



**CONSEIL DES  
APPELLATIONS**  
RÉSERVÉES ET DES TERMES VALORISANTS

# **Manual of specifications governing use of the designation “organic” in Québec**

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## INTRODUCTION: ORGANIC PRODUCTION STANDARDS

Since January 1, 2012, this manual of specifications governing use of the designation “organic” in Québec constitutes a certification reference manual based on the Canadian Organic Standards<sup>1</sup> published by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB).

### **Organic Production Method<sup>2</sup>**

These specifications for organic production in Québec comply with the requirements of CAN/CGSB-32.310, General Principles and Management Standards and CAN/CGSB-32.311, Permitted Substances Lists.

### **Organic Production Method in Aquaculture**

These specifications for organic aquaculture production in Québec comply with the General Principles and Management Standards and the requirements of the current Permitted Substances List CAN/CGSB-32.312.

CAN/CGSB-32.312 is recognized only for aquatic plants; the certification criteria are therefore not applicable to land plant cultivation. Land plants cannot be certified according to this standard and cannot be sold as organic in Québec. Certifying bodies can certify only algae, aquatic plants and aquaculture animals in accordance with CAN/CGSB-32.312.

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<sup>1</sup> “Canadian Organic Standards” means CAN/CGSB-32.310, CAN/CGSB-32.311 and CAN/CGSB-32.312.

<sup>2</sup> The Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) uses the term “organic production systems” in CAN/CGSB-32.310, CAN/CGSB-32.311, and CAN/CGSB-32.312 to refer to what is designated as the “organic production method” in this document.

## NORMATIVE REFERENCES

### GENERALITIES

For the purposes of this document, the following reference works contain requirements that must be taken into account and are cited in the appropriate places in the text.

In this document, please note that a dated normative reference indicates that specific edition of the reference, whereas an undated normative reference indicates the most recent edition.

### LAW AND REGULATIONS

#### Government of Canada

*Safe Food for Canadians Act (S.C. 2012, c. 24)*

*Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SOR/2018-108)*

*Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38)*

*Food and Drugs Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27)*

*Feeds Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-9)*

*Seeds Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. S-8)*

#### Government of Québec

*Act respecting reserved designations and added-value claims  
(Chap. A 20.03)*

*Regulation respecting reserved designations (Chap. A 20.03, r.2)*

*Legal notice published on December 29th, 1999 in the Gazette  
officielle du Québec, Volume 131, No. 53*

### GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

#### Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

*Certification Bodies Providing Organic Certification Services  
Under the Canada Organic Regime*

## **Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)**

CAN/CGSB-32.310-2020  
Amended March 2021

*Organic Production Systems – General Principles and Management Standards*

CAN/CGSB-32.311-2020  
Amended March 2021

*Organic Production Systems – Permitted Substances Lists*

CAN/CGSB-32.312-2018

*Organic Production Systems, Aquaculture – General Principles, Management Standards and Permitted Substances Lists*

## **OTHER DOCUMENTS**

### **Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants (CARTV)**

*Manuel des procédures du service de reconnaissance et de maintien des ARTV (Manual of procedures used by the department concerned with recognizing and maintaining reserved designations and added-value claims)*

*Regulations Pertaining to Recognition of Bodies Certifying Products from Outside Québec*

*Regulations Pertaining to Acceptance of Products Originating from Outside Québec*

*Register of Certified Products Granted Temporary Exemption*

### **Codex Alimentarius Commission**

*Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods*

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the CAN/CGSB-32.310, CAN/CGSB-32.311 and CAN/CGSB-32.312 and the following definitions apply.

