



FRUIT & VEGETABLE
GROWERS
OF CANADA

PRODUCTEURS
DE FRUITS ET LÉGUMES
DU CANADA

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



FRUIT & VEGETABLE
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INNOVATE
ADVOCATE
CULTIVATE

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Every new beginning comes from
some other beginning's end.

SENECA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Jan VanderHout

President, Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada

This past year has been a transformative journey for the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC), made possible by the unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions of you, our members. Under the banner of “A Fresh Approach,” we have navigated significant organizational transitions and achieved new heights, together. Drawing from my own experiences as a greenhouse cucumber grower, I approach each challenge and opportunity at FVGC with a perspective grounded in the practical realities of agriculture.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Our former Executive Director, Rebecca Lee, moved on to pursue new opportunities, paving the way for a fresh era of leadership and innovation at FVGC. As we explore new leadership opportunities, we are thankful for your support and insights. The appointment of Amy Argentino, a long-time FVGC employee, as our new Director of Operations, ensures continuity and strategic leadership. Amy’s deep understanding of our organization and strategic acumen are vital assets during this pivotal period. As this report goes to print, our search for a new Executive Director is ongoing. We remain optimistic and committed to finding a visionary leader who will embody the strategic direction and values of FVGC.

LOOKING BACK

This year has been about adaptability and forward-thinking. We’ve maintained the momentum of past successes while steering our organization towards new horizons, strengthened by your support and collaboration. Facing leadership transitions, global market fluctuations, and evolving environmental challenges, FVGC has remained steadfast in its mission, bolstered by the resilience and dedication of our members.

Our journey through the year, marked by significant milestones and strategic decisions, reflects our collective commitment to the sector’s betterment and our members’ well-being. From legislative advocacy to addressing labour shortages and securing funding for significant sector research, our achievements are a testament to our shared strength.





LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Advocacy efforts were a cornerstone of our activities this past year. Your voices have been the driving force behind pivotal legislative advancements:

BILL C-234

In our advocacy for Bill C-234, *An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, we faced a significant setback when the Senate's amendment diverged from the bill's original intent, impacting the greenhouse vegetable sector in particular. Despite this, FVGC's efforts have been formidable: we sent over 210 letters to parliamentarians and garnered media attention through interviews and press releases, effectively amplifying the challenges faced by Canadian growers. This adversity has only intensified our commitment to advocate for the need for carbon tax reduction for growers.

BILL C-280

The advancement of Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, marked another pivotal point of our advocacy. This bill, drawing closer to realization than ever before, aims to provide financial protection for growers, ensuring a more secure and sustainable future for the sector.

BILL C-282

FVGC has closely monitored Bill C-282, *An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)* as it has made its way through the Senate this past year, and FVGC has lobbied against this bill to promote competitive trade policies.

BILL C-359

FVGC has strongly supported Bill C-359, *An Act to amend the Feeds Act, the Seeds Act and the Pest Control Products Act (provisional registration and approval)* since it was introduced in the fall of 2023, and I participated in the press conference on Parliament Hill speaking to the importance of effective pest control products for Canadian growers.



RECOGNIZED EMPLOYER PILOT

Another significant stride was made with the Recognized Employer Pilot (REP). This initiative, designed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to alleviate administrative burdens for employers in the agricultural sector, is a direct response to FVGC's advocacy for a solution to the labour challenges growers have persistently faced. Our advocacy ensured that the REP not only recognized the high standards maintained by our employers in terms of wages and worker protection but also removed any negative implications towards employers not enrolled in the program.

RESEARCH

In terms of research and innovation, the approval of the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4 (Cluster 4) was a highlight. This program, led by FVGC, received a substantial federal investment, marking a significant commitment for the next five years to research spanning various commodity groups. Cluster 4 focuses on innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability, ensuring that Canadian fruit and vegetable growers have the tools and resources they need to thrive.

POTATO WART

Potato Wart has continued to impact growers, particularly in Prince Edward Island, this past year. This challenge has demanded our persistent advocacy and innovative problem-solving to support affected members. The Canadian Potato Council remains engaged on this file, and is working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on their updated Potato Wart management plan, which was released in December 2023.

CANADA'S GROCERY CODE OF CONDUCT

Among our notable achievements this year is our support for Canada's Grocery Code of Conduct. This initiative heralds a new era of fairness and transparency in the Canadian food supply chain, bringing together growers, processors, retailers, and industry giants. FVGC is committed to continuing our collaborative efforts with all stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation and adherence to this Code. This initiative is seen as a monumental step towards a brighter future for the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector, benefitting everyone from growers to consumers.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As we reflect on the year, it's evident that our journey has been a blend of significant challenges and notable achievements. We've navigated complex issues like the ongoing Potato Wart situation and the disappointing amendments to Bill C-234. We've grappled with challenges and opportunities in red tape reduction, and sustaining sector viability amidst the rising cost of food, which will continue to shape our path forward. Growers faced an exceptionally challenging growing year in 2023, and many were impacted by a variety of catastrophic weather events. At the same time, we have celebrated our significant achievements, like the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4, the establishment of the Recognized Employer Pilot, and the significant progress on Bill C-280.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to harnessing these successes and learning from these challenges, as we continue to advocate for and support our growers across Canada.



LOOKING AHEAD

As we embrace 'A Fresh Approach,' we invite each of you to join us in this exciting new chapter. Your ideas, feedback, and active participation are pivotal as we gear up for a year promising innovative developments and dynamic leadership.

Internally, we are looking ahead to strategic planning and a governance review to ensure that our association functions as effectively as possible. At the same time, we are committed to finding a new strategic leader to be the Executive Director of FVGC, to help chart a course for effective and energized advocacy. With these upcoming changes, our commitment to being the voice of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers is stronger and more fervent than ever.

We will continue to focus on legislative advocacy, red tape reduction, and sector sustainability. As the rising cost of food continues to be a national issue, we remain dedicated to advocating for government collaboration with the fruit and vegetable sector. Our goal is to ensure that the produce we grow remains affordable for Canadian consumers and sustainable for us, the growers.

In 2024, we will actively engage in crop protection consultations, ensuring the interests of our growers are well-represented. The Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group will continue its vital work in leading sustainability initiatives, and the Canadian Potato Council will pursue its strategic work plan, addressing critical issues like pesticides, plant health, and trade. Moreover, we recognize the importance of the Berry, Apple, and Field Vegetable working groups, each playing a crucial role in their respective areas, contributing to the overall strength and diversity of our sector.

In the realms of Business Risk Management and Food Safety, we are advocating for robust strategies and practical amendments to the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*, reflecting the competitiveness and practical needs of our sector. Addressing labour shortages through collaborative efforts remains a top priority.



Our focus also extends to trade and marketing, developing strategies that balance consumer affordability with the economic realities faced by growers. We are committed to advocating for the swift passage of Bill C-280 and actively participating in finalizing Canada's Grocery Code of Conduct. Embracing these challenges and opportunities with a "Fresh Approach," we stand united in our mission. As we look towards the future, my insights as a grower continually guide my vision for our collective growth and resilience in the ever-evolving landscape of Canadian agriculture. The path ahead is one of innovation, advocacy, and cultivation, and together, we will continue to make significant strides for the benefit of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers.

Jan VanderHout
President
Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada



IN NUMBERS

77

Communication Reports with the Commissioner of Lobbying. This year, FVGC filed 77 communication reports with the Commissioner of Lobbying. Whenever FVGC staff or members meet with designated public office holders, a corresponding report must be filed highlighting the themes discussed.

16

Submissions to Government Consultations: Demonstrating proactive engagement, FVGC made 16 submissions to various Government consultations. These submissions encompassed a range of vital issues for FVGC members, from inputs for the Federal Budget to discussions on changing plastic regulations and pest control product regulations. Detailed information on FVGC's consultation submissions is accessible at www.fvgc.ca.

2

Appearances at House of Commons and Senate Standing Committees. March 2023 saw FVGC appear before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO), contributing insights to a study on soil health. Additionally, in June 2023, FVGC presented its perspective on Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food. Quinton Woods, FVGC Board Member and Chair of the Trade and Marketing Working Group, along with former Executive Director, Rebecca Lee, emphasized the significance of Bill C-280 for the sector.

20

Letters to Government. FVGC penned 20 letters addressing critical issues for Canadian growers. These included calls for government support for growers affected by extreme weather, concerns regarding grocery price stabilization, and issues surrounding compostable PLUs. All of the letters are available to read on www.fvgc.ca.

12

Joint letters to Government. Collaborating with partners, FVGC co-authored 12 joint letters to the Government. Topics ranged from the Underused Housing Tax to plastics regulations and the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture. These letters can be read on www.fvgc.ca.

236

Points of Contact with Senators for Bill C-234 Advocacy: In a vigorous advocacy effort for Bill C-234, *An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, FVGC made 236 points of contact with Senators during October and November 2023. This campaign, involving direct calls, letters, and emails, was vital in championing the interests of Canadian growers.

85

Meetings with Parliamentarians and Government Officials: FVGC engaged in 85 meetings with various Parliamentarians and Government officials across three advocacy events. These discussions primarily focused on Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, Bill C-234, *An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Act*, competitiveness and cumulative regulatory burden and packaging solutions for fresh produce.

1500

X Followers and 2,898 LinkedIn Followers: In 2023, FVGC significantly enhanced its digital outreach, growing X (the platform previously known as Twitter) and LinkedIn followers to 1,500 and 2,898 respectively, with gains of 187 and 1,388 followers. This growth is critical as many of FVGC's followers include Parliamentarians and industry stakeholders. Additionally, a new Facebook page was launched in late 2023, rapidly attracting page likes and followers. These platforms have been pivotal in real-time engagement with influential individuals and organizations across the sector and the nation, reinforcing FVGC's presence in the digital landscape of agricultural advocacy.

22

News Releases Issued: In 2023, FVGC has actively communicated with the media, issuing 22 news releases. This consistent outreach has led to significant media engagement with the fruit and vegetable sector, ensuring widespread dissemination of FVGC's key messages across various news publications.

BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT

Business risk management (BRM) tools are fundamentally important for the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. The year 2023 presented unprecedented challenges for Canadian growers, marked by one of the most difficult growing seasons in recent memory and compounded by escalating extreme climate events, a trend expected to intensify in the future. Throughout these challenges, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) has continued to advocate on behalf of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers, ensuring that the Canadian government strengthens the BRM toolkit with appropriate, effective, and timely tools so growers can remain competitive in the years to come.

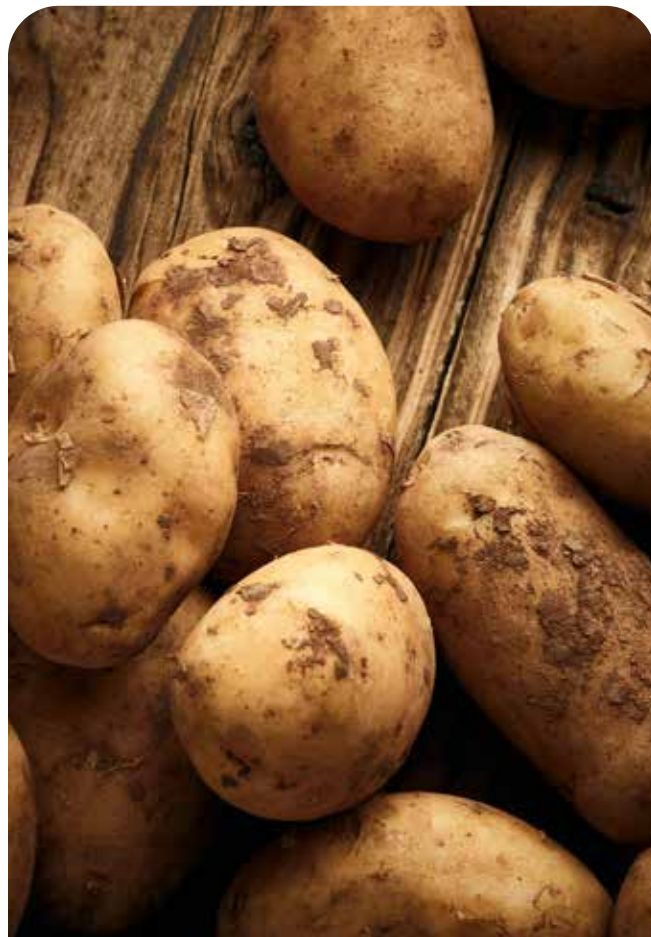
HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

In November 2023, FVGC member, L'Association des producteurs maraîchers du Québec (APMQ), played a pivotal role behind the scenes in influencing the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food to conduct a study on insurance programs and federal assistance specific to the fruit and vegetable sector. In 2024, the Committee will be looking at the effectiveness of insurance programs and the one-time assistance granted, as well as possible solutions to be developed for greater climate resilience, such as climate adaptation measures and programs to better support the fruit and vegetable sector in dealing with climate change. It is extremely important that all parliamentarians, including and especially those who do not have fruit and vegetable growers in their ridings, are educated on the risks facing the sector. FVGC will continue to engage with all parliamentarians and recommend changes that will improve the business risk management tools available to growers.

SUSTAINABLE CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FUNDING

In 2023, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) program came into effect, setting aside \$3.5 billion to strengthen and grow Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector over the next five years. The Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) agriculture ministers have publicly committed to the continuous improvement of BRM programs, and FVGC has been actively ensuring that these commitments are fulfilled. A key focus for FVGC has been advocating for a revision in Sustainable CAP, particularly aiming to increase the AgriStability trigger rate from 70% to 85%, enhancing the program's responsiveness to agricultural risks.

