

# A FRESH APPROACH

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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FRUIT & VEGETABLE  
**GROWERS**  
OF CANADA

PRODUCTEURS  
DE FRUITS ET LÉGUMES  
**DU CANADA**

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BUILDING MOMENTUM

# A FRESH APPROACH: SETTING GOALS, ACHIEVING SUCCESS

2024 was a year of renewal for the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC). As growers across Canada faced increasing challenges, FVGC took stock of how well it was meeting members' expectations and needs.

Leadership's conclusion?

The organization needed a fresh approach.

Starting at the last AGM, FVGC leadership and staff have been taking steps to strengthen the organization's voice and impact. With shifting global trade dynamics and a looming federal election, FVGC has worked to ensure that growers' concerns remain front and center in critical conversations.

Throughout the year, FVGC worked to address the issues that matter most to growers. Advocacy efforts tackled pressing challenges like chronic labour shortages, rising input costs and competitive pressures. At the same time, FVGC took proactive steps that address growing trade and tariff concerns.

This work was accelerated in the fall following the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States and continues in 2025 with enhanced engagement with horticultural sector organizations in the U.S. and close collaboration with Canadian partners and the Government of Canada.

The appointment of Massimo Bergamini as Executive Director in September brought renewed energy and a sharper focus to FVGC's work. With a mandate to define and implement the changes needed, he is guiding FVGC in its role as a champion of the fruit and vegetable sector.

A major milestone was achieved in December with the adoption of Bill C-280 – marking the culmination of nearly 40 years of advocacy by FVGC, growers, and sector partners to secure financial protection for fruit and vegetable farmers.



FVGC advocacy also focused on securing carbon tax exemptions and advancing programs that help growers contribute to environmental sustainability without jeopardizing their financial viability.

Importantly, these efforts were – and will continue to be – grounded in a “food lens” approach that aims to connect all government policies and initiatives to agriculture, food security, and sustainability.

By framing advocacy in a way that connects to kitchen-table realities and is more easily understandable by Canadian families, FVGC expects to see its efforts gaining more traction with all political parties.

As part of this fresh approach, FVGC has also begun laying the groundwork for stronger collaboration across its teams. Breaking down silos and fostering horizontal collaboration will enable the organization to address complex challenges—like



trade competitiveness, labour shortages, and sustainability – with a more coordinated and united front. This effort is supported by a top-to-bottom governance review, designed to give FVGC the decision-making, oversight and accountability mechanisms needed to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex environment.

Communications played a key role in FVGC's renewed focus in 2024. The organization transitioned from the printed *Fresh Thinking* magazine to a digital-first strategy, delivering timely updates through email, social media, and other platforms.

This shift laid the foundation for better member engagement, a focus that gained momentum under new leadership. Seeking member input on key issues such as grower returns and trade impacts has strengthened two-way communication, ensuring members' voices shape FVGC's advocacy and priorities.

Looking ahead, FVGC is building on the progress and renewal made in 2024 to further amplify the collective voice of Canada's fruit and vegetable growers. Plans include refining advocacy and communications strategies.

Advocacy efforts will focus on setting clear priorities and delivering tangible results that address growers' most pressing challenges. Communications efforts will include launching a strategic media plan to elevate the sector's profile and exploring new channels like podcasts and blogs to engage members and stakeholders in fresh and innovative ways. Horizontal collaboration across working groups will remain central to FVGC's approach, allowing the organization to tackle challenges with a united effort and voice.

The groundwork for FVGC's role as a convener was laid in 2024, and this will remain a key focus in the year ahead. By bringing together growers, policymakers, and stakeholders, FVGC aims to foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration on the sector's most pressing issues. Strengthening this role will enhance FVGC's leadership position and ensure that diverse perspectives are included in shaping the future of Canada's fruit and vegetable sector.

With collaboration, focus, and purpose driving the way forward, FVGC is committed to building a sustainable future for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers. This fresh approach has set the stage for growth and success—one goal at a time, one result at a time, and always with growers' best interests in mind.



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



## A FRESH APPROACH: SETTING GOALS, ACHIEVING SUCCESS

As President of the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada, I am proud to reflect on a year of transition and renewal for our organization. The theme of this year's annual report – *A Fresh Approach: Setting Goals, Achieving Success* – couldn't be more fitting. It speaks to the work we've done in 2024 and the path we're paving for the future.

This past year brought significant change. Finding the right person to lead FVGC was no small task. After a thorough search, we were pleased to welcome Massimo Bergamini as our new Executive Director in September. Settling into a role like this takes time, and over the past months, the Board, staff, and I have worked closely with Massimo to align our goals and map out a plan for the road ahead. It's safe to say we're hitting the ground running.

This fresh approach isn't just about a change in leadership – it's about rolling up our sleeves and committing to working smarter and more collaboratively. We've focused on breaking down silos, strengthening teamwork, and ensuring that every effort – whether it's advocacy, communications, or industry engagement – is aligned with our members' needs. At its core, this approach is about setting clear priorities and delivering results that growers can count on.

Our advocacy efforts in 2024 highlight what we can achieve when we work together. A significant milestone was reached in December when Bill C-280 was adopted – a huge advocacy victory for FVGC and a testament to our persistence in ensuring the priorities of Canada's fruit and vegetable growers are heard. Alongside this success, we amplified our voice on critical issues

like input costs and food security. Framing these conversations through a "food lens" has been a game-changer, demonstrating to policymakers just how interconnected agriculture and food security are.

As we look to 2025, we do so in the midst of a shifting political landscape. With the announcement in January of Prime Minister Trudeau's resignation, the prorogation of Parliament, and an upcoming election appearing imminent, the importance of FVGC's advocacy efforts cannot be overstated. This is a time of uncertainty, but it is also a time of opportunity. By remaining steadfast in our mission and proactive in our approach, we will ensure that the voices of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers are heard and prioritized in the political and policy decisions to come.

Looking ahead, I'm optimistic. With a solid foundation under Massimo's leadership, a strong team, and the support of our members, we're ready to tackle what's next. As the saying goes, "You reap what you sow," and I believe the groundwork we've laid this past year will yield big results in 2025.

Thank you for your trust and support. Together, we'll keep building a sustainable future for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers – one step at a time.



Marcus Janzen

President  
Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Annual reports tend to be about looking in the rearview. This one is no different as it spotlights all the important work done by FVGC on behalf of its members in 2024. But with this being my first Annual Report message to members, I did want to change things up a little by taking both a look back and a look forward.

My look back begins in 2014. With FVGC - then the Canadian Horticultural Council - in financial turmoil, the organization's leadership responded with a number of bold decisions to bolster FVGC's foundation and put it on the track to financial sustainability. Ten years later, FVGC's leadership took stock of the health of the organization and decided it was time to invest some of the dividends from a decade of prudent stewardship into a fresh approach.

As is clear from this Annual Report, this fresh approach is already starting to bear fruit -- a greater emphasis on advocacy and government relations and a more robust social and digital media presence are two examples. But above all, this fresh approach has been about redefining FVGC's relations and value proposition to its members and growers from coast to coast.

That work has just begun -- and this is where my look forward begins.

The next 12 months will see FVGC embrace its convenor role fully, engaging with all its key stakeholders - members, growers, government - to land on common understanding of its role in the agri-food ecosystem and the value it can bring.

The year ahead will also see FVGC model a fresh approach to advocacy. This will mean enhanced and purposeful engagement with parliamentarians and senior officials. It will mean a greater emphasis on research and policy development as well as on communications to ensure that our policies are sound, credible and well-understood. With 2025 being an election year, it will also mean developing an election agenda that reflects our members' priorities and executing a strategy that leverages our strengths and spotlights our sector's needs.

As of the printing of this report, the looming U.S. tariffs add an additional layer of complexity and urgency to our advocacy efforts, requiring a coordinated approach to ensure that trade stability and food security remain at the forefront of policy discussions.

One final thought: I have seen first-hand the remarkable contribution of the volunteer Board and working group members to the success of the organization, and that contribution must be recognized. Likewise, I want to recognize and celebrate the contribution of FVGC's staff. From my very first day in this role, they have impressed me with their passion and commitment, and they have made me feel welcome and supported as have all of you. I look forward to working with you in 2025 to grow FVGC's influence and with that, our ability to cultivate a sustainable and more prosperous future for our sector.



Massimo Bergamini  
Executive Director  
Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada



# IN NUMBERS

## **31** SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

Demonstrating proactive engagement, FVGC made 31 submissions to various Government consultations. These submissions encompassed a range of vital issues for FVGC members, from inputs for the Federal Budget to Labour White Papers to pest control product regulations. Detailed information on FVGC's consultation submissions is accessible at [www.fvgc.ca](http://www.fvgc.ca).

## **5** APPEARANCES AT HOUSE OF COMMONS AND SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES

In 2024, FVGC was a strong voice for its members, engaging directly with policymakers on critical issues affecting Canada's fruit and vegetable sector. The organization made five appearances before House of Commons and Senate Standing Committees, along with one additional written submission. Notably, 2024 saw the publication of two key reports by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI), both of which included recommendations that directly stemmed from FVGC's advocacy and presentations.

## **6** LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT

FVGC penned six letters addressing critical issues for Canadian growers. All the letters are available on [www.fvgc.ca](http://www.fvgc.ca).

## **5** JOINT LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT

Collaborating with partners, FVGC co-authored five joint letters to the Government. These letters can be read on [www.fvgc.ca](http://www.fvgc.ca).

## **131** MEETINGS WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

FVGC engaged in 131 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.

## **1,608** X FOLLOWERS AND **4,137** LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

In 2024, FVGC expanded its digital reach to 1,608 X followers and 4,137 LinkedIn followers, gaining 108 and 1,239 respectively. These platforms play a vital role in engaging Parliamentarians and industry stakeholders, strengthening FVGC's presence in agricultural advocacy.

## **20** NEWS RELEASES ISSUED

In 2024, FVGC actively communicated with the media, issuing 20 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.





# ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH REPORT

In the past, Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) advocacy efforts were often measured by numbers – meetings held, events hosted, or the bills supported. While these metrics demonstrate activity, FVGC is embracing a fresh approach, one that emphasizes achieving strategic results and creating lasting impact for Canadian fruit and vegetable growers. This report highlights the progress made in 2024, reflecting our renewed focus on meaningful outcomes and our role as a trusted, proactive voice in the sector.



**PASS BILL C-234**  
Support Canadian farmers and help tackle rising food prices

**Did you know?**  
Carbon tax costs imposed on the greenhouse vegetable sector are estimated at over \$23 million annually, and expected to rise to \$82-106 million by 2030.