<p><b>Aquatic plant</b> (<i>Plante aquatique</i>)</p>	<p>Plants growing naturally in water, totally or partially. Aquatic plants include submerged leaf plants (e.g. pondweed, water milfoil), floating plants that are rooted or non-substrate-based (e.g. water chestnuts, duckweeds, water lilies) and emerging plants (e.g. cattails, members of the genus <i>Sagittaria</i>). Aquatic plants also include algae.</p>
<p><b>Attestation of compliance</b> (<i>Attestation de conformité</i>)</p>	<p>A written document issued by a certification body confirming that the provision of a service through a particular activity taking place within the production or manufacturing process of a certified product complies with the current reference standards.</p>
<p><b>Certification</b> (<i>Certification</i>)</p>	<p>Procedure whereby an officially accredited certification body declares in writing that agricultural, aquaculture and food products comply with specified requirements. Depending on the case, certification of these products may be based on a full complement of controls providing for ongoing inspections of the production chain, quality control system audits and the examination of finished products.</p>
<p><b>Certification body</b> (<i>Organisme de certification</i>)</p>	<p>Any entity that is accredited as a certification body under the <i>Safe Food for Canadians Regulations</i> or accredited by the CARTV, which is responsible for the organic certification of food commodities and for the certification of packaging or labelling of organic products.</p>
<p><b>Certified product</b> (<i>Produit certifié</i>)</p>	<p>Any product subject to certification intended for consumption or processing (as an ingredient) and distributed by the business responsible for ensuring that the product meets the requirements upon which the certification is based.</p>
<p><b>Compliance certificate</b> (<i>Certificat de conformité</i>)</p>	<p>Official document issued by a certification body attesting that an organic product has met requirements applying to its production, preparation, packaging or any other operation leading to a change in its labelling.</p>
<p><b>Enterprise / Business</b> (<i>Entreprise</i>)</p>	<p>Legal entity: a farm that holds an NIM number (ministerial identification number), or a natural or legal person that holds an NEQ (Québec enterprise number) or any other registration under which it identifies itself in the exercise of its activities in Québec, that produces or prepares an organic product on its own behalf or on behalf of others, or has it produced or prepared on its behalf.</p> <p>An enterprise / business may include one or more operating sites.</p>

<b>Inspection</b> ( <i>Inspection</i> )	Evaluation of a product, process, service, facility to determine its compliance with specific requirements.
<b>Label</b> ( <i>Étiquetage</i> )	A small document apposed on or attached to a product, providing the information required in this specification.
<b>Labeling</b> ( <i>Étiquetage</i> )	Mentions, brands, marks, images or signs related to a product and shown on a label, poster, packaging or display, independently of how the are affixed.
<b>Marketing</b> ( <i>Commercialisation</i> )	The commercial operations of a business, that is, all operations involved in putting its products and services onto the market.
<b>Operation site</b> ( <i>Site d'exploitation</i> )	Operation location within a specific geographical area and including grounds and premises, or both, used to supply certified products.
<b>Organic</b> ( <i>Biologique</i> )	Labelling term that denotes products that have been produced in accordance with organic production standards and certified as such by a duly accredited certification body.
<b>Organic integrity</b> ( <i>Intégrité biologique</i> )	The maintenance of the inherent organic qualities of a product from receipt of ingredients through to the point of final sale, in accordance with the requirements of this manual of specifications.
<b>Organic product</b> ( <i>Produit biologique</i> )	<p>A food commodity that has been certified as organic under subsection 345(1) of the <i>Safe Food for Canadians Regulations</i> or certified as organic by an entity accredited by a foreign state that is referred to in subparagraph 357(1)(a)(ii) of these Regulations.</p> <p>Food commodity definition under the <i>Safe Food for Canadians Act</i>:</p> <p>a) <i>food</i> as defined in section 2 of the Food and Drugs Act: includes any article manufactured, sold or represented for use as food or drink for human beings, chewing gum, and any ingredient that may be mixed with food for any purpose whatever;.</p> <p>b) any animal or plant, or any of its parts, from which food referred to in paragraph (a) may be derived;</p> <p>c) anything prescribed to be a food commodity.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (c), the following are prescribed food commodities:</p> <p>a) <i>feed</i> as defined in section 2 of the Feeds Act;</p> <p>b) <i>seed</i> as defined in section 2 of the Seeds Act.</p>