Furthermore, FVGC plays a vital role in an ad hoc BRM technical working group. This group is comprised of FVGC, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Canadian Cattle Association, Grain Growers of Canada, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association and the Canadian Pork Council. The technical working group is working towards comprehensive reform of business risk management programming for Canadian farmers. This concerted effort by FVGC reflects its dedication to ensuring that the BRM programs are not only promised but also effectively delivered and tailored to the evolving needs of Canada's agricultural sector.



REVENUE INSURANCE PROJECT

FVGC has been closely monitoring AAFC's work on undertaking a complete analysis of how whole farm revenue insurance and margin insurance could function within the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector. Gallagher Re, a global leader in insurance, risk management and consulting services, was contracted by AAFC to look at the production practices, unique marketing characteristics, and driving perils affecting farm revenue during fruit and vegetable production cycles. FVGC is engaged with both AAFC and Gallagher Re to move this project forward as efficiently as possible.

LOOKING AHEAD

Aware of the escalating threat posed by climate events, FVGC is concentrating its efforts on advocacy and collaborative initiatives with federal government partners to champion business risk management strategies for the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. Over the coming year, FVGC will sustain its collaboration with AAFC and other industry stakeholders to ensure that growers are equipped with necessary business risk management tools. In 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food is set to examine issues pertinent to the horticultural sector, including insurance programs and federal support for the industry. Additionally, FVGC is engaging with AAFC and Gallagher Re to explore alternative insurance options as part of a comprehensive study on revenue insurance.

As the 2024 Federal Budget approaches, FVGC is set to persist in its dialogue with the Government to formulate programs that bolster the sector during climate-related crises, which can devastate crops and, at times, the livelihoods of growers. There is a pressing need for programs such as AgriRecovery and AgriStability to function more efficiently, responsively, and predictably.

"The past couple of years have demonstrated that persistent advocacy on BRM pays off, with progress achieved on AgriStability's payment rate, reference margin limit, and administrative improvements. It is clear that we need to keep pushing with a high level of urgency to make sure growers have strong BRM tools and can manage the growing risk and unpredictability presented by climate change"

STEFAN LARRASS

CHAIR-BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP



CROP PROTECTION

The Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG) of the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) met many times during 2023 with continued advocacy to support the availability of essential crop protection tools for growers.

CROP PROTECTION ADVOCACY

FVGC continued to advocate regarding the crop protection needs of fruit and vegetable growers in 2023 at events such as Farm to Plate and Fall Harvest. CPAG also met with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and the Pest Management Centre (PMC) in January 2023 to discuss the crop protection issues and concerns of Canada's fruit and vegetable growers. Additionally, FVGC lobbied for increases in their funding.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR CROP PROTECTION

With PMRA funding for the Transformation Initiative expiring at the end of March 2024, FVGC has advocated for a continuation of funding to ensure that progress can continue to address PMRA efficiencies and activities that will contribute to more timely science-based regulatory decisions. In particular, the continuation of funding for activities to gather real-world data through water monitoring and grower pesticide use information is important for the refinement of PMRA risk assessments.

FVGC continued to advocate for additional funding to be provided to the Pest Management Centre (PMC) for the development of data and submissions for minor uses in the fruit and vegetable sector, including in the FVGC pre-budget consultation submission.

PMRA'S TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

FVGC was active in five PMRA transformation technical working groups in addition to the Transformation Steering Committee throughout 2023 to ensure the needs of the fruit and vegetable sector were heard. Key areas of PMRA transformation are:

- Strengthen environmental and human health protection through modernized business processes;
- Improve transparency and access to information;
- Increase the use of real-world data and independent advice;
- A targeted review of the *Pest Control Products Act*.

Progress has been noted in all areas. The PMRA published the Continuous Oversight of Pesticides Policy, Regulatory Proposal PRO2024-01 on January 3, 2024, for a 60-day public consultation period. FVGC responded to this proposal. In May 2023 PMRA published a Notice of Intent (NOI2023-01) that proposed several regulatory amendments related to confidential test data, import maximum residue limits, species at risk and cumulative environmental risk assessments. FVGC responded to this consultation after alignment with other grower organizations to voice objections to most of the proposals that heavily favoured the environmental lobby.

AAFC PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION TRANSPARENCY STEERING COMMITTEE

FVGC participates on this Steering Committee that focuses on how to communicate to growers the varieties that contain traits that are exempt from regulation (i.e. gene-edited traits). Trait developers can voluntarily submit notification of a new trait (not variety) to Health Canada's List of non-novel products of plant breeding for food use database that was established in 2023. Seeds Canada also established in 2023 an online database of varieties for crops (including potatoes) that are subject to variety registration.

However, as vegetable crops are exempt from variety registration, the Steering Committee has been investigating the communication of varieties containing gene-edited traits from the seed developer to the seed provider to ensure transparency of genetic traits contained in a particular vegetable variety. This is of critical importance for organic vegetable growers who must ensure that the varieties they grow do not contain gene-edited traits.

PMRA RE-EVALUATIONS AND SPECIAL REVIEWS

The year 2023 was exceptionally quiet in terms of PMRA publishing proposed Re-evaluation or Special Review decisions that negatively impacted the fruit and vegetable sector. There were no proposed decisions that required FVGC to respond to the public consultations. Proposed or Final Re-evaluation decisions that continued use on most if not all fruit and vegetable crops included the active ingredients zoxamide (Gavel Fungicide) and abamectin (Agri-Mec/Minecto Insecticides). Of particular importance was the Proposed Re-evaluation decision for the widely used fungicide azoxystrobin (Quadris Fungicide) to maintain all uses. The Final Special Review decision for picoxystrobin (Acapela/Cerefit Fungicides) similarly maintained all uses. In June 2023 the PMRA published an updated Re-evaluation and Special Review work plan for the period 2023-2028. Many of the timelines for decisions on active ingredients (see accompanying table) have been amended from those published in the 2022 FVGC Annual Report.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU) REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

Past responses of FVGC to regulatory documents from the EU regarding Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) were compiled to support the EU court cases regarding neonicotinoid MRLs. This information will be submitted at a future date as the cases advance.

RE-EVALUATIONS AND SPECIAL REVIEWS OF PESTICIDES

PMRA published the following evaluation documents during 2023 and established timelines for decisions for products of relevance for fruits and vegetables.

Published Special Review Decisions	Proposed	fosetyl-ammonium
	Final	picoxystrobin
Published Re-evaluation Decisions	Proposed	abamectin azoxystrobin
	Final	zoxamide pyrethrins kaolin 1-methylcyclopropene (1-MCP) Chondrostereum purpureum (strain PFC2139) Bacillus subtilis
Upcoming Re-evaluation Decisions in 2024	Proposed	s-metolachlor (Feb) clothianidin (Oct-Dec) thiamethoxam (Oct-Dec) fenamidone (Jul-Sep) famoxadone (Jul-Sep) fatty acid cluster (Jul-Sep) nonylphenoxypolyethoxyethanol (Jan) potassium bicarbonate (Jul-Sep) mecoprop cluster (Jul-Sep) fatty acid cluster (Jul-Sep) gibberelins cluster (Jul-Sep) methyl bromide (Feb)
	Final	tebuconazole (Apr-Jun) quizalofop-p-ethyl (Feb)
Upcoming Special Review Decisions in 2024	Proposed	methyl bromide (Feb) pydiflumetofen (Oct-Dec) MCPA cluster (Oct-Dec) dicamba (Feb)
	Final	chlorothalonil (Apr-Jun) atrazine (Feb)
Re-evaluations closed	CLOSED	fenbuconazole

EUROPEAN UNION (EU) REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

Past responses of FVGC to regulatory documents from the EU regarding Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) were compiled to support the EU court cases regarding neonicotinoid MRLs. This information will be submitted at a future date as the cases advance.

LOOKING AHEAD

This year is expected to demand significant resources for consultation responses in the area of crop protection. PMRA has indicated that public consultations for transformation policy initiatives will take place in 2024 including those on transparency, business practices, continuous oversight, proportional effort, and real-world data. In addition, the PMRA schedule for Re-evaluations and Special Reviews indicates that decisions for several active ingredients of importance to fruit and vegetables will be published over the upcoming months that may require in-depth consultation responses from FVGC. CPAG will continue to advocate during the year on the regulation of crop protection tools for fruit and vegetable growers at the PMRA and PMC, and also before Senators and elected Members of Parliament.

With the departure of the FVGC Crop Protection Manager, Caleigh Hallink-Irwin, in the spring of 2023, crop protection activities were sustained by David Jones on a part-time basis. FVGC will look forward to hiring a full time Plant Health and Crop Protection Manager in 2024.

“As we navigate the evolving landscape of crop protection, our commitment at the Crop Protection Advisory Group remains steadfast: to advocate for and ensure the availability of essential tools that support the sustainability and competitiveness of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers. Together, we’re building a resilient future for our sector.”

JASON SMITH

CHAIR-CROP PROTECTION ADVISORY GROUP



PMRA RE-EVALUATION AND SPECIAL REVIEW DECISIONS SCHEDULE IMPACTING HORTICULTURE

(UPDATED: FEBRUARY, 2024)

FUNGICIDES

Active Ingredient	Tebuconazole Group 3	Zoxamide Group 22	Bacillus subtilis cluster Group BM02	Azoxystrobin Group 11	Chlorothalonil Group M5
Trade Name	FOLICUR Fungicide	ZOXIUM Fungicide	SERENADE, TAEGR0, Biofungicide	QUADRIS Fungicide	DACONIL, BRAVO, ECHO, CHLOROTHALONIL, EQUUS
Decision Status	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD2021-08 July 23, 2021	Cyclical Review: RVD2023-04 Feb 9, 2023	Cyclical Review: RVD2024-02 Jan 29, 2024	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD2023-02 Jun 15, 2023	Public Consultation Special Review: PSRD2022-01 Feb 11, 2022
Re-evaluation Category	1	1	3	1	
Proposed/ Final Decision Impacting Horticulture	Proposed acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	Proposed acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	PMRA proposing cancellation of all uses except on GH ornamentals due to health and environmental risks
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Asparagus	Potatoes, grapes, onion (bulb)	Asparagus, Crop Group 13 (bushberries & caneberries), Group 13-07 (berry and small fruit), highbush & lowbush blueberry, Group 5 (cole veg), Group 6 (legume veg), Group 3 (bulb veg), Group 1 (root tuber veg), potato, sugar & garden beets, Group 9 (cucurbits), <i>continued below</i>	Succulent shelled pea and bean, potatoes, field tomatoes, sweet corn, ginseng, asparagus, spinach, carrots, daikon, rutabaga, turnip, garden beet, radish, ground cherries, cabbage, cranberries, celery, strawberries, blueberries, sweet potatoes, cucurbit vegetables, GH and outdoor ornamentals	Carrot, parsnip, potato, onions (dry bulb & green bunching), cole crops (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage), tomatoes (processing), asparagus, highbush blueberries, cherry (sweet & sour), sweet corn, peach, nectarine, cranberry, outdoor ornamentals
	Group 8 (fruiting veg), tomato, pepper, grapes, Group 4 (leafy veg), lettuce, spinach, celery, Group 11 (pome fruit), apples, Group 12 (stone fruit), radish, turnip, rutabaga, strawberry, Group 19 (herbs & spices)				
Final Decision	Q1 (2024–25)	Completed	Completed	TBD	Q1 (2024–25)

FUNGICIDES

Active Ingredient	Picoxystrobin Group 11	Fenbuconazole Group 3	Cyprodinil Group 9	Famoxadone Group 11	Fenamidone Group 11
Trade Name	ACAPELA, CEREFIT A Fungicide	INDAR Fungicide	VANGARD, SWITCH Fungicide	TANOS Fungicide	REASON Fungicide
Decision Status	Special Review: SRD2023-01 May 30, 2023	Public consultation Cyclical Review: Closed	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2025–26)	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q2 (2024–25)	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q1 (2024–25)
Re-evaluation Category		1	1	1	1
Proposed/ Final Decision Impacting Horticulture	Acceptable for continued use. No additional mitigation measures required.	Registrants informed PMRA that all end-use products voluntarily discontinued, re-eval closed.			
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Crop Group 6A (edible podded legumes), Crop Group 6B (succulent shelled peas and beans), potatoes, bulb vegetables, sweet corn, peanuts	Stone fruit, blueberry (highbush)	Apples, stone fruit, grapes, onions, strawberry, carrots, mustard greens, turnip greens, cabbage, celery, spinach, field pepper, field tomato, succulent beans, greenhouse pepper, greenhouse cucumber, greenhouse tomato, greenhouse lettuce, Saskatoon berry, Crop Sub-groups 13-07A (caneberry), 13-07B (bushberry), 13-07F (small fruit vine climbing), 13-07G (low growing berry), 8-09A (tomato), Crop Group 1B (root and tuber)	Potatoes, field tomatoes, caneberries	Carrot, cucurbit vegetables, potatoes, turnip greens, tomato, ginseng, succulent beans, basil, Brassica head and stem vegetables, wBrassica leafy greens, bulb vegetables, spinach (including baby spinach)
Final Decision	Completed	Re-eval closed	TBD	TBD	TBD

