

Through a Food Lens

Annual Report 2025



FRUIT & VEGETABLE
GROWERS
OF CANADA

PRODUCTEURS
DE FRUITS ET LÉGUMES
DU CANADA

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Through a Food Lens

In a year of shifting cross-border pressures and geopolitical change, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) kept growers' interests at the centre of national discussions on food security. The early months of 2025 were marked by a stop-start cycle of tariffs that created unpredictability across the sector. During this tumultuous period, FVGC was a steadfast advocate for policies to protect a secure and reliable supply of healthy fruit and vegetables for Canadians. FVGC brought practical options to officials when tensions rose, worked to preserve predictability when measures changed, and kept members informed throughout. That steadiness was carried into the election period. The ideas FVGC advanced—grounded in a food lens that connected policy to food security—appeared across several party platforms. After the election, the Speech from the Throne acknowledged the role agricultural producers play in food security for Canadians.

The same clear focus guided how FVGC advanced its priority advocacy files. On crop protection, FVGC advocated for timely, science-based decisions and predictable pathways so growers can manage risk and protect crops while meeting high Canadian standards. On greenhouse investment, FVGC underscored the contribution of greenhouses to reliable, year-round supply and advanced measures to address energy and input pressures that threaten viability. Regarding business risk management policies, FVGC advocated shifting from risk management to risk mitigation and sought predictable, accessible programs for growers facing climate, market, or cost shocks. On trade competitiveness, FVGC advocated for consistent rules, efficient border processes, and reciprocity in standards and enforcement, work that proved essential amid tariff volatility. On labour, FVGC advanced the case for the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and

the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) when their need was questioned by some political leaders, and called for reliable, efficient programs that treat workers and employers fairly, with clear requirements and reasonable processing times.

Alongside this external work, FVGC began a strategic review in 2025 to strengthen the organization to add value for the years ahead. Through a member survey, focus groups, and in-depth interviews, FVGC clarified its priorities and how the association can deliver more value to its members as a national convenor. At the 2026 Conference and Annual General Meeting, this process will shift from the validation and analysis phase to the planning and implementation phase. The Board of Directors will present proposed changes to members that will sharpen FVGC's focus, better align efforts across files, and strengthen the connection between member priorities and national influence. In parallel, a governance review was initiated to modernize Board decision-making and oversight, clarify roles and responsibilities, streamline internal processes, and reinforce accountability, so the organization can act more quickly and speak with one voice on the issues that matter most to growers.

The result of FVGC's advocacy over the past year is a clearer line of sight from federal decisions to the food Canadians rely on. By applying a food lens and sustaining constructive advocacy through a volatile year, while strengthening FVGC's foundations, FVGC helped position policy discussions to recognize the key role of growers and to support a secure supply of safe and healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables. That important work continues in the years ahead.





● President's Message

Growing fruit and vegetables in Canada has always been about people: the families who farm, the workers they employ, the communities they sustain, and the Canadians they feed. When we ask governments to build policy through a food lens, we are talking about safeguarding both the security of our food supply and the livelihoods behind it.

That food lens has guided FVGC's advocacy throughout the past year. Our message to the government has been clear: if a decision makes it harder for growers to produce, it puts our country's food security at risk. Supporting growers is fundamental if Canada is serious about food security.

The food lens has guided FVGC's advocacy throughout the past year.

Business risk management (BRM) has therefore been a major focus of our advocacy efforts. FVGC has called for a meaningful overhaul of federal BRM programs to better reflect today's realities on the farm and give growers the confidence to invest, adapt, and keep producing the fruit and vegetables Canadians need. BRM needs to work as a true safety net, not as a last resort that often arrives too late. FVGC released a report this past year that focuses on shifting from a risk management to a risk mitigation model. This is a proactive, rather than reactive, capital-investment-focused approach that supports resilient growers and food security for Canadians.

Growers depend on a stable, predictable labour force and on safe, effective crop protection tools. With a food safety lens guiding these policies, growers can meet high food safety requirements, mitigate the impact of extreme weather, and be competitive with producers in other countries.

This year has also focused on frank conversations within FVGC itself. FVGC launched an important organizational review process. Through surveys, interviews, and discussions, members have been helping us look honestly at what is working well, what is not, and what is fundamentally needed from a national advocacy organization. The review will examine FVGC's structure and decision-making processes. The Board will report back on what was learned and FVGC members will discuss the next steps at the 2026 Conference and Annual General Meeting. As President, I take this process seriously, as does the Board of Directors. After more than 100 years, we are taking a fresh look at our structure to be set up for success in the future.

I want to thank every member who has taken the time to share their concerns, ideas, and hopes for building a new FVGC. Your input is shaping the path ahead. Together, we can strengthen both our organization and Canada's fruit and vegetable sector to ensure that, when government assesses policy through a food lens, growers are at the table and food security remains front and centre.



Marcus Janzen, President
Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada



● Impact

Impact is demonstrated through results: decisions secured, processes improved, and government policies changed. The outcomes below show what FVGC's advocacy efforts delivered in 2025.

Food Security Commitment

FVGC played a key role shaping the Liberal Party's 2025 election platform, which included a landmark commitment to amend the mandates of both the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). These amendments would require the agencies to consider food security and the cost of food as part of their regulatory decision-making. It was one of the most ambitious agricultural platforms put forward in many years.

This commitment was reaffirmed in the 2025 Speech from the Throne, which explicitly acknowledged the vital role of agricultural producers and pledged to protect those who grow Canada's food.

Trusted Voice

Regular appearances before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI) strengthened FVGC's standing as a trusted voice in agriculture, enabling faster follow-up on grower priorities. This was reinforced by AGRI's December 2025 report on regulatory reform, which reflected many of FVGC's recommendations on CFIA and PMRA decision-making, reducing duplicative requirements for growers, and improving regulatory efficiency.

Crop Protection Modernization

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) paused its cost-recovery approach, and Budget 2025 pledged to end cyclical reviews in favour of a modern, risk-based approach.



Plastics Registry

After raising concerns about duplicative reporting and significant administrative burden across complex fruit and vegetable supply chains, FVGC's advocacy helped secure a pause on Phases 2 and 3 of the Federal Plastics Registry in late 2025. With Phase 1 still in effect, FVGC will remain engaged in renewed consultations to ensure the next steps are practical, aligned with existing stewardship programs, and do not add unnecessary red tape for growers and packers.

Federal Consumer Carbon Price

FVGC's advocacy helped drive the federal decision to remove the consumer carbon price levy, delivering meaningful cost relief for fruit and vegetable growers, especially for greenhouse operations. With the federal consumer carbon price now repealed, FVGC will continue advocating to ensure remaining carbon pricing policies do not undermine year-round Canadian fruit and vegetable production or delay efficiency upgrades for growers.

Labour Challenges

Across party lines, recognition of agriculture's reliance on temporary foreign workers grew. In response to industry advocacy, including FVGC's, the government launched a Red Tape Reduction Review and signaled intent to simplify labour program processes, though concrete reforms have yet to be implemented.

Competitive Rules

Sustained FVGC advocacy led to amendments to the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), modernizing fresh produce labelling and reducing unnecessary administrative burden for growers. FVGC provided detailed, technical input to the CFIA, grounded in grower experience, and consistently pressed for changes that maintained food safety outcomes while removing duplicative and outdated requirements.

Following the removal of U.S. tariffs on fresh produce, FVGC worked closely with federal Canadian officials to address the downstream impacts of retaliatory measures. FVGC argued that tariffs on CUSMA-compliant fresh produce inputs and goods undermined an integrated North American supply chain and increased costs for growers everywhere. Through ongoing engagement, FVGC sought the repeal of these measures to restore predictability and stability for the sector, and in August 2025 the Prime Minister announced that retaliatory tariffs on CUSMA-compliant goods would be lifted.

Greenhouse Growth

The Federal Liberal platform recognized the importance of greenhouses to year-round food production, providing initial investment support through the announced Productivity Super-Deduction, and opening the door to further targeted investment.

FVGC will continue advocating to ensure remaining carbon pricing policies do not undermine year-round Canadian fruit and vegetable production.