	<p>Section 2 of the Feeds Act:</p> <p><b>Feed:</b> Any substance or mixture of substances containing amino acids, anti-oxidants, carbohydrates, condiments, enzymes, fats, minerals, non-protein nitrogen products, proteins or vitamins, or pelletizing, colouring, foaming or flavouring agents and any other substance manufactured, sold or represented for use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) for consumption by livestock,</li> <li>b) for providing the nutritional requirements of livestock, or</li> <li>c) for the purpose of preventing or correcting nutritional disorders of livestock.</li> </ul> <p>or any substance for use in any such substance or mixture of substances;</p> <p>Section 2 of the Seeds Act:</p> <p><b>Seed:</b> Any plant part of any species belonging to the plant kingdom, represented, sold or used to grow a plant.</p>
<p><b>Packaging</b> (<i>Conditionnement</i>)</p>	<p>Operation carried out by a business which, in order to offer an organic product for sale, obtains certified products from one or more suppliers, divides or groups them, and then repackages or rebottles them, or simply offers them in bulk or relabelled. As a result, changes are made to the original labelling of these certified products without the product having been processed.</p>
<p><b>Precertification</b> (<i>Précertification</i>)</p>	<p>Attestation applied to agricultural businesses being newly monitored by a certification body during the last year of their transition period.</p> <p>This attestation, which is issued only in Québec, cannot be the subject of organic product sales agreements or used for promotional purposes.</p>
<p><b>Prepackaged</b> (<i>Préemballé</i>)</p>	<p>"<b>prepackaged</b>" in respect of a food, means packaged in a container in the manner in which the food is ordinarily sold to - or used or purchased by - a person, and includes consumer prepackaged. According to <i>Safe Food for Canadians Regulations</i> (SOR/2018-108).</p> <p>("Package" means an inner or outer receptacle or covering used or to be used in connection with a food commodity and includes a wrapper or confining band.)</p>
<p><b>Preparation</b> (<i>Préparation</i>)</p>	<p>In the case of organic products, preparation includes postharvest handling, manufacturing, transformation, processing, storage and slaughter operations including labelling or packaging operations of the said prepared product.</p>
<p><b>Production</b> (<i>Production</i>)</p>	<p>All operations undertaken to supply agricultural products in the state in which they occur on the farm, including initial packaging and labelling.</p>



<b>Traceability</b> <i>(Traçabilité)</i>	Monitoring procedure to trace a food or a feed represented as organic or any product containing organic ingredients, through all stages of production, preparation and distribution, upstream and downstream.
<b>Voucher</b> <b>(Document commercial)</b>	Document prepared upon conclusion of an operation (purchase, sale, etc.) destined at keeping record of this operation.

**PART 1:  
BUSINESSES SUBJECT TO THE MANUAL OF SPECIFICATIONS  
AND RELATED OBLIGATIONS**

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## 1. Legal and regulatory framework

### 1.1 Act Respecting Reserved Designations and Added-Value Claims

1.1.1 In 2006, the Québec government passed the *Act Respecting Reserved Designations and Added-Value Claims* (Chap. A-20.02) (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”). This legislation, which replaced the 1996 *Act respecting reserved designations*, was enacted to control designations assigned to agricultural and food products as an attestation of their production method, terroir or specificity. Another objective of this legislation is to monitor the use of these designations.

1.1.2 Section 63 of the Act stipulates that: “A person may not use a recognized reserved designation or authorized added-value claim on a product, its packaging or its labelling, in advertising or commercial documents or in the presentation of a product unless the person is registered with an accredited certification body and the product is certified by such a body as compliant with the applicable specification manual or regulation.

A person to whom a specification manual or a regulation authorizing an added-value claim applies or whose activities are regulated by such a manual or regulation and who contravenes the first paragraph is guilty of an offence and is liable to the fines set out in Section 68.”

### 1.2 Recognition of the term “organic” by the Minister

On February 1, 2000, the term “organic” became a reserved designation in Québec pursuant to legal notice 33336 published on December 29, 1999 in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*, Volume 131, No. 53. The *Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants* (CARTV) was mandated by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to supervise this designation.

The CARTV is a competent authority that has jurisdiction over food products bearing a reserved designation or an added-value claim sold in Québec under the powers conferred upon it by the provincial Act.

The conditions governing this reserved designation specify that the product must comply with specifications whose standards are at least as stringent as those set forth in the *Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods*, adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program.

### 1.3 Regulation respecting reserved designations

Recognition of the designation “organic” confirms the CARTV approval of a manual of specifications for organic products, for their compliance with the requirements of Section 1.1. of the *Regulation respecting reserved designations (Chap. A 20.03, r.2)*, which reads as follows: “In the case of a reserved designation relating to a method of production, the product must result from a comprehensive system of cultivation, breeding or processing, whose standards make it possible to achieve distinctive objectives.”

### 1.4 Scope of the Act pertaining to the designation “organic”

For the purposes of applying the Act, any product included within the decree respecting reserved “organic” designations, any of whose operations is carried out by a business located in Québec, or is available for sale in Québec, must meet the stipulated certification conditions if it is intended to be sold or marketed as “organic.”

The products and services covered by the designation “organic” are as follows:

#### 1.4.1 Agricultural and aquaculture products and foodstuff intended for human consumption or livestock feed:

- a) Plant products: products grown in fields, greenhouses and nurseries; plants harvested in the wild and in forested areas; seeds and plant propagating material; maple products. Algae and aquatic plants under aquaculture.
- b) Animal products: meat, milk and eggs, insects, aquaculture and beekeeping products.
- c) Livestock feed.
- d) Processed products: processed products derived from crops and livestock intended for human use or consumption, and processed products intended for animal use and consumption. These products include foods and alcoholic beverages from preparation.