FUNGICIDES

Active Ingredient	Fluazinam Group 29	Fosetyl aluminum Group P07	Pydiflumetofen Group 7	Propiconazole Group 3	Ipconazole Group 3
Trade Name	ALLEGRO Fungicide	ALIETTE Fungicide	POSTERITY, A19649 Fungicide	TILT Fungicide	RACONA, VORTEX Fungicide
Decision Status	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2024–25)	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD2023-02 Nov 14, 2023	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Q3 (2024-25)	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Q4 (2025-26) Cyclical Review to be initiated 2027-2028	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed
Re-evaluation Category	1				
Proposed/ Final Decision Impacting Horticulture		Proposed acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures			
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Potatoes, Bok choy Chinese cabbage; broccoli; broccoli raab; Brussels sprouts; cabbages; cauliflower; cavolo broccolo; Chinese broccoli; Chinese mustard cabbage; collards; kale; kohlrabi; mizuna; mustard greens; mustard spinach; Chinese Napa cabbage and rape greens, highbush and lowbush blueberry, currant, elderberry, gooseberry, huckleberry, grapes (except table grapes), ediblepoddled legume vegetables (except pea): bean (Phaseolus spp.), ginseng, carrot, apple, field-grown cucurbit vegetables (Crop Group 9), bulb onion (Crop Subgroup 3- 07A), field peppers	Apples, ginseng, red/black raspberries, blackberries, cranberry, grapes, strawberries, lettuce, greenhouse lettuce in BC, spinach, onions, brassica head and stem vegetables (crop group 5-13) and brassica leafy vegetables (crop group 4-13b), greenhouse-grown brassica head and stem vegetable transplants (crop group 5-13), greenhouse-grown brassica leafy green transplants (crop subgroup 4-13b), kohlrabi, rutabaga, Belgian endive, highbush blueberries,	Potato, root and tuber vegetables (crop subgroup 1a), tuberous and corm vegetables, leaves of root and tuber vegetables, bulb brassica leafy vegetables, brassica head and stem vegetables, fruiting vegetables, cucurbit vegetables, pome fruits, blueberries (lowbush) - sprouting year, peaches (crop subgroup 12- 09b), cherries (crop subgroup 12-09a, stone fruits (crop group 12-09), greenhouse cucumbers, greenhouse peppers and greenhouse lettuce, sweet corn	Peaches, nectarines, plums, sweet cherries, sour cherries, apricots, highbush and lowbush blueberries, Saskatoon berries, cranberries, caneberries, rutabagas, asparagus, strawberries, garden beets.	Sweet corn, legume vegetables (succulent and edible-podded pea and bean)
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

FUNGICIDES

Active Ingredient	Trifloxystrobin Group 11	Pyraclostrobin Group 11	Boscalid Group 7	Potassium bicarbonate -	Sulphur Group M
Trade Name	STRATEGO, FLINT, TRILEX AL, CGA279202, EVERGOL, LUNA SENSATION Fungicide	HEADLINE, CABRIO, PRISTINE Fungicide	LANCE, PRISTINE, CANTUS Fungicide	MILSTOP, SIROCCO Fungicide	KUMULUS, MICROWETTABLE Fungicide
Decision Status	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q2 (2024-2025)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2024-2025)
Re-evaluation Category	1	1	1	2	2

No Proposed/Final Decision Impacting Horticulture

Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Sweet corn, grapes, pome fruits group (apple, crabapple, loquat, mayhaw, pear, Oriental pear and quince), cherries, seed treatment in beans (succulent, snap), pea (Includes dwarf pea, edible pod pea, English pea, field pea, garden pea, green pea, snow pea, sugar snap pea), asparagus, Crop Subgroup 1b: (carrot and other root vegetables), CROP SUBGROUP 4A: LEAFY GREEN VEGETABLES (except Brassica), Crop Subgroup 4B [leafy petiole vegetables (except Brassica)], Crop Group 5 (Brassica leafy vegetables), Crop Group 9 (cucurbit vegetables), Crop Group 12-09 (stone fruit), Crop Subgroup 13-07G (low growing berry)	Sweet corn, edible-podded legume vegetables (Crop Subgroup 6-A), succulent shelled beans and peas (Crop Subgroup 6-B), potatoes, sugar beets, blueberries (highbush, lowbush), bulb vegetables group, cucurbit vegetable group, fruiting vegetables (eggplant, field pepper, field tomato), garden beet tops, radish tops, root vegetables, stone fruits group, pomefruit group, strawberries, berry group, Belgian endive, brassica vegetables group, bulb vegetables group, carrots, grapes, greenhouse cucumbers, greenhouse lettuce, greenhouse peppers, greenhouse tomatoes, leafy vegetables (except brassica)	Succulent beans, succulent peas, potatoes, berry group, Belgian endive, brassica vegetables group, bulb vegetables group, carrots, celeriac, cucurbit crop group, grapes, greenhouse cucumbers, greenhouse lettuce, greenhouse peppers, greenhouse tomatoes, leafy vegetables (except brassica), pomefruit group, stone fruits group, strawberries	Vegetable crops in greenhouses, field cucurbits (cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash), stone fruits (peach, nectarine, apricot, plum, prune), greenhouse and field strawberries, greenhouse and field herbs and spices, mint, grapes (conventional and organic), artichokes, greenhouse lettuce and field peppers, apples	Apple, pear, peach, plum, sweet cherry, sour cherry, grapes, greenhouse tomato and pepper, currants, gooseberry, raspberry, blackberry, rutabaga
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

INSECTICIDES

Active Ingredient	Pyrethrins Group 3	Abamectin Group 6	Acetamiprid Group 4A	Clothianidin (general) Group 4A
Trade Name	SAFER'S, BUG-X Insecticide	AVID, AGRI-MEK Insecticide/Miticide	ASSAIL Insecticide	CLUTCH Insecticide
Decision Status	Cyclical Review RVD2023-06 Mar 2, 2023	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD2023-01 Feb 28, 2023	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2025–26)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q3 (2024–25)
Re-evaluation Category		1	1	1
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture	Acceptable for continued use with risk mitigation measures. Crops not specifically identified on commercial-class product labels i.e., removal of general crop terms such as “vegetables.”	Proposed acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures		
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Asparagus, blueberry, beans, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, grape, kale, lettuce, mustard greens, spinach, GH Peppers, potatoes, radish, raspberry, tomatoes, turnips	GH tomatoes, GH peppers, GH cucumbers, apples, pears, caneberries (Subgroup 13-07A), strawberries, celery, potatoes, grapes, bulb onions (Subgroup 3-07A), green onion (Subgroup 3-07B)	Leafy vegetables, Cole crops (Group 5), field tomato, pome fruit, potato, Leafy Vegetables (Group 4), ground cherry, field peppers, stone fruit, strawberries, blueberries (lowbush and highbush), Bushberries (Group 13-07B), grapes, sweet corn, rutabaga, Succulent shelled pea and bean (Subgroup 6B), edible podded pea, asparagus, Caneberries (13-07A)	Potato (Nipsit seed piece treatment), sweet potato, pome fruit, grape, strawberry, cucurbit vegetables, stone fruit
Final Decision	Completed	TBD	TBD	TBD

INSECTICIDES

Active Ingredient	Thiamethoxam (general) Group 4A	Spinetoram Group 5	Spinosad Group 5	Methoxyfenozide Group 1B
Trade Name	CRUISER, ACTARA Insecticide	RADIANT, DELEGATE Insecticide	SUCCESS, ENTRUST Insecticide	Intrepid Insecticide
Decision Status	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q3 (2024–25)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2024–25)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2024–25)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2024–25)
Re-evaluation Category	1	1	1	1

No Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture

Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Sweet corn, beans, peas, cucurbit vegetables, potatoes, Leafy Vegetables (Group 4), Brassica Vegetables (Group 5), Fruiting Vegetables (Group 8-09), apples, crabapples, pear, oriental pear, root vegetables, caneberries, bushberries, cherries, low growing berries, field pepper, GH peppers	Pome Fruits CG 11-09, apple, asparagus, highbush and lowbush blueberries, caneberries (raspberry, blackberry), cole crops (Brassica leafy veg), fruiting veg & okra, grape, Leafy Veg CG 4-13, turnip & beet greens, carrot, horseradish, radish, Oriental radish, rutabaga, turnip, Stone Fruit CG 12-09, strawberry, Berries CSG 13-07A, 13-07B, 13-07G, outdoor ornamentals, Brassica Head & Stem Veg CG 5-13, Fruiting Veg CG 8-09, Leaves of Root & Tuber Veg CG 2, potatoes, root veg, Leaf Petioles Veg SCG 22B, Stalk & Stem Veg CSG 22A, Bulb Veg CG 3, snap bean, basil, dill, ginseng, sweet corn, Bushberries CSG 13-07B, Caneberries CSG 13-07A, Low Growing Berry CSG 13-07G, GH veg, mint, non-bearing nursery stock, root veg	Apples, potatoes, outdoor ornamentals, root and tuber veg (horseradish, radish, Oriental radish, rutabaga, turnip), sweet corn, Leafy Greens Crop Subgroup 4-13A, Brassica Leafy Greens Crop Subgroup 4-13B, Fruiting Veg CG 8-09, Pome Fruits CG 11-09, Brassica Head & Stem Veg CG 5-13 and kohlrabi, Stone Fruits CG 12-09, chokecherries, nectarines, peaches, cherries (sweet & tart), snap bean, GH ornamentals & veg, grape, cranberry, lowbush and highbush blueberry, Caneberry Subgroup CG 13-07A, Bushberry Subgroup CG 13-07B, Low-growing Berry subgroup CG 13-07G, Stalk & Stem Veg CG 22A, Leaf Petiole Veg Crop Subgroup 22B, Bulb Veg CG 3-07, basil, dill seed, ginseng, GH transplants, Brassica Leafy Greens Crop Subgroup 4-13B, Brassica Head & Stem Veg CG 5-13, mint	Apples, pears, other pome fruit, raspberries (red and black), other caneberries, cranberries, blueberries (highbush and lowbush), other bushberries, grapes, cherries, peaches, other stone fruits Broccoli, cabbage, other brassica (cole) leafy vegetables, sweet corn, cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash & zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, other fruiting vegetables, lettuce (head and leaf), other leafy vegetables, beans (succulent), peas (succulent), sweet potatoes, other tuberous and corm vegetables, herbs (except chives)
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

INSECTICIDES

Active Ingredient	Phorate Group 1B	Thiacloprid Group 4	N-methyl carbamates Group 1A	Organophosphates Group 1B	Bifentozate Group 20D
Trade Name	THIMET Insecticide	THEME Insecticide	Various	Various	ACRAMITE, FLORAMITE Miticide
Decision Status	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q3 (2026–27)	Public consultation Special Review PSRD Q3 (2027–28) Cyclical Review Scoping Phase	Public consultation Cumulative Health Risk Assessment Q2 (2025–26)	Public consultation Cumulative Health Risk Assessment Publication of work plan Jan 2024	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed
Re-evaluation Category	2				
No Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture					
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Potato	Apple, Crabapple, Loquat, Mayhaw, Pear, Oriental Pear, Quince.	Range of fruit and vegetable crops	Range of fruit and vegetable crops	Greenhouse vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, eggplants), apples; grapes; fruiting vegetable (Crop Group 8-09), cucurbits (Crop Group 9); stone fruit (Crop Group 12); Crop Subgroup 13-07A: blackberry, loganberry, raspberry, wild raspberry; mint; and herbs (Crop Subgroup 19A).
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

HERBICIDES

Active Ingredient	Fatty Acid Cluster	Glufosinate ammonium Group 10	Desmedipham Group 5	Mecoprop cluster Group 4
Trade Name	AXXE Herbicide	IGNITE Herbicide	BETAMIX Herbicide	MCPA AMINE Herbicide
Decision Status	Public consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q2 (2024–25)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q1 (2026–27)	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Q4 (2027–28) Cyclical Review to be initiated 2024–2028	Public Consultation Cyclical Review PRVD Q2 (2024–25)
Re-evaluation Category	2	1		1
No Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture				
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Food crops, greenhouses	Eastern Canada and BC: raspberry (established raspberries only), apples apricots, cherries (sweet and sour) highbush blueberries, grapes, nectarines, pears, plums, peaches, lowbush blueberries (dormant application), strawberries (day neutral and June bearing), asparagus (stale seedbed, direct seeded; (established beds after harvest), carrots, lettuce, onions (stale seedbed), potatoes (ground crack)	Red garden (table) beet and newly-planted June-bearing strawberry varieties	Vegetable crops, asparagus, sweet corn, legumes (incl. peas), peas for canning
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

HERBICIDES

Active Ingredient	Glufosinate Ammonium Group 10	MCPA Cluster Group 4	Dicamba Herbicides Group 4	Bensulide Group 8	Mesotrione Group 27
Trade Name	LIBERTY 15SN Herbicide	Various Herbicides	BANVEL Herbicide	PREFAR Herbicide	CALLISTO Herbicide
Decision Status	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Q1 (2026–27)	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Q3 (2024–25) Cyclical Review To be initiated Apr2024- Mar2025	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Feb 2024	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed	Cyclical Review: Scoping phase completed
Re-evaluation Category					
No Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture					
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Eastern Canada and BC: raspberry (established raspberries only), apples apricots cherries (sweet and sour) highbush blueberries, grapes, nectarines, pears, plums, peaches, lowbush blueberries (dormant application), strawberries (day neutral and June bearing), asparagus (stale seedbed, direct seeded; (established beds after harvest), carrots, lettuce, onions (stale seedbed), potatoes (ground crack)	Amine: sweet corn, processing peas, asparagus. Sodium: processing peas, sweet corn Ester: asparagus	Blueberries (lowbush)	Cucumbers	Sweet corn, cranberry, asparagus (established), blueberry, rhubarb
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