● Advocacy and Outreach

In 2025, the food lens became a central focus of FVGC's advocacy and outreach. FVGC brought the food lens directly to decision-makers and demonstrated, file by file, how federal policy that supports resilient fresh produce growers strengthens food security for Canadians. As the year progressed, sector partners echoed the approach, and FVGC saw the framing reflected more consistently in government communications. While 2025 was shaped by shifting geopolitical realities, significant trade challenges, weak Canadian economic indicators, and a federal election, FVGC's advocacy and outreach remained steady with actionable steps, consistent outreach to government, and an outcome-focused approach.



Trade Competitiveness

Following the U.S. presidential election, early 2025 brought a stop-start cycle of tariffs that created unpredictability across the fruit and vegetable sector. FVGC advocated to keep fresh produce moving to minimize disruption and aligned messaging with members and working groups. FVGC advanced concrete fixes with government officials, maintaining pressure until Canada was able to lift its counter-tariffs. FVGC continues to advocate for maintaining the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) as is, given it is one of the world's most successful trade pacts.

Business Risk Management and Mitigation

In April, FVGC released its Business Risk Management report, *Extraordinary Measures for Unprecedented Times*, which was widely publicized and shared with Parliamentarians, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and other senior government officials. While FVGC's advocacy on this important priority continues, the report catalyzed cross-government discussion and reinforced the case for shifting from strictly risk management to a combined risk management and mitigation approach, dovetailing with FVGC's food lens advocacy messaging.

Canadian Federal Election

FVGC ran an outcomes-focused advocacy campaign through the 2025 Canadian federal election period. This included sharing clear policy asks from the fresh produce sector with all major political parties, as well as tools that members could use at the local level. FVGC demonstrated a clear link between federal policy and food production. This connection strengthened the case for a food lens, which appeared across several party platforms, most clearly in the Liberal platform. The Speech from the Throne explicitly acknowledged the role of agricultural producers in Canadian food security. FVGC treated that recognition as a policy

framing success and moved quickly to translate it into specific actions with government departments.

Turning Priorities into Progress

Following the election, targeted advocacy on the new government's first budget kept momentum on core files. FVGC's Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG) advanced crop protection advocacy priorities through focused engagement: meetings in August held with key officials at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and the Pest Management Centre (PMC), and October follow-ups with MPs after FVGC's appearance before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI) to address regulatory burden. This work contributed to concrete outcomes, including Budget 2025's commitment to remove cyclical review at the PMRA. Across policy files, the emphasis remained focused on practical outcomes. When the need for the Temporary Foreign Worker Program was questioned by some political leaders, FVGC quickly advocated for maintaining the program and pressed for clear employer requirements and reasonable processing times.

Budget 2025

Ahead of the November Federal Budget, FVGC framed a food lens narrative for the departments of Finance Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), filed a pre-budget submission aligned to FVGC's five policy priorities, and held targeted meetings and follow-ups with parliamentarians and government officials to translate political commitments into fiscal action. Budget 2025 reflected parts of FVGC's narrative including tools to spur capital investment, streamline trade processes, and modernize PMRA oversight, but it stopped short of a targeted plan for fruit and vegetable growers. Following the release of Budget 2025, FVGC has been working to close gaps in BRM modernization, greenhouse growth, and PMC capacity, and to protect AAFC's departmental capability as year-over-year spending reductions are implemented, with advocacy focused on practical steps that secure a reliable supply of healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables.

Fall Harvest

The annual Fall Harvest advocacy event, co-hosted with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), served as a high-value engagement and networking opportunity in November. Fall Harvest connected FVGC members with Parliamentarians and government officials, grounded policy discussions in on-farm realities, and built relationships to support future policy advocacy efforts. Priorities raised at the event included the need for a competitive trade environment, a reduction in regulatory burdens and a stable workforce.

Moving Forward

In the year ahead, FVGC will continue to ensure its advocacy leads to tangible outcomes for growers across Canada. The food lens approach will guide every FVGC advocacy issue, with clear asks and timely follow-through to turn recent recognition into action. Our progress will be measured by outcomes that strengthen food security and keep healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables reaching Canadian tables.



● Advancing Grower Priorities

Many decisions that impact growers are shaped through advisory bodies, technical committees, and processes that set guidelines on standards, plant health, sustainability, and regulatory burden. FVGC's leadership, participation, and coordination in these forums ensure discussions and decisions are considered through a food lens, remain grounded in grower realities, and support a secure, reliable supply of healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Sector Engagement Tables

Horticulture Table

FVGC advanced grower priorities through continued participation in the Horticulture Table, an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)-led forum that brings together industry and government to address competitiveness, supply chain challenges, and regulatory issues affecting the horticulture sector. Discussions focused on labour, crop protection, sustainability, and research – issues that are central to FVGC's advocacy agenda. The Table reinforced the need for reliable access to temporary foreign workers, science-based crop protection decisions for minor use crops, and climate policies that support adaptation rather than add costs. The discussions supported FVGC's ongoing work to ensure federal policies reflect on-farm realities and strengthen Canada's capacity to produce fruit and vegetables.

Agile Regulations Table

FVGC participated in discussions at AAFC's Agile Regulations Table on reducing cumulative regulatory and consultative burden. FVGC highlighted that growers face the challenge of overlapping and sometimes conflicting requirements across food safety, labelling, environment, transportation, and labour,

with compliance costs driven by multiple, unaligned reporting systems. For example, similar records on inputs, water use, or sanitation practices may be required separately for food safety audits, environmental compliance, and inspection readiness, often in different formats and on different timelines.

FVGC emphasized practical improvements to make regulations more workable without diluting standards, including clearer and more consistent guidance for interpretation and inspections, better use of digital tools to reduce duplicate reporting, stronger alignment with like-minded trading partners, and better coordination of consultation timing and processes across departments. FVGC's advocacy was subsequently reflected in the December 2025 report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, which recommended using the Agile Regulations Table as the primary forum to identify and address regulatory irritants in the agriculture and agri-food sector.



Let's Grow Canada

As part of its work to strengthen the broader policy environment for fruit and vegetable growers, FVGC continued to engage actively with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), including support for the Let's Grow Canada initiative. A coalition of more than 30 national organizations released an open letter calling on the federal government to adopt a coordinated growth strategy for agriculture and agri-food, including Indigenous agriculture, that treats food security as a national priority.

The initiative outlined four key areas for action:

1. A focused plan to drive sustainable growth, investment and a stable labour supply;
2. A regulatory approach that aligns the mandates of key agencies with Canada's food security and competitiveness goals;
3. Reliable, modern transportation and trade infrastructure that can move perishable products efficiently; and
4. Updated business risk management tools that reflect current climate and market realities.

By working alongside partners across the value chain, FVGC helped ensure that the specific needs of the fruit and vegetable sector were reflected in this national call to action, reinforcing the message that supporting growers is essential to maintaining a secure, reliable supply of healthy food for Canadians.

International Federation of Produce Standards (IFPS)

In 2025, FVGC deepened its leadership role in global produce standards through active participation in the International Federation of Produce Standards (IFPS). FVGC's Senior Director of Operations was elected Chair of the IFPS Board of Directors, strengthening Canada's voice in international discussions on food safety, global standards, sustainability, and regulatory alignment. Sustainability remained a central theme in 2025, with IFPS emphasizing coordinated industry efforts to improve harmonization of sustainability reporting and auditing. In 2026, FVGC will continue to collaborate with the IFPS Sustainability Committee Chair to examine the applicability and portability of commodity-led sustainability frameworks for the broader

Canadian produce sector. Exploring new models, such as the Potato Sustainability Alliance and Syngenta's Cropwise platform, may provide solutions to reduce reporting burdens for producers.

Crop Profiles

Since 2011, in partnership with AAFC's Pest Management Centre (PMC), FVGC coordinated the review and update of the crop profiles. The national crop profiles developed by PMC are online documents that provide a snapshot of the pest status and current production and pest management practices available for a crop or crop group. The profiles not only guide priority setting for the Pesticide Risk Reduction and Minor Use Pesticides Teams at the Pest Management Centre but also serve as a resource 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 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 role 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 the crop profiles, visit FVGC's website, www.fvgc.ca and click on Crop Profiles under Sector Overview.

During 2025 FVGC collaborated with the PMC and industry to update 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.