Exclusions: cannabis (cultivation and products)<sup>3</sup>, natural health products, cosmetics and body care products, textiles and pet food.

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<sup>3</sup> The production, distribution and sale of edible cannabis, as regards public health and safety, are mainly governed at the federal level by the *Cannabis Act* and the *Cannabis Regulations*. The *Food and Drugs Act* and its regulations do not apply to edible cannabis except in certain situations.

#### 1.4.2 Products contributing to the production system (inputs):

These products or their components must comply with the list of permitted substances contained in the document *Permitted Substances List (CAN/CGSB 32.311)* or CAN/CGSB 32.312 published by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB). These products must be approved (with written proof) by a CARTV-accredited certification body and, if applicable, may include an attestation of compliance stating that they are “approved for organic agriculture/aquaculture” or “approved for organic production/processing.” This attestation is valid for one year and is only valid within Québec.

#### 1.4.3 Contracted services:

Services such as slaughtering, transportation and storage of organic products, cutting of animal carcasses, or seed classification and screening may be performed by a supplier at the request of a customer who retains ownership of the product.

To guarantee or maintain a product’s organic integrity, if these services are not included in the customer’s organic plan and consequently not inspected as part of the certification of its product, they must be approved by an accredited certification body if the product is subject to certification in accordance with the requirements of the applicable Canadian Organic Standards (CAN/CGSB-32.310, CAN/CGSB-32.311 and CAN/CGSB-32.312).

These services must be subject to an attestation of compliance issued by an accredited certification body confirming that the services offered by the supplier are “approved for (identification of service type).” The attestation of compliance for a service is valid for one year in Canada.

## 2. Requirements for controlling and marketing organic products

### 2.1 Acceptance of organic products

Products identified as organic that are covered under the Act as it refers to the organic designation may be marketed in Québec under the following conditions:

2.1.1 Products that are subject to any operations implied by the designation<sup>4</sup> must be certified by one of the certification bodies accredited or recognized by the CARTV for the designation “organic.”

2.1.2 Products from outside of Québec must be certified by:

- a) a certification body that appears on the list of accredited bodies published by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in accordance with the Canadian Organic Standards;

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<sup>4</sup> <https://inspection.canada.ca/organic-products/operating-manual/eng/1389199079075/1554143470958?chap=8>

- b) a certification body recognized under a trade agreement between Canada and a competent foreign authority; or
  - c) a certification body recognized by the CARTV in accordance with the Regulations Pertaining to Recognition of Bodies Certifying Products from Outside Québec.
- 2.1.3 Any food product whose packaging – apart from the list of ingredients – claims 70% - 95% organic ingredients, excluding water (H<sub>2</sub>O) and salt (NaCl), must be certified by one of the above-mentioned bodies during the product’s production or processing.
- 2.1.4 Any organic ingredient included in a prepared product whose label mentions organic content must first be certified by one of the above-mentioned bodies.
- 2.1.5 All products, listed according to type or range of products, produced from organic farming intended to be sold in Québec and within the scope determined by the CARTV, must be registered on a certificate issued by a CARTV-accredited or recognized certification body or by a certification body whose name appears on the list of accredited or recognized bodies published by the CFIA. A certificate must be granted to each business involved in production, preparation or packaging/labelling operations.

In order for organic products to be sold in Québec, regardless of their origin, their labelling must meet the requirements pertaining to labelling, advertising, display materials and commercial documents stipulated by the CARTV and published on its website (Part 2 of this manual of specifications).

## 2.2 Prohibitions

Marketing of products bearing the term “organic” is prohibited in the following situations:

- 2.2.1 the product contains less than 95% organic ingredients;
- 2.2.2 the product does not meet the requirements outlined in this manual of specifications;
- 2.2.3 the certification body that issued the certificate is not accredited or recognized by the CARTV, is not recognized under an equivalency agreement between Canada and a foreign competent authority or does not appear on the list of accredited or recognized bodies published by the CFIA;
- 2.2.4 the compliance certificate has been revoked or suspended by the certification body, following voluntary relinquishing by the business or decision by the certification body;
- 2.2.5 the product was certified by an accredited certification body the scope of whose certification program does not cover the category of products concerned;
- 2.2.6 the product comes from a production system that is under organic transition;
- 2.2.7 the same ingredient is found both in organic and non-organic form in the same product.
- 2.2.8 the term “organic” is used in the list of ingredients – if the product only contains one ingredient (single-ingredient product) – unless the product is duly certified.