OTHER TYPES OF PRODUCTS

Active Ingredient	Kaolin	Dried Blood Animal Repellent	1-Methylcyclopropene (1-MCP)
Trade Name	SURROUND Crop Protectant	PLANTSKYDD Deer Repellent	SMARTFRESH, ETHYLBLOC, RIPELOCK, EASYFRESH, HARVISTA, FYSIUM PGR
Decision Status	Cyclical Review: RVD2022-10 Jun 30, 2022	Cyclical Review: RVD2022-08 May 16, 2022	Cyclical Review: RVD2023-15 Sep 26, 2023
Re-evaluation Category	3	3	3
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture	Acceptable for continued use with label updates	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Pome fruit, stone fruit, grapes, cucurbits, potatoes, carrots, leafy vegetables (excl. Brassicas), raspberries, strawberries, onions, shallots	Outdoor	apples, pears, tomatoes
Final Decision	Completed	Completed	Completed

OTHER TYPES OF PRODUCTS

Active Ingredient	Chondrostereum purpureum (Strain: PFC2139)	Methyl Bromide	Chlorpropham (CIPC)
Trade Name	CHONTROL, LALICIDE CHONDRO PGR	TERR-O-GAS Fumigant	SPROUT-NIP POTATO SPROUT INHIBITOR
Decision Status	Cyclical Review: RVD2023-12 Jul 6, 2023	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Feb 2024 Cyclical Review PRVD Feb 2024	Public Consultation Special Review PSRD Q3 (2025-26)
Re-evaluation Category	3	1	
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures		
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Sprout inhibition in chokecherry and buckthorn	Tomatoes, ornamentals	Potato sprout inhibition
Final Decision	Completed	TBD	TBD

OTHER TYPES OF PRODUCTS

Active Ingredient	Chlorpropham (CIPC)	6-benzylaminopurine	Gibberelin cluster: gibberellic acid, gibberellins A4A7	Nonylphenoxypolyethoxyethanol
Trade Name	SPROUT-NIP POTATO SPROUT INHIBITOR	PROMALIN, ACCEL, MAXCEL, PERLAN, CILIS PGR	ACTIVOL PGR	AGRAL 90, AG-SURF Surfactant
Decision Status	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD To be initiated Jan 2024	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q4 (2025-26)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Q2 (2024-25)	Public Consultation Cyclical Review: PRVD Dec 2023
Re-evaluation Category		1	3	3

No Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture

Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Potato sprout inhibition	Apples, pears, sweet cherries	Sweet and sour cherries, rhubarb	Non-ionic spreading agent for use with pesticides including those applied to fruit and vegetables
Final Decision	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

SOURCES

The above tables are based on: Tables 1, 2, 3a and 3b of REV2023-01. Pest Management Regulatory Agency Re-evaluation and Special Review Work Plan 2023-2028.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/reports-publications/pesticides-pest-management/decisions-updates/reevaluation-note/2023/special-review-work-plan-2023-2028.html>

PMRA Pesticide Label Search Tool: <https://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php>

NOTE

Some Trade Name products listed above contain additional active ingredients and in some cases these combination products list more crops on their labels than are found on labels for the active ingredient alone.



** Category 1 re-evaluations have the longest projected timeframes and typically require the submission of information prior to proceeding with updating the risk assessments. Evaluations could include, but are not limited to review of the new studies and the application of revised toxicology endpoints in exposure assessments. In some cases, an active ingredient with a large number of uses, emerging science issues, and/or extensive monitoring data can contribute to the increased level of effort and longer review timelines required to complete a proposed decision document.*

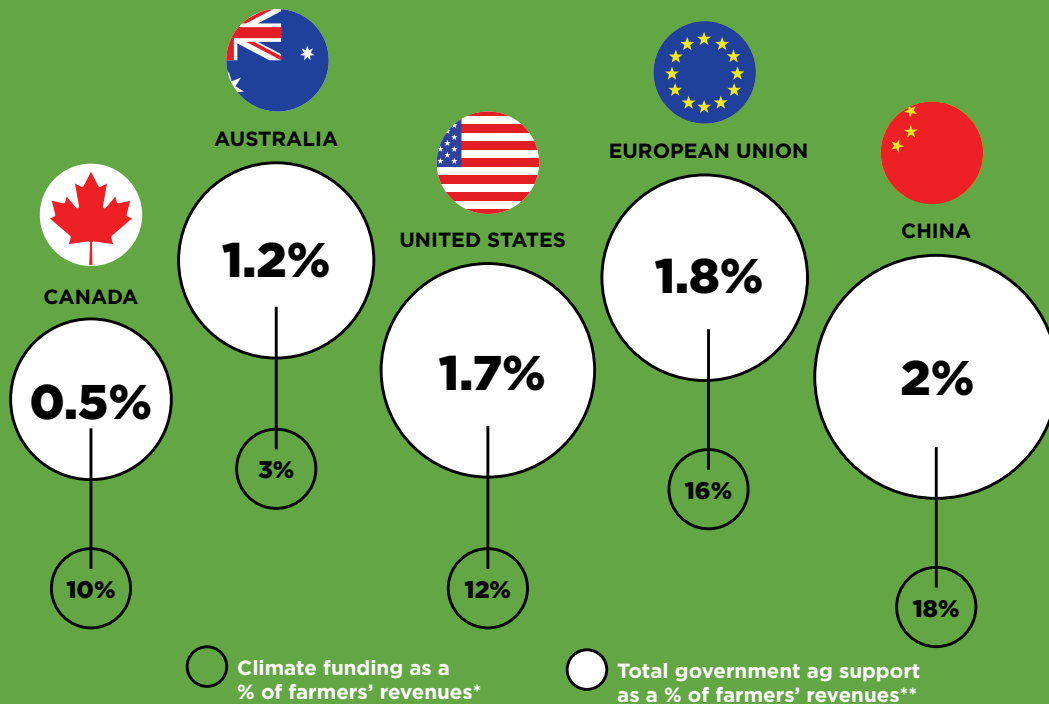
Category 2 re-evaluations typically do not require additional information to be submitted to PMRA, yet they may include a detailed evaluation of some areas, such as updating a risk assessment using current assumptions or including additional new information in drinking water estimates.

Category 3 re-evaluations are those in which all components may be adequately addressed by previous reviews and a detailed new evaluation is not warranted; however, the outcome of a Category 3 re-evaluation could still require that product labels be updated to meet current labelling requirements.

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2023 the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) has proactively navigated the complex landscape of sustainable agriculture, emphasizing the need for increased governmental support and funding to keep pace with international advancements in climate-smart practices. Through strategic involvement in key initiatives like the National Index on Agri-Food Performance, advocating for practical approaches to evolving plastic packaging regulations, and responding to legislative changes, notably Bill C-234, FVGC has demonstrated a strong commitment to representing and supporting the interests of fruit and vegetable growers in Canada, positioning them at the forefront of environmental and climate resilience in the agricultural sector.





*Proportion of revenue received from government programs focused on climate smart programs (2021)

**Proportion of farm revenue from government programs (2021)

INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Canadian fruit and vegetable growers are at a crucial juncture as global food producers intensify their focus on sustainable agriculture. Competing nations are significantly investing in climate-smart food supply chains, supported by substantial funding and strong policy measures. In this evolving landscape, there is a risk that Canadian agriculture could lag if not adequately supported by comparable funding and policy tools from Canadian governments. This is especially pressing as Canada currently receives roughly a third of the climate funding provided to agriculture sectors in countries like the U.S., EU, Australia, and China, despite increasing expectations for Canadian farmers to produce more with lower emissions and contribute to global food security.

The urgency is underscored by the significant investments other nations are making in agriculture-related climate initiatives, with the U.S., China, and the EU dedicating substantial resources to transform their agricultural sectors. Canadian farmers, already contributing notably to global food security and adopting climate-smart farming practices, are well-positioned to meet these new challenges.

FVGC will continue to advocate for increased government support and funding, aligning with global efforts to enhance sustainable and climate-smart agricultural practices within the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector.

Image and statistics credit—RBC report- <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/a-new-ag-deal-a-9-point-plan-for-climate-smart-agriculture/>

NATIONAL INDEX ON AGRI-FOOD PERFORMANCE

In May 2023, FVGC, as part of a broad coalition of 129 entities including agri-food companies, NGOs, commodity groups, and government departments, played a key role in developing and launching the National Index on Agri-Food Performance. This pioneering initiative established Canada's first sustainability index for the agriculture and food sector. The pilot Index provides a comprehensive framework for standardized sustainability reporting, enhancing transparency and preparing for new global disclosure standards expected in 2024.

The Index, featuring 20 indicators with over 130 metrics, covers environmental impacts, food integrity, economic factors, and societal well-being, including labour and food security issues. It aims to demonstrate Canada's progress in sustainable food production and positions the country as a leader in comprehensive sector-wide sustainability approaches.

Rather than scoring individual producers or companies, the Index consolidates national results from production to retail. It identifies areas of strong sustainability performance, improvement needs, and data gaps, offering valuable insights for policy, strategy, and research.

Enhancing sustainability measures and tracking changes over time is a priority. The next phase involves establishing a Centre for Agri-Food Benchmarking under the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute. The Centre was launched on February 7, 2024. This Centre will further develop the Index and expand stakeholder engagement.



PLASTIC PACKAGING REGULATIONS

Amid evolving plastic regulations in Canada, FVGC has actively advocated for growers, particularly regarding the Pollution Prevention Planning Notice for Primary Food Plastic Packaging (P2). The inclusion of P2 issues in the Fall Harvest advocacy topics, along with engagements with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) staff and a meeting with Minister Steven Guilbeault, underscores FVGC's dedication to ensuring that environmental policies affecting agriculture adequately reflect the needs of growers.

FVGC has also engaged in other key plastics consultations by Environment Canada, contributing to discussions on the Regulatory Framework for Recycled Content in Plastic Products and the Federal Plastics Registry. FVGC's submissions focus on practical, sustainable recycling solutions and accurate data collection for policy development.

FVGC underscores the necessity for a collaborative dialogue among government bodies, industry representatives, and stakeholders. This dialogue focuses on recognizing the vital role that plastic plays in maintaining the freshness, safety, and shelf life of produce, along with its contribution to minimizing food waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Advocating for progress, FVGC supports research and development efforts in the realm of innovative, sustainable packaging, aiming to harmonize environmental aspirations with the practical realities of the agricultural sector.

BILL C-234, AN ACT TO AMEND THE GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION ACT

For years, FVGC has been a staunch advocate for the swift passage of Bill C-234, aiming to amend the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Act*. This critical legislation was poised to exempt farm fuels used in agricultural buildings, like greenhouses and barns, from the carbon tax, addressing key needs of growers. However, in a concerning turn of events in fall 2023, the Senate's amendments significantly narrowed the bill's scope, notably excluding the heating and cooling of structures crucial for livestock and crop cultivation. This modification not only diverged from the bill's original purpose but also compromised the competitiveness of Canadian fruit and vegetable producers by withholding essential carbon tax relief.

Reacting to this setback, FVGC launched an extensive, multi-faceted advocacy initiative. This included 236 engagements with Senators, including over 210 targeted letters to parliamentarians, and strategic media outreach. Jan VanderHout, FVGC's President, played a pivotal

role, voicing concerns through media interviews and an on-air radio segment, thus spotlighting the sector's challenges. Moreover, FVGC leveraged its Fall Harvest advocacy event for direct dialogues with Parliamentarians, underlining the urgency of Bill C-234.

Despite FVGC's relentless and strategic efforts, Bill C-234, in its altered state, now resides in the House of Commons with prospects of passing before the next election appearing dim. However, undeterred by this challenge, FVGC stands steadfast in its mission. Facing an unpredictable future, the organization is poised to not only respond to emerging developments but also adapt proactively, reaffirming FVGC's commitment to seeking effective solutions and ensuring a robust future for Canadian growers.



FVGC team members, in support of the submission of a project entitled Clean Energy Amplification of Sustainable Agriculture Resilience (CEASAR).

The team had the unique opportunity to tour Canadian Nuclear Laboratories in 2023 to inform the proposal made to the NSERC-SSHRC Sustainable Agriculture Research Initiative in collaboration with AAFC. The lead applicant, Dr. Rupp Cariveau, Director of the Environmental Energy Institute at the University of Windsor, has assembled an impressive team of academics and industry partners to spearhead transformative work to evaluate the optimal energy mix including renewables (wind and solar energy), low carbon carriers like hydrogen and ammonia, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) for stable high energy supply, and cleaner burning traditional fuels like Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for various agricultural uses, that considers the importance of regional needs, scalability, reliability and long-term sustainability.

"In 2023, FVGC led the charge in sustainable agriculture, advocating for the support our growers need to embrace climate-smart practices and remain globally competitive. Our efforts ranged from challenging plastic packaging regulations to pushing for crucial support for legislation like Bill C-234, all aimed at ensuring our sector's sustainability and economic viability. As we move forward, our commitment is clear: to balance environmental stewardship with the practical needs of Canadian agriculture, ensuring a resilient, sustainable future for our growers."

AARON CORISTINE
CHAIR-ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT
AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) is poised to actively shape the future of sustainable agriculture in several critical areas. A key focus will be intensifying advocacy for increased government support and funding. This step is vital to keep Canadian agriculture competitive and responsive in a global context where substantial investments are being made in climate-smart food supply chains.

In the upcoming year, FVGC's involvement in the National Index on Agri-Food Performance will be pivotal. Efforts will center on enhancing the Index's impact and scope through the establishment of the Centre for Agri-Food Benchmarking. Subject to funding, this Centre will play a crucial role in broadening stakeholder engagement and refining the Index to ensure it remains a valuable tool for shaping policy, strategy and research.