North American Plant Protection Organization

The North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) is a forum for the public and private sectors in Canada, the United States and Mexico to collaborate in the regional protection of plant resources and the environment, while simultaneously facilitating safe trade.

As a member of the NAPPO Expert Group on *Tuta absoluta*, FVGC provided expertise alongside scientific, technical, and other industry representatives from the three NAPPO member countries. The Expert Group's project advanced how NAPPO member countries should prepare for the threat posed by *Tuta absoluta*, with the objective of preparing a response plan to facilitate trade should the pest establish in North America.

Pest Management Centre Minor Use Priority Setting Workshop

The 23rd Annual National Pest Management Priority Setting Workshop was held in Gatineau, Quebec in March 2025. This collaboration between AAFC's PMC, FVGC, and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) enables the sector to prioritize research that directly supports the delivery of new crop protection tools to growers. The event enables growers, researchers, regulators, and industry stakeholders from across North America to raise awareness on new crop pest challenges, while also working together to identify effective, appropriate solutions. The 2026 priority setting workshop will take place March 24 and 25 in Gatineau, Quebec.

Canadian Plant Health Council

The Canadian Plant Health Council (CPHC) is a national coordinating body that brings together industry, academia, and federal, provincial, and territorial governments to strengthen Canada's plant health system. Through its ongoing participation,



FVGC ensured that fruit and vegetable grower priorities were reflected in national plant health policy, planning, and coordination discussions.

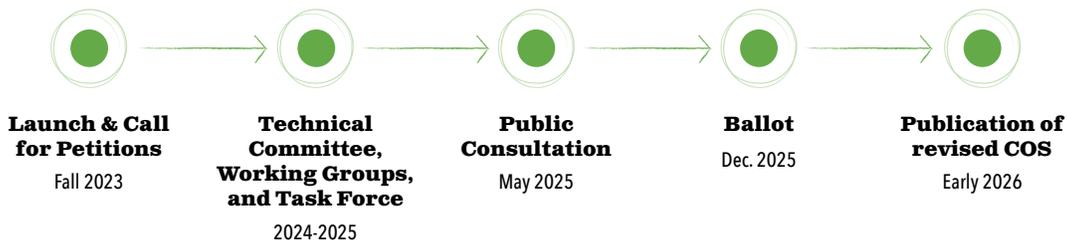
As a member of the CPHC Board of Directors, FVGC participated in the development and launch of CPHC's new five-year strategic plan, building on extensive partner engagement to set a clear, action-oriented direction for the organization's work through 2029. The original working groups – Biosecurity, Emergency Response, and Surveillance – were realigned around initiatives that better reflect the evolving risks and priorities of Canada's plant health system.

Member value is advanced through CPHC's continued integration of the Canadian Plant Health Information System (CPHIS) into its operations. Developed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CPHIS is a digital platform developed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that supports biosecurity risk analysis, environmental scanning, collaboration, and expertise mapping. It supports information sharing and collaboration across the plant health sector.

Organic Standards Review

The Canadian Organic Standards (COS) is the backbone of the production and trade of certified organic products and is incorporated into the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR). The review process and its amendments reflect an effort to move toward modernization and science-based decision-making.

Every five years the standards are reviewed, and organic stakeholders are asked to submit requests for modifications. The review process, initiated in Fall 2023, is led by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) and managed by the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC). FVGC is a voting member of the CGSB Organic Agriculture Technical Committee and has contributed to the Greenhouse Task Force and various opportunities to represent the interests of organic fruit and vegetable growers.



FVGC has raised objections throughout the process, noting that proposed changes have not addressed members' and growers' concerns about the lack of science-based decision-making and the need to consider production costs and trade impacts.



● Core Working Groups

Trade Competitiveness

Geo-political changes south of the border in early 2025 brought rapid changes in market access and pricing. As tariff pressures intensified through the spring, FVGC increased its advocacy for enhanced business risk management programs. Rapid changes in market access and pricing have exposed how poorly current programs protect growers from sudden revenue losses when conditions shift. This gap was a central message from FVGC

at the Canada-U.S. Economic Summit in Toronto in February 2025. FVGC emphasized that perishable crop producers need tools that match the speed of modern market shocks and that stronger programs reduce volatility and support a more stable domestic supply.

Business Risk Management Report

FVGC conducted a detailed review of the existing full Business Risk Management suite, including AgriStability, AgriInsurance, AgriInvest, AgriRecovery, and the Advance Payments Program, as well as provincial tools such as Ontario's Self-Directed Risk Management Program. Working Group members contributed grower experience, regional examples, and commodity-specific insights that helped identify where coverage does not reflect the realities of perishable crops and year-round production, and how slow or limited payments influence business decisions. This work culminated in FVGC's March 2025 report, *Extraordinary Measures for Unprecedented Times*, which set out a clear case for moving from traditional Business Risk Management to Business Risk Management and Mitigation (BRMM), with tools that help growers manage risk more effectively and proactively.

The report became the foundation of FVGC's BRM advocacy for the rest of the year. It provided a common reference point for the working group, FVGC staff, and members when engaging Parliamentarians, federal and provincial officials, and sector partners, and it helped draw national media attention to gaps in existing safety nets. FVGC has used the report's recommendations in meetings, submissions, and public commentary to show that modern, predictable business risk management and mitigation tools are essential to Canada's food security and the resilience of domestic fruit and vegetable production.

● Business Risk Management Working Group

This year clearly demonstrated how closely business risk management (BRM) programs are tied to food security. Supply disruptions, tariff uncertainty, and extreme weather all exposed gaps in federal and provincial tools. The current suite of insurance programs was not designed for the speed or scale of shocks that affect perishable crops, and those limits placed pressure on growers and the food system. FVGC advocated throughout the year to demonstrate how stronger and more predictable safety nets support a stable supply of fresh fruit and vegetables for Canadians.

Advocacy Momentum

The spring federal election marked a turning point for FVGC's advocacy. FVGC developed a policy asks document, *Cultivating Resiliency*, that included a call for modern, predictable BRM programs; a call that appeared in several party platforms. The Liberal platform committed to repairing agricultural safety nets, and this commitment was reinforced after the election. The Speech from the Throne also recognized the need to support agricultural producers.

As the year progressed, BRM programs became a central focus of FVGC's advocacy, reinforcing the message that food security depends on strong, proactive support tools. In turn, BRM received increased attention in federal policy discussions.

Unfortunately, Budget 2025 did not deliver substantive changes to BRM program design or timelines. Member feedback and grower consultations strengthened the case for continued, focused advocacy to ensure that modern, predictable safety nets for perishable crops are addressed in future budget plans and policy decisions.

Looking Ahead

FVGC will continue to press the federal government to act on the commitments it made during the election. Delivering tangible improvements to BRM program design and timelines will remain the priority.

The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), the current federal, provincial, and territorial agricultural policy framework, runs until March 31, 2028. As governments begin shaping the policy framework that will follow Sustainable CAP, FVGC will work with members to develop clear positions that reflect the realities of fruit and vegetable production, including the need for a more responsive Business Risk Management suite. This engagement will focus on modernizing support for

perishable crops and advancing mitigation-based tools that reduce losses before they occur.

FVGC will continue working with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to address coverage gaps, improve payment timelines, and align federal and provincial positions on program changes. Consistent improvements across jurisdictions will be essential for growers who depend on predictable supports.

“Food security depends on business risk tools that work for perishable crops. To stay competitive and withstand climate-driven losses, growers need modern, predictable programs - and stronger mitigation tools that reduce risk before it becomes a hit to domestic supply.”

**Catherine Lessard | Chair
Business Risk Management
Working Group**

● Crop Protection Advisory Group

This year witnessed a surge in advocacy for FVGC's Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG). 2025 saw several significant developments for the fruit and vegetable sector, including the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) announcing a pause to its proposed cost-recovery approach and stepping back from a proposal to expand unproven environmental assessment criteria. Throughout the year, FVGC emphasized the importance of regulatory decisions that consider downstream impacts on growers and the secure, reliable supply of healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables. This direction was reflected in the Liberal Party's election platform commitment to amend the PMRA's mandate to ensure food security is considered in regulatory decision-making. The sections below outline CPAG's key priorities in 2025 and the progress made across each area.

