

# BC Certified Organic Program Kootenay Organic Growers Society

## Organic Crop Farm Plan Guide For Initial Applications

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### Introduction

COABC Organic Production Management Standards require farmers to maintain an organic land and crop management register. Properly completing this Farm Plan (coupled with subsequent yearly updates) will provide the necessary information required for a crop management register. Though it may seem intimidating at first, the Farm Plan can be a useful tool to help you become a better organic farmer and to speed your way through the certification process.

Use this guide to assist in completing the Organic Crop Initial Farm Plan. Numbers in the guide correspond to numbers in the Farm Plan. Provide as much information as possible. The Certification Committee (CC) will decide your certification status, but they will never see your farm. The more information you can give, the easier it will be for the CC to make their decision.

Abbreviations used:

- CB is Certification Body (the people you got this application from.)
- VO is Verification Officer – an independent contractor who inspects your farm at the request of your certification body. The VO makes a report to the Certification Committee of the Certification Body. A copy of this report is sent to you, but the VO does not certify your farm.
- CC is Certification Committee the group your certification body authorizes to make decisions about certification. The Certification Committee examines your farm plan and the VO report and then decides whether you qualify for certification. Sometimes the CC sets conditions you must meet for certification.

### Section A General Information

1. Name of the person completing the Farm Plan. The person responsible for this operation. This must be person who is authorized to be responsible for management of this operation.
2. It is helpful for office procedures if your farm has a name.
3. Date the form is completed.
4. Postal mailing address.
5. Site address and a good description of how to find your farm.
6. You may fit more than one telephone number here
7. Provide your fax number even if it is the same as home telephone number.
8. Current email address
9. If you employ a manager, include his or her name
10. Please answer this question honestly, as most CBs share public information (client list)
11. The CC is trying to get an accurate picture of you and your farm - this question adds to that picture.
12. The VO will confirm your answer to this question.

13. We need to know everything you do on your farm so there are no surprises later in the certification process. If you produce & plan to sell as organic: Mushrooms, Honey, Sprouts, Livestock, or Poultry please request the appropriate forms from your CB
14. These jurisdictions require different certification standards and procedures. Your certification agency will let you know if they need more information for certification that will allow you to export to these areas. It is important that this information is provided at the start of the certification process.
15. You may fill in more than one box. Provide as much information as possible. If you want to certify other products such as mushrooms, sprouts, honey, or poultry or livestock you need another application form which you can request from your certifying body.
16. When an operator is running an organic system concurrently with a non-organic system (organic potatoes but non-organic beef, for instance) it is called a "Split Operation." Household amounts of non-organic production are not considered a Split Operation. If you sell your non-organic production, then you are running a Split Operation and must provide additional information. If you don't already have a "Split Operation Form," request one from your certification body.
17. Environmental Farm Plans are free, and they are useful tools for organic farmers to assess the environmental impact of their farming practices. Contact the COABC for more information.
18. Environmental protection is a crucial element of organic principles - CBs need to ensure organic farmers are doing their utmost to preserve and enhance the environment.
19. Provide as much information as possible.
20. If you do not store manure or compost, please indicate this.
21. Tensiometer/monitoring indicates moisture use in the soil.

### Section B Land Base Information

22. List your entire land base so that the numbers add up.
23. This table asks you to identify all your fields.

Definitions:

- **Farm:** All property managed by applicant including leased property and non-organically farmed property.
- **Site:** A group of adjacent properties (legal lot description) managed by the 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.

Most farmers break their farms into separate fields for ease of farming. Fences, bush, or hedges usually separate fields, but fields can also be contiguous - in this case, do your best to identify separate fields on your maps and by physical markers on the ground. Use an identification and numbering system that makes sense to you as the numbers you use will be used as reference for many items over the course of many years in recordkeeping, certification status, on your maps and rotation information. Give every site a name. Give every separate field a number, regardless of which site they are located - don't use the same field numbers on different sites. Provide your best estimate of acreage and the legal description from your tax assessment. Let the CB know how long you've owned this field and whether you want it included in your certification. See example below:

Site name	Field #	Acre/ha	Location and lot # (legal address)	How long owned or managed by you?	Applying for Certification? Y or N
Home Place	1	40 acres	Lot 9157 Skeena	16 yrs	Y
Bowie Place	2	170 acres	Lot 5754	2 yrs	Y

