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## ***ORGANIC SEED***

Quality Seeds West is actively pursuing a range of Certified Organic seed for production of organic forage for animals. To the present, however, there have been no consistent 'rules' for organic seed production with the resulting confusion of what is or is not allowed in the production of organic seed. Over the past few years, a myriad of 'Certification Bodies' (over 10 in BC alone at last count) have developed to certify that the production (whether vegetables, grain, meat, dairy products, etc.) is classed as organic or not. Each of these certifying agencies has different rules and interpretations of what constitutes organic production. In some cases, the producer is required to use organic inputs (seed and fertilizer), while others prefer the use of organic inputs (subject to availability and relative cost). There has been quite a variation in the interpretation of the rules as well by the different certification bodies and individual inspectors. This variation also extends to the production methods used for organic products.

Generally, organic production involves using:

- Seed that does not contain GMO (Genetically Modified Organism)
- Natural fertilizer only (usually composted manure or naturally occurring products)
- No chemical pesticides (against weeds, insects or diseases)
- Land that has had no chemical fertilizer or pesticide application for a period of time (there is a transition period allowed for the land [and produce] to be considered transition organic).

At the present time, certain varieties (desirable for forage production) are simply not available as Certified Organic seed. This has left producers in a difficult position of using less desirable forage varieties of organic seed or 'persuading' their certifying agency to use untreated, non-GMO seed of desirable varieties.

Late in 2006, the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) produced a set of standards for organic production which will be fully implemented by 2009 – the object being to standardize the requirements throughout Canada and to produce a certificate that is recognized internationally. There has been a mark developed to indicate that the production conforms to this standard.



Quality Seeds West can access (and has done so in the past) Certified Organic forage and grain seed for organic forage production. With a more standardized requirements, we expect the demand for these products to grow and thus become more widely available.

Some websites that may be useful:

**Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia** [www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca) and [www.organics.bc.ca](http://www.organics.bc.ca)

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency** [www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otfgtspbe.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otfgtspbe.shtml)

***Quality Seeds...where quality counts!***