Minor Use Pesticide Program

At FVGC's 2025 Annual General Meeting, restoring the capacity of the Pest Management Centre's (PMC) Minor Use Pesticide Program (MUPP) was formally established as an advocacy priority for FVGC. FVGC included this as a priority in its 2025 election asks, and engaged on this issue with industry partners via the Horticulture Round Table Crop Protection Working Group, and with Parliamentarians and senior government officials. FVGC also welcomed Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) 2025

audit of the MUPP, which reiterated previous calls to action for increased resourcing. With Budget 2025 anticipating 15 per cent in spending reductions at AAFC over the next three years and the initial planning for the next agricultural policy framework, FVGC will continue to advocate for long-term sustainable funding to the PMC's programs.

Regulatory Reform

Through regular engagement with Parliamentarians and senior government officials, crop protection has been at the forefront of advocacy for red-tape reduction and reform. FVGC appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI), advocating for regulatory reform at the PMRA and the need for Canada to become a rapid adopter of new technologies, including drones. The widening technology gap between Canada and the USA, and its overall impact on sector competitiveness, was also a focal point of FVGC's federal advocacy.

FVGC welcomed AGRI's December 2025 report on regulatory reform, which echoed growers' priorities for a crop protection system that is timely, transparent, and grounded in science and real-world impacts. The report called for the PMRA to better reflect economic impacts, food security, and the cost of food, while maintaining strong health and safety outcomes. It emphasized the need to improve regulatory timelines, transparency, and accountability.

A Food Lens at PMRA

The need to apply a food lens to decision-making throughout government, has been a central theme of FVGC's advocacy and was recognized in the Liberal government's 2025 election platform. Despite initial enthusiasm and explicit mention in the platform of a food lens at the PMRA, the federal government has not yet committed to amending the PMRA's mandate. FVGC has maintained strong advocacy to bring about this important change and will build on the recommendations of AGRI's 2025 report on regulatory reform in 2026.



New Crop Protection Tools

FVGC has remained steadfast in calling upon the government to allocate additional resources to support the fruit and vegetable sector. These efforts have led to a modest pick-up in activity for Category A registrations and minor use label expansions that require a new use site category. Still, much remains to be done to address the ongoing needs of the fruit and vegetable sector. For instance, the Emergency Use Registration (EUR) program continues to experience unprecedented demand, and funding of programs related to the collection of real-world data remains unknown.

Re-evaluations and Special Reviews

Many re-evaluation and special review decisions have been delayed. Decisions that were published included modest changes to mitigation measures and labels.

Budget 2025's proposed removal of cyclical review requirements, along with the PMRA's early steps to modernize its business practices, have potential for real progress. FVGC will remain actively engaged to ensure these changes translate into clear, practical benefits for growers.

Looking Ahead

Ensuring timely access to a broader range of crop protection tools remains a priority for the sector, and FVGC's CPAG will continue advancing these priorities in partnership with government and industry partners.

With the PMRA's framework for drone use expected by early 2026, FVGC is well-positioned to shape the next phase of policy and regulatory change. Throughout 2026, FVGC will continue to press for decisions that account for downstream impacts on growers and food security when crop protection products are cancelled or voluntarily withdrawn from the marketplace.

“FVGC and CPAG delivered real progress in 2025 by moving a food lens at the PMRA onto the national agenda. Next, we must keep the momentum going and ensure timely access to the tools growers rely on to stay competitive.”

Chris Duyvelshoff | Chair
Crop Protection Advisory Group

Energy, Environment and Climate Change Working Group

In 2025, FVGC continued to apply a food lens to energy and environmental decisions that shape whether growers can continue to produce a secure and reliable supply of safe, healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables. While this file dovetailed with other advocacy priorities, two outcomes stood out this year, reflecting key concerns raised directly by growers and resulting in measurable movement from the government.

Federal Consumer Carbon Price

Prime Minister Carney announced the removal of the consumer carbon price, effective April 1, 2025. FVGC welcomed the decision as a major advocacy outcome. FVGC had called for the removal of the consumer carbon price since it was introduced, emphasizing that it increased costs on essential inputs without improving competitiveness or strengthening food security. The impact was particularly significant for greenhouse growers, for whom added energy costs can directly impact viability. FVGC also underscored that carbon pricing made it harder for some operations to invest in the very efficiency upgrades the government wanted to encourage. While this decision removed the consumer carbon price, FVGC will continue to monitor how carbon pricing applies to greenhouse operations under

the federal Output-Based Pricing System and will advocate to ensure fruit and vegetable growers, including greenhouse operators, are not subject to policies that undermine year-round production.

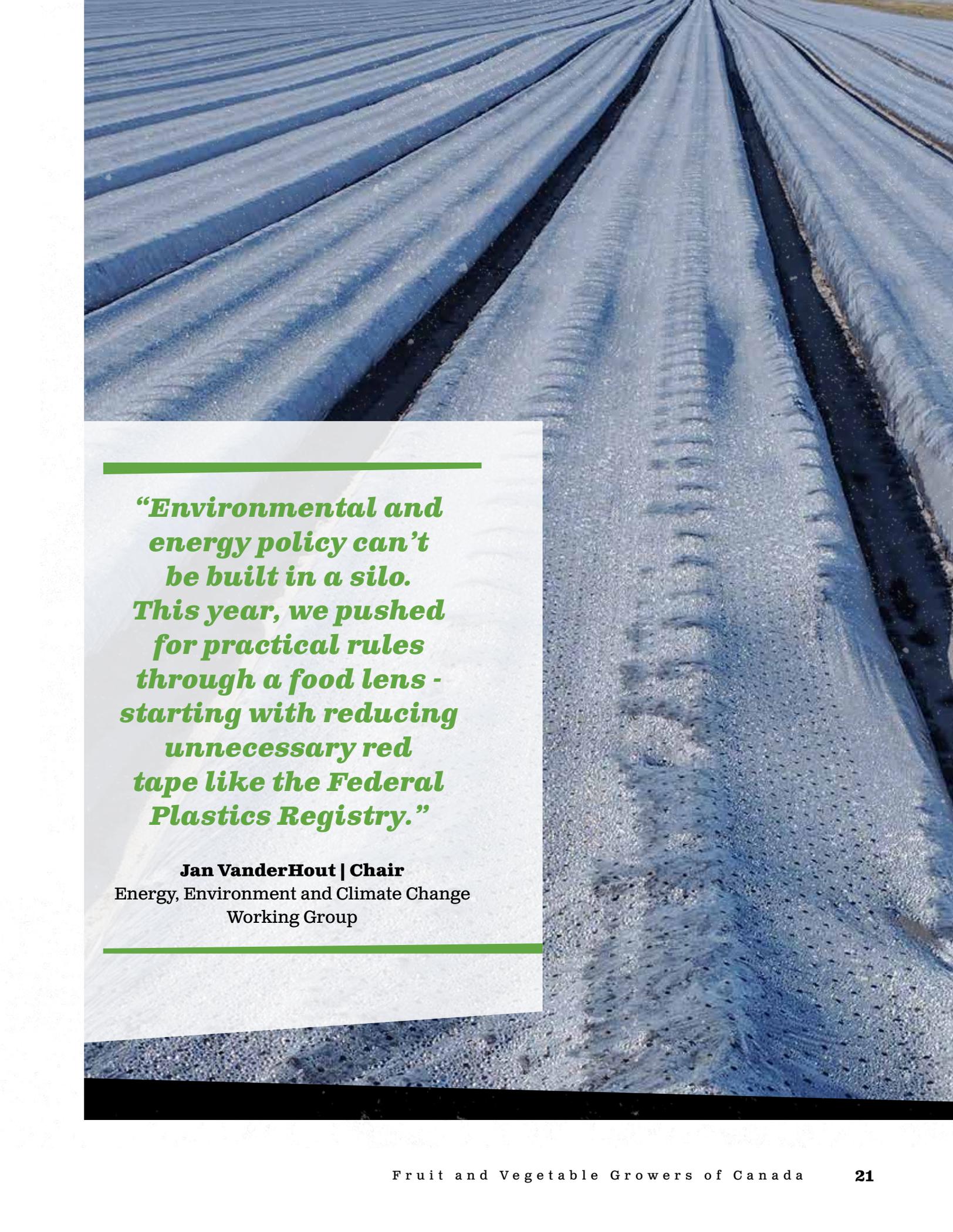
Federal Plastics Registry

FVGC also engaged heavily on the Federal Plastics Registry, beginning with Phase 2 consultations in July. FVGC assessed how proposed reporting requirements would apply across the fruit and vegetable sector and identified significant administrative and operational burdens for growers, packers, and others across the value chain. Members flagged that the Registry would duplicate existing reporting obligations and provincial stewardship programs, while requiring detailed product-level data across complex supply chains. FVGC reflected these concerns in formal submissions, including through the federal Red Tape Reduction Review, and called for the program to be paused. In late 2025, the federal government confirmed that Phases 2 and 3 would be paused pending further consultation, reflecting many of the concerns raised by FVGC. Phase 1 remains in effect, and an amended notice is expected to be published in Canada Gazette, Part I, in 2026.