### 3. **Businesses that market agricultural, aquaculture and food products produced using the organic production method**

#### 3.1 Businesses responsible for the production or preparation of organic products that are required to obtain a certificate of organic compliance

Any business, whether located in or outside Québec, that is involved in the production or preparation of an agricultural, aquaculture or food product must be evaluated by an accredited certification body so that the product can be certified.

Before offering a product for sale with the claim that its content is partially or completely organic, a business – regardless of whether it is a producer, processor, merchant, wholesaler, distributor or retailer, or a natural or legal person – must obtain a certificate for the product stating the name of the accredited certification body .

This means that a business must request organic certification if it:

- 3.1.1 Sells under its trade name (business or corporate name) or trademark or on behalf of a third party a product resulting from production or preparation; *or*
- 3.1.2 Trades in or acquires agricultural, aquaculture or organic food products and prepares them (in particular, by dividing or grouping them) or modifies their packaging or labelling. (Brokerage activities are not subject to organic certification when organic integrity is maintained); *or*
- 3.1.3 Sells under its trade name (business or corporate name) or trademark or on behalf of a third party a product that contains only one ingredient (single-ingredient product) resulting from a production, preparation or repackaging operation that lists this organic ingredient in the list of ingredients; *or*
- 3.1.4 Prepares private label products and is not covered by the certification of the trademark owner.

#### 3.2 Distributors and retailers of organic products

3.2.1 Any business that, as a distributor or retailer, acquires prepackaged organic agricultural, aquaculture or food products, from Québec or elsewhere, in order to re-sell them unaltered to consumers, is not required to apply for certification of such products if it does not compromise their organic integrity.

3.2.2 Businesses referred to in paragraph 3.2.1 that trade or sell organic products in Québec must:

- a) Provide, in a reasonable time, a valid organic compliance certificate issued by an accredited certification body for the products in question when asked to do so by the surveillance service of the CARTV;
- b) Ensure that all commercial documents supporting these transactions clearly state that the products concerned have been certified by a certification body;

- c) Ensure that this certification body appears on: i) the list of CARTV-accredited certification bodies when the product originates from Québec; or ii) the list of certification bodies recognized by the CARTV for an aquaculture product from outside Québec; or iii) the list of certification bodies accredited or recognized by the CFIA when the product originates from outside Québec;
      - d) Before marketing the products, ensure that they comply with the labelling requirements published by the CARTV.
  - 3.2.3 Certified products from a business that no longer holds a compliance certificate (voluntary withdrawal) for the aforementioned products may be sold in Québec within 12 months following the date of withdrawal of the compliance certificate, provided that the business concerned informs the certification body and the CARTV how and when its stock of organic products will be sold (amounts, timelines, customer lists, etc.). Products must be recorded in a register (*Registre de suivi*) for monitoring purposes. The CARTV must be regularly provided with a sales update. The products in question must not have been deemed non-compliant by the certification body. The business is also required to notify its customers. Only under these conditions can the product be deemed certified.
  - 3.2.4. Regardless of their origin, all certified products must be recertified by a CARTV-accredited or recognized certification body whenever the distributor or retailer carries out any of the following actions before offering it for sale as organic:
    - a) Modifies its packaging during repackaging operations (splitting, rewrapping, bottling, repackaging, etc.), including single-ingredient products;
    - b) Modifies the labelling in such manner as it no longer mentions the supplier's or certification body's name on the certified product's label or transaction documents;
    - c) Modifies an organic product for the purpose of producing a new product (except for products that comply with Section 5.1.b));
- 3.3 Importers of organic products in Québec
- 3.3.1 Acceptance of organic products from outside Québec (provinces, territories or countries) is subject to the CARTV requirements set out in the *Regulations Pertaining to Acceptance of Products Coming from Outside Québec* and the CFIA requirements for organic product certification.
  - 3.3.2 Before putting organic products on the market, importers must ensure that the products meet labelling requirements for Québec published by the CARTV.
  - 3.3.3 An importer must be able to demonstrate the traceability of any organic product it imports. In addition, a business that applies for certification of a product containing imported ingredients must demonstrate to the certification body the traceability of these products.



