



2008 in the Spotlight

Submitted By Karen Fenske, Administrator

2008 started out with the buzz of change and we moved full steam ahead the entire year! We experienced the challenges of growing pains as well as the satisfaction and joy of achievements. All of the work on the 2008 Operational Plan has been achieved or reached a conclusion. Our contractors are enjoying working with us and look forward to further work. The staff members and associated contractors are beginning to truly thrive as we each work from our strengths. Cultivating a strong, positive, helpful work environment takes hard work and determination and the results are evident as we look back at all that was achieved.

We hope that you enjoy this short trip down memory lane as we share with you, "2008 in the Spotlight"

ACCREDITATION

- COABC supported the Accreditation process by:
 - Sending out Renewal Packages, planning a budget developing job descriptions for all the ISO audits, doing bookkeeping, minutes, correspondence and document management
 - Attending meetings at the Canada Organic Office.
 - Dealing with logo abuse complaints.
 - Participating in an internal Audit of the Accreditation Board.
 - Though printing a new standard for each licensee was planned, timing, copyright issues and cost have transferred the task to 2009 planning.

COMMUNICATION, PR & EDUCATION

- NEW in 2008!!!
 - The first e-news, **COABC: Keeping You Informed** was sent out in May. It has increased the communication between COABC and members/licensees leaving people feeling more informed and included.
 - The **COABC Presentation Kit** and trade show booth are now in the office. They look fantastic!! We worked with FirstBase Communications to develop professional communication tools which will further identify COABC and the BC Certified Organic Program to our target markets.
 - If you were looking for up-to-date information regarding the **Canadian Organic Regime and the National Standards** the COABC office & website and the OEA have been great sources for you.
 - To bring people together COABC has a new teleconference service to use for Committee work.

Good for You, Good for the Environment



- We have set up an **on-line Forum** which will allow Directors to communicate via computer in an organized framework
- **Team meetings** with staff and contractors were held at the Vernon office to plan, celebrate accomplishments and develop a strong team environment.

Website

- NEW in 2008!!!
 - A **Wiki**, which houses historical documents and BOD minutes is now available <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/board/doku.php>
 - You will now find on the COR page links to the “Current Canadian Regulations”
 - We use PayPal or Karelo for easy on-line registration.
 - You can find out all about the **Extension Agent** and her work on the web site.
- We provide **Cyber-help the #1 on-line organic resource** in Western Canada. It is now getting traffic from a YouTube video as well as variety of other sources.
- For up coming events throughout the province the **COABC Events page** is a great tool!
- We experimented with a new **database system** and are now in the final stages of a tool that will allow CBs to enter/edit your own data on-line.
- We are continually working to ensure that the information online is relevant and valid for your use.

BCOG

- NEW!! We hired a new BCOG team: Moss Dance of Courtney & Andrea Langlois of Victoria. They quickly fit in and did a fantastic job on their first issue!
- The BC Organic Grower went out on time 4 times in 2008!
- We are implementing an advertising contract to be used with new and current advertisers to ensure that all parties are on the same page.

Events

- COABC produced another fantastic learning and network opportunity at the **2008 Conference & AGM** in Sidney.
- COABC co-sponsored **Basic Crop VO Training** to add 9 new inspectors to the field.
- COABC has been working with COG, International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) and the Organic Trade Association to provide New Standards training.
- NEW! You now have available **table-top displays** which are available at central locations throughout the province should you have an event coming up.
- To grow the organic sector and represent you, COABC attended:
 - The **Pacific Ag Show**, the largest Western Canada Agriculture event.
 - The **Health & Wellness Fair** for staff and students at UBC-O.

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- The **meeting with the late minister**, Hon. Stan Hagen, August 7th in Abbotsford, in cooperation with BCAC BC Agriculture Council.
- **Earthday** in White Rock
- **BC Food Systems Network Annual Gathering in September in Sorrento**
- The **BCAC Gala** in February
- The **Farm Assessment Review Panel** meetings

FINANCE

- NEW! **Financial statements in a new “planning tool” format were available quarterly!**
- To seek more funding support from the government **for extension services support and organic sector capacity projects** COABC submitted a request to the BC Government budget consultation meetings and **met with BCMAL**.
- Some financial highlights include:
 - There was a **healthy surplus** at the end of 2007 & 2008
 - The time taken to put funds into term deposits resulted in **\$4000 return on investment**.
 - The Administrator **acquired a \$24,000 grant** from OFC will be used to strengthen COABC through governance development and increasing by improving COABC/Checkmark branding. The new logo was developed and PR kits for potential organic licensees and sponsors.
 - The BCOG contract was reduced to a reasonable cost.
- The **COABC Sponsorship program** got off the ground and we have our first 2 sponsors. See the website for more details.
- Staff prepared the 2008 draft Budget.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE SUPPORT

- NEW!
 - The office moved to a roomy, modern site downtown with very little increase in cost and more room for staff or contractors.
 - The staff arranged a fall planning weekend for the Board of Directors
- In general, the COABC office:
 - Managed correspondence
 - Provided secretariat BoD and Exec meetings
 - Acted as reporting liaison to the board
 - Managed insurance renewals
 - Keeps the bookkeeping in order
 - And tends to the many, many other details of such a large organization!

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- We have developed and maintained relationships with BCMAL, the Kwantlen Horticulture Department, Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association, the OFC, etc.
- Annual staff performance reviews and contract negotiations were completed.
- To increase efficiency throughout COABC a Policy framework has been drafted and further work is in progress. A Board Manual including policies is being developed.
- COABC still continues to sell bags, t-shirts, books, stickers, etc.
- Staff prepared the 2008 draft Operational plan and supported pre-AGM governance exercises by summarizing and preparing work.
- Though creating standardized forms was planned, it was decided by the Board to be handled through a different process.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- NEW! A detailed contract format and renewal process has been put in place for our regular contractors. All contractors went through a review process which resulted in some amendments to their contracts.
- COABC managed the following contracts: Webmaster/IT Office Support, BCOG, Cyber-help, Environmental Farm Planning Program, OSDP, Regional Seminar Series, Speakers, COABC Research Projects, Strategic Plan and OFC Development project.
- We also worked in tandem with the Organic Extension Agent for BC

SECTOR CONNECTIONS

COABC works to ensure organic sector representation at:

BCAC

The Organic Federation of Canada

Canada Organic Standard: CGSB Technical Committee

The Organic Agricultural Center of Canada

Growing Forward

IFOAM

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