Looking Ahead

FVGC will remain focused on the Plastics Registry as further consultation timelines and revised requirements take shape. The priority remains clear: any federal reporting framework must reflect the realities of food production and avoid duplicating existing systems in ways that add administrative burden without improving environmental outcomes.

Members are also recognizing more explicitly that environment, energy, and climate policy increasingly overlaps with each FVGC advocacy priority, including trade competitiveness, greenhouse investment, crop protection, business risk management, and labour. In the year ahead, FVGC will strengthen cross-working group collaboration so that environmental requirements and energy policy are assessed consistently through a food lens and addressed early, with coordinated input from members across the country.



“Environmental and energy policy can’t be built in a silo. This year, we pushed for practical rules through a food lens - starting with reducing unnecessary red tape like the Federal Plastics Registry.”

Jan VanderHout | Chair
Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Working Group

Industry Standards and Food Safety Working Group

Industry standards and food safety policy decisions shaped how growers operated, how products moved across borders, and how consumers trusted the food on Canadian shelves in 2025. Throughout the year, FVGC focused its advocacy to ensure standards, grading rules, and regulatory requirements were practical, science-based, and aligned with the realities of perishable crop production. This work helped protect the reliability of the food system during a year marked by trade pressure, regulatory change, and close public attention on food security.

Grades, Labelling and Standard Container Requirements

In October 2025, the Government of Canada approved amendments to the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations for fresh fruit and vegetables. The outcome reflects sustained advocacy by FVGC and its members and is a meaningful step toward modernizing Canada's framework for grades, labelling, and standard container requirements. The amendments align key rules with current market practice and reduce regulatory burden for growers and packers while maintaining safeguards that support fair and consistent trade.

A key change will move most fresh fruit and vegetable grade requirements out of regulation and into a standard maintained by the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC). This allows grades to be updated more quickly by experts, while the standards continue to carry legal authority. Apples, onions, and potatoes will remain under CFIA oversight for now and will be transferred once trade-related concerns have eased. Practical updates included adjustments to grade specifications and tolerances, pack and size options, container formats, and required label elements. Notably, grading is no longer mandatory for products destined for manufacturing, processing, or preserving, while standard container requirements continue to apply and existing protections remain in place.

“Modernizing grades and labelling was a meaningful step forward this year. FVGC helped secure changes that reflect real market practice, reduce unnecessary burden, and still protect fair, consistent trade.”

Jody Mott | Chair
Industry Standards and Food Safety
Working Group

FVGC worked closely with members throughout the consultation process to assess impacts and provide detailed, sector-informed input to CFIA. Following the approval of the amendments, FVGC continued collaborating with CFIA and sector partners to support clear guidance and smooth implementation, helping ensure that growers will receive consistent interpretation as tools and import references are updated.

Cross-Border Inspection Trends

Cross-border food safety and inspection trends also required sustained attention in 2025. Members reported an increase in cross-border inspections and inconsistent application of requirements at multiple ports of entry. FVGC raised these concerns with officials and emphasized that unpredictable inspections and delays pose serious risks for perishable products. FVGC reinforced the need for consistent, uniform science-based inspection practices that protect food safety without undermining trade flows or product integrity.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, FVGC will focus on the implementation and interpretation of CFIA grade and labelling changes to ensure outcomes remain positive for growers. FVGC will also continue to focus on food safety, inspection consistency, and sustainability audit pressures.

In 2026, FVGC will examine increasing sustainability audit and reporting pressures raised by members, including duplication and misalignment across retailers and jurisdictions. FVGC will use this input to support more harmonized approaches that recognize existing systems and reduce unnecessary burden for growers.

This work will include advocating for harmonized standards, predictable inspection practices, and recognition of existing systems. By continuing to link standards and food safety decisions to production realities, FVGC will help ensure that Canada's regulatory framework supports a resilient, competitive, and secure food system

Grades — What Changed

- **Incorporation by reference:** Most Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (FFV) grade requirements will transition to a DRC-maintained document incorporated by reference.
- **CFIA-retained commodities:** Apples, onions, and potatoes will remain under CFIA, for the time being.
- **Cucumbers:** Canada No. 1 greenhouse long seedless cucumbers minimum length requirement amended to 254 mm (10 inches).
- **Processing stream:** Grading is no longer mandatory for FFV going to manufacturing/processing/preserving. Standard container sizes still apply; any non-standard containers still require a Ministerial Exemption—so existing grower protections remain.
- **Other requirements:** Phytosanitary requirements and standard container size requirements still apply.

Labelling — What Changed

- **Minimum type height:** Mandatory label information must be at least 1.6 mm for consumer and non-consumer prepackaged fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV).
- **Size designations:** Now optional, unless the size designation forms part of the grade name
- **Net quantity:** Net quantity may be declared by weight, by volume, or by count—use the unit that best fits the product/package. (e.g., *berries by weight, cherry tomatoes by volume, whole apples by count.*)
- **Exemption:** Net quantity not required when a confining band is used, or when six or fewer units are sold in transparent packaging.
- **Clear protective wrap:** Produce in a clear protective wrapper or bag (e.g., wrapped English cucumbers) are considered “unpackaged,” and are exempt from mandatory labelling.

Labour

Access to skilled workers continued to shape fruit and vegetable growers' ability to plan, plant, and harvest throughout 2025. FVGC focused on protecting the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and underscored the connection between reliable labour and domestic food security.

New Foreign Labour Program for Agriculture and Fish Processing

In 2025, in collaboration with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), FVGC prepared submissions to federal consultations on proposed changes to agricultural labour programs. These submissions addressed proposed changes, including stream-specific work permits, transportation requirements and cost responsibilities, wages and deductions, and access to health care for temporary foreign workers. This work ensured that program design discussions were grounded in on-farm realities and reflected the need for stability, fairness, and predictability for both growers and workers. FVGC reinforced that labour policy decisions directly affect farm viability, and Canada's ability to produce food must be considered through a food lens. FVGC worked closely with members throughout the consultation process to assess impacts and provide detailed, sector-informed input to CFIA. Following the approval of the amendments, FVGC continued collaborating with CFIA and sector partners to support clear guidance and smooth implementation, helping ensure that growers will receive consistent interpretation as tools and import references are updated.

Advocacy

During the federal election campaign, FVGC included timely access to skilled and reliable labour as one of the five priorities needed to protect food security in its policy asks document, *Cultivating Resiliency*. FVGC used grower experiences and operational examples to illustrate that perishable crops cannot be planted, harvested, or shipped without an assured workforce.

When the TFWP became a national political flashpoint in September, with some federal politicians suggesting the program be terminated, FVGC responded publicly and directly: without reliable, fair, and efficient pathways to hire international workers, Canada's ability to grow, harvest, and supply fresh fruits and vegetables is put at risk. FVGC's advocacy maintained horticulture's distinct labour requirements at the forefront of the political debate. As a result, as the fall continued, even calls to scrap the broader TFWP acknowledged the need for a standalone agriculture labour stream.

A stable workforce was one of three policy priorities highlighted at FVGC's annual Fall Harvest, a joint advocacy event with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA). FVGC advocated for predictable processing timelines, consistent inspections, and program administration that reflects the time-sensitive realities of fruit and vegetable production.

In 2023, agriculture employed 79,734 temporary foreign workers out of 280,798 employees, about 28% of the workforce, yet an estimated 28,200 jobs went unfilled, underscoring the scale of the challenge.