## 4. Exemptions

### 4.1 Exemptions granted under the designation “organic” in Québec

In exceptional cases or in the event of *force majeure*, Québec businesses may obtain from the CARTV an exemption from the current Canadian organic standards.

Such an exemption would be granted by the CARTV under its internal bylaws set out in the *Manuel des procédures du service de reconnaissance et de maintien des ARTV*.

Products resulting from an exemption granted by the CARTV may be sold only in Québec.

### 4.2 In the event of revocation of a certification body’s accreditation

Starting from the date of the CARTV revocation notice, Québec-based businesses that manufacture products certified by a certification body whose accreditation has been revoked must:

4.2.1 Within three months, submit an application to another accredited certification body for the designation “organic” in order to obtain a new certification for its products. The compliance certificate holder affected by this measure must, upon request, provide the CARTV with a letter of intent to transfer the certification of its products, as well as a copy of its new certification documents once they have been issued by the new accredited certification body.

4.2.2 Remove its organic products from inventory within six months. These products must be recorded in the *Register of Certified Products Granted Temporary Exemption*. Any Québec-based retailers, distributors and processors still possessing these products must remove them from inventory within 12 months of the date the notification was sent to retailers, distributors and processors and to the accredited certification bodies. Residual stock bearing the designation “organic” may not be sold after this end of this 12-month period.

## 5. Products not eligible for certification

Processed products containing less than 70% organic ingredients are not eligible for certification. For these products in this category, the use of the term “organic” or any other derivative term is prohibited everywhere except in the list of ingredients written on the product’s label. However, in order to be labelled “organic,” these ingredients must be certified organic.

## 6. Businesses exempt from obtaining a certificate of organic conformity

- 6.1 Prepared and cooked dishes presented in the form of meals offered directly to consumers in ready-to-serve portions (food service establishments, caterers, personal chefs, grocery stores with salad bars, etc.) and sold with the claim that they are organic are not subject to certification. However, establishments are required to use organic ingredients at all times when the designation is mentioned and must be able to demonstrate it at any time. Prepared, packaged and labelled dishes made available to consumers for take-out are however subject to certification.
- 6.2 Businesses that sell certified agricultural, aquaculture and food products bearing the designation “organic” are exempt from the requirement to obtain an organic compliance certificate:
  - 6.2.1 If, at the sites where these products are sold, they only carry out minor operations on these products (dividing into portions, slicing, cutting into pieces), at the request of the customer and in their presence, such that they do not process the products, alter their integrity or strip them of their original label.
  - 6.2.2 If they sell in bulk, as is, organic fruit or vegetables fitted with per unit labels complying with art. 2.1.3, Part 2 of the specification.
  - 6.2.3 *For certified organic whole loaves of bread whose cooking is completed onsite by said businesses*, if they use only unit packages containing all necessary information on the certification identifying the certified product. The packages should have been provided to the businesses in exact quantities by a supplier holding an organic compliance certificate for such products. Businesses exempted from obtaining an organic compliance certificate cannot add any additional information pertaining to certification and must clearly record the purchase and sale of certified products registered at the store’s checkouts.

However, it is recommended that these businesses comply with a code of good practice, especially when they concurrently sell similar products that are not labelled as organic.

Businesses that prepare and market products exempt from certification may nevertheless be subject to an inspection by a CARTV supervisory agent, in order to check whether claims used are truthful.

**PART 2:  
REQUIREMENTS FOR LABELLING, ADVERTISING AND TRANSACTION  
DOCUMENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL, AQUACULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTS**

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## 1. Indications regarding organic methods of production

- 1.1 Products are deemed to bear information referring to organic production when these products or their ingredients are identified using the following indications on labels and in advertising or commercial documents:
  - 1.1.1 “biologique,” “organique” and “organic.”
  - 1.1.2 The terms “cultivé biologiquement” or “organically grown,” “élevé biologiquement” or “organically raised” and “produit biologiquement” or “organically produced” and any similar reference, including abbreviations of, symbols for and phonetic renderings of these terms that lead retailers and consumers to infer that a product is derived from organic farming (under the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations*).
  - 1.1.3 A PLU code beginning with 9 on a fruit or vegetable. Since the use of the PLU code is optional, if it is present on a product, all the criteria in this manual of specifications must be met.
- 1.2 Section 1.1 does not apply when these terms are used for products that do not fall within the scope of the Act.

