greenhouse operations that are new to organic certification can apply for certification as soon as they like, but to achieve full organic status: • Initial applications to a certifier have to be submitted 15 months in advance of when the first organic product is anticipated of being marketed. • Two site inspections are required before a certification body can assess compliance to the standard and grant organic status. One of these inspections must be done while the organic crop is in production.

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		For container crops, the situation is a bit different. Although soil used in a container cannot have been treated with a prohibited substance for at least 36 months, the protective structure (e.g., greenhouse) and the ground beneath it does not have to go through the 36-month transition period. After a certification body determines the operation meets the organic standard, organic products can be sold. This will involve at least one inspection and resolution of non-compliance issues identified by the certifier. Existing organic operations can expand by simply informing their certifier; the certifier will determine their status and whether an additional inspection is required. Under these circumstances, no additional transition period will be imposed if no prohibited substances have been used for the previous 36 months in the expansion area. The operator will need to provide the applicable production records as evidence.
NOTE	Part 13 Organic Products of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations requires that the application for the organic certification of crops grown in greenhouses with a permanent in-ground soil system be filed at least 15 months before the day on which the food is expected to be sold. During that period of time, compliance with this standard will be assessed by the certification body and this assessment must include at least one inspection of the production unit, during production, in the year before crops may be eligible for certification and one inspection, during production, in the year crops are eligible for certification. This requirement does not apply to greenhouses built on land that is part of an existing organic operation. In the case of an initial application for organic certification of crops grown in containers, the application for certification must be filed within 12 months before the day on which the product is expected to be marketed.	

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7.5.6	Supplemental heat and carbon dioxide (CO ₂) enrichment are permitted. Supplemental nutrition with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 is permitted.	Supplemental nutrition (fertilization) is limited to substances listed in Column 1 of Table 4.2 of the PSL. For in- ground structures, the intent is to encourage closed-loop systems using crop rotations and green manures, and using nutrients produced on one part of the farm (i.e., from livestock, green waste) as a nutritional supplement in another part (i.e., greenhouse production) as outlined in clause 5 for outdoor crop production. However, crop rotation is not required for crops covered by 7.5. Closed-loop systems can also be used in container operations. For example, recycling (recomposting) old mixes not only reduces waste but actually could lead to production benefits, for example, by inoculating the new growing media with healthy microorganisms.
7.5.7	The sun shall be the primary source of light for photosynthesis from sunrise to sunset for all crops covered by Clause 7.5 on a year-round basis (i.e., growing plants in a predominantly opaque structure is prohibited, even if it has windows that permit some sunlight to reach the plants). In addition to sunlight, supplemental lighting may be used (see 7.5.11 b 2)). As an exception, 100% artificial lighting can be used for annual seedling and transplants that are started by the operation in winter or spring and will be planted in the same operation. The exception allows 100% artificial lighting only for these plants for the period from seeding to final transplanting. "Final transplanting" means moving a seedling or transplant into its final growing container or into the ground.	All forms of lighting are permitted as long as they supplement, not replace, natural daylight. There are two exceptions: certain transplants (see details in the standards) and plants in the far North during the winter when the sun does not rise. In 2020, a proposal was made to allow 100% artificial lighting for crops harvested within 60 days of planting. This would allow artificial lighting to be used for crops that can grow in cool conditions, such as greens, but not for heat-loving crops, such as tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers. This could increase organic crop production in the Far North and in city buildings. In the winter, crop production in insulated buildings without windows using 100% artificial lighting is more energy efficient than winter greenhouse production that involves supplemental lighting and heating. The proposal was submitted for public review by the CGSB and generated unprecedented opposition. One petition alone had 11,000 signatures. Opponents argued that sunlight is part of a living ecosystem and an essential part of the organic crop cycle. Plants grown in sunlight would

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		have better flavour and more nutrients and antioxidants than crops grown under artificial light (however scientific studies show inconsistent results). And, opponents asked, would consumers accept organic food produced without sunlight? (For details, see “The question of light” at: http://organicfederation.ca/sites/documents/COS%20Review%20The%20question%20of%20lighting%20Dec%2010.pdf.) Due to the backlash, the proposal was dropped and natural sunlight is required for almost all plants except for: 1) transplants started by an operation to be used on that operation and 2) operations in northern latitudes when sunlight is not available. However, the exemption only applies to the extreme far north for a very short period of time. If the sun is up for just an hour a day, even if it barely makes it over the horizon, the plants would need to be exposed to the sunlight.
7.5.8	For crops harvested within 30 days of imbibition, organic seed shall be used.	Imbibition occurs when a seed swells after soaking up water.
7.5.9	Plants and soil, including potting soil, shall not come into contact with prohibited substances, including wood treated with prohibited substances.	Wood treated with prohibited materials (basically, all treated lumber except copper-treated lumber) may not come in contact with the plants or soil. For existing situations, such as purchasing a greenhouse built with treated lumber, the operator would need to lay an impervious layer between the treated lumber and the soil. The use of treated lumber above growing plants would also not be allowed because condensed water could drip off of the treated wood and onto the plants.
7.5.10	For crop production, the operator shall:	

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	a)	use reusable and recyclable pots and flats whenever possible;	This requirement is based on the organic principles of ecology and care (Clause II of 32.310). Operators should embrace this requirement and certifying bodies should encourage adherence to it.
	b)	use substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311 as required; and	
	c)	use appropriate equipment cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers listed in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	Cleaning products used in greenhouse systems must comply with Clause 7 of the PSL (32.311) and be listed in Table 7.3 or 7.4. It might be helpful to read subclause 8.2 in 32.310.
7.5.11	The following procedures, processes or substances are permitted to:		
	a)	clean and disinfect crop structures, equipment that may contact the soil or crop, and plant containers, pots and flats: 1) substances listed in Tables 7.3 or 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; and 2) steam-heat sterilization;	This clause lists common practices in commercial greenhouse production that are acceptable in organic operations. It should not be assumed that the examples noted are the only methods available to produce the outcomes described in a, b, c, and d. Operators may find other methods that comply with organic principles and these standards. However, other methods might not be allowed. The certification body needs to evaluate these methods on a case-by-case basis and only substances on the specified PSL tables can be used. At all times, operators should try to find the most energy-efficient solution.
	b)	stimulate growth or development: 1) substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311; and 2) control of daily temperature and light levels;	
	c)	prevent and control pests including diseases, insects and other organisms: 1) substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 2) of CAN/CGSB-32.311; 2) pruning; 3) roguing; 4) vacuuming; 5) temperature manipulation, for example freezing, heating, steaming;	

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	6) pest exclusion from greenhouses with air filters, screens or other physical devices; and 7) biological control methods.	
7.5.12	Soil building and health are the cornerstones of organic agriculture and hence Subclause 5.4 regarding "Soil fertility and nutrient management" of this standard applies to crops grown under clause 7.5, except that 5.4.5 does not apply to container production as outlined in 7.5 c). In addition: a) in-ground operations shall regenerate their soils in the same fashion as field crop operations; b) in addition to the requirements in 7.5.5, container operations 1) shall build permanent soils in their containers reusing their soil for a minimum of three consecutive years. If necessary, and with justification, the soil may be replaced prior to three years. Spent soil shall be recycled in or outside the operation unless the disposal of used soil is mandatory due to a regulatory directive. Container operators have 36 months from the date of publication of this standard to comply with this requirement. 2) may graft onto disease-resistant rootstock; freeze the soil in their containers in winter; or regenerate the soil by introducing organic matter such as compost or biodegradable plant mulch (straw or hay). 3) may dispose of plant debris as necessary.	It is not enough to continually add inputs (especially soluble inputs) to maximize nutrition and production. Operators must actively put organic matter back into the soil to replace the organic matter mineralized through the years. To comply with this requirement, operators can add compost regularly and/or use green manure crops. The Standard allows certifying bodies some discretion regarding crop rotation, as this practice is occasionally not feasible in high- production, high-cost operations. To ensure that greenhouse operations follow the organic principles, specifically those of health and ecology, operators must build permanent soils in their containers and re-use the soil for at least three years. This requirement means that container growing is more aligned with organic in-ground production and is more sustainable. In addition, spent soil must be recycled inside or outside the operation (unless there is a regulation that mandates its disposal). To help operators adapt to this new requirement, two caveats have been added to 7.5.12 b1). Specifically, "If necessary, and with justification, the soil may be replaced prior to three years." and "Container operators have 36 months from the date of publication of this standard to comply with this requirement."