Continuing its advocacy, FVGC will seek a balanced approach to the evolving regulations around plastic packaging. This includes collaborative efforts with government and stakeholders to develop innovative, practical packaging solutions that meet both environmental goals and the realities of agricultural production.

FVGC is also prepared to respond and adapt to developments following the recent setback with Bill C-234. The focus will remain on advocating for amendments that cater specifically to the needs of fruit and vegetable growers, particularly concerning the heating and cooling requirements of agricultural buildings.



INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND FOOD SAFETY

In Canada, fruit and vegetables are an essential part of the food supply, and their safety is regulated to ensure they meet specific standards for human consumption. Canadians are fortunate to have one of the safest food supplies in the world, and Canadian fruit and vegetable growers work to guarantee that Canadian produce meets the highest standards of food safety. FVGC recognizes that maintaining this standard comes with its challenges, particularly the cumulative regulatory burden faced by growers. FVGC is committed to working closely with agricultural stakeholders and government officials to ensure that growers are not only equipped with the resources and tools they need to meet these stringent standards but also supported in navigating the complexities of regulatory requirements. This collaboration is essential to sustain the sector's competitiveness and ability to provide high-quality, safe produce to Canadians.



CANADAGAP

In early 2023, CanadaGAP successfully completed a scope expansion of the Greenhouse Food Safety program, for which FVGC was instrumental in securing funding through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). The expanded food safety manual and generic Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) model for the Greenhouse sector was published in January 2023. Certification became available on April 1, 2023 to many more greenhouse-grown crops, such as melons, berries, various root vegetables, cruciferous crops, and legumes.

In 2023, FVGC emphasized enhancing collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). This partnership led to a notable achievement: FVGC successfully hosted an educational session in June 2023, bringing together CFIA regional staff and CanadaGAP representatives. The primary focus of this session was to deepen understanding of the CanadaGAP program and its integration with the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR). Recognizing the crucial role of education in advancing food safety, FVGC is committed to continuing these educational efforts in the coming year. FVGC will maintain active engagement in the discussions and initiatives that strengthen food safety programs and foster FVGC's ongoing partnership with CFIA.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRODUCE STANDARDS (IFPS)

As a key member of the IFPS, FVGC has a voice when it comes to the standardization efforts for the fresh produce industry. In 2023, FVGC was instrumental in having the IFPS added to the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) as an associate member. This membership allows the IFPS to participate in the various CGF initiatives including the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

IFPS is responsible for approving Price Look Up (PLU) codes. Grocery stores utilize these PLUs to easily identify bulk produce which makes it easier for inventory control and to make check-outs more efficient. In 2023, the IFPS approved 27 new PLUs for the fruit and vegetable sector:

- 15 for apples
- 5 for grapes
- 3 for lemons
- 2 for cherries
- 1 for plums
- 1 for onions

FVGC looks forward to the opportunity to continue collaboration with international partners on Canadian soil in April 2024, at the International Sustainability Summit in Vancouver, BC.

SAFE FOOD FOR CANADIANS ACT (SFCA)

The *Safe Food for Canadians Act* (SFCA), enacted in 2019, consolidated various food-related legislative provisions under one comprehensive act. The Act and its regulations cover critical requirements including grades, licensing, labelling, organic certification, packaging, traceability, and trade. The Act requires a mandatory review every five years, and with the next review scheduled for 2024, FVGC will play an instrumental role as a recognized stakeholder, in partnership with the Fresh Produce Alliance (FPA).

In preparation for the review, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) initiated consultations with FVGC and other important stakeholders in November 2023. These preliminary discussions aimed to refine the focus for more extensive consultations. As part of this process, FVGC distributed a survey, prepared by the CFIA, to all members, seeking insights into the challenges, risks, and successes experienced since the SFCA's implementation. This survey is a critical tool for identifying areas for improvement and success within the Act.

FVGC is committed to maintaining its active engagement with the CFIA. This includes ensuring that the results of the CFIA survey are publicly available and disseminated to all interested parties, thereby maintaining transparency and inclusivity in the review process of the SFCA.

LOOKING AHEAD

FVGC is dedicated to advocating on behalf of its members regarding critical food safety issues, and is prepared to navigate the complexities of its engagement with the CFIA, with a focus on ensuring that the CFIA develops regulations that are transparent, collaborative, and responsive to the industry's needs. A significant focus for FVGC in 2024 will be the review of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* (SFCA). In this review, FVGC will advocate for amendments that are practical and realistic for the fruit and vegetable sector, without hindering competitiveness in the marketplace.

"As Chair of the Industry Standards and Food Safety Working Group, I firmly believe that each of us plays a crucial role in demonstrating how Canadian farmers diligently ensure the safety of our produce."

JODY MOTT

CHAIR-INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

LABOUR

In 2023, labour challenges remained a pivotal concern for fruit and vegetable growers, with the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) proactively engaging in numerous initiatives to tackle these issues. Collaborating with key federal departments such as Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) FVGC dedicated efforts to overcome the various challenges impacting the availability of necessary agricultural labour for the sector.

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS ROAD MAP

The Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program Workforce Solutions Road Map, launched in April 2022, is a Government of Canada initiative designed to adapt to current labour market conditions by extending and modifying measures for the agricultural sector. These measures include increasing the cap for employing temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in low-wage positions, extending employment durations, and adjusting Labour Market Impact Assessment validity periods, all aimed at addressing labour shortages in critical sectors like fruit and vegetable growing. FVGC continues to stay abreast of the changes to the Road Map and will continue to remain active in representing the needs of growers.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROGRAM BILATERAL MEETINGS

In November 2023, FVGC's Labour Working Group Chair Beth Connery attended the annual Seasonal Agricultural Worker (SAWP) bilateral meetings in Mexico and Trinidad. FVGC's presence at these meetings presents a unified voice for the fruit and vegetable sector. Collaboration with FARMS, FERME, and WALI helps to develop labour policies that benefit both growers and workers alike. The continuing commitment to quarterly meetings between all parties creates the working space needed to make headway on issues identified during the annual meetings and others that arise as the year progresses.

RECOGNIZED EMPLOYER PILOT (REP)

After persistent advocacy by FVGC, ESDC announced the Recognized Employer Pilot (REP) in August 2023. The REP is a three-year pilot designed to help reduce the administrative burden for employers who meet the highest standards for wages, working and living conditions, and worker protection. Fruit and vegetable growers have long sought a program to streamline the administrative processes in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. FVGC has been at the forefront, representing our members' interests to turn this vision into a reality.

In October 2023, FVGC organized a virtual technical briefing with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). This event aimed to inform members about the benefits of adopting the REP, particularly for those in the sector who depend on temporary foreign workers. FVGC has consistently advocated for reducing bureaucratic obstacles, aiming to facilitate better planning of labour needs by employers and to decrease the number of required Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA). While endorsing the general idea of the pilot program, FVGC intends to continue collaborating with ESDC, actively tracking the participation and outcomes among growers in the fruit and vegetable industry.

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) continues its focus on assessing current agricultural labour market trends, projecting future supply and demand for agricultural workers, and recommending potential solutions to the labour issues faced by the agricultural sector. FVGC sits on the CAHRC Board of Directors and in 2024 will continue to be closely connected through several working groups, including the Immigration and Temporary Foreign Workers Working Group.

UNDERUSED HOUSING TAX

In the 2021 Federal Budget, the Government announced a one percent annual tax, the Underused Housing Tax (UHT) on the value of residential real estate that is considered vacant or underused. The UHT is having an unintended and negative impact on growers. Many own multiple homes to provide housing to temporary foreign workers and seasonal agricultural workers. Even though the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) exempted some housing for foreign workers

(i.e. bunkhouses), many accommodations remain under the filing requirement. This creates an unnecessary financial and administrative burden. In August 2023, FVGC along with other industry groups, wrote to the Ministers of Agriculture and Agri-Food, National Revenue and Finance, urging an immediate exemption for growers for filing a UHT return. In response to FVGC's advocacy, the 2023 Fall Economic Statement proposed exempting Canadian Corporations, Partnerships, and Trusts from the UHT reporting requirements, starting in 2023. In January 2024, FVGC reinforced this position by writing to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, urging them to actualize these changes. This proposed exemption, once legislated, would significantly ease the financial and administrative burden on growers, enabling them to devote more resources to enhancing their agricultural businesses. FVGC remains committed to engaging with these departments for equitable and sensible solutions, emphasizing the need for exemptions that acknowledge the unique circumstances of growers.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, FVGC remains unwavering in its commitment to advocate for growers. Tackling the labour shortage crisis in our sector demands a collaborative and multi-dimensional strategy, involving active participation from government entities, parliamentarians, and industry partners. By actively engaging in key forums like the Temporary Foreign Workers Program Working Group and maintaining a strong presence in discussions with parliamentarians and government officials, FVGC is dedicated to being an influential advocate, consistently voicing and addressing the critical needs of growers.

"As a grower, I know how important labour is to the success of our operation. Representing FVGC at the national and international level gives our growers a voice in the decisions that are impacting us at home on the farm."

BETH CONNERY

CHAIR-LABOUR WORKING GROUP



TRADE AND MARKETING

In 2023, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) responded effectively to evolving trade and marketing challenges, focusing on the economic sustainability of the fruit and vegetable sector and modernizing fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards. Amidst rising grocery costs, a concern for consumers nationwide, FVGC's efforts have been pivotal in balancing grower viability with consumer affordability and maintaining the integrity of the agriculture sector.

COST OF FOOD

In 2023, FVGC directly engaged with the Government to address the challenges faced by its members during the ongoing grocery cost crisis in Canada, by sending a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau articulating the concerns of growers amidst rising grocery costs. The letter also put forth substantive recommendations for policy adjustments, including re-evaluating the carbon tax, reviewing policies such as the P2 Plastic Program, examining the impact of tariffs on fertilizers, and reconsidering the government's approach to fertilizer emission goals.

In addition to this high-level advocacy, FVGC actively participated in broader dialogues and initiatives aimed at stabilizing grocery prices while protecting the interests of growers. FVGC played a significant role in public discourse, highlighting the challenges faced by the agricultural sector and the implications of various government policies on growers. Through media engagements and public statements, FVGC raised awareness about the complexities of the grocery pricing issue and the critical role of growers in the Canadian food supply chain.

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GRADE STANDARDS

A key area of concern for FVGC has been the modernization of fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) grade standards. The grade standards are critical for maintaining the integrity and economic viability of Canada's agriculture sector. In collaboration with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) and the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC), as part of the Fresh Produce Alliance (FPA), FVGC has been actively engaged in efforts to update these standards with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), including direct engagements with CFIA staff, and communication with the president of the CFIA to highlight the fruit and vegetable industry's concerns.

In November 2023, FVGC, as part of the FPA, sent a letter to the CFIA, and expressed concern over the CFIA's shift in focus from trade and commerce activities to food safety, which resulted in the halt of the grades project. The letter emphasized the critical role of FFV grades in inspection, sorting, quality assurance, and market valuation while advocating for a holistic approach to grading and compositional standards that includes all commodities, not just FFV. The letter concluded with a call for CFIA to resume work on the grades project and consider the industry's change requests.

Despite investments from government and industry, updates to FFV grades have been slow, with only two standards finalized. This delay hinders progress as grades must align with current production practices and market trends. FVGC will continue to collaborate with the CFIA to resolve these issues and will advocate for a swifter, transparent review process, crucial for the Canadian fresh produce sector's success domestically and internationally.

C-280, THE FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMERS ACT

In 2023, FVGC significantly ramped up advocacy for Bill C-280, *The Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*. This crucial bill aims to bolster the financial stability and prosperity of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable industry. It also seeks to restore preferential treatment under the *Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)* for Canadian produce in the U.S.

FVGC's advocacy efforts were multifaceted. Key initiatives included three targeted lobby days: 'CGEN Lobby Day' in February, focusing on government engagement; 'Farm to Plate Lobby Day' in May, highlighting the farm-consumer link; and 'Fall Harvest Lobby Day' in November, emphasizing the year's achievements. These were complemented by a robust social media campaign in partnership with CPMA, broadening public awareness and support and a comprehensive letter-writing campaign mobilizing the industry and garnering 290 letters from across the country, along with an industry-wide letter co-signed by 35 Canadian produce associations. This demonstrated a unified industry stance for financial protection.



Adding to these efforts, Quinton Woods, FVGC's Trade and Marketing Working Group Chair, and Rebecca Lee, former Executive Director of FVGC, made a significant impact with their appearance before the House of Commons AGRI committee. Their advocacy at the AGRI committee not only highlighted the bill's importance but also underscored FVGC's committed leadership in championing the interests of Canadian growers.

Significant progress was made with the bill's passage in the House of Commons, and FVGC is now focused on advancing it through the Senate - engaging with Senators, organizing meetings, and collaborating with industry partners to communicate the bill's critical role in safeguarding the sector's future.



C-282 – AN ACT TO AMEND THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ACT (SUPPLY MANAGEMENT)

Currently in its second reading in the Senate, Bill C-282, which proposes amendments to Canada's trade negotiation and policy approach, has elicited serious concerns from the FVGC Trade and Marketing Working Group. The bill risks undermining Canada's flexible trade policy, potentially damaging its reputation as a free trade advocate and deterring trade concessions from other nations. Such changes could result in less ambitious trade outcomes and foster protectionism, adversely affecting an export-reliant country like Canada. Concerns also extend to the bill's potential negative impact on diverse economic sectors such as agriculture, energy, and manufacturing, limiting growth in emerging markets and potentially inflating food prices, contrary to Canada's food security commitments.