## 2. Required information, permitted references and prohibited references on labels of agricultural, aquaculture and food products covered by the organic designation

- 2.1 All certified products having labels that use the term “organic” or any of the derivative terms indicated in Section 1.1 of this part must be properly identified before being placed on sale. The following information must appear both on the product labelling:
  - 2.1.1 Prepackaged organic products (including fruit and vegetables) and organic products shipped in bulk:
    - a) The usual trade name of a business<sup>5</sup> to which an accredited certification body has issued an organic compliance certificate for the product.
    - b) Identification of the certification body (the body’s full name, or its acronym or trademark clearly indicating its name, which may also be clearly written in a logo) to which the business is subject, shown in a clear and legible manner<sup>6</sup>;
    - c) The batch number, if applicable.

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<sup>5</sup> “Usual trade name” means the usual name under which the business operates. This name is known and public and appears on purchase orders or other commercial documents. It is normally the name or names that a business uses and under which it identifies itself in the exercise of its activities in Québec. In the case of a private-label product, the identification code (assigned by the certification body) of the manufacturer holding an organic compliance certificate is also accepted on the product’s packaging or label.

<sup>6</sup> The statement “certified by” or “certified organic by” immediately followed by the name of the certification body or its logo, provided that the logo clearly identifies the name of the certification body may be added. Display of the certification body’s logo and contact information on the label of the finished product is optional.

### 2.1.2 Organic products sold in bulk by certified organic retailers:

- a) If the signage accompanying a bulk product bears the words "organic", the identifier of the certification body (whether the full name, acronym, trademark or logo including one of these terms) to which the company is subject must also appear clearly and legibly.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.1.3 Unit labelling of organic fruit and vegetables

- a) Only a business holding a certificate of conformity is authorized to label organic fruit and vegetables. However, it is not obliged to do so.
- b) However, the fruit or vegetable unit label is compulsory for products sold by companies covered by the exemption provided for in article 6.2.2 of part 1 of these specifications. This unit label must have been affixed by the certificate of conformity holder and must include at least the following information:
  - The trade name of the company<sup>8</sup> to which a certificate of conformity for the product has been issued by an accredited certification body, or the product trademark.
  - The identifier of the certification body (whether full name, acronym, trademark or logo including one of these terms) to which the company is subject, clearly and legibly marked<sup>9</sup>;

## 2.2 The permitted references and indications according to the product category are as follows:

**2.2.1 Product containing 95% or more organic ingredients** (by weight or by volume, excluding salt and water): The term "organic" or any of the terms mentioned in Section 1.1 displayed on the label, the packaging (and all related commercial documents). Product certification by an accredited certification body is mandatory. The name of the certification body that certified the product (whether the full name, acronym or trademark of the body clearing indicating its name) using a legible and proportional font. The term "certified by" may be indicated if it is immediately followed by the name of the certification body.

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<sup>7</sup> The statement "certified by" or "certified organic by" may be added, followed immediately by the name of the certification body or its logo, provided the latter clearly identifies the name of the certification body. The presence of the certification body's logo and contact details on the label of the finished product is optional.

<sup>8</sup> A trade name is the usual name under which the company does business. This name is known and public and appears on purchase orders or other commercial documents. Usually, it is the name by which the company identifies itself in the course of its activities in Quebec. The identification code (assigned by the certification body) of the holder of the organic certificate of conformity manufacturing a private label product is also accepted on the product's packaging or labeling.

<sup>9</sup> The statement "certified by" or "certified organic by" may be added, followed immediately by the name of the certification body or its logo, provided the latter clearly identifies the name of the certification body. The presence of the certification body's logo and contact details on the label of the finished product is optional.

- 2.2.2 **Product containing between 70% and 95% organic ingredients:** The claim “contains X% organic ingredients” on the product’s packaging. Product certification by an accredited certification body is mandatory. The name of the certification body that certified the product (whether the full name, acronym or trademark of the body clearing indicating its name) using a legible and proportional font. The term “certified by” may be indicated if it is immediately followed by the name of the certification body. The percentage of organic content must be rounded down to the next whole number.
- 2.2.3 **Product containing less than 70% organic ingredients:** Only the identification of organic ingredients in the list of ingredients of such products is permitted. Organic ingredients must be displayed with the same font, style and size. These ingredients must, however, be certified by a certification body. However, the verification of these organic ingredients in the final product by an accredited certification body is not required.
- 2.2.4 Under Section 353 (3) of the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations*, the list of ingredients shown on the label of a multi-ingredient food commodity that is not an organic product may indicate which of the ingredients are organic ingredients.<sup>10</sup> This section does not apply to single-ingredient products. Thus, for any product that contains a single ingredient that is claimed to be organic, the term “organic” cannot be used in the list of ingredients without certification.