			Skeena		
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*For the crops to be sold as "certified organic, COABC organic standards require land to undergo a three year transition period from the last use of prohibited materials, during which time there has been appropriate soil building. At least one year of this period must be while the land is in an organic certification program (Section 3.3.2).*

24. The VO will wish to see your lease or rental agreement.

25. This table asks you to describe the fields you identified in table 24. List all your fields from table 24 as well as the activity in each field for the last 3 years. To make this easier, you may group fields together if their history is the same (i.e. hayfields or pasture). The previous use column is asking what the field was used for before three years ago - answer as best you can. If you need more room, use the space at the end of this form or send the information to your CB in another attachment. Though this question will take some time to complete, it is crucial to determining your certification status. A CB can only supply certification based on actual field records. The verification officer will try to confirm this information and CB may ask for additional documentation. If you have not owned or controlled use of the property for the last three years provide this information signed by the previous owner or manager. See example below:

Year	Field(s) #	Previous Use	Materials including fertilisers, pesticides and/or herbicides applied	Date(s) of application
2001	1,3,4,10	Hay and pasture	Roundup, 20-10-0	April/May 2001
2002	1,3,4,10		None	
2003	1,3,4,10		10 tons Manure	November 2003

26. Your CB may require residue testing for transgenic material.

27. You must get permission from your certifying body if you import soil, because of possibilities that the imported soil may contain contaminants (section 3.1.2). If you answer yes here, indicate what the soil was used for.

28. Bio-solids from wastewater treatment are prohibited in organic production. (section 3.9.4) You may not grow organic crops on your septic drainage field, either (section 3.1.1). There are two areas of concern – contaminants (such as heavy metals) in the waste stream and the danger of pathogens on crops.

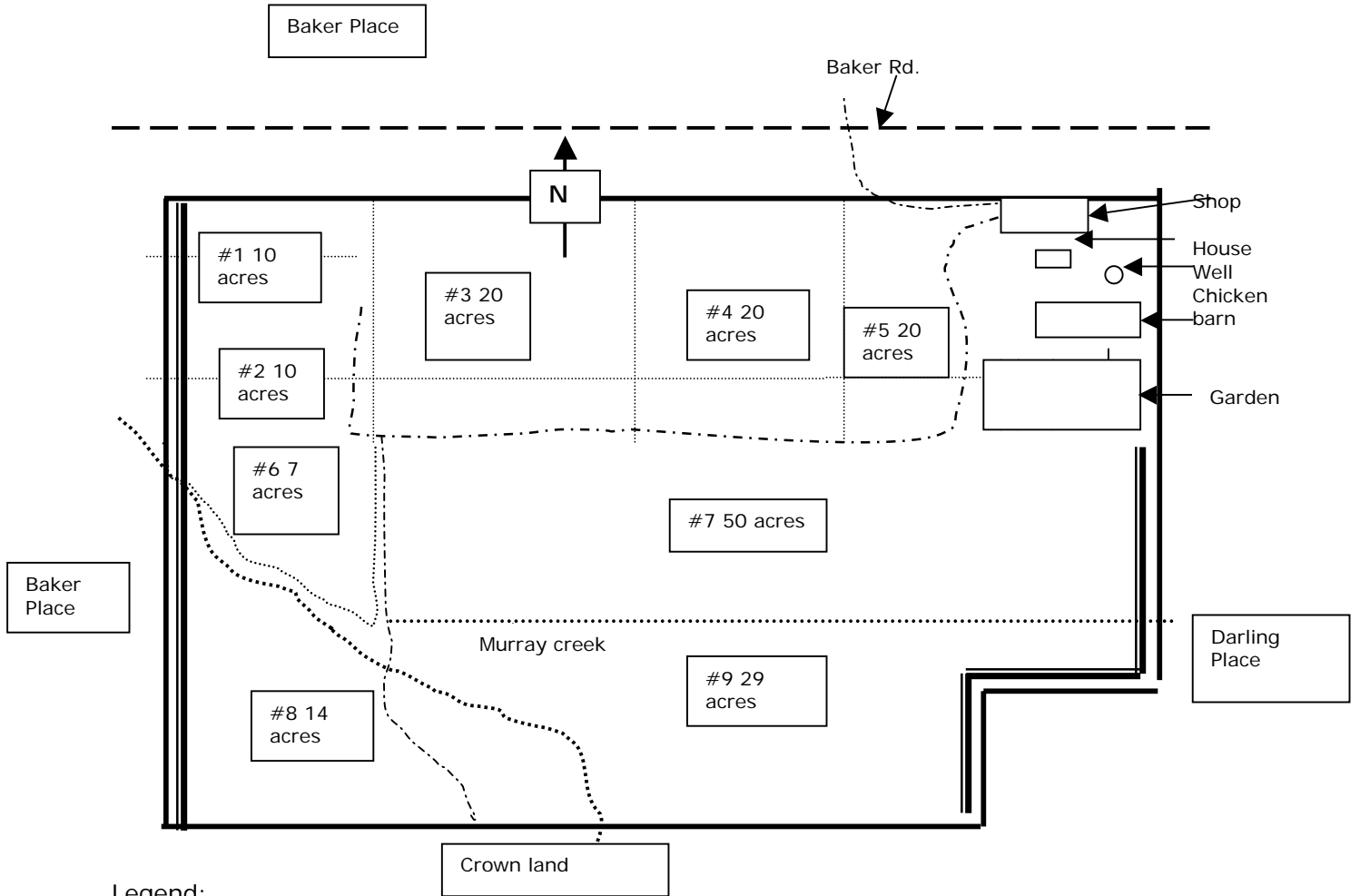
29. Farm maps are one of the biggest areas of contention between organic farmers and CBs. CBs need maps to understand the farm, but farmers are not cartographers or artists. Spend some time to make proper maps for your CB or you will be asked to re-do them. Maps must be no larger than 8\_ X 11 (standard writing paper) and can be orientated either landscape or portrait style. If you cannot cram all the detail on to one page, then make more than one map. Use graph paper to make it easier for yourself. Maps do not have to be to scale - note the buildings in the example below are much larger than they should be. North points toward the top of the page on most maps. Maps should show all relevant features of your farm:

- Fences and roadways, rail lines, buildings, Corrals, Wells
- Fields with Field number and size, Garden areas, fruit tree blocks
- Waterways, lakes and ponds
- Neighbouring land uses and **buffer zones**

Do not use colours on your map (for photocopying). Send your map(s) by mail (do not fax) or you may scan your map(s) and send by email. If you are ambitious, you can draw your

map(s) on your computer. Don't forget to include a road map describing how to get to your farm from the nearest community

Lady bug Organic Farm  
Lot 6167



Legend:

- Perimeter fence-line
- Public road
- Farm track
- Creek
- Cross-fence
- 25 ft. buffer zone

A separate road map showing direction to get the farm from the nearest large road is needed so the verification officer will be able to find the farm.

30. Answer this question for all areas of your farm. Treated lumber does not have to be removed, but if the treatment is not allowed (COABC Materials List), the lumber must be isolated from production.
31. CCA stands for Copper Chromated Arsenate treated lumber (green posts) and is prohibited by the COABC organic production standards. Existing posts do not have to be removed.
32. Complete the Water Use table:

Source	Use	Method of delivery	Tested Y or N	VO only:
Murray Creek	Irrigating hayfields	Electric pump & hand lines	N	
Well 1	House, garden, chicken barn	Electric Pump	Y	
Well 2	Washing/packing facility	Electric pump	Y	

### Section C Protection from Contamination

33. Prohibited substances include pesticide, herbicide sprays from farms or highway or rail crews, fertilisers, and dust retardant on gravel roads and other materials.
34. Include any other relevant information such as nearby industry or commercial farms.
35. Buffer zones are required where there is chance of contamination from neighbouring land use. Buffer zones are strips of land bordering organic production areas designed to prevent toxic contamination from adjacent activities. Please read section 3.5 for details. Boundaries of the land must be clearly marked
36. If you have established buffer zones, they must be visibly marked. Boundaries of land entering the organic program must be clear. (Section 3.4 & .3.52).
37. Complete this table to indicate what you are growing in your buffer zone for each field. You may combine fields if the information is identical.
38. If you grow crops in your buffer zone, those crops may not be sold as organic, or used as organic feed for livestock. You must describe what you do with crops from buffer zones. You will be asked to keep records to confirm these uses.
39. This information is required to ensure that crops from buffer zones do not contaminate or get mixed in with organic crops.
40. The CB needs to know if there is potential for contamination from floodwaters.
41. This question is asked so that the farmer and the VO will provide a critical assessment of local risks of contamination. Use of water that is known to be contaminated with prohibited substances is prohibited in section 4.4.
42. If there is potential for contamination, you should have a plan to regularly assess the risk.
43. The COABC has a policy of providing written letters to neighbours or agencies informing them of a farm's certification status. Contact the COABC for more information.
44. Take a walk around your farm buildings before answering this question.
45. Describe all areas of your farm that contact non-owned property. This is a problem area for certification committees so please ensure all areas that border your properties are properly described. Use the area at the end of the form if you need more room.