**Did you know?**  
In 2022, FVGC surveyed growers – 67% of respondents said they had to delay plans to implement smart agriculture practices because they had to reallocate resources.

**Did you know?**  
An Ontario family farm, growing 20 acres of greenhouse peppers will pay nearly \$185k in carbon tax in one year. This number will rise with the rate of the carbon tax.

Canada is facing an affordability crisis. Inflationary pressures, interest rates and unprecedented, rising costs of inputs continue to disadvantage Canadian farmers and consumers.

- Affordability is a key barrier to farmers' ability to implement smart agricultural practices that reduce their GHG emissions and contribute other co-benefits to environmental sustainability.
- Food prices will rise, if farmers are forced to continue to pay the federal carbon tax.



## BUILDING STRONGER ADVOCACY ON PARLIAMENT HILL

On February 15, 2024, FVGC hosted an advocacy day on Parliament Hill, bringing together members from FVGC's Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group (GVWG) and Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG). This event featured 42 targeted meetings with Parliamentarians and government officials, underscoring FVGC's role as a leading voice for the fresh produce sector.

Timed strategically to coincide with Canada's Agriculture Day celebrations, the advocacy day capitalized on Parliament's return to session and the finalization of 2024 pre-budget priorities. FVGC members addressed critical issues shaping the future of the industry, including:

- **Bill C-280:** Securing financial protection for fresh produce sellers.
- **Bill C-234:** Advocating for exemptions from carbon pricing for essential agricultural activities.
- **Pest Management Funding:** Calling for enhanced resources for the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and the Pest Management Centre (PMC) to ensure timely science-based decisions.



The event was not only a platform for presenting growers' priorities, but also a testament to FVGC's ability to unify its membership in a powerful show of sector-wide advocacy. Members' participation ensured that diverse perspectives from across the fresh produce industry were represented, strengthening the organization's impact during these critical discussions.

With this event, FVGC reinforced its commitment to securing practical, grower-focused policy solutions, ensuring that Parliamentarians understood the challenges and opportunities facing Canadian fruit and vegetable growers. This advocacy day marked a significant achievement in FVGC's 2024 efforts to drive meaningful change for the sector.

## ENGAGING THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EVENTS

Advocacy days such as *Farm to Plate* in June and *Fall Harvest* in November, held in cooperation with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), served as a vital platform for connecting growers, industry stakeholders, and Parliamentarians. These events facilitated meaningful dialogue and collaboration on the sector's most pressing challenges, highlighting FVGC's ability to bring key voices to the table and amplify the concerns of its members.



At these events, FVGC facilitated meetings with Parliamentarians and government officials to discuss critical issues including stabilizing food prices, sustainable packaging solutions, and the importance of Bill C-280 to protect growers from buyer insolvency. These discussions emphasized the role of thoughtful policy in creating a resilient and sustainable agricultural sector.

*Fall Harvest* brought a more interactive approach as an advocacy week with meetings held between FVGC representatives, Parliamentarians, and government officials to discuss workforce challenges, sustainability, and trade and competitiveness concerns. The week also featured a panel of Parliamentarians who provided their perspectives on broader issues affecting the agricultural sector. A keynote speech by David Coletto of Abacus Data offered industry participants actionable insights on framing advocacy narratives to resonate more effectively with policymakers. By combining direct advocacy meetings, meaningful dialogue, and strategic guidance, *Fall Harvest* highlighted FVGC's leadership in representing its members' interests.



## DRIVING LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Through persistent efforts, FVGC kept critical legislative issues front and center. Advocacy around carbon tax exemptions emphasized the need for policies that provide financial relief to growers while promoting environmental sustainability. While Bill C-234 died on the Order Paper with the prorogation of Parliament in January 2025, FVGC remains committed to working with policymakers to secure carbon tax exemptions and ensure growers can contribute to climate change mitigation while maintaining financial viability.

The passage of Bill C-280 in December marked a historic advocacy victory, ensuring vital financial protections for growers

in the event of buyer insolvency. This success was driven by FVGC's tireless advocacy, which played a pivotal role in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food's report, *Improving the Resilience of Canada's Horticultural Sector*, including a key recommendation for the bill's swift passage. FVGC's efforts extended to the Senate, where Executive Director Massimo Bergamini presented to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy (BANC), further highlighting the urgency and importance of this legislation. This achievement represents a significant win for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers and solidifies FVGC's position as a trusted, results-driven voice for the sector.

## PROMOTING THE AGRI COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2024, FVGC leveraged the AGRI Committee's report, *Improving the Resilience of Canada's Horticultural Sector*, as a critical tool to advance its advocacy priorities. The report reflected many of FVGC's core recommendations and highlighted the need for policy changes to address key challenges facing the sector.

Through targeted outreach to Parliamentarians, strategic amplification on social media, and persistent calls for government action, FVGC ensured that AGRI's recommendations were heard by government and Canadians. This effort underscored the urgency of implementing policies that not only stabilize food prices but also ensure long-term support for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers. By turning insights into action, FVGC reinforced its commitment to driving tangible results for the sector.



# LOOKING AHEAD

As FVGC looks toward 2025, advocacy efforts will reflect the organization's fresh approach, focusing on results-driven initiatives and long-term strategic achievements. Moving beyond simply "checking boxes," FVGC is committed to:

- Delivering sharper, targeted advocacy that prioritizes impactful outcomes over activities.
- Strengthening its convenor role by building partnerships and leading dialogue on the sector's most pressing challenges.
- Aligning advocacy efforts with the broader organizational goals of synergy, collaboration, and sustainability.

This evolution in advocacy strategy ensures FVGC remains a trusted leader, not only in representing the interests of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers but also in achieving tangible, meaningful progress for the sector.





# BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) prioritized enhancing Business Risk Management (BRM) programs in 2024, ensuring that Canadian growers have the tools and resources to navigate financial uncertainty in the face of increasing climate challenges and market volatility. FVGC's advocacy focused on addressing gaps in current programs, expanding disaster support mechanisms, and ensuring that growers remain competitive while protecting their financial stability.

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION

In 2024, Stefan Larrass, BRM Working Group Chair, represented FVGC before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI), highlighting key challenges such as rising input costs, labour shortages, and the need for improved business risk management tools. His testimony underscored the importance of aligning programs like AgriStability and the Advanced Payment Program (APP) with growers' needs to foster resilience and competitiveness.

By sharing real-world insights and practical solutions, FVGC's commitment to collaborative advocacy and ensuring the sector's voice is heard was reinforced. This appearance was a critical platform for advancing grower priorities and influencing policy decisions to support the industry's sustainability.

The input FVGC provided during its presentation to the AGRI Committee was instrumental in shaping the committee's report, *Improving the Resilience of Canada's Horticultural Sector*. This comprehensive report outlined a strategic roadmap for government policy changes needed to secure the long-term sustainability of the edible horticulture sector and safeguard Canada's food security. It has since become a cornerstone of FVGC's advocacy efforts.

## DELIVERING RESULTS FOR THE ADVANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM (APP)

A key achievement in 2024 was FVGC's successful advocacy for maintaining the increased interest-free limit of \$350,000 for the Advance Payments Program (APP). This critical support mechanism provided growers with essential cash flow relief to manage rising operational costs. FVGC collaborated with industry partners to emphasize the necessity of sustaining this limit beyond the 2023 program year. FVGC, in collaboration with key stakeholders, sent a letter to Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay, emphasizing the critical role of the APP in mitigating financial risks for growers and ensuring they can invest confidently in future production.

## ADVANCING REVENUE-BASED INSURANCE MODELS

In collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and Gallagher Re, FVGC participated in consultations and workshops exploring alternatives to the AgriStability program. The focus was on developing revenue-based insurance models tailored to the specific needs of horticultural growers. This feasibility study was a critical step toward modernizing BRM frameworks, ensuring they adequately address the financial risks unique to the sector. FVGC's proactive involvement ensured growers' concerns were central to the development of new risk management solutions.

# LOOKING AHEAD

FVGC remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening Business Risk Management (BRM) programs in 2025. Key priorities include advancing revenue insurance models, advocating for disaster support tailored to the specific needs of horticultural growers, and ensuring the integration of environmental best management practices (BMPs) into BRM programs aligns with operational realities.

In the year ahead, FVGC will continue to meet with Gallagher Re to inform AAFC's study on whole farm income insurance models. Additionally, FVGC will investigate ways to make BRM programs more accessible and relevant for greenhouse growers, addressing the unique challenges they face. Through strategic planning and collaboration with industry stakeholders, FVGC aims to deliver a robust safety net that fosters resilience, innovation, and confidence for Canadian growers amid ongoing uncertainties.



## BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The Business Risk Management Working Group has been pivotal in shaping policies and advocating for programs that help growers navigate financial uncertainty and build resilience in the face of climate and market challenges.

Stefan Larrass

CHAIR

Mike Chromczak

VICE CHAIR

*“Business Risk Management programs are essential to ensuring the stability of Canada’s fruit and vegetable sector. FVGC’s efforts in 2024 have laid the groundwork for meaningful improvements, and we will continue to advocate for programs that empower growers to thrive amidst challenges.”*

**STEFAN LARRASS**

CHAIR - BUSINESS RISK  
MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

# CROP PROTECTION

Throughout 2024, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada's (FVGC) Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG) has remained steadfast, working tirelessly to advocate on behalf of FVGC members through lobbying, attendance at events, participation in consultations, and by holding impactful meetings with key government departments including Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Pest Management Centre (PMC) and Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA).

## 2024 CALENDAR YEAR

**8 MEETINGS WITH MPS / SENIOR OFFICIALS**

**55 MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT**

**3 LETTERS**

**8 SUBMISSIONS TO CONSULTATIONS**



*“CPAG stands firm in advocating for Canada’s fruit and vegetable growers – championing their voices on vital policy issues and crop protection needs.”*

**CHRIS DUYNELSHOFF**

CHAIR - CROP PROTECTION ADVISORY GROUP







## INCREASED FUNDING TO THE PMC AND PMRA

In February 2024, CPAG held a lobby day on Parliament Hill and met with MPs to discuss the urgent need to support grower access to crop protection tools through increased resourcing and allocation of A-base funding to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and the Pest Management Centre (PMC). In February 2025, CPAG held their face-to-face meeting in Ottawa, and met with PMC and PMRA to discuss these same key advocacy issues.