In response to these challenges, the FVGC Trade and Marketing Working Group has developed a comprehensive strategy. In the short term, FVGC plans to engage with sympathetic Senators and Members of Parliament, submitting formal feedback to the Senate Committee to voice concerns. For the long term, FVGC aims to collaborate with like-minded organizations to build a unified opposition, and continuously monitor the bill to adapt strategies as necessary.

CANADA'S GROCERY CODE OF CONDUCT

In 2023, FVGC played a crucial role in advancing the proposed Grocery Code of Conduct in Canada. This voluntary code, designed by various industry players, aims to bring fairness and transparency to the grocery sector by addressing issues like unilateral charges by grocers for costs such as renovations or e-commerce projects. Although there has been resistance from major retailers, the goal is to have the Code operational by early 2024, though this timeline is subject to the complexities of the ongoing discussions and industry dynamics.

FVGC has actively participated in the Code's development since the beginning, with Patrice Léger Bourgoin from the Association des producteurs maraîchers du Québec (APMQ) now on the Interim Board of Directors. FVGC has focused on educating members about the Code, conducting webinars in the spring of 2023 in English and French to explain the Code and its potential impacts.

Additionally, FVGC conducted a social media campaign to promote feedback and consultation on the Code. In May, a public consultation was held, during which the Steering Committee received over

1,000 comments from various stakeholders. These comments were compiled into a comprehensive report, which was presented to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers at their meeting in July.

FVGC remains committed to keeping stakeholders informed about the ongoing developments and decisions regarding the Grocery Code of Conduct, and extends its gratitude to all participants in the public consultation.



LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, FVGC will continue to work on the cost of groceries issue, with plans to strengthen collaborations with government bodies and industry partners, aiming to develop sustainable strategies. These strategies will seek to strike a balance between consumer affordability and the economic needs of growers, vital for maintaining the sector's resilience against economic and climate challenges.

In response to the sluggish progress in modernizing fresh fruit and vegetable grades standards, FVGC will ramp up its engagement with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The goal is to push for a quicker and more transparent review process. FVGC will ensure that the updated grades accurately reflect the current production practices and market trends essential for facilitating trade, ensuring quality, and boosting the competitiveness of Canadian fresh fruits and vegetables.

Coming into 2024, FVGC is intensifying advocacy efforts to ensure the swift passage of Bill C-280 through the Senate. FVGC will emphasize the bill's importance for cost control, food security, and the prosperity of the industry, especially focusing on reinstating preferential treatment under the *Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)* for Canadian produce in the U.S. market.

With the anticipated implementation of Canada's Grocery Code of Conduct, FVGC is staying at the forefront of the dialogue and revision processes ensuring that members are well-informed and have a strong voice in these discussions. FVGC is committed to shaping the Code to benefit Canadian growers and to prevent unnecessary cost increases.

"This past year FVGC tackled critical trade and marketing challenges to support our growers. We addressed rising grocery costs and pushed for modernizing produce standards, ensuring our sector's economic sustainability. Our advocacy, notably for Bill C-280 and in shaping the Grocery Code of Conduct, aimed to enhance grower financial stability and market fairness. Moving forward, we're focused on policies that bolster competitiveness and maintain balance between grower viability and consumer affordability."

QUINTON WOODS

CHAIR-TRADE AND MARKETING WORKING GROUP



SECTOR SUPPORT

SEED REGULATORY MODERNIZATION ON VEGETABLES

The review of parts of the Seeds Regulations by CFIA and industry stakeholders continued in 2023, and included a public consultation to determine the level of support for certain task team recommendations on variety registration, seed standards and grade tables, and seed certification. Given that vegetable crops are exempt from variety registration and most vegetable seed is imported into Canada, some of the discussions and recommendations do not apply to vegetables. However, FVGC participation in those discussions is important to ensure that unintended consequences of amendments do not impact the fruit and vegetable sector. From the public consultation, recommendations that were supported included:

- having a national variety registration system,
- developing a regulatory pathway for heritage and heirloom varieties,
- continuing to have one national body establishing and determining the seed crop varietal purity standards to issue a seed crop certificate, and
- making the purity standards for No. 1 and No. 2 grades the same.

The CFIA anticipates consulting on seed regulatory modernization proposals and recommendations in Winter 2024. Proposed amendments will be published in Canada Gazette, Part I to allow for formal input on amendments to the Seeds Regulations before they are finalized.

PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION

In May 2023 CFIA announced updated guidance for the Seeds Regulations so that plant breeders have clear direction regarding plant breeding innovation while strengthening transparency initiatives for products developed through plant breeding. The updated guidance provides improved clarity about how gene-edited plants are regulated. Health Canada updated its guidance for plant breeding for novel foods in 2022.

FVGC participates on the Plant Breeding Innovation Transparency Steering Committee which focuses on how to communicate to growers the varieties that contain traits that are exempt from regulation (i.e. gene-edited traits). Trait developers can voluntarily submit notification of a new trait (not variety) to Health Canada's list of non-novel products of plant breeding for food use database. Unlike crops that require variety registration, there is no database of varieties containing gene-edited traits for crops that do not require variety registration, including vegetables. Communication of varieties containing gene-edited traits along the value-chain from the trait developer to the seed provider to the grower needs to be developed to ensure transparency of genetic traits contained in a particular variety. This is of critical importance for organic vegetable growers who must ensure that the varieties they grow do not contain genetically engineered traits.



COLLABORATION ON POLLINATORS

In May 2023, FVGC submitted recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food concerning the declining bee populations, crucial for pollination in agriculture. Highlighting bees' significant role in crop pollination and their declining numbers, with a 45% loss in 2022, FVGC emphasized the need for immediate action. Key recommendations included:

- Adopting strategies from the Industry-Government Honey Bee Sustainability Working Group to enhance beekeeping sector resilience.
- Focusing on the importation of bee stock, including exploring new supplier countries and streamlining the Pest Risk Assessment process.
- Urging the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to fast-track the approval of new miticides for Varroa mite control.
- Longer-term strategies include developing a comprehensive plan for beekeepers and the horticultural industry, reinstating national surveillance on bee health, promoting domestic bee stock development, harmonizing international regulations, and collaborating with producers to expand the domestic bee supply.

These measures aim to protect Canada's agricultural productivity and contribute to environmental sustainability by supporting a healthy bee population.

CANADIAN PLANT HEALTH COUNCIL

The Canadian Plant Health Council (CPHC) is the coordinating body that brings together industry, academia, Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) governments, and other partners that play a role in plant health to lead the implementation of the Plant and Animal Health Strategy for Canada. The CPHC was established in 2018 to coordinate collective actions that safeguard plant health to protect against economic and ecological losses and contribute to Canada's competitive advantage in the agri-food and forestry sectors.

FVGC's involvement at the CPHC Board and its Working Groups (Biosecurity, Emergency Response, and Surveillance) has allowed for the fruit and vegetable sector to be well represented. The Council has taken on an advisory role to provide strategic advice to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Assistant Deputy Ministers of Agriculture

Committee. In June 2023, FVGC's former Executive Director, Rebecca Lee, as the past CPHC co-chair, helped to frame the understanding of the current landscape and future priorities critical to the Canadian plant health system. In response to the FPT Regulatory ADM Committee of Agriculture's request for a strategic plan, the CPHC Board met in Ottawa in late February 2024 to update the CPHC Strategic Review, chart a course for the CPHC for the next 5 years, and conduct a Plant Health Emergency Tabletop Exercise.



CANADIAN ORGANIC STANDARDS

The Canadian Organic Standards (COS), 32.310 Production Systems, and 32.311 Permitted Substances List, guides and governs organic production, processing, and what can be labelled as certified organic. The COS, referenced by the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, Part 13, are essential to the sale and trade of Canadian organic agricultural products. Beginning Fall 2023, the process of the cyclical review of the COS began with the Organic Federation of Canada's (OFC) call for petitions. FVGC representatives continue to be engaged at the Canadian General Standard Board (CGSB) Technical Committee (TC), the various working groups and task force groups that will review, discuss and amend the standards until the publication of the 2025 Canadian Organic Standards.



SECTOR ENGAGEMENT TABLES

AGILE REGULATIONS TABLE (ART)

FVGC sat on the Agile Regulations Table (ART) throughout 2023. ART played a key role in advancing and modernizing Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. The main focus was on regulatory modernization, specifically updating regulations to meet current challenges and opportunities. This included a special focus on seed certification and exploring public-private partnerships in the seeds sector. ART also examined the impact of the European Union's Deforestation Regulations on Canadian agriculture, highlighting the global nature of agricultural policy.

ART's initiatives involved significant collaboration and strategic planning, including leading the Domestic Trade Journey Mapping project to improve interprovincial trade, encouraging innovative contributions from members. The Table facilitated discussions across various sectors, including consumer demand, market trends, skills development, and horticulture, to finalize strategic plans. These discussions addressed sector-specific issues as well as overarching themes like labor, environmental sustainability, and climate change adaptation, reflecting ART's comprehensive approach to enhancing the agriculture and agri-food sector in Canada.

HORTICULTURE TABLE

FVGC sits on the Horticulture Value Chain Roundtable, initiated in 2019, which focuses on five key themes: labor, crop protection, research and innovation, public trust, and sustainability and climate change adaptation. Developed through extensive strategic planning, including member interviews and planning sessions, these themes are supported by detailed strategic plans and initiatives. Key areas include addressing labor needs in collaboration with industry and government, ensuring access to effective crop protection products, enhancing sector-specific research programs, building consumer trust in Canadian agriculture, and adapting horticultural practices to climate change and sustainability demands.

The Roundtable is reassessing its mandate to align its focus and plans with the evolving needs of the horticulture sector. This reassessment aims to ensure the Roundtable's continued relevance and impact, considering the rapid changes in the sector and broader market and regulatory environments. The goal is to adapt and refine strategies to effectively support the advancement and sustainability of the horticulture sector in Canada.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TABLE

The Skills Development Table brings together sector associations, producers, and processors across the value chain. FVGC, along with organizations such as Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council (CAHRC), Food Processing Skills Canada and Agriculture in the Classroom participate and engage in constructive dialogue with federal government departments, such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) on the agricultural labour file. In 2023, the Skills Development Table through the Career Pathways Working Group began work on a Resource Hub – potentially a one-stop site for those looking for more information on careers in the agriculture sector. More work is slated for 2024 including setup and maintenance costs/efforts, discussions about hosting options and determining who will be responsible for hosting and updating the resource hub. Tables such as the Skills Development Table are coming back to in-person meetings, which allows FVGC to directly engage with federal department representatives. Across all agriculture sectors, labour is a significant issue – this Table allows FVGC to have a voice in policy development and collaboration.



The launch of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (SAS) Advisory Committee

(Source: The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Marie-Claude Bibeau)
<https://www.greenhousecanada.com/feds-launch-consultations-for-a-sustainable-agriculture-strategy/>

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE STRATEGY

The development of a Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (SAS) focuses on the environmental pillar of sustainability of Canada's food system, within the broader context of social and economic challenges and opportunities in the sector. With an integrated strategy that sets a clear path forward for collaborative action, Canada will be well positioned to be a world leader in sustainable agriculture while maintaining its role as a global food provider and contributing to global food security.

The Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Advisory Committee (SAS-AC) continues their mandate to inform the narrative on past and current successes, and to prioritize investments, initiatives, and enabling policies that must be made in the short term to support SAS goals and outcomes. Co-chaired by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Advisory Committee (SAS-AC) is comprised of industry experts, including producers and representatives of national associations and non-governmental organizations. As a SAS-AC members, FVGC continues to meet regularly to provide input, recommendations, and advice. In addition, several sub-working groups were struck to hear from experts, discuss, and refine key aspects of the strategy including Adaptation and Resilience, Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation, Fertilizer, Soil Health. The SAS-AC have guided the framework of goals, outcomes, indicators and potential milestones. FVGC participated in a total of 25 SAS-AC and working group meetings in 2023. The draft Sustainable Ag Strategy is expected to be published in early 2024.

VISION

In 2050, Canada's agriculture sector is a global leader in sustainable production, from an environment, economic, and social perspective. Canadian farmers and rural communities are able to thrive while producing nutritious food for domestic and global consumers, and meaningful progress has been made in environmental performance.

COMMODITY WORKING GROUP UPDATES

TENDER FRUIT AND TABLE GRAPES UPDATE

The 2023 season saw an overall increase in volumes compared to 2022 for tender fruit and table grapes. With great retailer and local promotional support, the crop moved well. Labour continues to be a top priority and challenge for the sector. Continued support is needed from the federal government to ensure that the importance of the program and the high level of oversight that is in place, is communicated to media and the public. A Niagara region-wide irrigation system, which industry representatives have been working on for several years, will be crucial future infrastructure as the sector continues to combat climate change and provide water security for growers.



APPLE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Apple Working Group (AWG) met twice in 2023. The AWG met during the FVGC Annual Meeting in Vancouver on March 14, 2023. Topics discussed included 2022 crop and marketing conditions, Canadian apple sector trends, Cluster 4 proposals, Grocery Code of Conduct, new variety development, crop protection issues, and export market priorities.

The FVGC Apple Working Group Mid-Summer Meeting was held on July 26, 2023 in Nova Scotia and was hosted by the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association (NSFGA). The session included discussions on market situations and trends, 2023 crop estimates, and FVGC activity updates. There were presentations from Nova Scotia apple industry leaders from Perennia and Scotian Gold. The AWG also toured the Kentville Research Station. The 2024 AWG Mid-Summer meeting will be held in Quebec.

