



FRUIT & VEGETABLE  
**GROWERS**  
OF CANADA

PRODUCTEURS  
DE FRUITS ET LÉGUMES  
DU CANADA

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2023-2024



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This report is designed to highlight the significant progress and impact of our efforts throughout the year, demonstrating the value of your contributions and how they directly support the initiatives that protect and promote the fruit and vegetable sector, beyond what is covered in our formal annual reporting.

This report covers October 1, 2023 - October 31, 2024.

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## WE ARE THE CHANGE: EMBRACING A FRESH APPROACH

Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) members embraced a fresh approach for the organization at the last Annual General Meeting.

This fresh approach is predicated on a solid foundation of strong member representation built over the last 100 years, but also on the recognition that continued success required a recalibration of FVGC's focus and efforts. It is predicated on a renewed spirit of collaboration and a readiness to tackle head-on the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing environment.

Practically speaking it will mean defining our way forward together; enhancing member engagement; growing FVGC's visibility and influence and advocating with purpose and passion for our diverse community.

This past year, FVGC has been dedicated to bringing together Canadian fruit and vegetable growers, ensuring that your collective voice is heard and that your priorities are reflected in the policies and programs affecting our sector. Whether it's advocating for carbon tax relief through Bill C-234 or championing financial protections in key legislation like Bill C-280, our efforts are always focused on safeguarding your interests and building resilience for the future—despite the challenges we face.

### **This will not change.**

But as we move forward together, you can expect a greater emphasis on defining strategic objectives to ensure that our assets – human, financial, reputational and political – are aligned to gain maximum impact. You can also expect a more direct approach – we want to be agenda setters, not followers.

### **FVGC will be the change.**

I look forward to meeting you over the next weeks and months.





# Taking stock of the year that was...

Our core mission is to ensure long-term resilience and sustainability for Canadian growers.

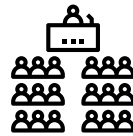
Whether it's addressing labour shortages, mitigating business risks, or advancing sustainability efforts across the sector, FVGC remains here to help you navigate a rapidly evolving landscape. For a full overview of FVGC's work over the past year across our six core areas—Business Risk Management; Crop Protection; Energy, Environment and Climate Change; Industry Standards and Food Safety; Labour; and Trade and Marketing—please continue reading. You'll also find updates from the Canadian Potato Council and the Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group, demonstrating the breadth and depth of our collective efforts.

Together, we are the voice of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers, and as we face the future with resilience, sustainability, and a clear vision, FVGC remains your steadfast partner — leading the way and ensuring our sector thrives for generations to come.

# SOME METRICS FROM THE YEAR



**29 SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS**



**5 APPEARANCES BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY AND SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Addressing House of Commons AGRI Committee on:**

- *Stabilizing Food Prices*
- *Improving Resilience of the Horticultural Industry*
  - Both appearances led to notable reports that credited FVGC with recommendations aligning closely with our advocacy efforts
- *Priorities of the Agriculture Sector*
  - FVGC also submitted written comments on Border Carbon Adjustments to the AGRI Committee.

**Addressing Senate BANC and AEFA Committees on:**

- *Bill C-280, Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*
- *Bill C-282, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)*



**3 SUCCESSFUL LOBBY DAYS ON PARLIAMENT HILL**

- Meetings with 89 Parliamentarians and government officials





# TRADE AND MARKETING

*Appearing before the Senate BANC Committee to support the passage of Bill C-280 shows our commitment to providing financial protection for growers.*

## Our Focus

- Advocating for Bill C-280, *The Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, now before the Senate Standing Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy (BANC).
- Monitoring import policy changes to ensure Canadian growers have priority in the domestic market.
- Providing input on trade negotiations, including the Canada-Ecuador agreement, Canada-UK FTA, and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) mission to Ecuador.
- Advocating in Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) negotiations to minimize negative impacts on the fresh produce industry.
- Supporting the development of the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct, promoting supply chain collaboration.
- Informing the government about growers' needs to support initiatives aimed at lowering grocery costs.

## Progress and Achievements

- Engaging with government on import and export issues that directly affect FVGC members.
- Playing a leading role in the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct, working across the value chain to bring all major retailers on board, ensuring its success.
- Appearing before the Senate BANC Committee to support the passage of Bill C-280, which aims to provide a financial protection mechanism for growers.