In addition to lobby days, CPAG has advocated for growers through other avenues including AAFC's audit of the minor use pesticide program and pesticide risk reduction program which took place in June 2024. Requests for increased funding to PMRA and PMC were also communicated to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance as part of the pre-budget consultation process that took place in the summer of 2024. Lastly, CPAG was invited in October 2024 to provide feedback to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Working Group on Pesticide Management's action plan. CPAG reiterated calls to action for grower engagement on matters which relate to the regulation of pest control products.

## MINOR USE PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOP

Under a new joint collaboration, FVGC, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA), and PMC held the 22nd Annual National Pest Management Priority Setting Workshop in Gatineau, Québec from March 19 - 20, 2024. In addition to identifying national priorities for crop protection, this event provided a platform for industry, government and scientists from Canada and abroad to unite through a shared goal of identifying new and innovative solutions for managing crop pests. FVGC staff and CPAG members were also able to engage in similar discussions through attendance at the Global Minor use Summit and IR-4 Food Use Workshop that took place in Madrid, Spain and Milwaukee, USA respectively.

## PMRA TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

In budget 2024, as a result of FVGC advocacy, an additional \$32.3M was allocated to support the PMRA's transformation initiative over the next two years, which includes continuing its efforts to modernize the PMRA's business practices. As PMRA continues to integrate initiatives from transformation into their day-to-day operations, FVGC will continue to advocate for policy changes that do not hinder the work of growers and deliver effective and safe crop protection tools in an efficient manner.



Key areas of activity during the 2024 calendar year, which are on-going:

	DESCRIPTION	ACTIONS TAKEN
<b>Modernized Business Practices</b>	<b>Continuous Oversight</b> - PMRA proposes to consider new information on an on-going basis (e.g. published scientific literature, water monitoring data, and other regulatory decisions) throughout a pesticide's regulatory lifecycle	In March 2024, CPAG submitted a response to the PMRA's Proposed Policy on Continuous Oversight of Pesticides, PRO2024-01.  FVGC remains concerned that this approach will divert resources from core activities at the PMRA and possibly lead to delays in registrations for minor use products.
	<b>Proportional Effort</b> - PMRA proposes to apply a categorization process for selecting the level of oversight and review required for an active ingredient.	In April 2024, FVGC attended a pre-consultation on PMRA's approach and anticipates additional engagement on this topic in early 2025.
<b>Collection of Real-World Data</b>	<b>Water Monitoring</b> - PMRA launched a 2-year water monitoring pilot project in 2022 for the purpose of better informing future pesticide re-evaluations and special reviews. Since then, the program has received an additional 2 years of funding via budget 2024.	In May 2024, CPAG submitted a response to the PMRA's consultation on a framework for pesticide water monitoring programs in Canada.  FVGC welcomes creation of a water monitoring program for the purpose of better informing PMRA's risk assessments and continues to advocate for long term A-base funding for this program.
	<b>Pesticide Use Information</b> - PMRA proposes to collect pesticide use information for the purposes of informing risk and value assessments for pesticides.	Consultation on the proposed framework for pesticide use information is scheduled for Winter 2025.  In winter 2023 / spring 2024 FVGC members participated in a pilot project which aimed to collect product specific pesticide usage information. Low response rates unfortunately did not lead to statistical significance and reinforces FVGC's recommendations for early engagement and transparency.
<b>Amendments to the Pest Control Product Regulations (PCPR)</b>	<b>Amendments to the Pest Control Products Act (PCPA)</b> - PMRA is proposing amendments to the regulations for the purposes of meeting transformation objectives which relate to increased transparency.	In August 2024, CPAG submitted a response to Canada Gazette Part I, Volume 158, Number 24.  FVGC remains of the opinion that the majority of changes being proposed are not required as PMRA already has authority and will set a negative precedent for future science-based policy involving pest control products.
<b>Cost-Recovery</b>	<b>Update to fees for Pest Control Products</b> - To recoup costs associated with activities related to re-evaluations/special reviews or compliance monitoring, PMRA is proposing to increase annual fees for registered pest control products.	In March 2024, CPAG submitted a response to the PMRA's consultation on a proposal to update fees for pest control products and in Winter 2024/25 submitted feedback on proposed regulations that were published in Canada Gazette Part 1, Volume 158, Number 51.  FVGC remains concerned that the proposed fee structure will impact the number of minor use products registered in Canada by deterring companies from conducting business in Canada or by reducing available capital for R&D budgets.

Although many initiatives are still under development, activities related to increased transparency (e.g. public notification on updated / changed Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and plain language summaries for regulatory decisions) have been brought online.



## MRLS

In 2024 CPAG engaged with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Market Access Secretariat on proposed MRL changes in the Europe Union and Japan. CPAG's Chair, Chris Duyvelshoff attended the 2024 North American Trilateral Technical Working Group on Pesticides, held in Mexico City on October 16-17, regarding international engagement and alignment. While North American regulators have indicated they remain interested in greater collaboration, domestic policies, as well as litigation in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, are making further alignment progress more difficult.

## USER REQUESTED MINOR USE LABEL EXPANSIONS

FVGC met with the PMRA in Winter 2023 and Spring 2024 to discuss ongoing 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 and has largely adhered to their timeline. Registration decisions for Ventigra, Timorex Gold and Closer are anticipated in Winter and Spring 2025.

## SPECIAL REVIEW AND RE-EVALUATION DECISIONS

The 2024 calendar year has been quiet as many pending final and proposed decisions were delayed until 2025 and 2026. While the majority of published decisions were favourable, PMRA proposed to cancel the use of methyl bromide for pre-plant and soil fumigation.



PUBLISHED FINAL DECISIONS (2024 CALENDAR YEAR)			
	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	TRADE NAME	FINAL DECISION
<b>Cyclical Review</b>	Bacillus subtilis cluster	SERENADE, TAEGRO,	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures (RVD2024-02, Published Jan 2024).
	Quinalofop-p-ethyl	ASSURE II, YUMA	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures (RVD2024-03, Published Feb 2024).
	Tebuconazole	FOLICUR	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures (RVD2024-09, Published Nov 2024).
<b>Special Review</b>	Fosetyl aluminum	ALIETTE	Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures (SRD2024-02, Published Aug 2024).



PUBLISHED PROPOSED RE-EVALUATION DECISIONS (2024 CALENDAR YEAR)			
	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	TRADE NAME	FINAL DECISION
<b>Cyclical Review</b>	Foramsulfuron	TRIBUTE SOLO, OPTION	Proposed Decision acceptable with risk mitigation measures (PRVD2024-04).
	Methyl Bromide	TERR-O-GAS	PMRA proposing to cancel the use of methyl bromide for pre-plant and soil fumigation (PRVD2024-03).  <b>Crops Impacted:</b> Tomatoes and ornamentals  Methyl bromide may still be used for quarantine and pre-shipment application (QPS).
	S-metolachlor & R-enantiomer	DUAL MAGNUM	Proposed acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures (PRVD2024-01).
<b>Special Review</b>	Methyl Bromide	TERR-O-GAS	PMRA proposing continued use of methyl bromide for quarantine and pre-shipment application (QPS) (PSRD2024-01).
	Pydiflumetofen	POSTERITY	Proposed acceptable with mitigation measures (PSRD2024-03).

2025 is expected to be more active with heavily anticipated final decisions for abamectin, atrazine, and chlorothalonil. Proposed decisions are also anticipated for 17 active ingredients including dicamba, MCPA cluster, clothianidin (general), thiamethoxam (general), and novaluron.

UPCOMING SPECIAL REVIEW AND RE-EVALUATION DECISIONS (2025 CALENDAR YEAR)			
<b>Special Review</b>	Upcoming Special Review Decisions	Proposed	Dicamba (January 2025) Novaluron (April-June 2025) Chlorpropham (CIPC) (October - December 2025)
		Final	Chlorothalonil (March 2025)
<b>Cyclical Review</b>	Upcoming Special Review Decisions	Proposed	Clothianidin (general) (July - September 2025) Fatty acid cluster (January 2025) Famoxodone (February 2025) Fenamidone (April-June 2025) Ferric Sodium Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (April - June 2025) Gibberelin cluster (April - July 2025) Mecoprop cluster (October -December 2025) Nonylphenoxypolyethoxyethanol (March 2025) Potassium bicarbonate (February 2025) Silicon Dioxide Cluster (August 2024 - delayed) Spinetoram (July - September 2025) Spinosad (July - September 2025) Streptomyces lydicus strain WYEC108 (December 2025) Sulfur (March 2025) Thiamethoxam (general) (March 2025)
		Final	Abamectin (April - June 2025) Atrazine (July - September 2025)

**NOTE:** as part of FVGC's fresh approach, comprehensive tables for upcoming re-evaluation and special review decisions will no longer be provided in the Annual Report. Instead, electronic copies will be provided to FVGC members.

# LOOKING AHEAD

Growers continue to face challenges in the field as a result of emerging pests, an unpredictable climate, resistance management, re-evaluation and special review decisions, and a growing technological gap. These factors have combined to create unprecedented demand for the Emergency Use Registration program, underscoring the urgent need for government support to ensure growers have access to the crop protection tools essential for maintaining a sustainable and competitive industry. In the short-term, these pressures are anticipated to continue, however recent calls to action in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI) report, *Improving the Resilience of Canada's Horticultural Sector* and the FPT Working Group on Pesticide Management's Action Plan are promising developments that demonstrate recognition that all governments must collaborate in support of growers and their need for increased and varied crop protection tools. In the year ahead, CPAG will continue to hold government accountable to these recommendations and looks forward to leveraging its past efforts through FVGC's fresh approach.

## CROP PROTECTION WORKING GROUP

The Crop Protection Working Group has provided essential guidance in ensuring access to effective pest management tools while advancing science-based decision-making and sustainability.

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Chris Duyvelshoff                      CHAIR  
Dr. Tracy Shinnars-Carnelley      VICE CHAIR



# ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE



## LEADING ADVOCACY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In 2024, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) addressed pressing environmental challenges facing Canada's fruit and vegetable sector. Advocating for carbon tax exemptions and responsible plastics policies were priorities for the Energy, Environment and Climate Change (EECC) Working Group. Championing practical and equitable policies, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, FVGC strengthened the foundation for a resilient and sustainable future in Canadian agriculture.

