



Pacific Agricultural Certification Society

PO Box 20094, Vernon, BC V1T 9L4 phone 250-558-7927 fax 250-558-7947
admin@pacscertifiedorganic.ca Website: www.pacscertifiedorganic.ca

Guide to the *Organic Plan: Crop*

Introduction

Use this guide to assist in completing the **PACS Organic Plan: Crop**. Numbers in this guide correspond to numbers in the Crop Plan.

All new applicants and existing PACS clients must complete the Crop Plan as there have been changes to the standards effective 2020 and all information must be in compliance with the updated standards.

Consequences of inaccurate completion

- Missing or inaccurate information submitted with initial, or renewal applications will incur higher billable Certification Committee and/or Verification Officer time. Please fill out the forms as completely as possible and ensure all supplemental documents that are submitted are up to date (i.e., maps, etc.).

How to complete the form:

PACS Online Portal:

All members are encouraged to complete the organic plans via the PACS Online Portal. The advantage of using the online portal is that during subsequent renewal applications, answers from the previous year's application will be prepopulated and will only require changes to be noted.

**For new clients who need a PACS Online Portal account set up, please contact the PACS office.*

Microsoft Word (fillable):

- Download the Word document to your computer. **Do not fill out the form in Google Docs.**
- Type into the grey coloured areas: Use your mouse, arrows, or tab keys to move around the form. If this form is not compatible with your computer system or you experience any problems, contact the PACS office for immediate assistance. If you need more space than is provided add additional sheets.
- **Note** – the charts expand when data is filled in, so the page numbers change from the original blank form as it is filled in. Therefore, **question** number references are given below, but page number references are not.
- If you are unable to complete the form electronically, you may print the form, fill it in with black or blue ink (do not use a pencil) and scan/email or mail it to the PACS office. Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form. If you need more space than is provided, add additional sheets.

Paperless Practices:

- PACS operates as a paperless office. We ask, if possible, to submit ALL documents electronically (via email). PACS will continue to accept documents by mail and by fax, however, an extra admin fee will be included on your final inspection invoice.

Abbreviations used:

- **VO - Verification Officer** – an independent contractor who inspects your farm at the request of your Certification Body (CB). The VO makes a report to the Certification Committee of the CB. A copy of this report is sent to you along with the Certification Review Report (CRR). Remember, the VO does **not** certify your farm, nor set conditions for certification.
- **CC - Certification Committee** - the group authorized by your Certification Body to make decisions. The PACS Certification Committee examines your Crop Plan and the VO's report, then decides whether you qualify for certification. Sometimes the CC sets conditions which you must meet for certification. These are itemized in the Certification Review Report (CRR) and have deadlines for your responses.
- **COR** – the standards, regulations and PSL that comprise the **Canada Organic Regime**.
- **COS** – Canadian Organic Standards (CAN/CGSB 32.310-2020).

Pacific Agricultural Certification Society

- PSL – Permitted Substance List (CAN/CGSB 32.311-2020).
- SFCR – Safe Food for Canadians Regulation, Part 13 – Organic Products
- CRR: Certification Review Report. This is the annual report that is created when the PACS Certification Committee reviews your certification (inspection report, organic plan, renewal forms, etc.). It will be sent to you as part of your certification package and is intended to provide a “snapshot” of your operation.

About this Guide:

This document highlights areas where there may be pitfalls, or confusion. Not every line is explained. If you have questions that are not covered in this guide, contact the PACS office.

Name and descriptive information about your enterprise. Please complete all sections.

SECTION A. CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

#1. Enter the list of crops or products as you would like them to appear on your certificate. Variety names for orchard fruits, grapes and major ground crops are generally required and would be mandatory if required to distinguish non-certified varieties from certified varieties.

#4. Section B: **A Split Operation Form (Split-Op) is required if your operation has an income stream that is not certified organic within your operation** (e.g. if you have an organic certified apple orchard and a non-organic peach orchard, or if you have an organic grain/hay operation and non-organic beef), you will need to submit this form.

SECTION B. SPLIT OPERATION:

#8. This table should be completed for: prohibited soil & fertility amendments/herbicides/pesticides, feeds, or a production related input you have used in the last 12 months on the non-organic portion of your operation. If this is your first year in a certification program, list the products you anticipate using during the next 12 months.

SECTION C. ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW:

#17. The information provided in this land base summary chart will be reflected in greater detail in the **Field Identification & Land Use History Sheet** (available on the PACS website). Please make sure that you have identified the site address, field locations and their respective field numbers (names), field acreages, and crops grown within each field (PACS Handbook for Organic Operators, Clause 4.2.1.2(b)).

For each separate production unit, or site submit:

- a **site map** identifying the fields
- a **farm map** (overview of the general locations of all sites in your land base)
- a **Field Identification Sheet & Land Use History Sheet** (available on the PACS website)

Give every site a name. Give every separate field a number - don't duplicate the field numbers on different sites. Provide your best estimate of acreage.

Useful Definitions:

- **Farm:** All property (production units) managed by applicant including leased property and non-organically farmed property.
- **Site:** A group of adjacent properties (legal lot description) managed by an applicant. Non-adjacent parcels will constitute separate sites. For future reference and recordkeeping, decide on a reference name for each site. Many farms have only one site.
- **Field:** A distinctive area within a site. A site may contain one or more fields. Records must be kept *per field*.

NOTE: If you lease your land to other operators, please identify these sites and production units on your map(s).

Pacific Agricultural Certification Society

#19. PVC piping (i.e., hard PVC plastic: water lines, irrigation lines, etc.) is **not** a problem. Soft PVC plastic (that is sometimes used in plastic mulch, or plastic wrapping material) is prohibited for use in organic production areas.