### Section D Farm Management Plan

46. Use the field numbers from table 24 (and your map) to identify what you are growing or what you intend to grow this season. You may combine fields if the information is the same. If you grow more than one acre of any vegetable, list it separately. This information will be used to prepare your certificate.

Crop, variety	Field Number(s)	Acres or area of crop	Projected Yield
Mixed vegetables	5	6 acres	80 box customers for 18 weeks
Barley	1, 6, 10	246 acres	1200 bushels
Carrots	4	1 acre	20,000 lbs

### Soil Management

Organic standards require soil building techniques designed to increase or maintain soil organic matter, optimise soil health, prevent erosion and prevent soil degradation. (section 3.7)

47. List all your fields from table 24. Do your best to provide an assessment for the CB. The CB will want to monitor your soil health over time. Erosion is a risk on land that has any slope, even slight.

Field(s) #	Soil Type	Nutrient deficiencies	Soil health	Compacts easily? Y or N	Vulnerable to erosion? Y or N	Vulnerable to Nutrient leaching? Y or N
2	Silt/sand	N	fair	N	Y	Y
5	Loam	None	Good	Y	N	N
1,3,6, 10	Clay	N	Good	Y	Y	N

48. Indicate your plan to minimise soil erosion.
49. How do you know that your farming practices are improving the structure of your soil?
50. List any other methods of tillage that you employ. Rotovator refers to a tractor-mounted rototiller.
51. The inference in question 50 is that all tillage has a detrimental effect on soil structure. Section 3.8 of the Standards states that damage to soil caused by tillage activities must be offset with appropriate soil-building techniques.
52. See section 3.11 of COABC Management Standards for instructions regarding a soil test. Check with your CB as they may have additional requirements. Contact a soil lab for details about sampling and cost.
53. This information should be available from your soil test results.
54. This question is requesting further details regarding the health of your soil.
55. Every organic farmer must have a plan to maintain or improve soil quality and fertility of his or her soil. (Section 3.7, 3.8).

56. List any fertility input you use or intend to use over the next 12 months. Fertility inputs must not contain any prohibited materials, including synthetic (chemical) fertilizers, preservatives or inert ingredients. Be sure to check the status of any fertility inputs carefully. You may have to ask the manufacturer for a complete list of all ingredients in the product. Check Crop Production Materials, section 14 of the COABC standards and the COABC Brand Names List on the Internet at

[http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/Standards/COABC\\_Brand\\_Name\\_List\\_02.pdf](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/Standards/COABC_Brand_Name_List_02.pdf)

Product	Brand Name	Status from Materials List	Reason for use
Fish fertiliser	Dead Whale Brand	Allowed	Corn growth
Blended fertiliser	Big Turnip Brand	regulated	Greenhouse tomatoes
Seaweed products	Mermaid Tails	Allowed	Mix with compost

57. This annoying but important question must always be answered. The most likely sources of GMO contamination in soil inputs are canola meal, cottonseed meal, sunflower meal, soy meal, or microbial products. Sometimes you will have to ask the company who makes a particular product.
58. You must have weatherproof storage in a different location than your pesticides area.
59. As part of your farm plan, you should have a chart or journal that rates your soil improvement practices year-by-year.
60. Residue burning is a restricted practice and you get permission from your CB. See section 3.7.
61. You must have a crop rotation plan for annual, biennial and arable field crops (section 4.2). Perennial crops such as orchards, vineyards, pastures that cannot be tilled, perennial herbs, do not need a rotation plan, but you must have a plan in place to improve the capacity of soil over time. Small diverse gardens may not have a formal rotation plan, but crops must be rotated. Your crop rotation plan may look something like this:

Field(s)	Rotation or soil maintenance plan
1, 6,12	Alfalfa hay, 3 years then oats, then sweet clover plough-down, buckwheat, oats, back to alfalfa hay
4	Plant vegetable beds with clover/barley cover crop in aisles paths between. In second year, veg beds are made on previous aisles years' path. Brassicas family plantings are at least two beds apart, so there is 4 years between brassicas in any one spot.
5	Apple orchard – mixed perennial cover crop planted between rows. Mown monthly during season with grass thrown into rows, for fertility. Compost was applied at planting.