## BILL C-234

In late 2023, the Senate amended Bill C-234, *An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, to exclude agricultural heating and cooling from carbon pricing exemptions, effectively gutting the bill's relevance for fruit and vegetable growers. In response, FVGC led a focused and impactful campaign to restore the original provisions of this critical legislation. Bill C-234 aimed to extend the exemption to fully account for essential qualifying farming fuels and activities including natural gas and propane, used for crop irrigation, heating and cooling of farm buildings including greenhouses. The bill also recognized the role of natural gas and propane in delivering heat and CO<sub>2</sub> as an essential input for plant growth, a cornerstone of sustainable, efficient, year-round greenhouse operations. Bill C-234 would support domestic food security, rural communities, and sustainable on-farm practices and capital investments.

Through strategic engagement with Members of Parliament and Senators, FVGC brought attention to the disproportionate burden carbon pricing places on growers, many of whom are already committed to sustainable practices. Armed with detailed data, real-life examples, and growers' testimonials, FVGC advocated for climate policies that balance environmental responsibility with economic viability.



## **FEBRUARY 2024 ADVOCACY DAY**

A key moment in this campaign was FVGC's Advocacy Day in February 2024, which brought together growers, industry representatives, and policymakers for direct dialogue. During 42 targeted meetings, FVGC members emphasized the urgency of passing Bill C-234 in its original form, illustrating how the bill's provisions would directly impact food affordability and sustainability. The event highlighted the unity of the sector and its commitment to advocating for practical, equitable climate policies.

## **EMPOWERING MEMBER VOICES**

To amplify its advocacy efforts, FVGC actively supported the Agriculture Carbon Alliance's grassroots "Show Your Receipts" campaign, mobilizing members to document and share the significant financial burden carbon pricing places on their operations. As a member of the Alliance, FVGC helped unite growers in a powerful call for equitable and practical climate policies.

## **ADVOCACY IMPACT AND NEXT STEPS**

FVGC's advocacy efforts effectively highlighted the economic realities growers face under carbon pricing. A significant outcome of these efforts was the AGRI Committee's recommendation to pass Bill C-234 as part of its report, *A Call to Action: How Government and Industry can Fight Back against Food Price Volatility*. This recommendation underscored the importance of targeted exemptions in supporting growers' operations while maintaining affordability and stability in the food supply chain. While Bill C-234 will not advance further, FVGC remains steadfast in its commitment to securing carbon tax exemptions and has made significant progress in helping Parliamentarians understand the critical need for these measures.

## **CONVENING STAKEHOLDERS ON PLASTICS REGULATION**

Addressing the regulatory complexities of Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) Pollution Prevention Planning (P2) Notice for plastics was another priority for FVGC and the Energy, Environment and Climate Change Working Group in 2024.

Recognizing the significant impact on growers, FVGC solidified its role as a central convener, organizing targeted consultations to bring growers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders together. FVGC facilitated direct discussions between growers and ECCC officials, ensuring that operational realities informed regulatory development.

FVGC pushed for flexible timelines and cost-effective alternatives to help growers transition to sustainable packaging.

These consultations provided growers a platform to influence regulatory policies, ensuring that environmental goals were balanced with practical implementation considerations.



*“Sustainability must encompass more than just environmental goals—it requires balancing economic, social, and environmental pillars to truly support the future of agriculture. Growers have always been leaders in sustainable practices, and FVGC is proud to convene growers, policymakers, and stakeholders to drive forward holistic and impactful solutions for a resilient agricultural future.”*

**GORDON STOCK**

(INTERIM) CHAIR - ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

# LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, FVGC will build on this past year's achievements by pushing for the implementation of practical carbon policies, supporting innovation in sustainable agriculture, and continuing to represent growers in discussions on environmental regulations. These efforts are critical to ensuring a balanced approach to environmental stewardship and economic sustainability for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers.

## ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The Energy, Environment and Climate Change Working Group has played a vital role in advocating for policies that support sustainable practices while balancing the economic realities faced by growers.

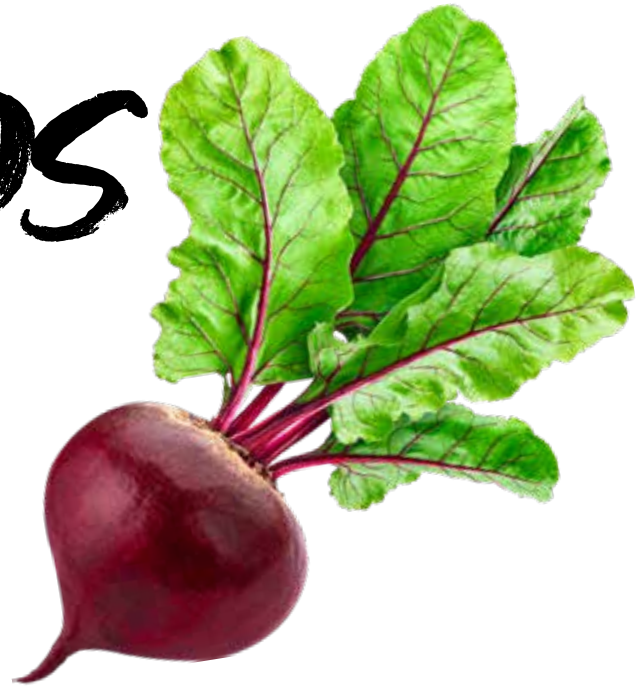
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Gordon Stock

INTERIM CHAIR



# INDUSTRY STANDARDS & FOOD SAFETY



The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) continued its proactive work in 2024 to enhance industry standards and strengthen food safety frameworks. Through collaboration with government, industry partners, and stakeholders, FVGC played a vital role in ensuring Canadian growers remain competitive in global markets while meeting evolving consumer and regulatory demands.

## ADVANCING FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

In 2024, FVGC actively participated in consultations on the implementation of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act (SFCA)*, ensuring that growers' concerns about unnecessary burdens were heard and addressed. By providing thoughtful feedback on proposed updates, FVGC emphasized the need to uphold robust food safety standards without disproportionately increasing costs for growers. FVGC remains committed to advocating for regulatory improvements specific to perishable produce, including enhanced Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) transparency and practical, grower-friendly implementation of new requirements.

## CANADAGAP CERTIFICATION AND EMERGING PRACTICES

FVGC continues to champion the CanadaGAP program as a cornerstone of food safety for the produce sector. In 2024, FVGC supported CanAgPlus in expanding the program to include certification for emerging crops and innovative production methods, such as advanced greenhouse techniques. These efforts enable growers adopting new technologies to remain compliant with rigorous food safety standards while adapting to the evolving expectations of domestic and international buyers. By supporting CanAgPlus in broadening the scope of CanadaGAP, FVGC is helping growers access new markets, strengthen buyer confidence, and foster innovation across the sector.

## NAVIGATING GFSI PROGRAM UPDATES

In addition to its work on CanadaGAP, FVGC supported growers in adapting to updates in Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) programs. These changes introduced new compliance requirements, particularly impacting growers of innovative or emerging crops. FVGC provided guidance to help members meet these standards while ensuring they could remain competitive in the marketplace.



## ADVOCATING FOR FLEXIBLE CERTIFICATION OPTIONS

Recognizing that GFSI certification can pose challenges for some markets, FVGC advocated for broader acceptance of alternative certification options. This initiative aims to create a more equitable market environment, allowing growers to compete effectively while meeting the diverse requirements of buyers and ensuring accessibility for all.



## FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GRADE STANDARDS REVISIONS

FVGC advanced its work on revising the fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) grade standards in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and industry partners. These efforts aim to modernize grading standards, ensuring they align with current production practices and meet evolving market demands. In addition to the ongoing grades review, CFIA has proposed a shift in approach to the management and implementation of grade standards, signaling potential changes in how they are governed and applied across the industry.

As part of this work, the Fresh Produce Alliance (a collaborative initiative led by the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC), the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), and the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC)), has endorsed a proposal (Option 1) to retain the FFV grades within the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) but transition the ownership of the associated Incorporated by Reference (IBR) document to an industry body, such as the DRC. This shift would support greater industry involvement in maintaining practical and relevant grading standards.

While progress has been made, the process has faced delays, particularly concerning updates to fresh fruit grades and other critical products. FVGC continues to advocate for clarity, fairness, and timeliness in these revisions to ensure the updated standards provide tangible benefits for growers and support consistent quality throughout the supply chain. Looking ahead, FVGC remains dedicated to expediting the completion and implementation of these essential updates.

## TEST MARKETS: DRIVING INNOVATION AND MARKET ACCESS

Test markets are crucial for fostering innovation and aligning with evolving consumer demands. By enabling trials of new varieties, packaging, and technologies, they help growers refine offerings, address potential regulatory issues, and reduce risks before full-scale commercialization.

In 2024, FVGC prioritized addressing the CFIA's suspension of test market authorizations (TMAs), emphasizing their importance in driving adaptability and competitiveness within the sector. Without TMAs or a viable alternative, the industry faces barriers to innovation and market responsiveness. FVGC continues to urge CFIA to reinstate TMAs or implement a replacement mechanism to ensure the growth of the fruit and vegetable sector and its ability to meet shifting market demands.

# LOOKING AHEAD

FVGC will remain focused on advocating for practical and forward-thinking food safety and industry standards. Priorities include promoting transparency and responsiveness in CFIA operations, supporting grower education on new regulatory requirements, and continuing to champion innovative production methods that meet evolving market demands. FVGC's dedication to industry standards and food safety underscores its commitment to supporting growers and fostering trust across the supply chain, from farm to consumer.

## INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

The Industry Standards and Food Safety Working Group has been instrumental in shaping strategies and demonstrating leadership in addressing key challenges in food safety and industry standards.

Jody Mott                      CHAIR  
Sarah Marshall              VICE CHAIR

*“The work we’ve done this year to strengthen food safety and enhance industry standards is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of Canadian growers. FVGC’s efforts ensure we remain at the forefront of global excellence in fruit and vegetable production.”*

**JODY MOTT**

CHAIR-INDUSTRY STANDARDS  
AND FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP





# LABOUR

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) made significant strides in 2024 to address the complex labour challenges faced by the industry. Recognizing the critical role of a robust and sustainable workforce, FVGC undertook a series of targeted initiatives to support growers, influence policy, and safeguard the fruit and vegetable sector's long-term stability.

## ADVOCATING FOR TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER (TFW) PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

In 2024, FVGC actively engaged with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and other stakeholders to ensure that the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Programs (SAWP) continue to address the unique needs of the fruit and vegetable sector. While the government's proposed changes to the TFW program primarily targeted non-agricultural industries, FVGC sought assurances that agriculture would remain exempt from these measures, emphasizing the critical importance of uninterrupted access to seasonal labour.