7.6 Wild Crops



7.6 Wild Crops

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7.6				
7.6.1	An organic wild plant product shall be harvested from a clearly defined area or production unit. The operator shall provide documentation proving that prohibited substances have not been used for at least 36 months before the harvest of an organic crop.		These wild crop requirements are specific to plants, and do not include wild animal products, such as honey harvested from wild bees. A clearly defined production area must be marked on a map so that the verification officer (inspector) can verify the limits of the harvest area. To comply with the standards, documents are required that state that no prohibited products have been applied to the production area; these documents must come from the authority having jurisdiction over the production area. In many cases this is the provincial government, but may also involve the owners of private land. Keep in mind that certain prohibited substances, such as herbicides and fertilizer, are routinely applied to tree farms. Do not overlook aerial spraying applications, such as in the case of gypsy moth or mosquito eradication programs. There are also historical examples of injectable arsenic being trialed in forestry blocks.	
7.6.2	The operator shall prepare an organic plan (see 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) that includes:		Organic plans for wild crop operations need to provide (among other things) the following information:	
	a)	a detailed description of production areas and harvest methods;	a)	detailed maps/descriptions of the harvested areas (consider supplying GPS latitude and longitude coordinates) and verifiable information regarding the use of the harvested area over the past three years.
	b)	management practices that preserve wild species and avoid disturbance of the environment; and	b)	details about the length of harvest, tools used, how the crop is cared for post-harvest, and where it is marketed.
	c)	a record keeping system that meets the requirements of 4.4.	c)	documentation and records that ensure a sustainable harvest

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		over time. The operators should be able to prove that their activities will not result in the degradation of the target crop, other species in the area, or the ecosystem.
7.6.3	Wild products shall be considered organic on the condition that they are harvested in relatively undisturbed or stable natural settings. A wild plant shall be harvested or picked in a manner that promotes growth and production, and does not damage the environment.	Wild cropping is an off-farm activity and involves harvesting wild plants – not cultivated species. Wild harvesting must be done in such a way so as to be sustainable over time and in a way that will not deplete the resource. The use of the term “relatively undisturbed” could lead to some confusion as a logged forest has been disturbed, but mushrooms growing in a logged and planted clear-cut are in a natural setting (aside from the logging that has taken place earlier). As long as the mushrooms are harvested in a way that ensures future growth (in this case, that spawn mushrooms are left behind), this type of wild harvest complies with these standards. “Relatively undisturbed” would also prohibit the use of any substances, even permitted substances, as they could change the ecosystem.
7.6.4	The production zone for wild crops shall be isolated from contact with prohibited substances by a clearly defined buffer (see 5.2.2). Harvest sites shall be located more than one kilometre (0.62 mi) from potential sources of environmental contamination, such as golf courses, dumps, sanitary landfill sites and industrial complexes.	Buffer zones or some type of barrier, such as a fence or hedge, may be required to separate organic wild crops from surrounding activities, with a minimum 1-kilometre distance required to golf courses, dumps, sanitary landfills and other industrial activities. Any wild crop or crop in the buffer zone cannot be marketed as organic.
7.6.5	Wild crop product preparation Wherever organic product preparation takes place, clauses 8.1 and 8.2 apply.	To maintain the organic integrity of the wild crop during harvest and after harvest, all handling must comply with the requirements outlined in 8.1 and 8.2. Clause 9 may be pertinent if further processing is done.
7.6.6	Facility pest management	Address the requirements in 8.3 of 32.310 when dealing with pests (such as rodents or silverfish) at the facility (e.g., weighing station, temporary



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	Clause 8.3 applies to pest management practices in and around crop facilities.	storage, etc.).



7.7 Organic Insects

7.7 Organic Insects

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7.7	Organic Insects Clause 7.7 covers insects, snails, and other terrestrial invertebrates, excluding bees (which are addressed in Section 7.1 Apiculture of CAN/CGSB-32.310). All the relevant elements of clauses 1 to 6 in this standard shall apply.	The clauses relating to the origin of insects reflect the standards for other livestock. The offspring of non-organic parents can be considered organic if the insects have hatched in the organic production unit and are under organic management throughout their lives.
7.7.1	Origin of insects Insects shall: a) be hatched on organic production units; b) be managed organically throughout their lifetime. c) be the offspring of organic parents. As an exception, insects may be the offspring of non-organic parents from outside the operation that have not been treated with prohibited substances after being introduced into the operation. These introduced non-organic parents shall never be sold as organic.	There is no "commercially available" clause for breeding stock unlike for other livestock (for other livestock, organic producers can only buy non-organic breeding stock if there are no organic animals commercially available). This is because the insect industry is currently very small. But we want to encourage the maintenance of organic breeding insects on the operation.
NOTE	Low replacement rates for organic insect breeding stock are expected. Operators should maintain their own organic breeding stock.	
7.7.2	Insect feed	The requirements for insects reflect, to the most part, the requirements for other livestock. However, cannibalism is an exception: cannibalism regularly occurs, even when insects are adequately fed, so allowance must be made for this natural behaviour. The CFIA has not yet established a clear enforcement on safety issues related to insects as livestock feed or human food, however this will be implemented soon. If there is a chance the insect feed may contain SRM,
7.7.2.1	As per 6.4.1 and 6.4.2, the operator shall provide an organic feed ration that meets the nutritional requirements of the species being reared and limits cannibalism.	
7.7.2.2	Feed, feed additives and feed supplements listed in 6.4.5 of this standard are prohibited; the following exceptions apply only for insects and only if	

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	permitted by CFIA regulations for the end use of the product and to recognize insects' natural consumption of decomposing and waste materials as part of their ecological role in nutrient cycling: a) mammalian or avian slaughter by-products (as referenced in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311) from organic sources and guaranteed free of Specified Risk Materials (SRM) are permitted; b) feed formulas that contain manure or other animal waste (as referenced in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311) sourced from organic livestock operations are permitted.	the onus is on the producer to show that the final insect product is safe for feed for food. A careful consideration of the entire process of rearing insects should identify any potential contaminants that may be inherent in the insects, the growth substrate or introduced via production and processing steps. Some insect species do not drink water; instead, they obtain the water they need from the humidity of the environment or from moisture in their food.
7.7.2.3	Insects of all ages shall have access to a species-appropriate source of water, whether from a vessel of potable water, environmental humidity, or feed moisture.	The concept of catastrophe is addressed in the food section by referring to 6.74 (about a catastrophic event).
7.7.2.4	By exception, 6.4.7 a) applies as the result of a catastrophic event with a direct impact on the production unit (for example, fire, flood, or extraordinary weather conditions).	
7.7.3	Insect health care	These clauses replicate the preventative health care practices described in section 6 on livestock production. However, the physical alterations described in 7.7.3.3. are specific to insects.
7.7.3.1	The operator shall establish and maintain preventative livestock health care practices, including: a) a feed ration sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of the livestock, as required under 7.7.2.1; b) housing, space allowance and sanitation practices that minimize the occurrence and spread of disease and parasites.	
7.7.3.2	The operator shall not administer (see definitions in Clause 3): a) antibiotics; b) veterinary drugs, in the absence of illness, other than vaccines;	

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	c) synthetic substances to stimulate or retard growth or production, including hormones for growth promotion; d) synthetic parasitocides or anti-microbials; nor e) health care products other than those listed in Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 and used as annotated.	
7.7.3.3	Physical alterations of living invertebrates, such as the trimming of wings or removing of legs, are prohibited.	
7.7.3.4	The method of killing shall ensure rapid death and minimize invertebrate suffering.	
7.7.3.5	Medical treatment shall not be withheld from sick or injured insects to preserve their organic status. If methods permitted in organic production fail, all appropriate medications shall be used to restore insects to health. Insects that are treated with a method that is not permitted	
7.7.4	Insect living conditions	A general sentence introduces the 'living conditions' section, which covers many aspects of suitable living conditions (e.g., air quality, stress, pain, natural behaviour). The needs of insects change rapidly from hatching to the adult stage and vary between species. An acceptable stocking density is one that minimizes stress and cannibalism while allowing for exploratory and foraging behaviors. Air quality, temperature, humidity, levels of dust particles and ammonia levels need to be monitored given that insects are raised in a closed environment. Light cycle and light density must be suitable for the insects' life cycles. In 7.7.4.5, a land requirement has been added for operations where insect
7.7.4.1	The operator shall establish and maintain stocking densities and living conditions (environment, facilities, air quality and population size) that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of the species; minimize stress, pain, injuries and cannibalism; and meet the needs of the species for exploratory and foraging behaviour.	
7.7.4.2	Density requirements may vary depending on many factors, such as the type of production system, species and production stage of the animal.	
7.7.4.3	Air quality and living conditions of the insects shall be maintained and based on the needs and metabolic output of each species. The operator shall monitor the temperature, humidity, levels of dust particles and concentration of potentially damaging gases, such as ammonia.	

