




ORGANIC BC

STRATEGIC PLAN
2026–2030



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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE



Organic BC is a newly established, independent provincial organization created to serve as the unified voice and coordinating body for organic agriculture in British Columbia. Following decades in which regulatory and certification responsibilities dominated sector organization, Organic BC was formed to focus squarely on advocacy, market development, and education in support of a thriving organic food system.

This Strategic Plan corresponds to the framework developed during an organizational restructuring in 2023-25 that led to the creation of Organic BC as an independent organization. The restructuring process involved extensive sector engagement that identified the key pillars for focus going forward. This Strategic Plan provides the basis for action over the next three years. It responds directly to the outcomes of the multi-stakeholder Strategic Planning Session held on November 25, 2025, at the BC Organic Conference, as well as to broader sector trends and policy opportunities.

Participants at the Strategic Planning Session expressed a clear sense of urgency and opportunity: demand for organic food is growing rapidly, yet BC production is not keeping pace, resulting in lost economic opportunities, import reliance, and pressure on existing producers. Underlying this, the organic community has much to offer the larger agricultural sector in BC; at a time of global uncertainty and challenging markets for all growers, organics opens the door to new opportunities for all growers by offering markets and practices that are more widely accepted by markets around the world, while securing the social, economic, and environmental well-being of Canadians.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a clear, actionable roadmap for Organic BC's work over the next three to five years, while identifying priority actions for the first 12–18 months. It is intended to guide the Board of Directors, staff, members, partners, and funders in aligning efforts toward shared outcomes.

Context: The State of Organic Agriculture in BC

British Columbia has long been a leader in organic agriculture, with strong consumer demand, innovative producers, and a well-established certification system.

However, the sector faces structural challenges:

- Demand for organic food continues to grow at an estimated 8–10% annually, yet domestic production has stagnated or declined in some commodities.
- Retailers and distributors report consistent shortages of BC-grown organic products, leading to increased reliance on imports.
- Producers face significant barriers to entering or expanding organic production, particularly during the three-year transition period.
- Organic agriculture has been chronically under-invested in relation to its economic, environmental, and public health benefits.

At the same time, organic agriculture aligns strongly with provincial and federal priorities related to climate resilience, soil health, biodiversity, food security, and rural economic development. This creates a strategic opportunity for coordinated action.



Vision, Mission, and Organizational Role



Vision & Mission

Vision

A thriving food and farming system in British Columbia built on the foundation of organic principles and practices.

Mission

To advance organic food systems in British Columbia through advocacy, education, and promotion.

Organic BC's Role

Organic BC exists to:

- Represent the collective interests of organic producers, processors, and allied businesses;
- Convene supply chain actors to support coordinated market growth;
- Enhance knowledge and adoption of organic practices and organic certification;
- Advocate for public policies and investments that support organic agriculture;
- Strengthen understanding and trust in organic standards and practices.

Organic BC does not act as a certifying body or regulator, and does not replace commodity organizations. Instead, it works alongside these bodies to advance shared objectives where organic-specific leadership and coordination are required.



Pillar 1: Market Development and Demand Growth



Strategic Objective

Expand and strengthen markets for BC organic products so that increased production is economically viable and sustainable.

Rationale

Stakeholders consistently emphasized that market development must lead production expansion. While consumer demand is strong, lack of coordinated engagement with retailers, processors, and distributors has limited the sector's ability to respond.

Strategic Directions

- Develop a commodity-by-commodity market expansion strategy, beginning with high-potential commodities such as blueberries, greenhouse, mushrooms, and other crops where demand outpaces supply.
- Convene retailers, distributors, processors, and producers to align expectations around volume, quality, pricing, and timing.
- Support consumer education and awareness initiatives that reinforce the value of organic production and the importance of local supply.
- Explore institutional and public procurement opportunities (e.g., schools, hospitals, post-secondary institutions) as anchor markets for BC organic products.

Expected Outcomes

- Clear market pathways for priority organic commodities.
- Improved availability and visibility of BC organic products.
- Greater confidence among producers to invest in organic transition and expansion.



Pillar 2: Production Growth, Transition, and Extension



Strategic Objective

Reduce systemic barriers to organic transition and expansion by strengthening support for producers.

Rationale

Participants identified the three-year transition period, lack of financial support, and limited access to organic-specific extension as the most significant constraints on production growth.