In collaboration with industry partners, FVGC met with officials, including representatives from the office of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, to reiterate the essential role of SAWP as a standalone program tailored to agriculture. These discussions reinforced the government's commitment to exclude agriculture from any sweeping changes, ensuring growers could maintain access to a reliable workforce without facing additional regulatory burdens.

FVGC's proactive engagement underscored the importance of safeguarding the sector's labour needs and highlighted the collaborative approach of industry and government in supporting agricultural priorities.





## LABOUR: ADDRESSING KEY CHALLENGES AND SHAPING POLICY

FVGC took a proactive leadership role in addressing critical labour issues by developing coordinated responses to Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) consultations and white papers on the new Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) stream for fish and food processing. These responses, developed in collaboration with members of FVGC's Labour Working Group and industry partners, ensured the sector's voice was heard in shaping policy that impacts growers and workers alike.

Two white papers were completed this year, focusing on worker accommodations and occupational scope. FVGC's response to the first consultation highlighted the need for practical, fair housing standards that balance workers' well-being with growers' operational realities. The second response emphasized flexibility in occupational roles to reflect the diverse and evolving nature of agricultural work.

A total of six white papers will be developed as part of ESDC's consultation process.

These white papers will be instrumental in guiding ESDC's approach to the new TFW stream while safeguarding the unique needs of the agricultural sector. Through these efforts, FVGC underscores its commitment to fostering a fair and effective labour framework for growers and workers alike.



## TACKLING EMERGING LABOUR LEGISLATION

The enactment of Bill S-211, the *Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act*, in late 2023 introduced important new requirements for businesses in 2024. FVGC worked closely with partners, including the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), to assess the legislation's implications for growers. Advocacy efforts focused on clarifying reporting requirements and reducing undue administrative burdens on the sector, ensuring compliance without compromising competitiveness.

Additionally, FVGC joined other agricultural organizations in addressing concerns related to the Underused Housing Tax (UHT). While some growers are exempt from the tax, they are still required to file returns to demonstrate their exempt status—a process that adds unnecessary administrative burden. FVGC advocated for legislative changes to eliminate this redundant reporting requirement for exempt growers. This effort, supported by a joint letter to key policymakers, reflects FVGC's commitment to cutting unnecessary red tape and ensuring fair treatment for all growers.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE 2024 SAWP ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING

FVGC participated in the 2024 SAWP Annual Review Meeting in Barbados, actively contributing to discussions on critical policy and operational proposals impacting the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The meeting provided an opportunity to address key issues such as contract amendments and workplace safety, reinforcing FVGC's commitment to ensuring fair and effective labour standards for growers and workers alike.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A NATIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

To address persistent labour shortages, FVGC actively collaborated with the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) in the development of a National Agricultural Workforce Strategy. This initiative, involving broad stakeholder engagement across the agriculture sector, aims to provide long-term solutions by fostering collaboration and ensuring a consistent supply of skilled and unskilled workers. FVGC's leadership and partnership with CAHRC underscore its commitment to supporting both growers and workers, ensuring a resilient agricultural future for Canada.

# LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, FVGC will continue to strengthen its role as a convener by uniting policymakers, industry leaders, and growers to tackle labour challenges collectively. Planned initiatives include advancing discussions on housing standards, refining labour program efficiencies, and ensuring the sector's voice is heard in the implementation of national workforce policies.

FVGC will continue to engage with ESDC on their consultation on the new Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) stream for fish and food processing, ensuring the outcomes of these consultations lead to policies that support a sustainable and competitive fruit and vegetable sector. Future topics for the white papers being developed in this consultation will include:

- Stream-Specific Work Permits
- Transportation
- Wages and Deductions
- Healthcare Provisions

This year's accomplishments have laid a strong foundation for continued progress in supporting Canadian growers and fostering a thriving workforce. Building on this fresh approach, FVGC remains committed to setting clear goals and delivering impactful labour solutions to ensure success for growers.



## LABOUR WORKING GROUP

The Labour Working Group has been central to advancing solutions for workforce challenges, advocating for policies that ensure growers have access to a stable and skilled labour force.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Beth Connery    | CHAIR         |
| Fernando Borja  | CO-VICE CHAIR |
| Ken Forth       | CO-VICE CHAIR |
| Veronica Moreno | CO-VICE CHAIR |

*“Our advocacy efforts this year reflect FVGC’s unwavering commitment to addressing the labour challenges that growers face. By staying proactive and united, we continue to safeguard the workforce that is essential to the sustainability of Canada’s fruit and vegetable sector.”*

**BETH CONNERY**

CHAIR - LABOUR WORKING GROUP

# TRADE AND MARKETING

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) prioritized key trade and marketing issues in 2024, advocating for fair policies, securing financial protections, and addressing critical challenges in domestic and international markets. These efforts supported the sustainability and competitiveness of Canada's fruit and vegetable sector.



## **A HISTORIC WIN FOR GROWERS: BILL C-280 BECOMES LAW**

After nearly 40 years of dedicated advocacy by FVGC, growers, and industry partners, mainstream bankruptcy protection for Canada's fresh produce sector has become a reality. Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, received royal assent on December 12, 2024.

Bill C-280 establishes a deemed trust to protect growers and sellers from financial losses caused by buyer insolvency. This groundbreaking legislation ensures equitable bankruptcy protection across the fresh produce supply chain, marking a milestone for the industry.

Importantly, the adoption of Bill C-280 paves the way for renewed collaboration with the United States on the *Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)*, which extends similar protections to Canadian growers exporting to the U.S. This alignment strengthens cross-border trade and fortifies the financial stability of Canada's fresh produce sector.

This achievement reinforces FVGC's dedication to safeguarding growers' financial well-being and securing the future of Canada's fruit and vegetable industry.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

While this legislation represents a critical milestone, its successful implementation remains essential. FVGC continues to work with its industry partners on implementation and will continue to monitor the government's progress in finalizing the necessary regulations, including program start dates, claims processes, and eligibility criteria. Members will be updated as details become available.



## **ADDRESSING RISKS IN TRADE POLICY: BILL C-282**

FVGC took a proactive stance on Bill C-282, *An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)*, which proposed to exclude supply management from future trade agreements.

FVGC spoke to the need for agricultural trade policy to support free and open trade, provide Canadian negotiators with the tools necessary to secure trade terms that serve our national interest, and highlighted the real potential for retaliatory trade measures that could harm Canada's fruit and vegetable exporters.

Advocacy included detailed submissions and an appearance by George Gilvesy, the past Chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA), emphasizing the need to maintain flexibility in trade negotiations, as well as meetings with Senators and Members of Parliament.

The decision by Prime Minister Trudeau to prorogue parliament in January resulted in the Bill dying on the order paper.

## **RESPONDING TO U.S. TRADE CONCERNS**

In late 2024, threats from U.S. President Donald Trump about imposing tariffs on Canadian goods caused widespread concern about the stability of North American trade. For Canadian fruit and vegetable growers, these remarks posed serious questions about market access and the integrity of the integrated supply chain that has long supported both economies.

As these threats grew more likely, FVGC worked closely with the Government of Canada and industry partners on both sides of the border to ensure a strong contingency plan was in place to support the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector. These actions included seeking feedback from FVGC members on retaliatory tariffs, FVGC's participation in the Canada-US Economic Summit and participation in government roundtables to ensure the sector's voice was heard.

## **ADVANCING GROWER INTERESTS IN CUSMA CONSULTATIONS**

FVGC actively engaged in consultations for the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), focusing on key issues such as market access, regulatory alignment, and labour provisions. These discussions emphasized the importance of fair treatment for Canadian growers in U.S. markets and reducing cross-border trade barriers. Looking ahead to the upcoming 2026 CUSMA review,

FVGC will continue its advocacy to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of Canada's fruit and vegetable sector.

## **GROCERY SECTOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

FVGC has been an integral part of the successful advancement of the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct, a significant milestone in fostering fairness and transparency in the fresh produce supply chain and reflecting our commitment to collaboration and advocacy for growers across Canada.

Representing FVGC on the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct Interim Board of Directors, Patrice Léger Bourgoïn played a pivotal role in achieving a major milestone: securing commitments from all major grocery retailers. This landmark accomplishment lays the foundation for the initiative to advance to its next critical steps, including finalizing the Code to reflect stakeholder needs, launching robust guidelines and enforcement measures, and equipping growers with the tools and support needed to ensure fair treatment and business stability. FVGC has been deeply engaged in the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct since its inception and is proud to celebrate this progress while continuing to drive the initiative forward.

The next steps include finalizing the Code to address stakeholder needs and market dynamics, launching it with robust guidelines and enforcement measures, and equipping growers with tools and support to ensure fair treatment and business stability. This achievement marks a landmark victory for growers, highlighting FVGC's steadfast commitment to fostering a stable, transparent, and equitable domestic market where growers can thrive.



## FVGC'S MINISTERIAL EXEMPTION COMMITTEE

FVGC has established an ad hoc Ministerial Exemption (ME) Committee to address key challenges impacting Canadian growers, including market pressures and process inconsistencies. By uniting stakeholders across the sector, the committee aims to identify solutions that enhance fairness, competitiveness, and sustainability, reinforcing FVGC's commitment to supporting growers and ensuring a resilient agricultural industry.

*“FVGC's efforts in 2024 demonstrated our commitment to protecting growers in an increasingly complex trade environment. By addressing challenges head-on, we've laid the foundation for a more resilient and competitive sector.”*

**JASON WHITCHER**

CHAIR - TRADE AND MARKETING WORKING GROUP

# LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, FVGC will continue actively monitoring potential U.S. trade policy changes, including tariff discussions, and engaging with stakeholders to support Canadian growers' market access and competitiveness. The organization will also focus on ensuring equitable outcomes during the ongoing CUSMA review process, advocating for policies that protect the interests of Canadian growers. Domestically, FVGC will support the implementation of the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct, a critical initiative to promote fairness and stability in supply chain practices. These efforts underscore FVGC's unwavering commitment to securing a competitive and sustainable future for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers in both domestic and global markets.

## TRADE AND MARKETING WORKING GROUP

The Trade and Marketing Working Group has worked tirelessly to strengthen Canada's position in global markets, ensuring growers remain competitive while addressing trade and tariff concerns.