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7.7.4.4	Light cycle and light density shall satisfy the specific needs of the species being reared.	boxes are put directly on soil, or if an operator is raising invertebrates such as snails.
7.7.4.5	Land used for outdoor production shall be free of prohibited substances for 36 months prior to use.	The need to prevent escape at any stage of development into local natural habitats is derived from the aquaculture standard.
7.7.4.6	Facilities shall be designed and managed to prevent the escape of invertebrates at any stage of development into the surrounding environment.	Materials used in insect habitats will encourage natural behaviors, such as climbing, hiding and jumping (though hiding and retreating is not necessary for all insects).
7.7.4.7	Habitat construction materials, equipment, structural components or furnishing elements shall be kept in a reasonable hygienic condition in order to protect the insects' health and allow natural expression of behaviours (jumping, climbing, hiding), such as; a) Wood and other structural materials shall not have been treated with prohibited substances. b) Cardboard, including corrugated cardboard, may be used for structures; cardboard that is waxed or impregnated with a fungicide or another prohibited substances is prohibited. c) Glossy paper and paper containing coloured ink are prohibited. Bedding or substrate material of agricultural origin shall be organic. However, if organic bedding is not commercially available, and if bedding or substrate is required for production, transportation or handling, non-organic bedding is permitted provided it shall under organic production shall lose their organic status but may remain breeders in the organic operation. a) not contain, or have been treated with, prohibited substances and shall meet the requirements in 1.4 and 1.5 of this standard.	Bedding, in its traditional meaning for livestock, is not really needed for insects. Instead, bedding is a substrate on which insects are raised, transported or handled. As with livestock, the prohibition of prohibited substances in bedding is maintained. The clause about storage and handling of frass is added to prevent contamination of water.
7.7.4.8	Frass management practices shall be implemented in a manner that	



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	minimizes soil and water degradation. Frass storage and handling facilities, including composting facilities, shall be designed, constructed and operated to prevent contamination of ground and surface water.	
7.7.4.9	Clause 8.3 applies to pest management practices in and around insect production facilities.	
NOTE	This section will be revised in 2031 to comply with the latest industry standards and research.	

8. Maintaining Organic Integrity During Cleaning, Preparation and Transportation



8. Maintaining Organic Integrity During Cleaning, Preparation and Transportation

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8.1	Maintaining integrity This clause applies to all operations that handle (including packaging and labelling), store or transport organic products for production or processing. During these activities, a central objective is to maintain the inherent organic qualities of the product through strict adherence to the procedures and principles of this standard. Operators are responsible for maintaining organic integrity at all points of the market supply chain, from production through the point of sale to the final consumer.	This clause outlines how to maintain organic product integrity from field to plate. It is applicable to all types of crop and livestock production systems, in addition to organic preparation (processing, packaging, labeling etc.,) wherever it takes place (on-farm, at processing facilities, retailers, etc.). Elements of this clause are also applicable to operations that take physical possession of organic product even if they do not prepare, package or label the product. This includes distribution centres, warehouses and transportation companies.
8.1.1	Preparation materials, such as counters, containers and conveyors, in contact with food shall be clean and of food-grade quality.	Food-grade materials are of higher quality than non- food-grade materials. Food-grade materials are required when handling organic food products. Food-grade material is not required for surfaces in contact with organic feed or seed (used for planting). To demonstrate compliance with the standards, operators can provide statements from suppliers regarding the food-grade quality of the materials that are in contact with organic food. See 8.1.6 for additional packaging requirements.
8.1.2	Incidental additives shall not compromise organic integrity: a) active ingredients of hand sanitizers used on hands that come into direct contact with organic products shall be listed in Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. Synthetic dyes, synthetic fragrances, synthetic thickening agents, synthetic suspending agents, synthetic emulsifying agents and synthetic high viscous	It is prohibited to allow the contamination of organic products (food, feed and seed) by direct contact with incidental additives that are not listed in the PSL. See Clause 3 for a definition of “incidental additives.” For split operations, the easiest solution is to use the incidental additives that are permitted for organic production in both organic and non-organic operations; this will eliminate having to switch from non-permitted to permitted additives for organic runs.

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	extenders, such as carbomers, are not permitted; b) culinary steam, that is, steam used in direct contact with organic products or packaging, shall only contain: 1) substances listed in Tables 6.3, 6.4 or 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; and/or 2) food-grade cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers authorized for organic product contact in Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; c) food-contact lubricants shall be listed in Tables 6.3, 6.4 or 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; d) use of cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers shall comply with the requirements in 8.2 of this standard.	If switching is not an option, consider other alternatives as described below. For hand sanitizer substances: consider instead using either disposable gloves or dedicated organic gloves. Remember that if the gloves are sanitized or treated with prohibited substances, they will not be permitted. For food-contact lubricants and chemicals used in boiler systems that generate culinary steam: consider turning off the delivery mechanism before using the system for organic products and turning the system back on after the organic run. Operators need to provide data that can confirm the number of hours it takes after delivery is paused to ensure there are no traces at the contact point or surface. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be needed to outline the protocol, and records of when the delivery mechanism was turned off and then back on will be required. Examples of incidental additives: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Direct contact with organic product</th><th>No direct contact with organic product</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Alcohol hand sanitizer</td><td>allowed (listed in Table 7.3)</td><td>allowed</td></tr> <tr> <td>Iodophor hand dips</td><td>prohibited</td><td>allowed</td></tr> <tr> <td>Amine-based boiler chemical</td><td>prohibited</td><td>allowed</td></tr> <tr> <td>Potassium hydroxide boiler</td><td>allowed (listed in Table 6.5)</td><td>allowed</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Direct contact with organic product	No direct contact with organic product	Alcohol hand sanitizer	allowed (listed in Table 7.3)	allowed	Iodophor hand dips	prohibited	allowed	Amine-based boiler chemical	prohibited	allowed	Potassium hydroxide boiler	allowed (listed in Table 6.5)	allowed
	Direct contact with organic product	No direct contact with organic product															
Alcohol hand sanitizer	allowed (listed in Table 7.3)	allowed															
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		chemical	
		Mineral oil lubricant	prohibited
		Organic canola oil used as a lubricant	allowed
		Even though water treatments, other than culinary steam, are not specifically addressed in this subclause, the definition of incidental additives includes “water treatment compounds.” This means that the water used for organic preparation may be “treated,” providing the resulting water: • falls within Health Canada’s Guidelines for Drinking Water; • has a pH of 6.5 to 8.5; and • no substances or processes prohibited by the standard are added or used. Examples of acceptable water treatments include softeners, ultra-violet disinfection and reverse osmosis filtration. Do not overlook the fact that the cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers used as incidental additives also have to comply with the cleaning product restrictions in Clause 8.2.	
8.1.3	Mechanical, physical or biological processes (such as fermentation and smoking) are permitted.	Chemical manipulation of organic products is prohibited. This includes hydrogenation, bleaching, hydrolysis, oxidation, denaturation and interesterification. These techniques are sometimes used in food production to minimize the	

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		development of unwanted and potentially harmful compounds. Ionizing radiation is prohibited for any purpose or at any point in the supply chain. Microwaves, ultra-violet rays and x-rays are classified as non-ionizing radiation and therefore are allowed. However, there is one exception. Neither microwaves nor ultra-violet rays can be used to boil (7.2.14) or sterilize (7.2.12.2) maple syrup sold as syrup or used in maple products. Along the same lines of concern, the standards prohibit nanotechnology (1.4 b), as it is an unregulated field with unknown risks. Matter at the nanoscale can have different physical and chemical properties compared to their macroscale counterparts. The size of nanoparticles enables easier transfer through membranes of living tissue and the consequences of this are unknown.
8.1.4	To prevent commingling, organic products shall be segregated or otherwise protected from non-organic products at all times, for example, during processing, storage, at bulk and unbound stages.	Split operations handling both organic and non-organic products must be able to maintain separation between organic and non-organic ingredients, work-in-process (WIP), and finished products at all times and in all stages (especially when the products are unpackaged or loose).
8.1.5	If a production unit handles or prepares both organic and non-organic ingredients or products:	It is not uncommon to pack, run, or process organic products on Monday mornings following a deep clean done on the weekend, or to have dedicated organic lines. These are two examples of protocols sufficient to identify, handle, and store organic runs separately from non-organic runs. But they don't work for every operation and there are additional requirements to address when an operation produces both organic and non-organic products. Under these circumstances it is imperative that:
	a) organic and non-organic ingredients and products shall not be mixed at any stage of preparation;	there is no commingling of organic and non-organic ingredients or products at any time during preparation;