The AWG was pleased to have two research projects approved as part of the Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 4 funding. The two projects are:

- Reducing Losses from Apple Pests with Alternative Control Strategies - Principal Investigators: Kristy Grigg-McGuffin (OMAFRA) and Suzanne Blatt (CRDA)
- Apple crop load management: Enhancing thinning predictability and tree response through advancements in modeling, new precision thinning products and strategies, and technology, Principal Investigator: Dr. John Cline (U of G)

FIELD VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Field Vegetable Working Group had a few meetings to discuss issues impacting growers in 2023. During these conversations, the damages due to extreme weather during the 2023 production season were shared by the various provinces. The FVGC Cluster 4 projects, the consistency between provinces for the proof of shortages, and the risk-management programs for vegetables and crop protection were also discussed.

Moving forward into the year ahead, working group members will finalize their work plan for the sector. This includes following the Cluster 3 Research Projects coming to an end, identifying alternatives to crop protection products being phased out, and better collaboration with other working groups on issues involving field vegetable production.

BERRY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Members of the Berry Working Group met in Spring 2023 during the week of the FVGC's Annual General Meeting in Vancouver. The Berry Working Group reviewed the commodity reports, and plant breeding was an item that many of the provinces showed interest in. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) shared with the group the most recent changes to the Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) that will affect any group that is conducting plant breeding. Members of the working group continue to participate with the Pollinator Task Force, as well as support work on policy priorities throughout the year that include ensuring access to stable labour, funding for essential crop protection products, and improving trade access.

In recent years, the Berry Working Group has worked to identify areas where this diverse group could coordinate research efforts. Using the priorities that were established in 2021 the working group reviewed project submissions for overarching priorities and supported projects to be included in the new federal-provincial funding framework S-CAP. The area of proposed research that was approved for the FVGC cluster application was the Canadian Berry Trial Network - breeding and trialing new varieties that are suitable for the Canadian climate as they remain a priority to berry growers.



CROP PROFILES

Since 2011, in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)'s Pest Management Centre (PMC), the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) has coordinated the review and updating of the crop profiles. The national crop profiles developed by PMC are web-published documents that provide a snapshot of the pest status and current production and pest management practices available for a crop or crop group. They not only guide priority setting for the Pesticide Risk Reduction and Minor Use Pesticides Teams at the Pest Management Centre but also serve as vital resources for Health Canada and the industry at large.

Under the stewardship of FVGC, each crop profile undergoes a thorough update every four years. As part of the update process, detailed information on pest occurrence, the use of integrated pest management practices, and grower pest management issues is collected from stakeholders in the main producing provinces of each crop. FVGC's involvement in coordinating these updates plays a key role in the ongoing effort to provide current and practical information, aiding in the advancement of sustainable and effective pest management strategies within the agricultural sector.

In 2023-2024 FVGC worked with PMC and industry to update the following crop profiles:

- Greenhouse cucumber
- Greenhouse lettuce
- Greenhouse pepper
- Greenhouse tomato
- Highbush blueberry
- Lowbush blueberry
- Potato

LOOKING AHEAD

For 2024-2025 FVGC will be collecting information for the following crop profiles:

- Asparagus
- Allium crops - dry onion
- Allium crops - leek
- Rutabaga
- Sweet corn
- Brassica crops - broccoli
- Brassica crops - cabbage
- Carrot

FVGC is looking forward to continuing its partnership with AAFC's Pest Management Centre into 2027.



To access all of the updated crop profiles, visit FVGC's website and look for Crop Profiles under Sector Overview.

CANADIAN GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE SECTOR

TEN YEARS OF CONSECUTIVE GROWTH

The greenhouse vegetable sector marked 10 years of growth in 2023. Greenhouse growers are clearly dedicated to excellence in their pursuit of growth opportunities that deliver safe, high-quality, nutritious, and sustainably-grown fresh fruit and vegetables. The national efforts of the Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group (GVWG) saw a year of significant achievements as they addressed priority issues, pursued opportunities, and advanced the sector as a recognized leader in sustainable agriculture.



GVWG Chair, Linda Delli Santi, and the BCGGA hosted a tour at Sunnyside Produce, Delta - an excellent opportunity for GVWG members.

PROTECTED AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Important improvements to support the implementation efforts of the Protected Agriculture Stewardship (PAS) Standards have been a priority in 2023. The Protected Agriculture Stewardship Standards program, managed and audited by the Agrichemical Warehousing Standards Association (AWSA), was established to assist protected agriculture operators in the identification and mitigation of risks associated with pesticide application and supports growers' efforts towards continuous improvement of environmental, health and safety outcomes.

Canadian greenhouse vegetable growers' investments in their environment-controlled growing technology confers a range of environmental co-benefits including energy efficiency, health and safety of workers, and their ability to 'reduce-reuse-recycle' irrigation water and fertilizers. The hydroponic, closed-loop recirculation systems, or organic soil-based production systems rely heavily on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs, strict biosecurity measures, biological controls, and beneficial insects, significantly reducing traditional pesticides.

FVGC and its leadership within the Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group are actively engaged in ongoing discussions with members, CropLife Canada and AWSA to amend the PAS program, find solutions, reduce the burden on growers, and avoid disruption in accessing greenhouse-labelled pest control products.

GREENHOUSE GRADE STANDARDS

The growers and marketers on the Grades Review Team, led by the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC), have invested valuable time and expertise to make recommendations that respond to current trends, expected innovation, modernization, and growth. The new mini-cucumber grades were published July 7, 2023. Ongoing efforts to finalize the requested shift in size in Canada

No. 1 minimum length from 11 inches to the desired 10 inches in the Long English Cucumber Grades, continue to be an urgent priority. The Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group continues to urge the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to ensure the grades respond to the needs of the industry, market demands, and the priorities of trade and commerce.



Natural gas-powered climate-controlled systems provide plants the carbon dioxide (CO₂), heat and electricity needed for a year-round supply of Canadian fruit and vegetables.

ADVOCACY FOR FEDERAL CARBON PRICING, POLICIES, AND SECTOR SUPPORT

FVGC's long-standing advocacy on carbon pricing for the greenhouse vegetable sector solidified with efforts to support Bill C-234. The unprecedented level of political attention on the bill was unexpected and necessitated an equally impressive and collaborative advocacy effort. Despite the challenges to keep the bill moving forward, FVGC and its greenhouse members seized this crucial opportunity to communicate the unique fact that carbon costs are unavoidable for Canadian growers because they are tied to their natural gas-powered systems which provide plants the carbon dioxide (CO₂), heat and electricity needed for a year-round supply of Canadian fruit and vegetables. The Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group continues to advocate for targeted and time-limited carbon tax exemptions for specified on-farm fuel uses as the right and pragmatic approach to ensure Canadians can be assured the supply-chain is resilient, sustainable, and competitive.

Increasingly, growers are pursuing investments in research, novel technologies, and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) options. These initiatives optimize energy efficiency and reduce emissions by generating CO₂, electricity and thermal energy on-farm, which are needed for greenhouse crops. Such strategies help to sustainably support the increasing demand for year-round fresh fruit and vegetable production in Canada.



Like never before, in the debate around Bill C-234, Members of Parliament, Senators, senior officials, and consumers heard how carbon pricing impacts Canadian growers. (Left to Right: Albert Cramer, Julie Paillat, Richard Lee, Hon. Senator McCallum, Gordon Stock.)



CANADIAN GREENHOUSE EXCELLENCE NETWORK

The Canadian Greenhouse Excellence Network (CGEN) was launched with a two-day summit held February 2023. Parliamentary Secretary, Francis Drouin, MP of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, officially opened the Summit, held in Ottawa on February 15, 2023. The Summit brought together Canadian greenhouse vegetable growers, allied industry, academia, government policy makers and elected officials.

Building on the initial launch of CGEN, the next steps of strategic planning and capacity building continued throughout 2023 to build a strong foundation with strong partnerships. The CGEN Summit report provides more detail, and is available at www.fvgc.ca/cgen-2/.

The GVGW hosted a lobby day on February 15th, which coincided with celebrations of Canada's Agriculture Day. GVGW members and a number of CGEN Summit participants met with Members of Parliament, Senators, and their staff on three key asks:

- Support for Bill C-234 to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act
- Support for Bill C-280 Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act
- Significant financial support for the Canadian Greenhouse Excellence Network (CGEN)

The urgency and importance of the sector's efforts to build capacity, industry opportunities, and support for on-farm climate action is positioned amidst the rising federal carbon price of \$65 per tonne CO₂e today, which is set to climb to \$170 in 2030, the Canadian emission reduction targets, net-zero commitments, and increasing global climate change events.



The CGEN summit, reception, and lobby day hosted by the GVGW, were well-attended and saw over 21 meetings with each of the four federal political parties.

LOOKING AHEAD

FVGC and the Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group are positioning the Canadian greenhouse vegetable sector as a recognized leader in sustainable agriculture. The next steps in the advocacy efforts include:

- Follow up on FVGC's Budget 2024 submission to seek improved funding and enabling policy support for the co-optimisation of energy and greenhouse food production, especially in light of the increasing carbon pricing costs on growers.
- CGEN's ongoing development including the online, interactive platform, and more opportunities to support and mobilize the sector.
- Engagement with industry partners, academia, and the federal government to reduce the regulatory burden, build opportunities, and support the growth, sustainability, and competitiveness of the sector.

"National representation at FVGC brings growers real and tangible results, because, together, we inform federal policy and regulatory decisions and collaborate to ensure an innovative, sustainable, and competitive sector with a strong growth agenda."

LINDA DELLI SANTI

CHAIR-GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP

CANADIAN POTATO COUNCIL

The Canadian Potato Council (CPC), representing the collaborative efforts of provincial potato grower organizations across eight provinces, has marked 2023 as a year of significant achievements and steadfast dedication to advancing the interests of potato growers nationwide. CPC has successfully navigated challenges and seized opportunities in regulatory discussions, research initiatives, and pest management strategies, all while maintaining a clear vision for the future prosperity of CPC members and the Canadian potato industry. Reflecting on the accomplishments of the past year, CPC is poised to identify and prioritize objectives for 2024, ensuring continued advancement and support for Canada's potato growers.



SEED REGULATORY MODERNIZATION

CPC has been actively engaged with CFIA through their Seed Potato Regulatory Modernization Task Teams over the past year and will continue to work on updating the regulations in 2024. Eight regulatory areas are being focused on through task teams such as the Variety Registration, Grading, and Traceability. The Certification Task Team completed their work and their recommendations were submitted to CFIA's Potato Regulatory Modernization Working Group which manages the overall process. CPC's interest in this effort is to modernize the regulations and to find efficiencies while ensuring changes do not have any unintended consequences for potato producers and the industry.

POTATO RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

In the past year, the Canadian Potato Council has strategically concentrated its research initiatives on two pivotal areas: Firstly, CPC engaged in the Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE) to deepen the understanding of potatoes' role in enhancing health and nutrition, fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange. Secondly, CPC prepared for the next cycle of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) AgriScience Cluster program funding, focusing on sustainable practices, resilience to climate change, and enhanced productivity in Canadian potato production.

ALLIANCE FOR POTATO RESEARCH

The Alliance for Potato Research (APRE) focuses on transforming scientific studies into practical policies and educational programs, emphasizing the nutritional benefits of potatoes for all ages. The APRE Board of Directors has been actively working to expand partnerships and collaboration with other potato-producing countries such as the European Union. The hope is to increase the exchange of information and expand the scientific reach of the current activities. Representatives from Europatat and Belgapom recently visited to meet the Board of Directors and hear about the ongoing research being funded.

The pipeline of APRE-funded studies to date consists of:

- 52 Studies Funded
- 28 Manuscripts Published
- 6 Reviews and Commentaries Published
- 15+ Studies Presented at Conferences

For 2023, there is \$750,000 available for peer-reviewed research, which will add to the current library of information.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA'S (AAFC) AGRISCIENCE CLUSTER PROGRAM

CPC also focused its efforts, in 2023, on preparing for the upcoming Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4 application. The five-year cycle potato research conducted under the AAFC Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 3 concluded on March 31, 2023. Potato growers are encouraged to visit the bilingual Canadian Potato Research Cluster Website (potatoresearchcluster.ca) to access detailed research project reports.

CPC is pleased that the application for potato research funding for the period 2023-2028 has been submitted and approved as part of the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4 proposal to AAFC. The application included committed funding from multiple potato sector stakeholders to support continuing collaborative research efforts in Canada.

The following three potato projects were approved:

- National Potato Variety Evaluation for Sustainability, Resilience and Climate Change,
- Regenerative and sustainable agriculture for climate change adaptation and carbon sequestration: rebuilding soil health and increasing crop productivity of Canadian potato production systems,
- Positioning Canada's Potato Industry for Improved Sustainable Production.

POTATO WART

Potato Wart continues to be a challenging file for producers in Prince Edward Island. Potato Wart poses no threat to human health or food safety but has an impact on the economic return for potato growers by reducing yield and making potatoes unmarketable. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) completed its latest round of focused soil testing in Prince Edward Island with over 48,000 soil samples taken on the island since the fall of 2021. CPC coordinated a visit to the island with PEI producers for members across Canada to see and learn firsthand about the Potato Wart mitigation efforts. We look forward to reviewing CFIA's updated Potato Wart management plan that was publicly released in December as part of our commitment to decisions being guided by data, science, international standards, and best practices.

CHANGES AT CPC

CPC is undergoing several changes to its staff and volunteer team. The CPC would like to thank long-term members Dan Sawatzky of the Keystone Potato Producers Association, as well as Brenda Simmons and Mary Kay Sonier, of the PEI Potato Board, for their dedication to the industry as they transition to retirement.