# CROP PROTECTION

*Our work in crop protection showcases how your support enables FVGC to advocate effectively for timely access to essential tools and funding, ensuring that growers have the resources needed to protect their crops and maintain a sustainable, competitive industry*

## Our Focus

- **Supporting the Minor Use Pesticide Program (MUPP):** This year FVGC, in collaboration with Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association and AAFC's Pest Management Centre (PMC), hosted the minor use priority setting meeting. FVGC also continued its lobbying efforts for increased funding to the PMC. For example, in Summer 2024 FVGC participated in AAFC's audit of the Minor Use Pesticide Program (MUPP).
- **Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) Transformation:** FVGC has been actively involved in all six PMRA transformation committees. FVGC has also engaged with the PMRA on a regular basis through participation in consultations, webinars, and in-person meetings. FVGC is also monitoring efforts to integrate initiatives from transformation into the PMRA's day to day operations and will continue to advocate for policy changes that do not harm growers and which deliver crop protection tools in an efficient and timely manner.
- **Collection of Grower Use Information:** To help better inform PMRA risk assessments, FVGC collaborated on a third-party survey during Winter 2023/2024. FVGC is also engaging with PMRA on an on-going basis to identify new approaches and improved efficiencies for collecting pesticide use information from growers.
- **Informing policy on pesticide regulation in Canada and abroad:** FVGC has maintained open channels of communication with diverse stakeholders in government, industry, academia and not-for-profit for the purposes of informing policy makers on topics such as MRLs, labels, risk mitigation, research priorities, etc. For example, in winter 2024 Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG) members held face-to-face meetings with PMRA, PMC, and Croplife for the purpose of addressing regulatory challenges and bottlenecks that are negatively impacting growers. FVGC staff and CPAG members engaged with agricultural experts and growers on common threats to the cultivation of minor use crops through attendance at the Global Minor use Summit and IR-4 Food Use Workshop that took place in Madrid, Spain and Milwaukee, USA respectively.

## Progress and Achievements

- FVGC has advocated for a continuation of funding for the PMRA's transformation agenda. Additional funding would ensure that efforts under transformation to improve PMRA efficiencies and activities will continue. On 16 April, the Government of Canada's 2024 budget included \$39 million to Health Canada and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) over the next two years, to strengthen the pesticide regulatory system, and continue to monitor and promote sustainable pesticide use in Canada.
- FVGC met with the PMRA in Winter 2024 and Spring 2024 to discuss on-going delays for User Requested Minor Use Label Expansions which require a new use site category. Following this meeting the PMRA, committed to publishing proposed registrations decisions for eight products over the coming months.





# ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

*FVGC advocates for government support to help growers adopt sustainable practices and access smart funding and clean energy solutions—ensuring that Canada’s fruit and vegetable sector remains resilient and competitive in the face of environmental challenges.*

## Our Focus

- Representing growers on AAFC’s Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Advisory Committee, ensuring their needs are addressed in policy development.
- Engaging in discussions on the “Toward a 2030 Biodiversity Strategy for Canada”, aligning with UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) targets to support biodiversity in agriculture.
- Advocating for smart agriculture funding to help growers adopt precision agriculture tools, reducing emissions and improving efficiency.
- Driving data-driven policies to guide regulations on fertilizer emissions and plastic use, ensuring evidence-based solutions for the sector.
- Pushing for financial incentives to support the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices.

## Progress and Achievements

- Facilitating engagement sessions with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to gather insights and advocate for growers on Pollution Prevention (P2) plastics regulations.
- Exploring and advocating for alternatives to P2 plastic regulations, pushing for smart agriculture funding to support sustainable packaging innovations.
- Promoting clean energy solutions through the CEASAR project (Clean Energy Amplification of Sustainable Agricultural Resilience), advocating for funding to help growers reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.
- Working with the International Fresh Produce Standards (IFPS) on standardizing sustainability certifications, advocating for funding to help growers meet global standards and remain competitive.
- Participating in international sustainability discussions through the IFPS and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) International Sustainability Summit, ensuring Canadian growers are represented.



# LABOUR



*FVGC is committed to advocating for strong, dependable labour programs that address the unique needs of fruit and vegetable growers, ensuring the agriculture sector has access to essential workforce resources while safeguarding program stability.*

## Our Focus

- Strengthening the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFW) and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) while developing a national labour strategy to address the unique challenges of the agriculture sector.
- Ensuring SAWP remains a standalone program to meet the specific needs of fruit and vegetable growers.
- Advocating against the Underused Housing Tax (UHT), protecting growers from unnecessary financial burdens.

## Progress and Achievements

- Collaborating with the federal government on Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program revisions: Addressing the impact of recent changes, including limits on the Low-Wage Stream and caps on TFW workforce, while ensuring continued exemptions for critical food security sectors such as agriculture.
- Presenting the employers' perspective in discussions on worker housing.
- Secured ongoing viability and delivery of the Temporary Foreign Worker Programs through federal government collaboration.
- Represented the sector at the Ministerial Roundtable on worker housing.
- Engaging in labour consultations with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to represent growers and develop a new TFW stream that aligns with industry needs.

# INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND FOOD SAFETY

*FVGC advocates for the modernization of industry standards and food safety regulations, working with government and industry partners to ensure that standards reflect the evolving needs of growers and support quality and transparency in the sector.*

## Our Focus

- Engaging with Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) leadership and Ministers of Agriculture and Health to propose improvements in transparency, responsiveness, and collaboration within CFIA.
- Representing growers on the 2025 Canadian Organic Standards Review Technical Committee, to ensure their needs are reflected in organic standards .
- Advocating for modernization of fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards: Collaborating with CFIA and industry partners to ensure grade standards are updated in a timely and transparent manner, addressing concerns over delays and their impact on production practices, quality assurance, and market valuation.