62. Using green manure is an essential aspect of most crop rotation and soil building plans. Sometimes green manures are planted for part of the season (winter, spring, summer). Other farms include one to several years of cover crop. Rotating into areas that are in semi-permanent cover, such as pasture seem to have the biggest benefit in terms of overall soil health gains.
63. The "Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management is available at BCMAFF website <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca> in the Environmental Guidelines section. The "Code" describes the rules for storing and handling manure and compost. This is the law in BC.
64. Check Section 3 of the COABC Management Standards for rules regarding the spreading of raw manure.
65. If you import non-organic manure, be prepared document where it is from and to prove to your CB that there are no contaminants in the imported manure.

66. Allowed compost ingredients are listed in the Standards. Again, keep documentation of where it is from and ask questions about potential contamination that would not break down in composting process.
67. If you worm your horses (for instance) there is potential for wormer residue to end up in your compost.
68. In vessel means a compost-making machine.
69. COABC standards require compost to reach a certain temperature.
70. The COABC Brand Name List is available on the COABC website. If you purchase compost be sure that you have a list of all ingredients and know what composting procedures were used.
71. The Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management also has some rules about when you can spread manure and compost.
72. Seed Sources for all the seeds you are using or will use in the next 12 months.

Seed source/supplier	Vegetable(V) forage(F), grain (G)	Organic (O)	Non-organic (N)
Jenny's Seeds	V	O	N
Co-op Feed and Seed	F, G		N

73. Some seed catalogues state that they only use GMO-free seeds. Keep copies of the catalogue statement to show the verification officer. If there is no GMO statement in catalogue ask for one from the seed company, especially if you are buying field corn, soy, potatoes, canola, oil sunflowers. It is incumbent on you to make sure you do not plant genetically engineered crops.
74. You may check the COABC Brand Names list or with OMRI ([www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org)) brand names list regarding GMO-free inoculants.
75. You will need to check with your seed source to find out what they use for pelleting.
76. Planting stock means tubers (potato seed) onion sets, garlic seed, strawberry plants, asparagus roots, fruit tree rootstock, other perennial plants, slips, leaf cutting, but not including annual seedlings. Perennial planting stock must be planted for at least on year before plant products harvested can be sold as organic.

Supplier	Planting stock type or variety	Organic (O)	Non-organic (N) + date of planting
Jenny's Seeds	Onion Sets		N - May 16 2004
Big Spud Potato Ranch	Seed potatoes	O	
Walla Walla Farms	Strawberry plants		N - April 12 2004

77. Growers must provide proof of attempting to obtain organic planting stock before using non-organic planting stock.
78. Annual seedlings must be grown organically (in an organic certification program).
79. Greenhouse production (heated commercial greenhouse) of larger than 315 sq. meters should request a Greenhouse Farm Plan from their CB.
80. Include tunnels (hoop greenhouses) and glasshouses attached to other buildings, but do not include cold-frames.
81. You may check more than one box in this question.
82. Inputs may be liquid fertilisers or compost tea.
83. Some caustic cleaners are not allowed.
84. Check the COABC Brand Name List for approved commercial soil mixes.
85. Answer for your intentions during the next 12 months.

86. This refers to the strategies you plant to use in your seedling production area or greenhouse within the next 12 months. .

87. Weed Control example:

Major problem weeds	Control plan
Black nightshade	Aggressive weeding followed by cover crop (annual rye)
Burdock	Dig out plants when young (May)

88. Regulated materials have specific requirements attached to their use - refer to your standard.

89. You should have an idea of what pests will be a problem so you can plan a prevention strategy.

90. Fill this out for what you currently do and plan to do in the next 12 months. You may have other ideas for pest management, so note them under "other."

91. Problem pests over the next 12 months

Pest	Pest control strategy
Deer	Fence more and more of the orchard as I can afford it
Flea beetle	Plant Chinese Greens early before beetles are present.