Jason Witcher

CHAIR

Brian Gilroy

VICE CHAIR



# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS, DRIVING SOLUTIONS



In 2024, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) actively participated in key initiatives and discussions that brought together growers, industry stakeholders, government officials, and international partners to address critical challenges facing the sector. Through its engagement in these platforms, FVGC played a vital role in fostering dialogue, advancing sector priorities, and ensuring Canadian growers' perspectives were at the forefront of decision-making. As part of its fresh approach, FVGC is laying the groundwork to take an even more active role as a convener, driving meaningful collaboration to tackle the sector's most pressing issues.

## AAFC ENGAGEMENT

FVGC's on-going participation in AAFC's Sector Engagement Tables (SETs) enables purposeful dialogue between government officials and the fruit and vegetable sector on a wide variety of topics including: Agile Regulations, Consumer Demand and Market Trends, Skills Development, and Sustainability. Through this initiative, FVGC has worked to advance and strengthen the fruit and vegetable sector's competitiveness by providing recommendations and strategic guidance to government officials. For example, in Spring 2024 the horticultural SET drafted a strategic plan for overcoming challenges which relate to labour, crop protection, sustainability and climate change adaptation, and research and innovation.

In addition to the SET, FVGC has engaged with Deputy Minister Lawrence Hanson and other members from AAFC through participation in the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Advisory Council.





## **CANADIAN PLANT HEALTH COUNCIL – BOARD AND WORKING GROUPS**

In 2024, the Canadian Plant Health Council (CPHC) Board approved its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan focusing on plant health surveillance, biosecurity, and emergency response. The Board and working group discussions unite industry, government, and academia to address plant health and play an important role in information sharing and emerging pest management. FVGC is represented on the CPHC Board by Julie Paillat and alternate Christina Turi.

## **NORTH AMERICAN PLANT PROTECTION ORGANIZATION – ANNUAL MEETING, EXPERT GROUP ON TUTA ABSOLUTA**

FVGC attended the 47th NAPPO Annual General Meeting in Tucson, Arizona, where government regulators and industry leaders discussed safeguarding plant trade across North America. Key sessions included updates from NAPPO Chief Scientist Dr. Javier Trujillo, and emphasized use of industry-driven, trilateral regulatory solutions. Canadian delegates, co-chaired by CFIA's Steve Côté and Flowers Canada Growers' Andrew Morse, presented the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, addressing phytosanitary standards, pest management, and regulatory harmonization. This year's symposium also explored alternatives to Methyl bromide and the implementation of NAPPO standards. NAPPO 2025 will take place in Ottawa.

The NAPPO Expert Group on *Tuta absoluta* is preparing for potential impacts on regional trade, with a discussion document and response plan in progress. Canadian representatives include CFIA's Mélanie Gauthier, and FVGC's Julie Paillat.

## **CANADIAN ORGANIC STANDARDS REVIEW**

The Canadian Organic Standards Review (COS), managed by the Organic Federation of Canada, continued in 2024 with the Greenhouse Task Force and various working groups who are reviewing the list of proposals submitted to the COS: Organic Principles and Management Standards and Permitted Substances Lists. FVGC's Julie Paillat participated in the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture meetings to discuss recommendations and make decisions that will be available for public consultation in Spring 2025.



## **ELEVATING CANADIAN VOICES ON THE GLOBAL STAGE**

FVGC's participation in international discussions reinforced Canada's influence in shaping global sustainability standards, ensuring that the unique needs of Canadian growers remain central to these conversations.

## **INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRODUCE STANDARDS**

In 2024, FVGC's Director of Operations, Amy Hutchinson, was elected to the Board of Directors of the International Federation of Produce Standards (IFPS). IFPS brings together produce stakeholders from around the world to discuss and work on common interests such as food safety, global standards, and sustainability. The IFPS is supporting various industry efforts

around the globe to ensure that government regulations do not inadvertently disrupt trade and commerce through legislation related to PLU stickers. This year, IFPS's focus has been shifted to sustainability and highlights the importance of collaboration within the industry to promote sustainability. IFPS recognizes the need to work together to implement sustainable practices and ensure the long-term success of the produce industry. IFPS believes that the fruit and vegetable industry can make a difference in this area and is committed to working toward the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). FVGC's Angela Reid also participates in the Sustainability Committee of IFPS.



## CANADIAN PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

FVGC showcased its leadership in sustainability and advocacy during the Canadian Produce Marketing Association's (CPMA) *Fresh Week*, a flagship event attracting over 4,000 attendees and 630 exhibitors. President Marcus Janzen and Director of Operations Amy Hutchinson represented FVGC, and actively participated in key discussions at the Canadian International Trade Advisory Committee (CITAC) and the Canadian Government Industry Meeting (CGIM). FVGC staff participated in other CPMA groups including the Labelling Task Force and the newly formed Reusable Plastic Container (RPC) Task Force.

## SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

A highlight of the CPMA event was the joint Sustainability Summit hosted by the International Federation of Produce Standards (IFPS) and CPMA. The Summit focused on how sustainability goals drive innovation in the fresh produce sector. FVGC's contributions underscored Canada's leadership in balancing environmental stewardship with practical implementation for growers. A Summit report, including a Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter has been published to:

1. Promote the importance of sustainability for the fresh produce sector;
2. Advocate for support of sustainability efforts and initiatives;
3. Accelerate adoption of sustainability actions; and
4. Achieve the desired and required state of sustainability.

## ADVANCING COLLABORATION, STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP

In 2024, FVGC's active participation in domestic and international initiatives underscored its commitment to fostering collaboration and amplifying growers' voices. By working closely with diverse stakeholders, FVGC has helped drive progress in sustainability, trade, and competitiveness. Looking ahead, FVGC is poised to take on an even greater convenor role, leading efforts to unite the sector, strengthen partnerships, and shape a resilient future for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers.



# CROP PROFILES

Since 2011, in partnership with Agriculture and AgriFood 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.

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





In 2024 - 2025 FVGC worked with PMC and industry to update the following crop profiles:

Allium - dry onion

Allium - leek

Asparagus

Brassica - broccoli

Brassica - cabbage

Carrot

Rutabaga

Sweet Corn

# LOOKING AHEAD

For 2025 - 2026 FVGC will be collecting information for the following crop profiles:

Apple

Cherry (sweet & sour)

Cranberry

Grape

Peach

Pear

Raspberry

Strawberry

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



# FVGC'S COMMODITY WORKING GROUP REPORTS



## APPLE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

FVGC's Apple Working Group (AWG) met twice in 2024. The AWG met during the FVGC Annual Meeting in Ottawa on March 5th, 2024. Topics discussed included 2023 crop and marketing conditions, apple sector trends, Research & Promotion Agency, Ministerial Exemptions, export market opportunities, and crop protection issues.

The FVGC Apple Working Group Mid-Summer Meeting was held on July 16, 2024, in Quebec and was hosted by Les Producteurs de pommes du Québec (PPQ). The agenda included market situations and trends, 2023 crop estimate, crop protection issues, and several research reports. The AWG participated in the PPQ's Great Apple Tour which was a two-day tour with many topics and research activities highlighted. The 2025 AWG Mid-Summer meeting will be held in British Columbia.

The AWG was pleased to have two research projects approved as part of the Cluster 4 funding. The two projects are:

- Reducing Losses from Apple Pests with Alternative Control Strategies - Principal Investigators: Kristy Grigg-McGuffin (OMAFRA) and Suzanne Blatt (AAFC Kentville)
- 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 (University of Guelph)

## APPLE WORKING GROUP

The Apple Working Group has demonstrated leadership in tackling critical challenges such as climate adaptation, labour, and crop protection, ensuring the long-term sustainability of Canada's apple and tender fruit industry.

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Charles Stevens      CHAIR

## BERRY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

FVGC's Berry Working Group held meetings throughout 2024, focusing on key issues impacting berry growers across Canada. Early fall discussions centered on critical topics such as the gap between programs, pollinator access challenges, federal carbon credits, and the need for FVGC to proactively communicate a strong message of sustainability on behalf of growers.

A review of provincial reports highlighted climate change as the most significant issue for berry producers this year. Extreme weather events and shifting growing conditions underscored the need for innovative research and collaborative efforts to ensure resilience in the sector. The group also received updates on the progress of the Eastern Canada Clean Plant Hub. While staff consistency has maintained momentum, changes in agricultural leadership have slowed overall progress.

The working group continued to monitor key priorities, including stable access to labour. Members were briefed on upcoming consultations planned for the fall to address this pressing concern.

As part of its ongoing commitment to advancing research, the Berry Working Group has prioritized the Canadian Berry Trial Network, funded through the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4. This initiative focuses on breeding and trialing new varieties suited to Canadian climates, addressing the unique challenges of the berry sector. Building on priorities established in 2021, the group continues to coordinate research efforts and support projects critical to growers across the country.



### BERRY WORKING GROUP

The Berry Working Group has been instrumental in advancing research and strategies to address climate resilience, sustainability, and market competitiveness for Canada's diverse berry sector.

Lisa Craig

**CHAIR**

Peter Burgess

**VICE CHAIR**

## FIELD VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

FVGC's Field Vegetable Working Group convened several meetings to address issues impacting vegetable growers. The 2024 growing season has been variable across provinces, with each region facing its own set of challenges. These difficulties underscored a critical gap in crop protection alternatives for certain vegetables, such as rutabaga and beets.

In response, the Field Vegetable Working Group reached out to the Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG) to explore potential solutions and initiate discussions with the federal government. Additionally, the group focused on building a network of experts in field vegetable crop protection to facilitate knowledge sharing and develop effective solutions.

Over the past year, the Field Vegetable Working Group also reviewed progress on Cluster 4 projects and discussed ministerial exemptions.

### FIELD VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP

The Field Vegetable Working Group has played a key role in advocating for solutions that support competitiveness, sustainability, and growth in Canada's field vegetable sector.

Catherine Lessard

**CHAIR**

Jody Mott

**VICE CHAIR**



# GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP

In 2024, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada's (FVGC) Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group (GVWG) held regular in-person and virtual meetings. The members from across Canada work together to advance their workplan activities and national advocacy priorities including the need for carbon pricing relief (Bill C-234), financial protection for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers (Bill C-280) and speaking out in support of free trade, while highlighting the sector's experience in defending against retaliatory measures (Bill C-282).

## CARBON PRICING ADVOCACY

Throughout 2024, FVGC's GVWG focused their advocacy efforts on the escalating carbon costs imposed on greenhouse vegetable growers, for heat and carbon dioxide inputs supplied to their crops.

- The direct costs, estimated at \$29 million in 2024 are expected to rise to \$82-100 million by 2030 as the federal carbon price is set to rise to \$170/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e. These estimates do not include carbon costs that are incurred from the supply-chain via other inputs or activities such as fertilizer, packaging, or transport.