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	b)	every measure shall be taken to ensure that the organic and non-organic identity of the finished product is maintained;	there is proper identification on ingredients, WIP and finished goods;
	c)	organic ingredients and products that are being moved or transferred within the operation shall remain visually identifiable;	
	d)	operators shall document removal events used to prevent cross-contamination of organic and non-organic production runs;	if there are non-organic runs ahead of organic runs, cleaning records are sufficiently detailed to confirm there is no carryover from the non-organic run to the organic run; and production records are sufficiently detailed confirming where each organic run occurred and recording the start and end times of each organic run;
	e)	handling or preparation of organic ingredients and products shall be carried out continuously until the run is complete;	
	f)	organic runs shall be separated by place or time from similar runs of non-organic products; and	
	g)	organic runs shall be planned in advance to prevent commingling.	organic runs are not done at the last minute but are scheduled well enough in advance so that all employees are aware of the organic run and can prepare accordingly. When handling commodities at high risk of being contaminated with GE products, such as corn and canola, extra weather-appropriate signage is needed while (i) storing, (ii) transferring, and (iii) temporarily holding organic and non-organic commodities at the same time.
8.1.6	Organic product packaging shall:		Operators should choose packaging that is not excessive yet will contain and protect their product appropriately. The packaging and the packaging manufacturing process should not itself be a source of pollution. In the case of plastic packaging, especially for food products, consideration should be given to the type of plastic. Keep in mind that
	a)	maintain organic product quality and integrity; and	
	b)	be minimal in a manner that is consistent with 8.1.6 a). Packaging materials that minimize harm to the environment throughout their life cycle are preferred; and	

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	c) comply with prohibitions in 1.4 b) and 1.4 e).	products that are highly acidic or that contain alcohol or fats can leach plastic additives from the packaging or container into the food. Operators should only use plastic containers that are approved for the particular type of food. Operators must also verify that the final packaging materials comply with the standards and do not contain any fumigants, fungicides, pesticides or preservatives (1.4 e), and there is no intentional transfer of nano-sized particles from the packaging to the product (1.4 b).
8.2	Cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing	As long as the annotation restrictions are met, all operators, on the farm or in a manufacturing facility, may use PSL Table 7.3 substances to clean, disinfect or sanitize organic product and organic product contact surfaces without having to rinse, dry, drip dry or purge the system. This includes egg washing substances. Chlorine (at concentrations up to the levels permitted in municipal drinking water systems) is acceptable for washing organic products and contact surfaces without an intervening step. Free chlorine levels in Canadian municipal drinking water range between 0.04-2.0 mg/L (0.04-2 ppm). See the chlorine compound listing in PSL Table 7.3. Cleaning products listed in Table 7.4 can be used on surfaces in contact with the organic product, but only after an operator can demonstrate that an appropriate removal event is employed before organic product touches the contact surface. Rinsing, drying, drip-drying and purging are examples of effective removal events as defined in Clause 3. The use of cleaners that are not listed in Table 7.3 or 7.4 of the PSL, such as tartaric acid, is allowed when all of the following three issues are
8.2.1	Food-grade cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers listed in Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used as annotated: a) on organic product contact surfaces, which include equipment, storage and transport units; b) in direct contact with organic products.	
8.2.2	Cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers listed in Table 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used on organic product contact surfaces. Operators shall document that: a) they are used as annotated; and b) removal event(s) are effective and prevent organic product from coming into contact with substances used on surfaces prior to organic production.	
8.2.3	If substances in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 are ineffective, other cleaners, disinfectants or sanitizers may be used on organic product contact	

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	surfaces. Operators shall document:	documented:
	a) why the permitted substances were unsuitable or ineffective for cleaning, disinfecting or sanitizing specific equipment;	the operator has demonstrated that the non-listed substance, such as quaternary ammonia or colloidal silver, is needed and effective; this includes documenting why cleaning products listed in Table 7.3 or Table 7.4 are inadequate.
	b) that removal event(s) have eliminated the substance(s) from organic product contact surfaces prior to organic production; and	the non-listed substance can be effectively removed from the product contact surfaces by an acceptable removal event (which in the case of the quaternary ammonium would be residue test strips showing zero quat residue after rinsing); and
	c) that effluent discharge was neutralized to minimize the negative impact on the environment.	the operation can neutralize the non-listed substance before disposal. Examples of “acceptable removal events” include rinsing with potable water, letting surfaces drip dry, and purging lines with organic product.
8.2.4	Specific cleaning, sanitation and disinfection requirements in clause 7 of this standard supersede those specified in 8.2.	Adhere to the cleaning requirements in Clause 7 for apiculture, maple, mushrooms, sprouts, shoots, microgreens and greenhouses if the requirements in Clause 7 are stricter than those in Clause 8.2. This is most notable for maple – as all cleaning requirements are in Clause 7.2. Seed cleaning for sprouts, shoots and microgreens is outlined in Clause 7.4.
8.3	Facility pest management and post-harvest management	
8.3.1	Good production and manufacturing practices shall be adopted to prevent pest problems and shall involve: a) the removal of pest habitat and food sources; b) sealing the facility to limit pest intrusion when applicable; and c) using environmental management (for example, altering light, temperature and atmosphere) to further prevent pest intrusion	This section refers to pests of all sorts including insects, fungi and rodents. Perhaps the most challenging and controversial aspect of this clause is rodent control. Rodents can create problems for producers and processors of all types and scales from voles eating lettuce in the greenhouse, mice feeding on spilled grain in a dairy barn, to rats in a bakery. The principles of organic

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	and reproduction.	
8.3.2	Mechanical and physical methods of pest management may be used, including: a) sticky tape, sticky traps or glue boards for insect monitoring and control (e.g., in light traps); b) live capture traps and snap traps; and c) lures, repellents, and baits as listed in Table 8.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	production apply to rodent control in organic facilities. For example, we must consider the environmental impact of pest control. If toxic baits were allowed to be used indiscriminately, the target pest rodent might consume that bait, run away and then be eaten by a wild animal. The result could be a dead owl in addition to dead mice. The standards have been written to avoid such risks. More complicated, however, is the fact that pests, as well as organic livestock, deserve humane treatment. The goal is to manage pests without causing undue suffering. The preferred method of control is prevention.
8.3.3	If the practices enumerated in 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 are ineffective, the operator may use a) pest control substances listed in Table 8.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. b) glue boards for rodent control, in the exceptional situation when an infestation is demonstrated. In either case, the operator shall record the target pests, substances used, start and end dates, and the location(s) of pest control devices.	Pest control substances in PSL Table 8.1 can be used by an organic operation if the preventative measures in 8.3.1 are found inadequate. Detailed records are required. The substances in PSL Table 8.1 with no restrictions, such as carbon dioxide, diatomaceous earth and neem oil, may be used in direct contact with organic product. The 2026 COS clearly identifies what pest control methods can be used and when. There is a hierarchy of preference. Certain methods, such as glue boards for rodents, can only be used in certain situations and only after more humane methods have been tried but have failed. A complete ban on glue boards for rodents for humane reasons was evaluated, but it was determined it would decimate the pest control toolbox for organic operators too dramatically.
8.3.4	In all cases for rodent control covered by 8.3.2 and 8.3.3, the catch must be disposed of promptly and humanely.	
8.3.5	If the practices specified in 8.3.3 are ineffective, substances not listed in Table 8.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used provided that there is no risk to organic product status or integrity. The following conditions apply:	If all else fails, pest control substances not listed in Table 8.1 can be used both outside and inside facilities including farm buildings, on-farm storage (e.g., grain bins), and transport vehicles but only if there is not risk to organic product status or integrity and all the conditions clearly outlined in

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	a) If pest activity assessments justify the use of fumigation or fogging, operators shall ensure and document that organic products or the packaging materials are not present when these substances are used. b) If rodent activity assessments justify using rodenticide-containing baits, the bait shall: 1) be enclosed in tamper-proof containers, in locations where there is no potential for contamination of organic products, crops, or fields; and 2) not be used inside organic product processing areas or organic product storage areas c) Operators shall clearly document: 1) why permitted substances were not suitable or were found to be ineffective for pest management; 2) how operators prevented contact between organic products, packaging materials, crops and fields with substances that are not listed in Table 8.1; 3) all activities involved in the use, storage and disposal of substances that are not listed in Table 8.1; and 4) a plan to minimize potential for non-target wildlife poisoning when baits containing rodenticide are used.	8.3.5 are addressed. As well, if operators use a substance not listed in Table 8.1, they must justify this action, record the use of these substances, and provide a plan as to how to avoid using these substances in the future.
8.3.6	If pest and disease control substances that are not listed in Table 8.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 are used under a mandatory government program, operators shall monitor and document their use.	NOTE: Certifiers will need to assess if activities undertaken by an operator during an emergency pest event compromised the status of the product.
NOTE	In the event of an emergency pest outbreak, operators are required to notify their certification body immediately of any change that may affect organic product certification.	
8.3.7	Substances in Table 8.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 may be used for post-harvest storage.	Sprout inhibitors, ripening inhibitors and ripeners listed on Table 8.3 may be used in storage facilities.