92. Pest Control Products

Material	Brand or supplier	Allowed or regulated COABC list? Y or N	Where used	What pest?
BT	Dipel	A	brassicas	Cabbage worms
Garlic	Organic Bio-link	A	Potatoes	Flea beetle

93. You will need to keep of journal of Pest Control Product use.

94. See 94

95. Problem diseases - note this question is asking for prevention techniques, not disease suppression products.

Problem disease	Disease management techniques
Fire bight	Eliminate overhead watering - monitor and remove diseased sections - prune to open up the canopy to allow air in
Potato scab	Plant clean seed in clean ground - do not lime - careful use of aged compost

96. List all disease management inputs you intend to use in the next 12 months. For example, dormant oil for tree fruit, compost tea for greenhouse diseases.

### Section E Orchard and Small Fruit

97. The orchard section includes berries as well (raspberries, strawberries and others).

98. As above

99. Submit another page if you need more room

100. Do you ensure that windfall fruit does not get picked for human food?

101. If you answer yes, the VO will need evidence that employees are properly trained in organic practices

## Section F Harvest, Processing & Transport

102. Check as many boxes as appropriate - CBs need to ensure that harvest containers are not a source of contamination of organic products (are used for non-organic products or other potential contaminants.)
103. As above
104. As above
105. Labelling harvest containers will help ensure they are not used to haul grain to cows, for instance.
106. Your CB wants to ensure you are doing everything possible to prevent contamination of your organic product.
107. As above.
108. Some sections from the Canadian Agriculture Products Act are copied below:  
*For the purposes of paragraph (1)(e), "prepared in a sanitary manner" includes preparation in such a manner that*
- (a) no stagnant or polluted water is used in the washing or fluming of the produce;*
  - (b) only potable water is used in the final rinsing of the produce to remove any surface contaminant before packing;*
  - (c) the final rinse water, if reused, is used only in the initial washing or fluming of the produce; and*
  - (d) the produce is handled with equipment that is cleaned regularly.*
- CBs do not enforce the law, but they are responsible to ensure that clients are aware of applicable laws and will report flagrant violations of food safety protocols. Complying with applicable laws is part of the BC Certified Organic Program - your certification can be withheld or denied because you are not complying with applicable laws.
109. Your CB needs to know where washing and grading takes place. Your responsibility for the certified product extends as long as you own the product.
110. Final packing containers means containers that product is in when you sell it, for instance retail containers (clamshells for blueberries, for instance) or wholesale containers (100# potato sacks for seed potato production). Please answer for all products sold.
111. If you use an off-site facility for storage of products (before you sell them), please request an Independent Storage Facility Form from your CB.
112. As above
113. Storage bins

ID #	Style and Capacity	Location	Volume & harvest year	Contents
4	Concrete root house	Field 1	600 tonne - 2003	Potatoes
1	Steel grain bin	Field #6	43 tonne - 2003	Barley

114. Contact your CB for details on use of the COABC Program Symbol - do not use the checkmark without approval. Containers used for shipping product must be labelled. After you receive your certificate from your CB shipping containers, at a minimum, must include name of producer (farm name) certification status (transitional or organic) and name of certification agency and certification number. Before you receive your certificate you may not sell your produce as transitional or organic.
115. Buyers may apply labels under specific conditions. Let your CB know what you intend to do about labels.
116. If you are planning to process organic products on farm it will be inspected at the same time as your farm. The certifying body may ask you to submit more information.
117. If a product is to be sold as organic, under this program, all processing and handling must be verified. If you are processing products for other farms, then you must be certified for this. If you are planning to do off-farm processing of organic products, you

must use a certified organic facility, or speak to your CB about your options for certifying the facility.

- 118. You remain responsible as long as you own the product.
- 119. As above
- 120. Shipping containers should protect organic products from contamination.
- 121. As above
- 122. An open vehicle poses a contamination risk.
- 123. This question attempts to ascertain that organic product will not become confused or contaminated with non-organic product during shipping.
- 124. As above
- 125. The CB is curious. Sometimes different audit trails are required in different circumstances.

### **Section G Records**

- 126. You must develop a record keeping system before your first inspection. Records must be available for inspection by the verification officer.
- 127. The COABC requires records to be kept for a minimum of five years.
- 128. Ensure this is the case.

### **Section H Notes & Affirmations**

- 129. Add another page to the application if you need more room.
- 130. Read the Affirmation carefully before signing. It must be signed by a person with authority over the operation.
- 131. You may be able to reduce or eliminate the need for buffer zones if you can acquire a letter from neighbours attesting no prohibited substances will be applied adjacent to your property. Check with your CB for permission. Your certification will be delayed if required forms or documents are not provided.
- 132. VO area.
- 133. VO Affirmation