Budget 2025

Following ongoing FVGC advocacy, the 2025 Federal Budget eliminated the Underused Housing Tax (UHT) as of 2025. As a result, no UHT would be payable, and no UHT returns would be required in 2025 or subsequent years. FVGC has advocated for the UHT's removal since it was introduced, as it created unnecessary red tape for growers providing accommodations for temporary foreign workers.

Looking Ahead

FVGC will continue to focus on maintaining the SAWP and the TFWP to ensure they remain predictable, transparent, and responsive to the needs of both workers and growers. FVGC will engage with the federal government to advocate that recent commitments on agricultural labour are reflected in practical program improvements to support domestic food production.

FVGC will seek clearer guidance on housing requirements, and advocate for reduced administrative burden that slows hiring processes. This will include continued engagement with officials to ensure that future rules are workable, consistent, and aligned with the realities of seasonal production. FVGC will also continue to highlight the strengths of the existing programs, including long-standing worker-employer relationships and strong compliance records across the sector.

FVGC is also examining whether additional analysis of seasonal worker timing and movement within the sector could support more informed discussions on program efficiency. FVGC will work with national partners, including WALI, F.A.R.M.S., and FERME, to deliver coordinated advocacy to Parliamentarians that labour security is essential to food security.

Moving forward, FVGC will continue to highlight that without reliable access to skilled and dedicated workers, Canada cannot maintain the reliable supply of fresh fruit and vegetables that consumers depend on. Strengthening labour programs is essential to supporting growers, sustaining rural communities, and protecting a secure food supply for Canadians.



“Labour security is food security. Without reliable access to skilled seasonal workers, growers cannot plant, harvest, or ship perishable crops, and Canada’s supply of fruit and vegetables is put at risk.”

Beth Connery | Chair
Labour Working Group

Trade and Marketing Working Group

In 2025, Canadian trade and market conditions were shaped by volatility rather than routine cycles. Shifting tariff threats, early signals around the 2026 Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review, and continued pressure in the domestic retail landscape created uncertainty for growers who rely on stable access to the United States and predictable market conditions at home. Against this backdrop, FVGC focused on protecting market access, reinforcing the importance of predictable border rules, and ensuring that trade and marketing decisions supported a secure, reliable supply of healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables.

Trade Competitiveness

The year began with uncertainty surrounding proposed U.S. tariffs on Canadian fresh produce. FVGC closely monitored developments, assessed potential impacts on growers, and provided rapid analysis to government officials. With more than 90 per cent of Canada’s fruit and vegetable exports destined for the United States, FVGC impressed upon the federal government that tariffs would disrupt highly integrated North American supply chains and place Canadian-grown produce exports, valued at \$4.4 billion annually, at risk. FVGC underscored that trade instability would reduce predictability for growers and increase costs across the supply chain, with implications for food affordability and sector resilience.

As tariff discussions intensified, FVGC advanced practical options to federal officials to limit immediate impacts on growers, including targeted tariff remission orders to help manage

sudden market disruptions. FVGC used public platforms and government meetings to explain that when border conditions shift overnight, growers often cannot redirect or store perishable products. This message was reinforced at the Canada–U.S. Economic Summit, where FVGC underlined that maintaining predictable market access is essential to food security and to the viability of fruit and vegetable production across the country.

CUSMA

FVGC engaged extensively in the federal CUSMA consultation process through written submissions and ongoing participation in cross-industry and agriculture-focused consultation calls and meetings. This work included regular direct engagement with officials from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Global Affairs Canada. FVGC coordinated input from members and the Trade and Marketing Working Group to ensure grower priorities were reflected consistently across discussions. This engagement formed part of FVGC’s broader, year-long preparation for the CUSMA review scheduled for 2026, reinforcing the need for predictable rules, efficient border processes, and reciprocity in standards and enforcement.

Grocery Code of Conduct

FVGC supported industry efforts to advance the forthcoming Grocery Code of Conduct and monitored its development, focusing on whether it would deliver meaningful outcomes for growers. FVGC, represented on the interim Board of Directors by Patrice Léger Bourgoïn of the Association des producteurs maraîchers du Québec (APMQ), advocated that grower perspectives should be directly reflected as implementation details are finalized. FVGC raised multiple outstanding issues, including the need for broad participation, a clear and accessible dispute resolution mechanism, and protections against the transfer of risk and costs back onto growers.

In October, FVGC testified at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct, highlighting a structural weakness in the dispute system. FVGC emphasized that a model based on individual suppliers filing individual complaints places an unfair burden

on growers, increases the risk of retaliation, and limits the ability of the Code office to address recurring issues efficiently. FVGC recommended a practical improvement: allowing credible producer associations to bring representative, systemic complaints on behalf of affected members, supported by explicit anti-retaliation commitments to ensure the Code can deliver fair and predictable market conditions for growers.

Looking Ahead

FVGC will continue to focus on stability, predictability, and competitiveness in the year ahead. FVGC will work with the government to ensure that the next phase of the CUSMA review protects Canada's access to the U.S. market and advances reciprocity in standards and enforcement. FVGC will also monitor tariff developments and provide timely analysis and feedback as new measures arise.

FVGC will continue to highlight how trade disruptions affect food security. This will include work to strengthen Canada's international competitiveness, support diversification where feasible, and address barriers that slow new market access opportunities. FVGC will seek continued improvements to border processes and will reinforce the need for policies that reflect the realities of a perishable, seasonal sector.

In the coming year, FVGC will advance the message that trade stability is foundational to food security. FVGC will collaborate with Parliamentarians, government officials, and industry

partners to ensure that policy decisions protect the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables and support the long-term strength of Canada's horticulture sector.

“Stable market access and predictable border rules are foundational to food security. FVGC advanced this work through a food lens, focusing on reliable and predictable trade with the United States and a secure supply of healthy fruit and vegetables.”

Jason Whitcher | Chair
Trade and Marketing Working Group



● Commodity Working Groups

● Apple Working Group

FVGC's Apple Working Group (AWG) played a key role addressing important challenges and opportunities in Canada's apple sector. Through ongoing collaboration and strategic actions, the AWG worked to ensure the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of apple growers nationwide.

The AWG met twice in 2025. The first meeting took place during the FVGC Annual Meeting in Quebec City, where discussions focused on the development of a promotion and research agency, crop and market reports, and emerging trends in the apple sector. The mid-summer meeting was held in July in Penticton, BC, hosted by the BC Fruit Growers' Association. The agenda included provincial association reports, updates on the promotion and research agency, crop and market condition reports, and sustainability reporting for the produce sector. The tour portion featured visits to the Sterile Insect Release Laboratory and AAFC's Summerland Research and Development Centre, with in-depth discussions on the apple breeding program and an apple waste reduction project. The 2026 mid-summer meeting will be held in New Brunswick.

AWG provincial managers met monthly to address priority issues in a timely manner. Key topics included trade and data concerns, replant programs, country-of-origin labeling (both in-store and on product labels), apple grade standards, standardized containers, and Ministerial Exemptions. Collectively, the provincial apple associations sponsored the annual Fall

“Apple growers are navigating fast-moving market, trade, and standards issues. The Apple Working Group is focused on practical solutions so growers have the certainty and tools they need to stay competitive and support resilient growers across Canada.”

Charles Stevens | Chair
Apple Working Group

Harvest advocacy event in Ottawa, attended by provincial apple representatives from Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

The AWG remains committed to driving solutions that strengthen the Canadian apple industry. By addressing critical issues and promoting innovation, the group continues to support the long-term sustainability and success of apple growers across the country.

● Berry Working Group

Members of FVGC's Berry Working Group met during the Annual General Meeting in Quebec City in March 2025, and, since that meeting, have continued to monitor key issues affecting berry growers across Canada. A pollination access subcommittee was struck, though staff transitions limited the work to a single meeting, and the file will require renewed coordination.



The Working Group also continued to track research needs related to spotted wing drosophila (SWD), including potential drone applications. Members monitored crop protection developments, including chemical reviews such as Bravo, but no new information was reported this year. Neopestalotiopsis remained an emerging concern, with the Chair working with researchers to initiate projects, including early work underway in British Columbia and discussions with Agriculture Canada's Market and Industry Services Branch on potential national coordination. As part of its ongoing commitment to advancing research priorities, the Berry Working Group continues to support the Canadian Berry Trial Network (CBTN).

