

## 12.1 Research Priorities in British Columbia

In 2003, the COABC conducted a research needs study to identify areas of research and to prioritize them. Table 12.1 presents a summary of the research areas identified in the study.

**Table 12.1 Summary of Research Priorities for British Columbia**

Research Need*	Relative cost of conducting research	Relative return on investment	Availability of research or information	Expected spread of research benefits	Rank
Soil fertility and management	Medium to high	High	Many & diverse sources	Many producers	1
Information needs	Low	High	Many & diverse sources	Many producers	2
Pest control	High	High	Scattered, little regionally specific work	Some producers	3
Marketplace development	Medium	High	Many sources	Many producers	4
Weed management, cover cropping, green manures	Medium	Medium	Many sources, many research projects	Many producers	5
Infrastructure development	High	Medium	Many sources, requires private enterprise partners	Some producers	6
Livestock management and infrastructure	Medium	Low	Many sources	Some producers	7
Seed production	Low	Low	Many sources	Some producers	8

\*Needs ranked in descending order

Source: [http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/osdp/COABC\\_research\\_needs.pdf](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/programs/osdp/COABC_research_needs.pdf)

## 13. Government Programs and Initiatives

### 13.1 Provincial

#### **BCMAL Trade and Intergovernmental Relations Branch**

Activities include ensuring export market access through equivalence, regulations, and monitoring initiatives and negotiations of international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). With the upcoming national organic regulation, the Branch will establish a memorandum of understanding between British Columbia and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for federal regulation of products in British Columbia.

#### **BCMAL Food Safety and Quality Branch**

Provides independent auditing of BCCOP accreditation and certification process.

## **BCMAL Industry Competitiveness Branch**

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## **13.2 Joint Provincial and Federal**

### **Agri-Food Futures Fund (AFFF)**

AFFF is a joint federal/provincial (60% federal, 40% provincial) program developed to stimulate British Columbia agriculture. The fund provides funding for facilitating growth and development of emerging sectors, diversification and stabilization of established sectors, and improving food safety and quality. The AFFF was designed to encourage a strategic approach to industry development and is administered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation. The ODSP (see Section 12) is one of the 14 initiatives that exist under this program.

### **Agriculture Policy Framework**

A program developed to provide funding and direction to key agricultural industry areas including: business risk management, environment renewal, food safety and quality, and science and innovation

### **British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Program (EFP)**

The British Columbia EFP is a partnership between AAFC, BCMAL and the British Columbia Agriculture Council. Environmental farm planning is a voluntary process that producers can use to identify both environmental strengths and any potential risks on their farms. As appropriate, it includes a prioritized action plan to reduce the risks. The EFP program is delivered by the British Columbia Agriculture Council.

## 13.3 Federal

### Organic Production Systems Task Force (OTF)

The OTF was mandated to investigate outstanding organic standard, inspection and certification issues and to recommend a regulatory scheme to resolve them. The OTF will remain in place to see the regulations through to publication. Updates from the OTF on progress towards the implementation of the national regulation are posted on the OTF website: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otfgtspbe.shtml>

## 14. Resources

The following resources provide either direct information, or pathways for accessing information relevant to organic agriculture in British Columbia and Canada.

### British Columbia Organic Grower

A quarterly publication from the COABC containing feature articles from members of the British Columbia organic industry, classifieds and other forms of advertisement from organic producers and suppliers. Previous issues and subscriptions are available at <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/publications/bcog/index.htm>

### Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia Website

[www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca)

The COABC website contains descriptions of their various programs, a producer/processor database, and updated versions of the COABC Production Operation Policies and Management Standards. Other important components of the COABC website are:

- **Cyber Help for Organic Farmers:** a portal for web-based information on organic production, management, and other services including produce prices, organic news, seed sources and more.  
<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.html>
- **COABC e-mail listserve:** a forum for organic farmers throughout British Columbia to post questions, answers and exchange ideas with regards to production and marketing issues.  
<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/contact/listserve.htm>

### Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

Since 1975, COG has been educating farmers, gardeners, consumers, the media and policy-makers about the benefits of organic farming systems. COG produces technical handbooks and a quarterly magazine, *The Canadian Organic Grower*, dedicated to organic growing. COG's website ([www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca)) and mail-order library contain valuable reference material. COG also tracks the growth of organics and works with the organic sector to address emerging issues of national concern.