

Mexico and Canada agree on organic products equivalence

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In order to enhance the competitiveness of small and medium producers of organic food, and to ensure the supply of this type of products in our country, for the benefit of consumers, the governments of Mexico and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding Recognizing Equivalence in Organic Products (MdE).

The document executed by the Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Victor Villalobos Arambula, and by the Executive Director of International Programs of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Mr. Parthiban Muthukumarasamy, sets the homologation of certification procedures for organic products in both countries; thus, strengthening and streamlining a safe exchange of foods, reducing expenses for producers, processors, importers, and exporters, and increasing and diversifying the offer of organic products in the national market.

In this manner, the National Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety and Quality Service (Senasica) acknowledges as equivalent Canadian primary and processed products of vegetable and animal origin that are certified under the Canadian Organic Regimen (COR).

Likewise, CFIA acknowledges organic products produced or processed in Mexico that are certified under the Organic Products Act (LPO, in Spanish) from the Secretariat of Agriculture and which bear the Organic Mexico seal. This implies that Mexican vegetable, fungi, processed, and bee products may enter to the Canadian market with no need to process the COR certification, thus reducing producers' expenses.

The Agreement establishes that, prior notification of both agencies, their officers can carry out in situ verifications to ensure that relevant regulating authorities and certification bodies comply with the program requirements.

Senasica and CFIA agreed on sending in the following weeks a list on the type and amount of certified organic products that will be marketed, which will include updated information on the accreditation and certification bodies acknowledged by both countries.

Likewise, they will share a report on the surveillance and monitoring actions undertaken by relevant authorities, as well as information on the reports, follow-up action to positive residues analysis and cancellation of organic certification, if any.

MdE shall be valid for one year, therefore both agencies will assess its effectiveness and, upon expiration, it may be extended for as long as they both deem appropriate.

These foods are produced with organic substances and allowed inputs and practices; thus, contributing to environmental preservation by helping to conserve water, soil, and atmosphere. The most produced organic foods in Mexico are coffee, corn, avocado, alfalfa, beans, agave, sorghum, sesame, grass, mango, lemon, honey, banana, chickpea, coconut and certain meat.

In recent years, the production of organic food in Mexico has grown exponentially: to date, more than 46 thousand producers, mainly medium and small, who produce this type of food in almost 368 thousand hectares in the 32 states.