These costs are out-pacing greenhouse growers' ability to reinvest and remain competitive, threatening the displacement of investment to U.S. jurisdictions. The transition to energy alternatives faces significant barriers including a lack of available research and technology, limited knowledge transfer support, enabling public policy, and energy infrastructure.



## GVWG ON PARLIAMENT HILL

In February 2024, FVGC hosted a highly successful lobby day, made possible through the strong support and resources provided by GVWG. GVWG members shared firsthand grower experiences with Parliamentarians, underscoring the need for carbon pricing exemptions, financial protection for fruit and vegetable growers and investment in greenhouse agriculture. The strong alignment of the GVWG narrative with FVGC's legislative priorities was instrumental in advancing policies that support the greenhouse vegetable sector.

## SUBMISSION TO THE PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION

The August GVWG submission to the 2025 pre-budget consultation outlined four key recommendations to help drive our sector's economic potential through key investments, removing regulatory barriers, and incentivizing greenhouse agriculture within the government's environmental policies.

GVWG shared these four key recommendations with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance:

- 1.** Need for carbon pricing relief inclusive of all fuel types, farming activities, and machinery used in modern Canadian agriculture and regulatory support for greenhouse growers.
- 2.** Invest in greenhouse agriculture including critical infrastructure and a new national program modelled after the ISED Net Zero Accelerator initiative to support growers.
- 3.** Develop a national risk mitigation program for greenhouse vegetable growers to address plant pest and disease preparedness and emergency response.
- 4.** Increase resources dedicated to maintain market access, support growth, and expand trade opportunities.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

- In-person GVWG meetings on October 2, 2024 to discuss key business items, governance, strategic considerations and CGEN planning. Dr. Rupp Carriveau spoke to updates from Agriculture at University of Windsor (AgUWin), and the opportunity to collaborate in the Clean Energy Amplification of Sustainable Agricultural Resilience (CEASAR) project.
- Protected Agriculture Stewardship - approval of the Greenhouse Enhanced Nutrient Testing protocol provided another option for greenhouse growers with closed-loop facilities to complete the third-party Water Assessment.
- Greenhouse cucumber grade standards - CFIA extended the timelines for regulated parties to bring labels and advertising into compliance until December 31, 2025 for greenhouse miniature seedless cucumbers and greenhouse long seedless cucumbers.
- North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) Expert Group - FVGC and CFIA are collaborating to inform the trilateral Tuta absoluta discussion document and forward-looking response plan to mitigate impacts on tomato trade.
- Canadian Organic Standards Review - Participation in CGSB Standards Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture and its Greenhouse Task Force.

# LOOKING AHEAD

As part of FVGC's Fresh Approach, the GVWG is committed to engaging in FVGC's strategic planning process, taking deliberate steps to increase capacity and have a greater national presence that will showcase the greenhouse vegetable sector's dedication to global leadership in sustainable agriculture.

The Canadian Greenhouse Excellence Network (CGEN), which aims to mobilize expertise, research, and innovation, will ensure investments in clean energy solutions are researched, piloted, validated and demonstrated in greenhouse production systems, and ultimately support the continued growth of the sector and supply-chain capacity.

CGEN strategic planning in 2024 will advance the partnerships, collaborative activities and projects, and next steps to secure government funding in 2025.



## GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP

The Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group has demonstrated leadership in advancing strategies to support greenhouse growers, ensuring their voices are heard on key issues such as business risk management and carbon pricing exemptions.

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Linda Delli Santi

CHAIR

Richard Lee

VICE CHAIR

## GVWG MISSION

**TO POSITION THE CANADIAN GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE SECTOR AS A RECOGNIZED LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:**

**DRIVEN BY OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE, DEMONSTRATED IN OUR RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF PEOPLE AND THE PLANET, AND UNIFIED BY A TIRELESS PURSUIT OF INNOVATION, COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH.**

*“The Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group (GVWG) plays an active role in addressing national priorities, ensuring greenhouse vegetable growers have every opportunity to thrive.”*

**LINDA DELLI SANTI**

CHAIR - GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP



# CANADIAN POTATO COUNCIL



The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada's (FVGC) Canadian Potato Council (CPC) represents the interests of the major potato-producing provinces, oversees initiatives to increase economic sustainability and gives a clear, unified national voice to Canadian potato growers. In 2024, CPC met in-person three times, and in October, hired Caleigh Hallink-Irwin as the General Manager. Caleigh has a background in crop protection, advocacy, and regulatory affairs with both growers and industry.



This year, CPC developed a Strategic Plan with four priorities and a three-year implementation plan.

## 1. Effective CPC Structure & Governance

1. Develop a current Terms of Reference to accurately represent the desired governance model
2. Communication of the value and knowledge of CPC & FVGC

## 2. Advocacy specific to trade

1. Advocacy and education with federal officials (CFIA, etc.)
2. Policy that facilitates trade

## 3. Research

1. Knowledge transfer from Cluster projects
2. Continue to leverage and access federal funding for research initiatives

## 4. Crop Protection

## CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

The CPC has been working closely with the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) throughout 2024 on ongoing Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) files, particularly focusing on:

- Fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards consultation. DRC supports industry's preferred option, which would transfer ownership of fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards to an industry body while maintaining federal oversight.
- Test market authorization for potato packaging specifications, ensuring clarity for packers and working to secure a permanent resolution before the current TMA expires in September 2025.
- Addressing Rhizoctonia concerns with the objective of influencing CFIA's inspection protocol for this defect

## POTATO WART

One of the national priority files continues to be potato wart. CPC has been representing the national interests of potato growers on government initiatives regarding the regulation and management of potato wart and is an active participant in the Potato Wart Info Sharing Working Group.

The CFIA's science-based National Potato Wart Response Plan published in November, was developed in a timely way, with good collaboration and industry consultation. Overall, CPC appreciates the excellent work CFIA has done on this file to ensure containment and regulation of potato wart while maintaining continued access to Canadian and American markets.

There is further work to be done in rebuilding relationships with the US and tackling changing trade landscapes in a science-based CFIA-centered way. CPC looks forward to CFIA continuing their strong leadership on the issue.

# LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, CPC will continue to:

- Build the connections to strengthen the Canadian potato industry and ensure a strong unified voice on issues of national importance for potato growers
- Engage in national work with federal agencies
- Collaborate with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA): PMRA is engaging with CPC to gather potato information to be used as real data in re-evaluations in place of conservative computer models. The CPC will continue to monitor and consult on all relevant re-evaluations of products in the coming year.

As part of FVGC's fresh approach, CPC is embracing new ways to tackle challenges, foster collaboration, and drive solutions that reflect the evolving needs of potato growers. This renewed focus on deliberate action and strategic advocacy ensures that FVGC's Canadian Potato Council remains a strong and effective voice for the Canadian potato industry, safeguarding its future in an ever-changing landscape.

## CPC MANDATE

**A UNIFIED VOICE OF CANADIAN POTATO GROWERS, OVERSEEING INITIATIVES LEADING TO INCREASED PROFITABILITY OF THE INDUSTRY.**

### CANADIAN POTATO COUNCIL

The Canadian Potato Council has been instrumental in addressing critical issues for the potato sector, from sustainability and research to advocacy on behalf of growers nationwide.

Bill Zylmans

**CHAIR**

Michelle Flis

**VICE CHAIR**



*“The strength of this organization lies in our unity and shared purpose. By coming together as an industry coast to coast, we are building a foundation for prosperity and success. Together, we are stronger.”*

**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

2024 marked the second year of the 5-year funding cycle for the AgriScience Clusters under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP). The AgriScience Clusters aim to bring together industry, government, and academia to address national-level issues and themes by forming partnerships.

Activity Name	Activity Lead	AAFC Priority Area
Science Coordination	FVGC	<i>Mandatory Activities</i>
Knowledge & Technology Transfer (KTT)	FVGC with Burr Forest Group	<i>Mandatory Activities</i>
Historical Impact Assessment	FVGC with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre	<i>Mandatory Activities</i>
Reducing Losses from Apple Pests with Alternative Control Strategies	Principal Investigator: Kristy Grigg-McGuffin, OMAFRA (Guelph), Suzanne Blatt, AAFC Kentville, NS	<i>OTHER - Climate Change &amp; Environment</i>
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, AAFC Kentville, NS & Eric Gerbrandt, Chilliwack, BC	<i>Economic Growth &amp; Development</i>
Increasing Field Vegetable Yield and Resilience to Abiotic and Biotic Stresses through Soil Microbial Engineering	Principle Investigators: Hervé Van der Heyden, AAFC Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu RDC, QC	<i>OTHER - Climate Change &amp; Environment</i>
Reduce Risk Strategies for Cabbage Maggot Control	Principle Investigators: Wim van Herk, AAFC, Agassiz RDC, BC & Renee Prasad, University of the Fraser Valley, BC	<i>Sector Resilience &amp; Societal Challenges</i>
Developing a Systems Approach to Pest Management on Greenhouse Vegetable Crops: Mirid Predator Selection	Principle Investigators: Roselyne Labbe, Harrow RDC, ON AAFC & Francois Dumont, CRAM, Mirabel, QC	<i>Sector Resilience &amp; Societal Challenges</i>

Activity Name	Activity Lead	AAFC Priority Area
Novel Approaches for the Management of Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV)	Principle Investigators: Aiming Wang, AAFC, London RDC, ON & Keri Wang, A&L Laboratories, Guelph, ON	<i>Economic Growth &amp; Development</i>
National Potato Variety Evaluation for Sustainability, Resilience and Climate Change	Principle Investigators: Erica Fava, Fredericton RDC, AAFC, NB & Katerina Jordan, University of Guelph, ON	<i>Sector Resilience &amp; Societal Challenges</i>
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, AAFC, Fredericton RDC, NB & Richard Hogue, IRDA, QC	<i>GHG REDUC. / CARBON SEQ. - Climate Change &amp; Environment</i>
Positioning Canada's Potato Industry for Improved Sustainable Production	Principle Investigators: Ikechukwu Agomoh, AAFC, Fredericton RDC, NB & Mario Tenuta, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB	<i>GHG REDUC. / CARBON SEQ. - Climate Change &amp; Environment</i>

## HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- ACTIVITY 6 – CANADIAN BERRY TRIAL NETWORK**

During the 2024 growing season, all four provinces harvested blueberry trials established during Cluster 3. Sixteen highbush blueberry varieties were evaluated, including two numbered selections from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program, several recent releases from public programs and private breeding companies in Oregon, and some well-known varieties developed in the northeastern United States. Data collection is ongoing, with preliminary yield results expected this winter.