### 2.3 Prohibited references

In addition to the prohibitions set out under section 2.2 of Part I, the following references may not appear on the label attached to the product packaging, on related commercial documents, or on any other material:

- 2.3.1 The term “organic” or other reference to organic production for the product or one of its ingredients when the product contains less than 70% organic ingredients from organic agriculture or aquaculture.
- 2.3.2 The term “organic” or other reference to organic production claimed anywhere on the product packaging for a single-ingredient product from organic agriculture or aquaculture if the production, preparation or packaging operation (including bulk sale) of this product is not certified.
- 2.3.3 The expression “100% organic,” “(product name) 100% organic,” “100% (product name) organic” or another percentage when the product contains between 95% and 100% organic ingredients from organic agriculture or aquaculture.
- 2.3.4 The expression “verified by” and the trademark of the accredited certification body which, if applicable, (voluntarily) verified a product containing less than 70% organic ingredients.

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<sup>10</sup> Organic ingredients must be displayed with the same font, style and size. They must be certified by an accredited certification body. An ingredient cannot be listed in an organic form and a nonorganic form in a product. In addition, all ingredients must be listed in accordance with current regulations, without giving priority to organic ingredients.

- 2.3.5 Expressions such as “produced during a period of transition to organic production,” “produced during organic transition,” “produced during organic conversion,” “produced during organic pre-certification” or any other similar wording referring to organic transition or organic pre-certification granted to the business before its products are certified organic.
- 2.3.6 Any information enabling the business to make multipurpose use of the same packaging, which may contain organic foods or non-organic foods.
- 2.4 Trademarks referring to the designation “organic”
  - 2.4.1 Any business that markets an agricultural, aquaculture or food product under a trademark it owns must ensure that no confusion surrounding the use of the designation “organic” is created by the labelling, advertising, or display of the product.
  - 2.4.2 Trademarks, including business names, that refer explicitly or implicitly to the designation “organic” (see section 1.1. of Part 2) must not be used in or on the label, packaging, advertising and other means of presenting a product that has not been certified pursuant to these specifications.

### **3. Indications regarding inputs and services approved by a certification body**

- 3.1 When an input has been approved by an accredited certification body, the only reference authorized in related advertising, labelling, display material or commercial documents is the following: “approved for organic agriculture/aquaculture/production/processing,” followed by the certification body's name. Use of the term “organic” in the input’s name or identification is prohibited. When the certification body’s trademark or certification mark are used, they must include the reference “input approved for organic agriculture/aquaculture” or “input approved for organic processing.”

No reference to the Canada Organic Regime (use of the CFIA’s trademark or any reference to the CFIA) may be made on the above-mentioned documents to indicate the certification requirements according to which the input has been evaluated.

- 3.2 When a service has been approved by an accredited certification body, the only reference authorized in related publicity or commercial documents is the following: “approved for organic (identification of the type of service)” followed by the certification body's name. When the certification body’s trademark or certification mark is used, it must include the reference “service approved for organic production”.
- 3.3 Trademarks of accredited certification bodies must be different from marks of conformity used to indicate product conformity. The fonts used for these seals must not emphasize one term more than another.

#### **4. Advertising**

- 4.1 Mandatory information or claims that are allowed on a food label may also be used in advertising, an announcement or any other display material. The use of information that is prohibited on labels is also prohibited in advertising messages, display material, ads, brochures, websites, etc.
- 4.2 The use of the term “organic” or the expression “certified organic” as well as any other derivative terms (in accordance with Section 1.1) used to identify a legal person or a type of operation provided by a business (e.g. organic farm, organic farmer, organic farming, organic breeding, organic cuisine, etc.) is allowed in advertising and on display material only when all products resulting from this operation are certified as compliant with certifications requirements applicable to products in this category.

#### **5. Business developers that market organic products**

- 5.1 Organizations that promote businesses that market products using the designation “organic” are subject to the Act, even if they do not themselves sell such products. This is because they may be a party to an offence committed by another person whose products they are promoting. They are thus liable to the same penalty under Section 67 of the Act.
- 5.2 Consequently, they must ensure that the information they disseminate does not contain any claim that could mislead the public.
- 5.3 Their physical or electronic publications, including those disseminated on the Web, must include information that is not likely to be incorrect, or if this is impossible to guarantee, take reasonable steps to ensure that those who access these publications are informed of this likelihood and of ways to access an update of the information published.