#21 & #22. It is important for PACS to know if your water source is maintained by a public entity (municipality, irrigation district, etc.) or is from a private source (well, creek, river, etc.). Irrigation water has quality control standards set by the provincial government; drinking water must meet potability standards and water used to wash organic produce must meet drinking water standards (required by the Canadian Organic Standards).

SECTION D. ORGANIC PLAN:

#24. Recordkeeping is an integral part of organic certification. Your records must be comprehensive and **detailed**. If you *wonder* if you should keep a record of something, do it – **then** ask whether you need to continue doing it.

#27. The possibility of GE contamination rises with each new genetically engineered crop introduction (alfalfa and apples being recently added). The federal government mandates that farmers must develop a plan to prevent GE contamination. This matter will only become more urgent in future years.

SECTION E. LAND REQUIREMENTS and ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:

#32 – 36. Protection from contamination and buffers zones: Neighbouring non-organically farmed properties are potential sources of contamination to organic farms. Non-organic fertilizers and chemical sprays must not reach organic crops. Buffer zones, hedgerows, roadways, and ditches help to halt the spread of these contaminants. Crops grown in buffer zones must be treated as non-organic. Harvest, storage, and sales must be segregated from organic products. Harvest equipment must be cleaned prior to being used on organic crops. Neighbouring GE crops require more stringent methods and separations, depending on the crop being grown.

#37. Section 1.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.310-2020 emphasizes the importance of nurturing ecosystems by sustainable management practices and to provide control of pests through enhancement of biodiversity, recycling of plant and animal residues, crop selection and rotation, water management, tillage, and cultivation.

SECTION F. FARM MANAGEMENT: Farming activities and practices; long-term plans for building and maintaining soil fertility, maintaining, and increasing productivity, reducing weeds, pests and diseases, and increasing numbers of natural predators while promoting the health and diversity of native flora and fauna are part of the organic philosophy.

#40 & #41. With the growth of the organic sector, new sources of seeds and planting stock continually become available. Enterprises must show that they are constantly researching availability of organic sources to replace non-organic selections from previous years. The PACS Board has determined that a “reasonable” seed search constitutes contacting at least three credible seed sources that are known to carry organic seeds.

#42. Non-organic perennial planting stock, that is free of prohibited substances, requires a 12-month transition to organic status, even if it is being planted into a land base that has achieved organic status. This is why the planting dates must be identified.

#44. First transplanting is defined as moving a seedling to another growing medium (in a box, pot, container, or in the ground). **CAN/CGSB-32.310-2020, subclause 5.3.3.**

#47. If your irrigation system is connected to a shared irrigation water source, you must investigate whether or not the water is treated with algicides or herbicides to kill aquatic weeds. You must also ensure that you avoid overwatering and resultant run-off into adjacent areas.

Pacific Agricultural Certification Society

#50. Annual projected yields are compared in the following year with actual harvest amounts. In this manner, the VO is able to audit your output and build a historical record of results to compare with your own past and with other reference materials.

SECTION G. CROP RESIDUES, COMPOST AND MANURE: The national standards require documentation for off-farm sourced manure. The PSL describes materials that are allowed as compost feedstocks.

#61 to 67: These questions apply **ONLY FOR THOSE WHO USE un-composted FRESH OR AGED MANURE**. A log-book is required to document each imported load of off-farm manure recording the details described in this question. In addition, organic operations must make it a priority to use manure that does not come from landless livestock production units or from livestock operations that use genetically engineered (GE) ingredients or GE derivatives in animal feeds. CAN/CGSB-32.310, Clause 5.5.1.1.

N.B. Manure that is not composted according to the COS is treated as raw manure and application dates on crops for human consumption must comply with the requirements of the standards.

SECTION H. CROP, PEST, DISEASE and WEED MANAGEMENT

INPUTS: Please be accurate and thorough. **ALL** inputs must be listed (including manure, compost, fertilizers, crop production aids, soil amendments, pesticides, mulches, etc.).

SECTION I. HARVEST, PREPARATION AND TRANSPORT: If another enterprise is responsible for the harvest of your crops (e.g., a winery), you must declare that.

#76. If you conduct any on-farm product preparation or packaging (e.g. washing, bagging, drying, freezing, etc.) declare each individual kind of preparation in this question.

#79. All cleaning and sanitation products must be reviewed and approved by PACS. They must be declared on your application form and support documents (SDS sheets, ingredient lists, product spec. sheets, etc.) must be in your organic records and in your PACS file.

#85. Identify your customers and the geographical locations where your goods are sold.

SECTION J. NOTES and ATTACHMENTS: Please identify ALL attachments.

SECTION K. ORGANIC OPERATOR AFFIRMATION:

If your product is considered food, feed, or seed and will be sold via a packing house or a wholesale distributor, or if your product will be an ingredient that will be used in a product that will be sold across provincial boundaries, please choose the **COR Applicant** box.

If your product is food, feed, seed, or ornamentals, and will only be sold within British Columbia, and will not be an ingredient in a product sold outside BC, and you plan to market your product without the COR logo, please choose the **BCCOP Applicant** box.

If your product will remain in British Columbia, and your operation has been certified for 3 years without any outstanding conditions, and you have chosen to have the Verification Officer perform a risk assessment of your operation, please choose the **BCCOP Low-Risk Program** box.

If your operation produces Natural Health Products, Cannabis Cultivation or Processing, or your operation is located outside of British Columbia, please choose the **PACS Program Applicant** box.

Pacific Agricultural Certification Society

Don't forget to sign the form and **make sure to checkmark the correct box(es)**. ***Be aware:*** Any applicable transition period does not commence until all documentation comprising a **complete** application has been submitted to and reviewed by the PACS office.