- ACTIVITY 7 – INCREASING FIELD VEGETABLE YIELD AND RESILIENCE TO ABIOTIC AND BIOTIC STRESSES THROUGH SOIL MICROBIAL ENGINEERING**

In the 2023-24 growing season, plant-growth-promoting rhizobacteria increased lettuce yields by more than 15 per cent in both greenhouse and field conditions. Additionally, yields were maintained with 25 per cent less synthetic nitrogen fertilizer. Some of these bacteria also demonstrated the ability to suppress growth of key vegetable pathogens when tested under in-vitro conditions.

- ACTIVITY 9 – DEVELOPING A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO PEST MANAGEMENT ON GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE CROPS: MIRID PREDATOR SELECTION**

During the 2024-25 period, colonies for three mirid species were initiated, and two were successfully bred. Over 60 laboratory assays were conducted to assess the zoophytophagy capacity (predatory and plant-feeding ability) of these predators. A greenhouse trial tested oviposition preferences (egg-laying) and the suitability of four host plant types for the four mirid species, showing promising preliminary trends.

- ACTIVITY 10 – NOVEL APPROACHES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TOMATO BROWN RUGOSE FRUIT VIRUS (TOBRFV)**

Researchers screened a tomato mutant population of more than 10,000 plants and identified promising lines showing resistance or tolerance to ToBRFV infection. These lines offer exciting potential for the development of virus-resistant tomato varieties.

- ACTIVITY 11 – NATIONAL POTATO VARIETY EVALUATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY, RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

Selection F160032-06, a chip line, was taken forward for further evaluation by five companies in 2024. One company also opted to test its potential in the United States. This selection demonstrates earlier maturity compared to standard varieties, with similar yields. It also shows resistance to PVX and moderate resistance to common scab.



## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

FVGC is proud to partner with Burr Forest Group (BFG) to ensure the key messages from Cluster 4 research reach Canadian horticulture growers and the broader sector. Through targeted outreach, engaging content, and regular updates, FVGC has successfully shared progress and findings from the research activities.

- **CLUSTER 4 RESEARCH OVERVIEW VIDEO**

A comprehensive animated video showcasing the research activities was released to highlight the scope and importance of the work being undertaken.

- Visit [www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/](http://www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/) to watch the video.

- **ONLINE PRESENCE**

A dedicated Cluster 4 webpage was launched on the FVGC website to provide growers and stakeholders with easy access to detailed information about the research activities.

- Visit [www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/](http://www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/) to explore the webpage.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

Weekly social media posts on LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter) have shared up-to-date information on ongoing research work. These efforts have boosted awareness and engagement across platforms, helping to connect the research outcomes with growers.

- **UPDATE TO INDUSTRY REPORTS**

Two *Update to Industry* reports were released in June and October, providing detailed overviews of research plans and progress to date. These reports ensure stakeholders remain informed about the advancements and goals of Cluster 4 research.

- **ON-SITE RESEARCH VISITS**

In August, Burr Forest Group staff visited research activity sites to meet with researchers and gather valuable content for knowledge sharing:

- Canadian Berry Trial Network (Kentville, N.S.) – Beatrice Amyotte
- National Potato Variety Evaluation for Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change (Guelph, Ont.) – Katerina Jordan and Vanessa Currie

This collaborative knowledge transfer strategy ensures that growers, researchers, and industry stakeholders remain connected and informed about the critical advancements coming out of Cluster 4 research.



## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FVGC has contracted Dr. Amy Bowen at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (VRIC) to lead the Impact Assessment (IA) activity for FVGC. VRIC and FVGC will work collaboratively with the cluster commodity groups to identify at least one case study or project per crop type and develop the outline for each specific case study. Using primary and secondary sources of information including (but not limited to) qualitative interviews with project participants and researchers, qualitative interviews with end-users of the research results along with project final reports from the previous cluster program funding, and sector publications will inform the development of performance measures that demonstrate the impact of the research. These performance measures as well as successes and challenges identified will be used to write the case studies. Each case study will be its own story outlining the performance measures, along with highlighting the challenge(s) and success the research achieved in creating impact for the sector. The IA activity will run through 2025 and 2026, with a final report completed in 2027.



# LOOKING AHEAD

As FVGC enters year three of the five-year Cluster 4 program, the organization continues to prioritize collaboration and impact. Positive early results are emerging from research activities, and FVGC is focused on sharing these findings with industry contributors, members and stakeholders through comprehensive reports, social media updates, and knowledge transfer initiatives. By fostering connections and engaging growers in the research journey, FVGC is amplifying its role as a unifying voice for the sector.

Looking ahead to 2025, FVGC will continue to flex its convenor muscles by bringing together researchers, growers, and stakeholders to discuss the sector's most pressing challenges. These efforts not only strengthen FVGC's leadership position but also ensure that Canadian horticulture remains competitive, sustainable, and resilient in the face of future challenges.

Stay connected by following FVGC on social media for regular updates, research highlights, and knowledge-sharing content, showcasing the progress and outcomes of Cluster 4. With collaboration, focus, and a commitment to results, FVGC is leading the way toward a stronger, more sustainable future for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers.



*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/](http://www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/).*



# COMMUNICATIONS

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) has embraced a fresh approach to communications in 2024, taking meaningful steps to enhance how we engage with members, stakeholders, and the public. By implementing targeted changes and focusing on delivering timely and relevant updates, FVGC is strengthening its role as a trusted voice for Canada's fruit and vegetable growers while laying the groundwork for continued evolution in the coming year.

## A FRESH APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS

This year, FVGC began shifting its communications focus to meet the changing needs of members and amplify its role as the voice of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers. Recognizing the importance of timely updates, FVGC transitioned away from *Fresh Thinking*, its biannual printed magazine, favouring a more dynamic digital-first strategy. This adjustment allows the organization to provide regular updates through email, social media, and other digital platforms, ensuring members and stakeholders receive relevant, timely information.



Social media has become a key pillar of FVGC's communications strategy. By emphasizing its role as a convenor and championing the "food lens" narrative—encouraging policymakers and stakeholders to consider the intersection of agriculture and food security—FVGC has amplified its voice and extended its reach. Campaigns focused on brand-aligned, proactive advocacy have resonated with both members and external audiences, solidifying FVGC's reputation as a leader in the sector.

## OPENING THE DOOR TO TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

FVGC's strong communications plan played a key role in advancing advocacy priorities in 2024, contributing to major successes such as the passage of Bill C-280 in the Senate. Through social media campaigns, letter-writing initiatives, and regular updates in Member Notes and HortShorts, FVGC kept members informed and engaged on key issues. Outreach efforts, such as targeted surveys on grower returns and feedback requests on U.S. import tariffs, ensured members' voices were included in shaping advocacy strategies.

These communication efforts fostered dialogue and strengthened connections between FVGC and its members. By encouraging participation in advocacy campaigns and providing timely updates on sector challenges and organizational changes, FVGC ensured members were informed and actively involved in driving outcomes during this transition year.

*"This year, FVGC has embraced a fresh approach to communications, focusing on listening to our members and delivering timely, relevant updates that reflect their needs. As we move forward, we will continue to strengthen our engagement and ensure that growers' voices are at the heart of everything we do."*

**MASSIMO BERGAMINI**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## EXPANDING OUR MEDIA STRATEGY

FVGC also advanced its role as the authoritative voice of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers in the media. The introduction of Meltwater, a media monitoring service, marked an important first step. Looking ahead, FVGC will launch a strategic media plan to amplify its key messages, elevate its profile, and promote the priorities of the sector.



**FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS OF CANADA** | **PRODUCTEURS DE FRUITS ET LÉGUMES DU CANADA**

Le français suit...



Massimo Bergamini (FVGC Executive Director), Quinton Woods (FVGC Board Member), Luc Mougnot (DRC President and CEO)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 26, 2024

**FVGC Presents at Senate Committee, Urges Swift Passage of Bill C-280, Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act**

OTTAWA, ON – The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) today appeared

# LOOKING AHEAD

FVGC is committed to continuing this fresh approach to communications in 2025, with plans to build on the progress made in 2024. A comprehensive review of newsletters, schedules, and content is underway to enhance clarity, relevance, and impact. These efforts will ensure members hear from FVGC in the most effective and efficient ways possible, while fostering collaboration and synergy.

The organization is also exploring new communication mediums, such as podcasts and blogs, to connect with members and stakeholders in innovative and engaging ways. These formats will highlight FVGC's leadership and convenor role while providing fresh perspectives on the issues that matter most.

Additionally, FVGC plans to bring more regular updates from its working groups to members. By sharing insights and progress from these collaborative efforts, FVGC will reinforce its commitment to synergy and further solidify its role as a unifying force for Canada's fruit and vegetable sector.





# BUILDING MOMENTUM: A FRESH APPROACH FOR THE FUTURE

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) enters 2025 with a renewed sense of purpose, reflecting on the progress made in 2024 and looking ahead to the challenges and opportunities to come. Last year, FVGC sharpened its focus on delivering meaningful results for growers by addressing pressing challenges such as labour shortages, rising input costs, and trade competitiveness. The adoption of Bill C-280 in December stands as a testament to the power of persistence and collaboration, marking a historic milestone for financial protections in the fruit and vegetable sector.

FVGC's fresh approach has been about more than responding to challenges; it's been about laying the groundwork for sustainable, forward-looking solutions. By fostering collaboration across teams, uniting voices within the sector, and reframing discussions through a "food lens," FVGC has strengthened its role as a trusted advocate for growers. These efforts have amplified Canada's fruit and vegetable sector's priorities and prepared the organization to meet the road ahead with renewed purpose.

Looking ahead, FVGC is determined to lead with intention and innovation, redefining how we advocate for growers.

With a federal election on the horizon, our approach will be sharper, more focused and supported by a narrative that resonates with Canadians.



Advocacy is not just about raising concerns – it's about driving real change and delivering results. In the complex and hypercompetitive political environment we operate in, that means spotlighting issues and solutions not only in the corridors of Parliament, but more importantly, in our communities.

This fresh approach is not just a slogan; it's a commitment to doing things differently. FVGC is here to stand firmly alongside growers, ensuring their voices are amplified, their concerns gain traction, and their challenges are addressed. Together, as one unified team, we will tackle the road ahead with renewed energy, clear goals, and a steadfast focus on securing a sustainable, competitive future for Canada's fruit and vegetable sector.



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