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8.4	Transportation	
8.4.1	Every measure shall be taken to ensure that the integrity of organic inputs, ingredients and products is not compromised in transit. Physical segregation or other protection methods shall be used to avoid commingling or substitution with non-organic inputs, ingredients and products.	
8.4.2	Documentation including the following information shall accompany the organic product while in transit, including bulk loads: - the name and address of the person or organization responsible for the production, preparation or distribution of the product; - the name of the product; - the organic status of the product; - the name of the certification body; and - information that ensures traceability, for example, the lot number.	It is imperative that organic product is not contaminated by prohibited substances or commingled with non-organic products while in transit. Trucks, railcars and containers must be clean to prevent contamination by prohibited substances or previous shipments. To avoid commingling: - segregate loose or bulk organic and non-organic products into separate trucks; - segregate loose or bulk organic and non-organic products into separate compartments in trucks; - load only sealed boxes or crates; or - load only shrink-wrapped pallets. Shared loading and unloading equipment for loose bulk products, such as grains, oilseeds, oil and flour, must be cleaned or purged sufficiently before organic product is handled. Shipping documentation must include the product name, organic status, lot number(s) and contact information of the responsible party. It is recommended that the shipping documentation packet for loose bulk commodities include copies of clean truck affidavits (signed by the truckers), which identify the two previous loads and identify the cleaning methods that were used.

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8.4.3	Organic products shall not be exposed to pesticides or pest control substances that are not listed in Table 8.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 during any stage of transit or at border crossings.	Federal plant protection requirements commonly require imported agricultural products to be fumigated or irradiated depending on the source country and the condition of the goods. The fumigation is usually done at the border or in transit to Canada when a pest or disease has been detected or is of concern. Fumigating protects product against unwanted pests and helps reduce the introduction of unwanted species into the receiving country. However, none of the most common fumigants, such as methyl bromide, phosphine and sulphuryl fluoride, are listed on the PSL – this means these are not permitted. Products treated with any of these substances or irradiated with ionizing radiation (1.4 c) will lose their organic status. The owner of the product during transit is ultimately responsible for organic compliance and should clearly communicate the rules for organic handling to their transportation service providers.
NOTE	Owners are responsible for the organic integrity of the organic product while it is in transit. This includes the use of common carriers and custom hauling. Transport companies share responsibility for organic integrity while loading, transporting, or off-loading certified organic products.	



9. Organic Product Composition

9. Organic Product Composition

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9	Organic product composition This clause applies to all operations involved in organic product preparation, including retailers.	No matter where the product is prepared, the following rules apply when you want to make and call the product organic. Elements of this clause are also applicable to operations that do not prepare, package or label but take physical possession of organic product. This includes distribution centres, warehouses and transportation companies.
9.1	Product composition	
9.1.1	Organic product formulations shall consist primarily of organic whole or processed agricultural ingredients, organic whole or processed aquaculture ingredients (see 2.1, CAN/CGSB-32.312), and organic processing aids. Other permitted ingredients and processing aids, as described in Clause 9.2, shall be kept to a minimum.	The standards restrict the use of highly processed agricultural ingredients that have been refined, hydrogenated, chemically bleached, hydrolyzed, oxidized or denatured. The same goes for aquaculture ingredients (certified to 32.310) used as ingredients in 32.310/311 certified products (e.g., seafood lasagna). That said, multi-ingredient products are allowed; these may contain ingredients and processing aids as described in later parts of this clause. Fortification with vitamins and minerals is prohibited unless required by federal regulation, which is the case for milk, white flour, meal replacements and a few other products. Non-dairy substitute products (e.g., plant-based beverages; products that resemble cheese; butter substitutes) may also be enriched. However, organic breakfast cereals, infant formulas and juice products cannot be enriched. Refer to CFIA's "Foods to Which Vitamins, Mineral Nutrients and Amino Acids May or Must be Added" and to the "Vitamins and Mineral Nutrients" listing in Table 6.3 for details. The use of calcium compounds and Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) as acidity regulators, stabilizers, preservatives per the individual listings in Table 6.3

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		of the PSL is permitted in any type of product.
9.1.2	The evaluation of product composition shall exclude non-agricultural sub-parts of ingredients listed in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 in CAN/CGSB-32.311 that have a technical or functional effect on the ingredient but not on the final organic product, and are not declared on the final organic product label. These ingredient sub-parts may be present in the final organic product but only in insignificant amounts. This includes non-agricultural sub-parts of ingredients, such as anticaking agents, carriers and fillers, preservatives, stabilizers, pH adjusters or buffers. The calculation of organic percentages shall account for all constituent ingredients or ingredient sub-parts, distinguishing between organic and non-organic components of each ingredient contained in the product.	There is an important distinction in this clause between • ingredients (constituents of a product that remain in the product in its finished form and are listed on its ingredient statement) and • processing aids (used for a functional effect in processing but not remaining in the finished product nor identified in the ingredient statement). Beyond all that agricultural constituents, non-agricultural constituents or subparts of every multi-ingredient ingredient (complex ingredient), including anti-caking agents, stabilizers, pH adjusters, buffers or preservatives, that are listed in the final product's ingredient panel or have a functional effect on the final product need to be: • listed in the appropriate PSL table as allowed; • compliant with any applicable substance annotation; and • accounted for in the organic percentage calculation. Non-organic carriers of agricultural origin (such as wheat starch) may be used if complex ingredients or processing aids containing organic carriers are not commercially available (see Carriers PSL 6.3, 6.4). This means the suppliers of certified complex ingredients will need to disclose the makeup of their products, including the added water and salt; otherwise the subsequent manufacturer will have to calculate the ingredient as only contributing either 95% organic content or 70% organic, according to the product's category on the supplier's certificate, and not the actual organic percentage content.
9.1.3	The percentage of all organic ingredients in an organic product shall be calculated as follows:	The term "organic" and the Canada organic logo can be used on: • Food products certified as containing 95% or more organic

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a) Solid products (except livestock feed: see 9.1.3 d)): Divide the net mass, excluding water and salt, of all organic ingredients in the formulation by the net mass, excluding water and salt, of all ingredients. b) Liquid products: If the product and its ingredients are liquid, divide the fluid volume of all organic ingredients, excluding water and salt, by the fluid volume of all ingredients, excluding water and salt. If the principal display panel, specification sheet or certificate of analysis uses phrases such as “reconstituted from concentrates” to describe the final product, single-strength concentrations of the ingredients or the finished product shall be used to calculate organic percentages. c) Solid and liquid products: Using data from the product’s recipe and considering work-in-process ingredients made onsite, divide the combined net mass of solid organic ingredients (except for salt added during production) and liquid organic ingredients (except for water or salt/brine added during production) by the total mass of all ingredients. The water and salt content of ingredients received are not to be deducted. d) Livestock feed shall exclusively contain organic agricultural ingredients and permitted feed additives or feed supplements as listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. The requirements of 9.2 do not apply to livestock feed. No actual calculation required. e) Seed products as defined by the Seeds Act (see 2.4) shall contain 100% organic seeds and may be treated, primed, pelleted, or coated with substances listed in Table 4.2 (Column 1 or 2) or Table 7.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	- ingredients and other permitted substances; and - Livestock feed containing organic agricultural ingredients and permitted feed additives or feed supplements. Food products certified as containing between 70-95% organic ingredients may only be labelled as containing “xx% organic ingredients.” Food products containing less than 70% organic ingredients cannot be certified, however their organic ingredients may be identified as such in the product ingredient list. Calculating these organic percentages has to be done consistently to sustain consumer confidence in organic labels. However, the 2026 COS uses the calculations required in 2018 rather than the revised calculations from 2020. This change simplifies the calculations for food manufacturers and their supply chain. Once again, except for reconstituted products, in addition to added salt, only added water needs to be deducted. Salt and water are deducted as they are not classified as “organic” ingredients. The salt deduction also includes salt substitutes used in consumer goods when the sodium-free alternative is performing the same function as that of sodium chloride. For consumer food products, the calculation varies depending if the product is a solid, liquid or a mixture of both as outlined in subclauses a-c. There is one other notable change made in the 2026 COS with regards to livestock feeds. Math calculations are no longer necessary as long as the product is composed exclusively of organic ingredients and permitted feed additives or feed supplements as listed in Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. The value of the single-strength product made from the concentrate, inclusive of the water content, is used to calculate the organic percentage when a product is:

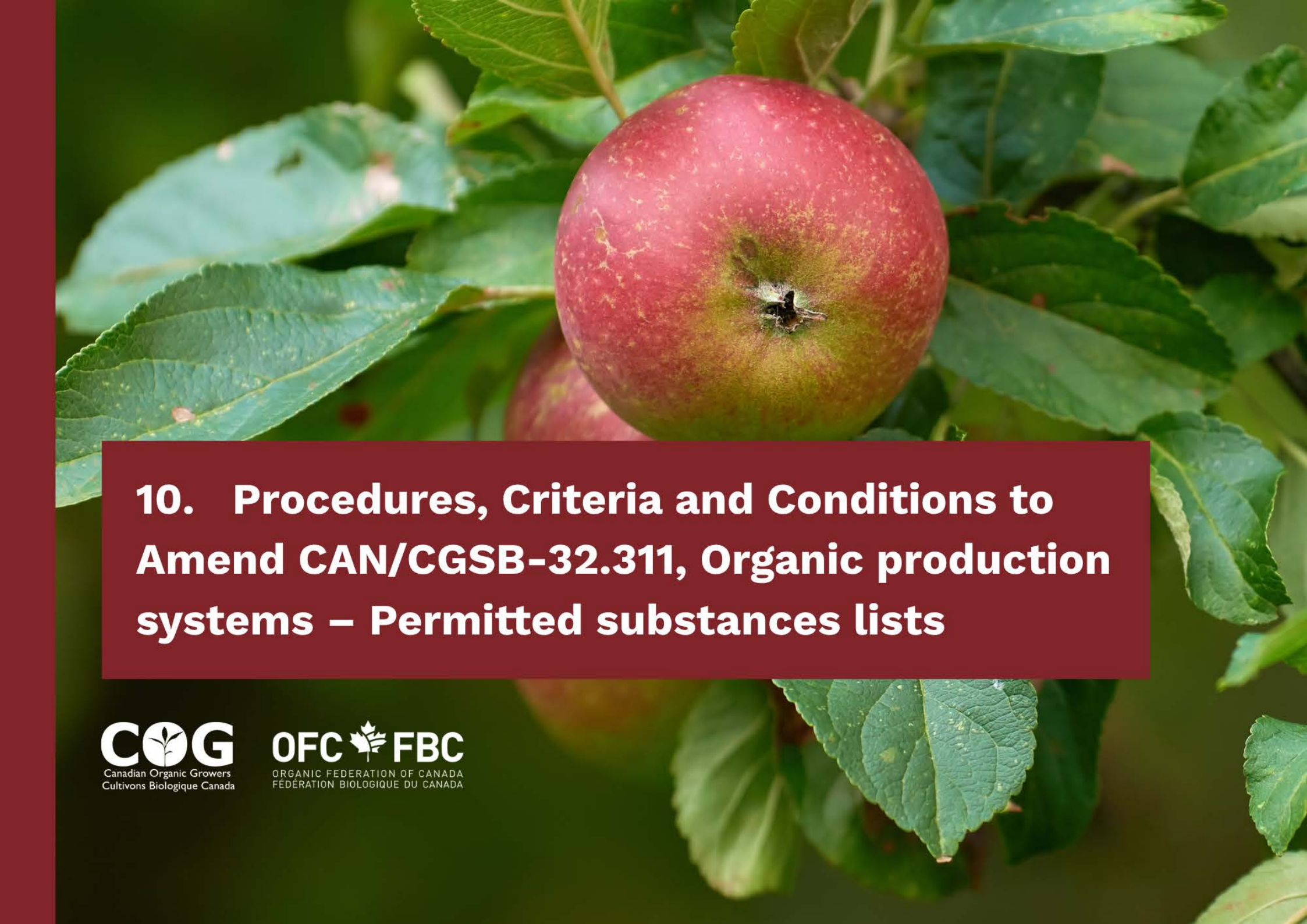
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		• made from a reconstituted ingredient, and • “reconstituted from concentrate” language is included on the principal display panel, specification sheet or certificate of analysis, If such language is not used on the principal display panel, specification sheet or certificate of analysis, then the total volume of water is subtracted. If that reconstituted product is used as an ingredient in a subsequent food product, the water used to do the initial reconstitution must also be subtracted out unless the final product has a “standard of identity.” Added water also can be confusing when grains or seeds are “tempered” with water before processing, such as in the case of flour manufacturing and soymilk base extraction. In both situations, the total of the raw ingredients, not the finished product, is relevant. All the above complexities outline why suppliers of certified complex ingredients need to disclose the makeup of their products, including the water and salt content. Otherwise, organic manufacturers who use these products as ingredients will not be able to correctly calculate the organic content of their finished products. When necessary supplements (other than calcium compounds and salt) are subtracted from livestock feed ingredients, the feed might contain less than 95% organic agricultural ingredients. This fact was confirmed by industry feedback. As a result, these products would need to be labelled in the 70-95% category. This was never the intention. Organic feed must contain only organic agricultural ingredients and permitted supplements. Hence with this revision, the requirement to do any calculation has been eliminated. The new second sentence confirms there is no need to apply the 70-95% rules (9.2) as organic feed must be composed of 100%

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		organic agricultural ingredients and substances from Table 5.2. If the feed doesn't comply with this requirement, it is not organic feed.
9.1.4	The percentage of all organic ingredients in an organic product shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number.	
9.2	Categorization of organic food Based on the percentage of their organic ingredients, organic products fall into two categories:	
9.2.1	95% organic content (or more) Such products shall not contain an ingredient in both organic and non-organic form. Such products may contain up to 5% of the following: a) “ingredients classified as food additives” and “ingredients not classified as food additives” as listed in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, respectively, subject to requirements specified in substance listing annotations and restrictions specified in 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. Listed ingredients of agricultural origin shall meet the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 c), 1.4 d) of this standard and 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; b) non-organic agricultural processing aids that meet the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 b), 1.4 c), and 1.4 d) of CAN/CGSB-32.310, and any annotations listed in Table 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; c) non-agricultural processing aids as listed in Table 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, subject to the requirements specified in substance listing annotations; d) non-organic agricultural ingredients that meet the requirements in	Up to five percent of an organic product can be composed of ingredients listed on the Permitted Substances Lists, non-organic agricultural ingredients and processing aids if $\geq 95\%$ of the product is made up of organic agricultural or organic wild-harvested ingredients. If and when they are used, the 5% of non-organic ingredients: • Must respect origin and usage requirements, as annotated in PSL Tables 6.3 and 6.4. • If not listed on the PSL, the 5% must be non-organic agricultural ingredients for which the organic form is not commercially available (see details below). Such non-organic ingredients cannot have been grown with sewage sludge, treated with irradiation, be genetically engineered, or be (or be parts of) a cloned animal, or cannot have an organic equivalent in the product formulation in any form. For example, organic whole potatoes and non-organic grated potato cannot be in the same product, nor can organic Macintosh apples and non- organic Fuji apples be in the same product. Another example of a product that would not be allowed is a dough conditioner containing non-organic white flour in its formulation that duplicates the white organic flour contained in the product. However,

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	1.4 a), 1.4 c) and 1.4 d) of this standard, and non-organic aquacultural ingredients that meet the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 b) 1.4 c) and 1.4 h) of CAN/CGSB-32.312, and wild-capture aquatic animal ingredients. These ingredients are also subject to organic commercial availability requirements.	non-organic atta flour and organic wheat flour would be fine if they are listed separately in the ingredient panel. Processing aids must respect origin and usage requirements, as annotated in PSL Table 6.5 if they are non- agricultural; and if agricultural but not organic, processing aids cannot be genetically engineered, be the result of nanotechnology, have been irradiated, or have come from a cloned animal. Regarding commercial availability: An active and documented search for an equivalent organic agricultural ingredient must be completed annually before the non- organic agricultural version is used. If an organic source is available but not used, operators will need to explain why it is not appropriate. For example, if organic liquid lecithin is called for in the formulation, but only organic granulated de- oiled lecithin is available, the operator may request to use non-organic liquid lecithin. There would have to be an issue with the quantity, or quality or variety (form) available to justify not using an organic version.
9.2.2	70-95% organic content Such products shall not contain an ingredient in both its organic and non-organic form. Such products may contain up to 30% of the following: a) non-organic agricultural ingredients subject to the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 c), and 1.4 d) of this standard; b) non-organic aquacultural ingredients subject to the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 b) 1.4 c) and 1.4 h) of CAN/CGSB-32.312, and wild-capture aquatic animal ingredients; c) “ingredients classified as food additives”, and “ingredients not classified as food additives,” as listed in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, respectively, subject to the requirements specified in substance listing annotations and restrictions	The criteria for products containing between 70-95% organic content is identical to ≥ 95% product criteria except that up to 30% of the product can be composed of: • ingredients listed on PSL Tables 6.3 & 6.4; • compliant processing aids; and • non-organic agricultural ingredients that are not genetically engineered, irradiated or cloned. Commercial availability searches do not have to be done on the non-organic agricultural ingredients accounted for in the 30%. This revision updates the food composition requirements to include organic aquaculture ingredients certified to CAN/CGSB-32.312 and



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	specified in 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. Listed ingredients of agricultural origin shall meet the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 c), 1.4 d) of this standard and 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; d) non-organic agricultural processing aids that meet the requirements in 1.4 a), 1.4 b), 1.4 c), and 1.4 d) of this standard and any annotations listed in Table 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311; e) non-agricultural processing aids listed in Table 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311 subject to the requirements specified in substance listing annotations.	non-organic aquatic animal ingredients when organic ingredients are not commercially available. This mirrors the agricultural allowances.