## Progress and Achievements

- Educating growers on changes to Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) programs and advocating for acceptance of non-GFSI options within the buyer community.
- Expanding CanadaGAP certification to include emerging products and innovative production methods, such as greenhouse production.
- Submitted to the GFSI consultation to support the removal of unannounced audits for primary agriculture, advocating for a change that aligns with growers' operational needs and reduces unnecessary burdens.



# BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT

*FVGC advocates for stronger Business Risk Management programs that provide growers with the tools and financial security needed to navigate the increasing risks posed by climate change, extreme weather, and market volatility.*

## Our Focus

- Pushing for enhanced funding for Business Risk Management (BRM) programs to better support growers in managing the increasing risks posed by climate change and market volatility.
- Collaborating with agriculture stakeholders to oppose the inclusion of cross-compliance for environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) in BRM programs, ensuring growers are not burdened by unnecessary regulatory conditions.
- Advocating for an increase in the AgriStability trigger to provide greater financial security for growers, especially during challenging growing seasons.
- Working with AAFC on a feasibility study for revenue-based insurance to explore new options for better protecting growers from market and weather-related risks.

## Progress and Achievements

- Monitoring the impacts of extreme weather on crop production and the financial situation of growers to ensure timely responses to emerging challenges.
- Providing members with resources to help them navigate and take full advantage of available BRM programs, ensuring they have the tools needed to mitigate risk.
- Engaging with AAFC officials to enhance BRM programs: Advocating for updates to better support growers as they navigate increased risks from climate change and extreme weather events, ensuring programs are aligned with current and future needs.
- Engaged in advocacy on the Underused Housing Tax (UHT) by meeting with senior staff from the Canada Revenue Agency and the Minister of National Revenue, collaborating with agriculture groups on lobbying strategies, and co-signing a joint letter with six industry groups to urge exemptions for farmers from UHT filing requirements.



# CANADIAN POTATO COUNCIL UPDATE

*The Canadian Potato Council's newly approved strategic plan sets a clear vision for a thriving potato industry, with a unified voice advocating for science-based solutions and pre-emptive trade strategies to secure a strong future for Canadian growers.*

Reflecting on the accomplishments of the past year, a major highlight is the finalization and approval of the Canadian Potato Council's (CPC) strategic plan, a crucial step toward guiding the industry's future.

**Vision:** a thriving Canadian potato industry

**Mandate:** a unified voice for Canadian potato growers, overseeing initiatives leading to increased profitability of the industry

**Strategic Priorities:** effective CPC structure/governance; pre-emptive advocacy specific to trade; research; pest management.

CPC members have also come together this year to respond to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) consultations on Potato Wart, including the CFIA's updated Potato Wart management plan. The CPC is committed to supporting decisions being guided by data, science, international standards, and best practices. The draft plan has considered many of the comments and recommendations from the CPC. Work with CFIA is ongoing and CPC continues to lead the industry's responses on this file.

On October 15, 2024, FVGC welcomed Caleigh Hallink-Irwin back to FVGC as the new General Manager, Canadian Potato Council. Caleigh is eager to collaborate with CPC members to turn the strategic plan into action. Her leadership and experience will be instrumental in driving CPC's initiatives forward and supporting the potato sector in the months and years ahead.



# GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP

*With over 40 meetings with MPs, Senators, and key officials during February's advocacy day alone, FVGC has championed crucial reforms—pushing for financial protections, carbon pricing exemptions, and essential updates to greenhouse standards that reflect the needs of Canadian greenhouse growers.*

- **Engaging in an impressive 42 meetings** with Members of Parliament, Senators, and key government officials, our February advocacy day emphasized crucial reforms in response to rising food costs and living expenses: the swift passage of Bill C-234 in its original form for carbon pricing exemptions, supporting Bill C-280 for financial protection of produce growers and sellers, and promoting investment in greenhouse agriculture.
- **Successfully advocated for exemptions for the sector** within the ECCC Regulations amending the Products Containing Mercury Regulations for lamps used for essential purposes that do not have viable mercury-free alternatives, such as those to treat water or to grow plants.
- **Achieving progress with regards to the new greenhouse mini cucumber grades** based on the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) Grades Review Team's recommendations.
- **Delivering a consistent message to CFIA** that the final revisions to the greenhouse long seedless cucumber grades to adjust the Canada No. 1 minimum length of smalls and modification of the Incorporation by Reference (IbR) document Grade Standard Requirements for Fresh Fruits or Vegetables Imported from the United States, must be prioritized.
- **Supporting members to revise the Protected Agriculture Stewardship program** and ensure their questions and concerns were raised with CropLife Canada and its partners.

# CONTACT US



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