The CPC Executive Committee selected Gary Stordy to lead the Canadian Potato Council after David Jones retired in March 2023. Gary spent 15 years working for Canadian pork producers as Director of Government and Corporate Affairs where he led communications and advocacy efforts, developing agriculture policy on business risk management tools, trade and market development, and served as the national spokesperson for the industry. As Gary completes his first year at the helm of CPC, he is committed to advancing the interests of the potato industry.

LOOKING AHEAD

Government policy and regulation play a pivotal role in the success of the sector. CPC has a history of representing growers in the areas of pesticides, plant health, and trade. CPC must have a clear plan for the role of the grower, the value chain, and the public sector on key issues which can guide CPC in its relations with industry partners and governments. The next step for CPC is to develop a strategic work plan. CPC believes the process of building and implementing a strategic plan will be a valuable tool, helping to unify the leadership across Canada toward a single vision and mission, clarifying priorities, and aligning activities between national and provincial bodies.

"In a year of challenges and opportunities, the CPC has steadfastly championed innovation, regulatory excellence, and global collaboration, fortifying the backbone of Canada's potato industry."

BILL ZYLMANS

CHAIR-CANADIAN POTATO COUNCIL

RESEARCH



The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) supports innovation in the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector by managing funding applications and subsequent research projects that address the sector's top priorities.

CANADIAN AGRISCIENCE CLUSTER FOR HORTICULTURE 4

Throughout 2022 and in early 2023, FVGC actively prepared for the opportunity to establish a fourth Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) next agricultural policy framework for 2023-2028.

On January 19, 2023, FVGC submitted an application to AAFC and on July 19, 2023 received notice of approval from AAFC.

In October, the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, announced a federal investment of \$9.8 million to the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4 in Abbotsford, BC. Cluster 4, led by FVGC, will include an additional \$7.7 million in contributions from industry, for a total investment of \$17.5 million.

This approval is a result of the outstanding efforts of all the research teams and a great deal of industry collaboration and support. The Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4 focuses on innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability to ensure Canadian fruit and vegetable growers have the tools and resources they need to continue to grow high-quality, healthy fruits and vegetables for Canadians and the world.

Activities facilitate cooperation between AAFC, universities/colleges, and private researchers to best utilize the scientific expertise available across Canada.

"Agriculture creates jobs and a sense of pride in communities right across Canada. The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada have demonstrated continued leadership over the past 100 years, and we will continue to support Canada's fruit and vegetable growers, while building a sustainable sector for the future."

THE HONOURABLE LAWRENCE MACAULAY

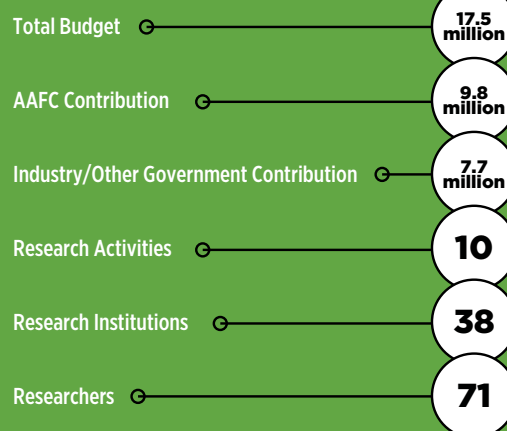
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

"We are incredibly excited to renew our collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the approval of the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4. This significant investment of \$17.5 million, including AAFC's substantial \$9.8 million contribution, will be a catalyst for research spanning five commodity groups. This program will bolster our efforts in areas such as climate change mitigation, economic development, and sector resilience. Cluster 4 is not merely funding; it's a commitment to equipping Canadian farmers with the innovative tools they need to produce world-class fruits and vegetables and ensure our sector's sustainability."

MARCUS JANZEN

VICE PRESIDENT-FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS OF CANADA

CLUSTER 4 DETAILS



Activity Name	Activity Lead	AAFC Priority Area
Science Coordination	FVGC	Mandatory Activities
Knowledge & Technology Transfer (KTT)	FVGC	Mandatory Activities
Historical Impact Assessment	FVGC	Mandatory Activities
Reducing Losses from Apple Pests with Alternative Control Strategies	Principal Investigator: CA - Kristy Grigg-McGuffin, OMAFRA (Guelph), CRDA - Suzanne Blatt, Kentville, NS	OTHER - Climate Change & Environment
Apple crop load management: Enhancing thinning predictability and tree response through advancements in modeling, new precision thinning products and strategies, and technology	Principle investigator: John Cline, University of Guelph, ON	Economic Growth & Development
Canadian Berry Trial Network	Principle Investigators: Beatrice Amyotte, Kentville, NS & Eric Gerbrandt, Chilliwack, BC	Economic Growth & Development
Increasing Field Vegetable Yield and Resilience to Abiotic and Biotic Stresses through Soil Microbial Engineering	Principle Investigators: Martin Fillion, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu RDC, QC & Herve Van Der Heyden, Sherrington QC	OTHER - Climate Change & Environment
Reduce Risk Strategies for Cabbage Maggot Control	Principle Investigators: Wim van Herk, Agassiz RDC, BC & Renee Prasad, University of the Fraser Valley, BC	Sector Resilience & Societal Challenges
Developing a Systems Approach to Pest Management on Greenhouse Vegetable Crops: Mirid Predator Selection	Principle Investigators: Roselyne Labbe, Harrow RDC, ON & Francois Dumont, CRAM, Mirabel, QC	Sector Resilience & Societal Challenges
Novel Approaches for the Management of Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV)	Principle Investigators: Aiming Wang, London RDC, ON & Keri Wang, A&L Laboratories, Guelph, ON	Economic Growth & Development
National Potato Variety Evaluation for Sustainability, Resilience and Climate Change	Principle Investigators: Erica Fava, Fredericton RDC, NB & Katerina Jordan, University of Guelph, ON	Sector Resilience & Societal Challenges
Regenerative and Sustainable Agriculture for Climate Change Adaptation and Carbon Sequestration: Rebuilding Soil Health and Increasing Crop Productivity of Canadian Potato Production Systems	Principle Investigators: Claudia Goyer, Fredericton RDC, NB & Richard Hogue, IRDA, QC	GHG REDUC. / CARBON SEQ. - Climate Change & Environment
Positioning Canada's Potato Industry for Improved Sustainable Production	Principle Investigators: Ikechukwu Agomoh, Fredericton RDC, NB & Mario Tenuta, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB	GHG REDUC. / CARBON SEQ. - Climate Change & Environment

The Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 4 is funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership's AgriScience Program, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative, with support from the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada and industry contributors.

For more information on Cluster 4 visit the Cluster 4 page on the FVGC website, www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) has diligently pursued a strategic and comprehensive communications strategy throughout the past year, aimed at empowering its members with critical information and bolstering its advocacy efforts. FVGC's approach has been multifaceted, targeting government bodies, the general public, and industry partners to amplify the voice and concerns of fruit and vegetable growers across Canada.

In 2023, FVGC effectively communicated with its members by issuing 67 Member Notes in both of Canada's official languages. Additionally, 11 On Your Behalf reports were disseminated exclusively to members and associates, highlighting FVGC's advocacy efforts and monthly achievements. The organization's engagement with the media was marked by the publication of 22 news releases, focusing on issues pertinent to the industry. HortShorts newsletter was another key communication tool, distributed in eight editions to over 620 subscribers.



FVGC's commitment to high-quality, informative content was exemplified by its bilingual print publication, Fresh Thinking. Published biannually in the spring and fall, this magazine, with a distribution of 5,000 copies per issue across Canada, the U.S.A., and internationally, offered industry insights and information for growers and stakeholders. Each edition of Fresh Thinking was centered around strategic priorities, providing valuable content to its readership.

Engaging in two-way communication, FVGC actively sought input from its members through surveys and participation in various government consultations and roundtables. The organization extends its gratitude to members who provided valuable insights and helped disseminate information to the broader grower community, thus keeping them informed about sector developments.

FVGC's digital footprint expanded significantly with the strengthening of its social media presence, particularly on X (formerly known as Twitter), and LinkedIn. These platforms were not only conduits for member engagement but also facilitated interactions with government representatives, industry stakeholders, and the public. On X, FVGC achieved approximately 90,000 impressions and grew its following to 1,500, including 187 new followers in 2023. LinkedIn saw over 60,000 impressions and a total following of 2,898, with 1,388 new followers in 2023. The organization also recorded over 4,000 page views.

The launch of FVGC's Facebook page in Fall 2023 marked a significant step in expanding its outreach. This platform, along with the ongoing efforts on X and LinkedIn, serves as a pivotal tool in engaging with various audiences and highlighting the importance of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable sector.

FVGC was proud to announce the launch of a new website in November 2023. This latest development is a significant step forward in enhancing FVGC's digital presence and providing a more accessible, informative platform for members, government representatives, and industry partners.

The new website has been designed with a focus on clarity and ease of use. Understanding the importance of timely and accurate information, a clean and modern design that allows members to effortlessly navigate and locate the information they need was prioritized.



For government and industry partners, the new website serves as an invaluable resource to gain insights into FVGC's objectives, initiatives, and the overall landscape of the fruit and vegetable sector in Canada. The platform offers a comprehensive overview of the key issues FVGC is working on. This transparency and ease of access to information are vital in fostering stronger partnerships and collaborations.

This revamped digital platform will significantly enhance FVGC's communication capabilities, allowing for a broader reach and more effective communication of the important work being done by FVGC.



As always, FVGC is keen to receive feedback from members on this new initiative. Member and stakeholder input is invaluable in ensuring that FVGC continues to meet member needs and improve services. FVGC is confident that this new website will play a crucial role in the ongoing efforts to advocate for and support the fruit and vegetable growers of Canada.



LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, FVGC remains committed to its proven communication strategies, including Member Notes, On Your Behalf reports, and HortShorts newsletter. Continued member feedback is eagerly anticipated to enhance FVGC's communication efforts. The expansion and strengthening of its social media presence remain a key focus, ensuring FVGC's voice resonates on platforms influential to decision-makers. By tracking engagement metrics, FVGC aims to continuously refine its approach, building a robust social media community to support its advocacy initiatives.

Recognizing communication as a cornerstone of its mission, FVGC is dedicated to adapting and enhancing its programs. This commitment is driven by the goal of providing timely, relevant information to its members and engaging effectively with all stakeholders in the fruit and vegetable sector.

OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY ON PARLIAMENT HILL

In 2023, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) intensified advocacy efforts on Parliament Hill. FVGC played a pivotal role in ensuring that the voices of its members were heard and understood by key decision-makers. Through strategic outreach, FVGC successfully brought growers directly to policymakers, providing them with first-hand insights into the fruit and vegetable sector's challenges and opportunities.

FARM TO PLATE

FVGC hosted, along with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), a spring advocacy event on Parliament Hill on May 30, 2023. Farm to Plate convened industry leaders and government officials and highlighted key areas related to the sustainability of the industry, from the perspectives of environmental, economic, and social sustainability. FVGC and CPMA urged the government to prioritize agriculture, implement sustainable strategies, and address labour and supply chain challenges. They also called for support of Bill C-280, the Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act. The event concluded with a reception at the Metropolitan Brasserie, encouraging informal yet impactful discussions.



FALL HARVEST

Fall Harvest, held from November 20-22, 2023, again showcased FVGC's collaborative efforts with CPMA, and focused on crucial topics like easing regulatory burdens, advancing Bill C-280 for financial protection of produce growers, and championing sustainable packaging initiatives in line with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) proposals. FVGC also worked to arrange meetings with Senators to discuss the importance of Bill C-234. The engagement with over 30 political representatives, including notable MPs and Senators, underlined the event's significance. The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's presence at the reception highlighted the sector's importance.

FARM TOURS

Throughout 2023, FVGC organized several farm tours. These tours were pivotal in connecting policymakers with the real-world aspects of farming, fostering a deeper understanding of the industry's challenges and innovations.

FVGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SUMMER TOUR

On July 5th, the FVGC Board of Directors hosted their Summer Tour in Prince Edward Island. This event was a convergence of FVGC's leadership, local members, industry stakeholders, and government representatives, including federal MPs and the PEI Minister of Agriculture. Visiting seven farms, the tour provided an excellent opportunity for direct dialogue and showcased diverse aspects of Canada's fruit and vegetable sector.



NEWFOUNDLAND FARM TOUR

From July 10-13, 2023, FVGC engaged directly with Newfoundland growers through an extensive tour of farms across the region. The goal of these visits was to better understand the experiences, challenges, and priorities of growers, serving to inform FVGC's advocacy strategies. The tour spanned a spectrum of farming operations, from large-scale commercial vegetable farms to berry farms offering diverse crop selections. The tour demonstrated the diverse and dynamic nature of Newfoundland's fruit and vegetable industry, providing essential insights that informed FVGC's ongoing commitment to advocate for members.

APPLE WORKING GROUP SUMMER TOUR

In July 2023, the Apple Working Group met in Nova Scotia and participated in a tour of the Kentville Research Station, visiting the Apple Biodiversity Collection (ABC) Research Site. Canada's Apple Biodiversity Collection is one of the most diverse collections of apples in the world, which was designed to enable genetic mapping. FVGC staff participated in the tour and engaged with the Apple Working Group and growers to understand the challenges and opportunities facing them.



CROP PROTECTION ADVISORY GROUP SUMMER TOUR

The Crop Protection Tour, held on August 16th, served as an essential bridge between growers and government regulators, particularly representatives from Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre (PMC), and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Participants visited a variety of agricultural sites, gaining insights into the vital role of pest management in producing safe and nutritious fruit and vegetables. This tour was instrumental in strengthening the relationship between the agriculture sector and regulatory bodies.



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