10. Procedures, Criteria and Conditions to Amend CAN/CGSB-32.311, Organic production systems – Permitted substances lists

10. Procedures, Criteria and Conditions to Amend CAN/CGSB-32.311, Organic production systems – Permitted substances lists

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10	Procedures, criteria and conditions to amend CAN/CGSB-32.311, Organic production systems – Permitted substances lists This clause applies to all proposed amendments to the permitted substances lists (PSL). Only generic substances are listed in the PSL. Brand name substances, which may be a combination of generic substances, are not eligible for inclusion on the PSL. This clause does not apply to packaging materials, equipment surfaces, or other similar substances or materials.
10.1	Substance review procedures
10.1.1	Criteria provided in this clause shall be the determinants for amending CAN/CGSB-32.311.
10.1.2	The substance review process shall be open, transparent and fully participatory according to the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) procedures.
10.1.3	Consideration shall be given to the consequences a proposed amendment may have on equivalency and harmonization of this standard with standards and regulations of other jurisdictions.
10.2	Permitted substances criteria
10.2.1	Substances included in the PSL shall: a) comply with the general principles of organic production specified in section 0.2 of the Introduction of this standard, and b) comply with 1.4 and 1.5 of this standard.
10.2.2	Substance reviews shall: a) consider the necessity, origin and mode of production, and the social and ecological impact of the production and application of the substance; b) include a detailed description of the substance and a substantive rationale along with documentation in support of the proposed amendment; and

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	c) include an evaluation of all available alternatives, including substances and acceptable practices outlined in this standard, and in other production systems.	
10.2.3	If applicable, the substance annotation shall include: a) restrictions concerning its origin and mode of production; b) restrictions concerning its composition and usage; and c) a commercial availability clause which allows for the use of an alternative substance when the preferred form of the substance as outlined in the following tables is not available in sufficient quality or quantity, at the time of publication.	
10.3	Specific substance review criteria The criteria used for guiding the review of a substance are described in Tables 10, 11, 12 and 13.	
	Table 10 — Substance review criteria for permitted substances in crop production	
	Soil amendments and crop nutrition (Table 4.2 Column 1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)	Crop production aids and materials (Table 4.2 Column 2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)
A. Necessity	Shall be necessary to improve or maintain soil fertility, to fulfil specific requirements of crops, or for specific soil conditioning and rotational purposes that cannot be satisfied by the requirements and practices of this standard.	Shall be necessary to manage plant diseases, insects, weeds and other pests. Used when no other adequate biological, physical or plant breeding alternatives or effective management practices are available.
B. Origin and mode of production	1. Shall be of plant, animal, microbial or mineral origin. Substances may be produced through physical (for example, mechanical or thermal), enzymatic or microbial (for example, composting, fermentation or digestion) methods of transformation. 2. Shall be produced from crops and livestock produced in accordance with this standard, or from naturally occurring minerals. 3. If preferred forms, as described in B1 & B2, of these substances do not exist, alternative substances may be considered for inclusion.	
C. Impact	Substance reviews shall consider:	

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1. The impact of a substance's manufacture and disposal after use on the environment including impacts on ecology, surface and ground water, and soil and air quality, including substance persistence, degradation and concentration effects.
2. The impact of a substance's use or potential misuse on soil quality (including biological diversity and activity, structure, salinity, sodicity, erodability and tilth), surface and ground water quality, ecosystems (in particular, non-target organisms) including wildlife and wildlife habitat, and animal and human health.

Table 11 – Substance review criteria for permitted substances in livestock production

	Livestock feed (Table 5.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)	Livestock health care (Table 5.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)
A. Necessity	1. Shall be necessary to correct documented essential nutrient deficiencies in the forage or feed ration, when other biological, cultural or physical treatments permitted by this standard are not available; or 2. Shall be necessary to ensure and preserve product quality, when other biological, cultural or physical treatments permitted by this standard are not available.	Shall be necessary to prevent or treat livestock health problems when other treatments permitted by this standard are not available.
B. Origin and mode of production	Shall be organic or derived from biological or mineral sources.	Shall be organic or derived from biological or mineral sources.
C. Impact	Substance reviews shall consider: 1. The impact of a substance's manufacture and disposal after use on the environment including impacts on ecology, surface and ground water, and soil and air quality including substance persistence, degradation and concentration effects.	

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	2. The impact of a substance's use or potential misuse on soil quality (including biological diversity and activity, structure, salinity, sodicity, erodability and tilth), surface and ground water quality, ecosystems (in particular non-target organisms) including wildlife and wildlife habitat, and animal and human health.								
Table 12— Substance review criteria for permitted substances in processing of organic food									
	<table> <tr> <th colspan="2">Food ingredients and processing aids (Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)</th></tr> <tr> <td>A. Necessity</td><td> 1. Shall be necessary to correct documented, essential nutrient deficiencies of the product, that is, vitamins and minerals; or when required by regulations; 2. Shall be essential for ensuring the safety of the product; 3. Shall be used only when it is not feasible or practical to produce or store such products without the use of these substances; or 4. Shall be necessary to achieve a technological effect during processing (for example, filtration) or an organoleptic effect in the final product (for example, colouring and flavouring). </td></tr> <tr> <td>B. Origin and mode of production</td><td> 1. Shall be found in nature. Substances may be produced using physical (for example, extraction, precipitation), enzymatic or microbial (for example, fermentation) processes, as well as through chemical extractions that do not alter the substance's chemical structure. 2. Preferably from organic sources. 3. If preferred forms, as described in B1 & B2, of these substances do not exist, alternative substances may be considered for inclusion. </td></tr> <tr> <td>C. Impact</td><td> Substance reviews shall consider the impact of use and potential misuse on: </td></tr> </table>	Food ingredients and processing aids (Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)		A. Necessity	1. Shall be necessary to correct documented, essential nutrient deficiencies of the product, that is, vitamins and minerals; or when required by regulations; 2. Shall be essential for ensuring the safety of the product; 3. Shall be used only when it is not feasible or practical to produce or store such products without the use of these substances; or 4. Shall be necessary to achieve a technological effect during processing (for example, filtration) or an organoleptic effect in the final product (for example, colouring and flavouring).	B. Origin and mode of production	1. Shall be found in nature. Substances may be produced using physical (for example, extraction, precipitation), enzymatic or microbial (for example, fermentation) processes, as well as through chemical extractions that do not alter the substance's chemical structure. 2. Preferably from organic sources. 3. If preferred forms, as described in B1 & B2, of these substances do not exist, alternative substances may be considered for inclusion.	C. Impact	Substance reviews shall consider the impact of use and potential misuse on:
Food ingredients and processing aids (Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)									
A. Necessity	1. Shall be necessary to correct documented, essential nutrient deficiencies of the product, that is, vitamins and minerals; or when required by regulations; 2. Shall be essential for ensuring the safety of the product; 3. Shall be used only when it is not feasible or practical to produce or store such products without the use of these substances; or 4. Shall be necessary to achieve a technological effect during processing (for example, filtration) or an organoleptic effect in the final product (for example, colouring and flavouring).								
B. Origin and mode of production	1. Shall be found in nature. Substances may be produced using physical (for example, extraction, precipitation), enzymatic or microbial (for example, fermentation) processes, as well as through chemical extractions that do not alter the substance's chemical structure. 2. Preferably from organic sources. 3. If preferred forms, as described in B1 & B2, of these substances do not exist, alternative substances may be considered for inclusion.								
C. Impact	Substance reviews shall consider the impact of use and potential misuse on:								

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1. Human health through both food and non-food exposure, including acute and chronic toxicity, allergenicity and metabolites;
2. product quality, including nutrition, flavour, taste, appearance and storage, if applicable;
3. consumer perception of the nature, substance and quality of a food product.

Table 13 – Substance review criteria for permitted substances in cleaning and sanitation

	Cleaning and sanitation substances (Tables 7.3 and 7.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)	Facility management substances (Tables 8.1 and 8.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311)
A. Necessity	Substances used for cleaning and sanitizing organic products and organic product contact surfaces shall be necessary and appropriate for the intended use.	Substances used for pest control or to cause a post-harvest physiological effect shall be necessary and appropriate for the intended use.
B. Origin and mode of production	1. Shall be organic or derived from mineral or biological sources whenever possible. 2. If preferred forms, as described in B1, of these substances do not exist, alternative substances may be considered for inclusion.	
C. Impact	Substance reviews shall consider: 1. The impact of a substance's manufacture and disposal after use on the environment including impacts on ecology, surface and ground water, and soil and air quality including substance persistence, degradation and concentration effects. 2. The impact of a substance's use or potential misuse on soil quality (including biological diversity and activity, structure, salinity, sodicity, erodability and tilth), surface and ground water quality, ecosystems (in particular non-target organisms) including wildlife and wildlife habitat, and animal and human health.	