“Berry growers are facing rising pressure from pests and emerging disease risks. Our focus is keeping research and coordination moving on files like SWD, Neopestalotiopsis, pollination access, and the Canadian Berry Trial Network so growers have workable tools to protect crops and supply.”

Lisa Craig | Chair
Berry Working Group

● Field Vegetable Working Group

FVGC's Field Vegetable Working Group continued to monitor market and competitiveness pressures affecting field vegetable growers across Canada following their meeting at the FVGC AGM in March 2025. Discussions throughout the year highlighted growing concerns related to interprovincial trade, including pricing volatility and product movement between provinces. The group discussed sustainability concerns linked to intensified interprovincial competition and instances of below-cost marketing. These issues unfolded alongside reported consumption declines of 20-25% in both Canada and the United States, suggesting shifting consumer habits that may be influencing demand and pricing across multiple vegetable categories. A stakeholder meeting was initiated to gather feedback from commodity groups and to assess whether similar trends are being observed elsewhere.

“Market volatility and competitiveness pressures are putting field vegetable growers in a tougher position, especially across interprovincial lines. We are working with partners to understand the trends and push for practical solutions that strengthen resilience and support fair competition”

Jody Mott | Chair
Field Vegetable Working Group





Canadian Potato Council

FVGC's Canadian Potato Council (CPC) represents potato growers across Canada's major producing provinces, providing a unified national voice on trade, plant health, crop protection, and research priorities. In 2025, CPC's work was guided by the four pillars of its Strategic Plan: Effective CPC Structure and Governance; Pre-Emptive Advocacy Specific to Trade; Research; and Pest Management.

Throughout the year, CPC advanced major national files within the four strategic pillars, including the grades and labelling standards, plant breeders' rights, potato wart, seed regulatory modernization, crop protection decisions, and cross-border trade stability, while maintaining a strong federal presence and strengthening Canada-U.S. relationships.

Strategic Priority 1 – Effective CPC Structure & Governance

2025 marked a significant year of modernization for CPC's governance, as new Terms of Reference were developed and approved by its membership.

CPC held three in-person meetings, enhanced member engagement through a new monthly newsletter (The Potato Post) and improved national visibility by attending provincial meetings. In addition, CPC continued to clarify roles and strengthen CPC-FVGC alignment, especially concerning FVGC's Strategic Review.

Strategic Priority 2 – Pre-emptive Advocacy Specific to Trade

CPC re-established direct engagement with US counterparts through the June 2025 bilateral Canada-US potato committee meeting in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Both countries agreed that collaboration is critical to protecting free and fair trade while avoiding disruptions from tariff disputes.

As the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) renegotiation approached, CPC made a submission to Global Affairs Canada emphasizing free, fair, and predictable trade, as well as the value CUSMA has brought to Canada and its trading partners. CPC will continue to engage on this file as the renegotiations progress in 2026.

Oversight of most fruit and vegetable grade standards shifted to the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC), while potatoes, apples, and onions remain under CFIA. CPC will continue to collaborate with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on fresh fruit and vegetable grade standards as these changes take effect. The Test Market Authorization for 2-inch round potatoes will be made permanent once CFIA and DRC finalize an agreement.

In 2025, CPC submitted a new AgriMarketing application, covering 2026-2028, to enable ongoing market support and diversification.

Strategic Priority 3 – Research

Research projects under AgriScience Cluster 4 are progressing well, with recent highlights including variety trials, regenerative agriculture work, and upcoming impact assessment studies; however, some reporting delays remain. CPC's Research Working Group will reconvene to consider its broader role in facilitating national research collaboration beyond the AgriScience Cluster.

Strategic Priority 4 – Pest Management

Alongside FVGC, CPC continues to advocate for predictable pesticide label changes, improved emergency use policies, and reduced regulatory red tape, especially around drone usage.

CPC monitored key re-evaluations (e.g. chlorothalonil, CIPC, clothianidin) and supported the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's proposed registration of clove oil as a sprout inhibitor.

CPC submitted real-world data regarding potato seed piece treatment and potato phenology, to provide context to the PMRA around crop protection in potatoes.

Potato Wart remains a key national file. CPC is a member of the CFIA's Potato Wart Information Sharing Working Group and has supported the rollout of the National Potato Wart Response Plan, emphasizing science-based, timely decision-making. CPC and members are working with the CFIA on a Bacterial Ring Rot focus group to support the development of clear national guidance and best management practices (BMPs) for prevention and control.

Advocacy and Outreach

CPC engaged Parliamentarians during several advocacy days on Parliament Hill. Key messages included the importance of free and fair trade with the US, access to crop protection tools, the importance of a food lens on regulatory bodies and decisions, and supporting amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Regulations to align with international standards, streamline variety registration, and incentivize innovation. Ongoing advocacy reinforced growers' concerns and positioned potatoes as a priority sector within the agriculture sector.



Looking Ahead

CPC remains committed to being a strong, unified national voice for Canadian potato growers. In the year ahead, CPC will continue working to secure federal funding that supports research and market development, engage regularly with AAFC, CFIA, FPA, DRC, and PMRA on core files, and support Canada-U.S. collaboration on free and fair trade as preparations begin for the 2026 CUSMA negotiations. CPC will also ensure growers' voices remain central in crop protection and regulatory discussions, while continuing to advocate for the interests of Canadian potato growers.

With these efforts, CPC is positioning Canadian potatoes for a stronger, more resilient future.

“Over the past year, I’ve really felt the Canadian potato sector coming closer together under the CPC umbrella. There’s a renewed sense of unity, collaboration, and optimism as we look ahead - working more closely with FVGC, strengthening trade opportunities, and moving forward as one team for the greater good of the industry.”

Bill Zylmans | Chair
Canadian Potato Council

Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group

FVGC's Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group (GVWG) represents Canada's greenhouse fruit and vegetable growers. The GVWG works with stakeholders and government partners to inform policy and regulatory decisions, support sector profitability and sustainability, maintain and enhance market access, and strengthen a competitive sector with a growth agenda.

In 2025, the GVWG advanced a focused advocacy agenda to strengthen competitiveness amid shifting trade dynamics, political uncertainty, and rising operational pressures. Early in the year, the GVWG prioritized outreach to ensure greenhouse priorities, particularly trade, investment, energy affordability, and food security, were understood by federal decision-makers and reflected in policy discussions.

As U.S. trade policy shifted and uncertainty increased, FVGC and greenhouse members responded quickly while preparing for the federal election. Working with the GVWG and FVGC's Business Risk Management (BRM) Working Group, FVGC advanced recommendations for improved BRM programming through the report *Extraordinary Measures for Unprecedented Times: Supporting Canadian Horticulture Now and in the Future*. This advocacy contributed to a clear commitment in the Liberal Party's election platform to invest in greenhouses, hydroponics, and controlled-environment agriculture as part of a broader strategy to protect Canada's food security.



Greenhouse Investment Roadmap

In Spring 2025, the GVWG launched the Greenhouse Investment Roadmap to engage Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and other federal departments ahead of the federal budget. The Roadmap outlined three national priorities:

- Strengthen North American trade competitiveness
- Prioritize Canada's food security
- Support climate-smart agriculture

The Canadian Greenhouse Growth Strategy (2025 to 2028) is a core component of the Roadmap and provides a forward-looking action plan to strengthen competitiveness, drive innovation, and expand climate-smart food production across Canada.

Trade Competitiveness

As an export-oriented sector, greenhouse vegetable growers faced immediate economic vulnerability under U.S. tariffs on CUSMA-compliant Canadian exports, totaling more than \$2.2 million per day in Ontario alone. Perishability heightened these risks, as disruption quickly translated into domestic oversupply, price deterioration, quality losses, and reduced competitiveness.