Strategic Directions

- Advocate for provincial and federal transition supports, including cost-share programs, risk-management tools, and insurance mechanisms that recognize organic price differentials.
- Support modernization and consistency within the certification system, while maintaining rigour and consumer trust.
- Take proactive steps toward reconciliation, engagement, and support of Indigenous farmers and Indigenous Food Sovereignty initiatives.
- Work to ensure our actions are aligned with supporting equity-deserving groups to improve participation in agriculture and food-systems activities.
- Partner with governments, educational institutions, and professional bodies to strengthen organic extension, training, and advisory capacity.
- Support initiatives that improve land access for organic producers, including partnerships with First Nations and land-matching models.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased interest in organic transition among conventional producers.
- Improved retention and viability of existing organic farms.
- Stronger technical support and knowledge transfer within the sector.
- New partnerships with a diversity of groups who will lead the sector as the next generation of growers.
- Empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of alternative production practices that support organic production, while also leading more sustainable opportunities for all growers in BC.



Pillar 3: Policy Leadership and Sector Representation



Strategic Objective

Establish organic agriculture as a recognized and supported priority within BC's agri-food policy landscape.

Rationale

Despite delivering public benefits related to climate, environment, and health, organic agriculture has lacked consistent representation and investment within government policy frameworks.

Strategic Directions

- Develop and advance a BC Organic Policy Platform that articulates clear policy asks related to transition support, research, market development, and procurement.
- Coordinate and support organic representation on BC Agriculture Council committees and other policy tables.
- Strengthen relationships with provincial and federal ministries to ensure organic perspectives are integrated into broader agricultural, climate, and economic strategies.
- Position organic agriculture as a practical solution to policy priorities such as climate resilience, food security, and rural development.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased visibility of organic agriculture in policy discussions.
- Tangible policy wins that support organic production and markets.
- Stronger alignment between organic sector needs and government programs.



Pillar 4: Organizational Capacity, Membership, and Sector Identity



Strategic Objective

Build a strong, representative, and financially sustainable organization capable of leading the sector long-term.

Rationale

As a new organization, Organic BC must establish clarity around its value, grow its membership base, and secure stable resources to deliver on its mandate.

Strategic Directions

- Grow membership across producers, processors, retailers, allied organizations, and consumers, with clear value propositions for each group.
- Communicate Organic BC's role, priorities, and impacts clearly to the sector and the public.
- Develop leadership and ambassador capacity within the organic community to support advocacy and representation.
- Diversify funding sources through grants, partnerships, donations, and earned revenue opportunities.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased membership and sector engagement.
- Improved organizational stability and effectiveness.
- A stronger, more cohesive organic sector identity.



Cross-Cutting Principles

Across all pillars, Organic BC will be guided by the following principles:

- Focus on commodity-specific strategies rather than generic programming.
- Maintain the integrity and credibility of organic standards.
- Prioritize collaboration and partnerships over duplication of effort.
- Advance equity, access, and inclusion within the organic sector.
- Use evidence and data to inform advocacy and decision-making.

Priority Actions (First 12–18 Months)

To ensure momentum, Organic BC will prioritize the following actions in the near term:

- Launch a commodity-focused market development initiative for one to two priority commodities.
- Advance a policy proposal for organic transition support within provincial programming.
- Clarify and communicate Organic BC's role, mandate, and value to members and partners.
- Ensure the financial viability of Organic BC with new revenue streams identified and partnerships established to support ongoing work and sustainability.
- Strengthen capacity for policy engagement and sector representation.
- Begin development of a coordinated consumer and stakeholder education narrative on organic agriculture.



Measuring Progress and Accountability

Progress under this Strategic Plan will be tracked using a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators, including:

- Market outcomes (availability and sales of BC organic products);
- Production indicators (interest in transition, acreage trends);
- Policy outcomes (representation, policy changes, program access);
- Organizational health (membership growth, financial stability).

The Board of Directors will review progress regularly and adjust priorities as needed to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.

Conclusion

British Columbia's organic sector stands at a critical inflection point. Demand is strong, alignment with public policy goals is clear, and there is broad consensus that coordinated provincial leadership is needed. Through this Strategic Plan, Organic BC commits to providing that leadership—working collaboratively to grow organic markets, support producers, influence policy, and strengthen the sector for the long term.