11. Annexes & Bibliography



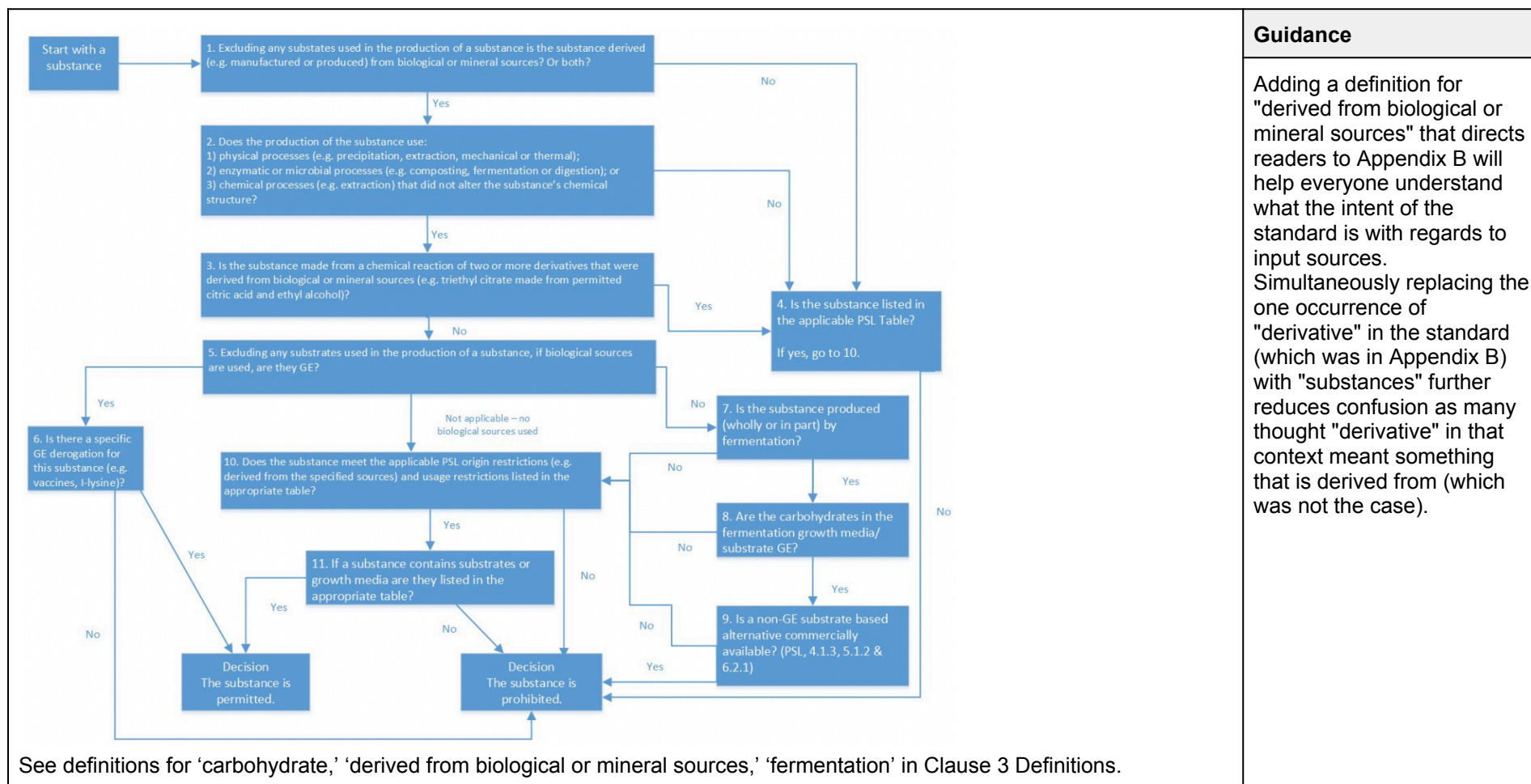
Annex A (informative) Categorization of Organic Products

Table A.1 – Categorization of organic products based on their percentage of organic ingredients (excludes livestock feed and seed products)

Summary	Categories		
	95% ^a (or more)	70-<95% ^b (or more)	<70% ^c
May not contain an ingredient in both its organic and non-organic form.	✓	✓	n/a
May contain up to 5% non-organic ingredients if the organic form is not commercially available.	✓	n/a	n/a
May contain up to 30% non-organic ingredients.	n/a	✓	n/a
May contain less than 70% organic ingredients.	n/a	n/a	✓
Non-organic ingredients both “classified as food additives” and “not classified as food additives” shall be listed in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, meet the specified annotations and comply with 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	✓	✓	n/a
Whether listed or not in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 of CAN/CGSB-32.311, agricultural, non-organic ingredients shall meet 1.4 a), c) and d), and 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	✓	✓	n/a
Non-listed agricultural, non-organic ingredients are subject to commercial availability requirements.	✓	n/a	n/a

Non-organic processing aids of agricultural origin are permitted, subject to the requirements of 1.4 a), b), c), and d); and any annotations listed in Table 6.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	✓	✓	n/a
Non-agricultural processing aids are permitted if they are listed in Table 6.5 (processing aids) of CAN/CGSB-32.311.	✓	✓	n/a
^a Products compliant with 9.2.1 may be identified as organic. ^b Products compliant with 9.2.2 may only declare the percentage of organic ingredients. ^c Products with less than 70% organic content may identify which ingredients are organic in their ingredient list. For full labelling requirements refer to current regulations.			

Annex B (informative) Permitted Substances Decision Tree



Annex C (informative) Notes on Organic Principles

Annex C (informative) Notes on Organic Principles Section 0.2 of the Introduction indicates the General Principles of Organic Production. These are from IFOAM Organics International (www.ifoam.bio/why-organic/shaping-agriculture/four-principles-organic). Historical organic principles The principles listed below were the original principles published in 2006. Though they have been updated in the introduction of this standard, they have been retained in this annex to provide context for existing organic plans. Organic production is based on principles that support healthy practices. These principles aim to increase the quality and the durability of the environment through specific management and production methods. They also focus on ensuring the humane treatment of animals. The general principles of organic production include the following: 1. Protect the environment, minimize soil degradation and erosion, decrease pollution, optimize biological productivity and promote a sound state of health. 2. Maintain long-term soil fertility by optimizing conditions for biological activity within the soil. 3. Maintain biological diversity within the system. 4. Recycle materials and resources to the greatest extent possible within the operation. 5. Provide attentive care that promotes the health and meets the behavioural needs of livestock. 6. Prepare organic products, emphasizing careful processing, and handling methods in order to maintain the organic integrity and vital qualities of the products at all stages of production. 7. Rely on renewable resources in locally organized agriculture systems.	The proposal to add requirements about social fairness to the 2026 standards was discussed at length and rejected.
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Fairness

IFOAM Organics International describes fairness as:

“Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings.

This principle emphasizes that those involved in Organic Agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties – farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and consumers. Organic Agriculture should provide everyone involved with a good quality of life, and contribute to food sovereignty and reduction of poverty. It aims to produce a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products.

This principle insists that animals should be provided with the conditions and opportunities of life that accord with their physiology, natural behaviour and well-being.

Natural and environmental resources that are used for production and consumption should be managed in a way that is socially and ecologically just and should be held in trust for future generations. Fairness requires systems of production, distribution and trade that are open and equitable and account for real environmental and social costs.”

Annex D (32.310) (informative) Minimum Processes¹

The following processes are categorized as creating minimal physical, chemical or biological changes as outlined in the agricultural ingredient/product definition (Clause 3).

Aeration	¹ Forming
Ageing	Grating
Agglomeration	Grinding
Blending	Heating (including baking, blanching, boiling, canning, cooking, frying, microwaving, pasteurizing, sterilizing, parboiling, roasting)
Centrifugation	Homogenization
Chilling (including refrigerating and freezing)	Maturation
Chopping	Melting, thawing
Churning	Milling
Concentration	Mixing, blending
Cutting	Packaging, canning
Curing	Peeling
Deboning (manual)	Pressing
Defatting	Puffing
Degerming	Reconstitution
Dissolving	Ripening
Drying, dehydration, desiccation, evaporation, freeze drying	Separating (including screening, clarifying, centrifugation, decanting, extraction, filtering, shelling, trimming)
Emulsifying	Shredding
Extrusion	Smoking
Filtering and clarifying	Soaking
Fining, finishing	Treatment with inert gases (nitrogen pack)
Flaking	
Flocculation	

¹ This list was developed from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's "Annex 1 - Minimum processes" contained in their "Method of production claims on food labels." information.

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