Key achievements and milestones

- Removal of Canadian retaliatory tariffs on fresh, chilled tomatoes (August 22, 2025)
- Recognition of submissions through federal pre-budget consultations (FINA, Finance Canada)
- Fast-tracked amendments to Safe Food for Canadians Regulations on labelling and grades
- Active collaboration under the FVGC–University of Windsor Memorandum of Understanding
- National Greenhouse Minor Use Coordination supporting registrations, re-evaluation, and integrated pest management solutions
- Refinement of the Protected Agriculture Stewardship program to streamline requirements
- Advancement of NAPPO's *Tuta absoluta* expert group discussion document and response planning
- Participation in the Canadian Organic Standards review through the CGSB standards committee and greenhouse task force

GVWG trade advocacy focused on maintaining predictable, rules-based access to the U.S. market and preventing further trade irritants. Key recommendations to Canadian officials included protecting tariff-free trade for food under CUSMA and reinforcing rules-based trade to reduce future risks, advancing regulatory alignment and reducing non-tariff barriers through a strengthened Canada–U.S. Regulatory Cooperation Council mandate that prioritizes plant health, including harmonized pesticide registration, food safety requirements, and pest risk assessments, and ensuring risk management programming reflects the unique vulnerabilities and pressures facing greenhouse growers.

Looking Ahead

The Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group will continue working with government and industry partners to ensure the next agricultural policy framework reflects the priorities of greenhouse fruit and vegetable growers. With the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) set to expire in 2028, the Working Group will advocate for a stronger, more responsive framework that supports the sector's competitiveness and growth, including enhanced Business Risk Management programs. The GVWG will also advance priorities tied to the 2026 CUSMA review and deepen engagement with elected officials in support of the Greenhouse Investment Roadmap.

In addition, the GVWG will advance a renaming and branding process to strengthen its national advocacy presence to better reflect the innovation, growth, and competitiveness of Canada's modern greenhouse fruit and vegetable sector.

“We are working together to build the conditions for Canadian greenhouse growers to compete and grow. Through focused advocacy and strong collaboration, we are unlocking investment and jobs, reducing barriers, and strengthening Canada’s food security.”

George Gilvesy | Chair
Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group

Research

Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4

2025 marked the third year of the five-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.



Key Highlights

Activity 4 - Reducing Losses from Apple Pests with Alternative Control Strategies

- The Sterile Insect Release (SIR) research team is identifying the ratio of sterile to wild flies needed to reduce stings from apple maggots, with a recommendation on commercial potential to be made soon.
- Landscape factors have been identified, and trials are underway to identify modifications needed to reduce ambrosia and bark beetle populations.
- Researchers discovered that the species of ambrosia and bark beetles causing damage in British Columbia is different than the Ontario species.

Activity 8 - Reduce Risk Strategies for Cabbage Maggot Control

- Results last year showed effective control initially, but timely sprays are important as pest pressure can overwhelm chemical control.
- Researchers have found that regardless of what insecticide is used, the duration of control is about three to four weeks.

Activity 12 - Regenerative and Sustainable Agriculture for Climate Change Adaptation and Carbon Sequestration

- Trials are showing that multispecies mixes not only increase soil health but also ensure a tighter cycling of nutrients, reducing greenhouse gas losses to the atmosphere.
- A longer crop rotation with a perennial multispecies mix was found to improve soil health indicators.
- Disease risk was reduced with potato early dying (PED) severity, and the abundance of *Verticillium dahliae* was found to be lower in more diversified crop rotations.

Activity 13 - Positioning Canada's Potato Industry for Improved Sustainable Production

- Newer higher nitrogen-efficient potato varieties are outyielding standard varieties. More yield is obtained with less of an increase in nitrogen additions than with the standard varieties.
- The nitrification inhibitor, eNtrench, has been found to reduce N_2O emissions.
- The newer high nitrogen efficient variety, Musica, is drastically outyielding checks, but it does this with more nitrogen added. Researchers are working to confirm this year if it is more nitrogen efficient.

Knowledge Transfer

FVGC is proud to partner with Burr Forest Group 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.

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

- Reduce Risk Strategies for Cabbage Maggot Control (Chilliwack, BC) – *Renee Prasad*
- Regenerative and Sustainable Agriculture for Climate Change Adaptation and Carbon Sequestration (Fredericton, NB) – *Claudia Goyer*

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. 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. You can also visit www.fvgc.ca/cluster-4/.



Impact Assessment

FVGC has contracted Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland) to lead the Impact Assessment (IA) activity. Vineland will be working jointly with FVGC to develop impact studies for each of the commodity groups represented by the cluster and demonstrate FVGC role in supporting these activities.

- Year 1 (2024-2025): Field Vegetables and Berries
- Year 2 (2025-2026): Potato and Greenhouse
- Year 3 (2027-2028): Apples and FVGC/overall Hort Clusters

To achieve this, Vineland will collaborate with commodity-specific working groups at FVGC to develop performance measures that demonstrate the impact of the research, write impact studies that highlight challenges, roadblocks, successes, and key learnings from the projects, and showcase the overall impact on the strategic priorities (defined/re-defined) of relevant commodity groups.

Looking Forward

As FVGC enters year four of the five-year Cluster 4 program, the organization looks forward to participating in AAFC's consultations for the next policy framework and the future of the AgriScience Program.

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/.

FVGC Staff

FVGC maintains a small Ottawa-based team of professionals that delivers the organization's advocacy agenda, supports the Board of Directors, and maintains day-to-day operations. From policy research and government relations to public affairs and sector-specific coordination, FVGC staff help members advocate with a united voice, so that Canadian fruit and vegetable growers can continue to supply a secure, reliable source of healthy food.

- **Bev Appleby**
Executive Assistant and Corporate Secretary
- **Massimo Bergamini**
Executive Director (Retired, November 2025)
- **Donna Boileau** *Project Accountant*
- **Caleigh Hallink-Irwin**
General Manager, Canadian Potato Council
- **Amy Hutchinson** *Senior Director of Operations*
- **Erik Nielsen**
Director of Policy, Research, and Public Affairs
- **Julie Paillat**
National Coordinator, Greenhouse Vegetable Industry
- **Ashley Peyrard** *Manager, Public Affairs*
- **Patti Proulx** *Financial Controller*
- **Angela Reid** *Manager, Policy and Government Relations*
- **Christina Turi**
Manager, Plant Health and Crop Protection
(Departed FVGC in December 2025)
- **Stephanie Turpin**
Project Accountant (On leave until February 2026)
- **Linda Vinokuroff** *Coordinator, Crop Profiles*

At a Glance

- Twelve Ottawa-based staff, serving members from coast to coast
- Working for members through policy, advocacy, government relations, research and outreach
- Serving members in both official languages

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- in Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada
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● Moving Forward

As 2026 begins, FVGC's priorities continue to be shaped by the realities growers face every day. Policy choices shape whether farms can plan, invest, hire, and continue producing the safe, healthy Canadian-grown fruit and vegetables Canadians and export customers rely on. Building policy through a food lens is not a slogan – it is a practical test. If a policy or regulatory decision makes it harder to grow, harvest, or move a product, it puts national food security and farm viability at risk.

In the year ahead, as the next critical phase of the CUSMA review approaches, trade stability will be the top priority. FVGC will continue to engage with the federal government to protect fruit and vegetable growers' access to the U.S. market and advance fresh produce trade. FVGC will continue to press for reciprocity in standards and enforcement, and for efficient border processes that reflect the realities of a perishable, seasonal sector.

Ensuring timely access to crop protection tools remains essential. FVGC will continue to advocate for predictable, science-based pathways that support high Canadian standards and ensure growers remain competitive. FVGC will also influence the next phase of regulatory change, including the PMRA's expected framework for agricultural drone use, with a focus on field-ready implementation.

FVGC will remain focused on working with the government to build a safety net system that is predictable, accessible, and fast enough to matter, alongside mitigation-based tools that reduce losses before they occur.

Labour stability is equally central. FVGC will continue to defend and strengthen SAWP and TFWP, and advocate for practical improvements that support seasonal production, including clearer housing guidance, reduced administrative burden, and reasonable work-permit processing timelines.

Most importantly, next year will be a turning point for FVGC itself. The strategic and governance reviews launched in 2025 will move into implementation in 2026, and member input and contribution will drive that work. At the 2026 Conference and Annual General Meeting, the Board of Directors will bring forward options to sharpen organizational focus, strengthen governance processes, and reinforce FVGC's ability to speak with one voice. The association is strongest when it reflects growers' collective priorities, and FVGC's impact depends on member participation.





Through a Food Lens
Annual Report 2025



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