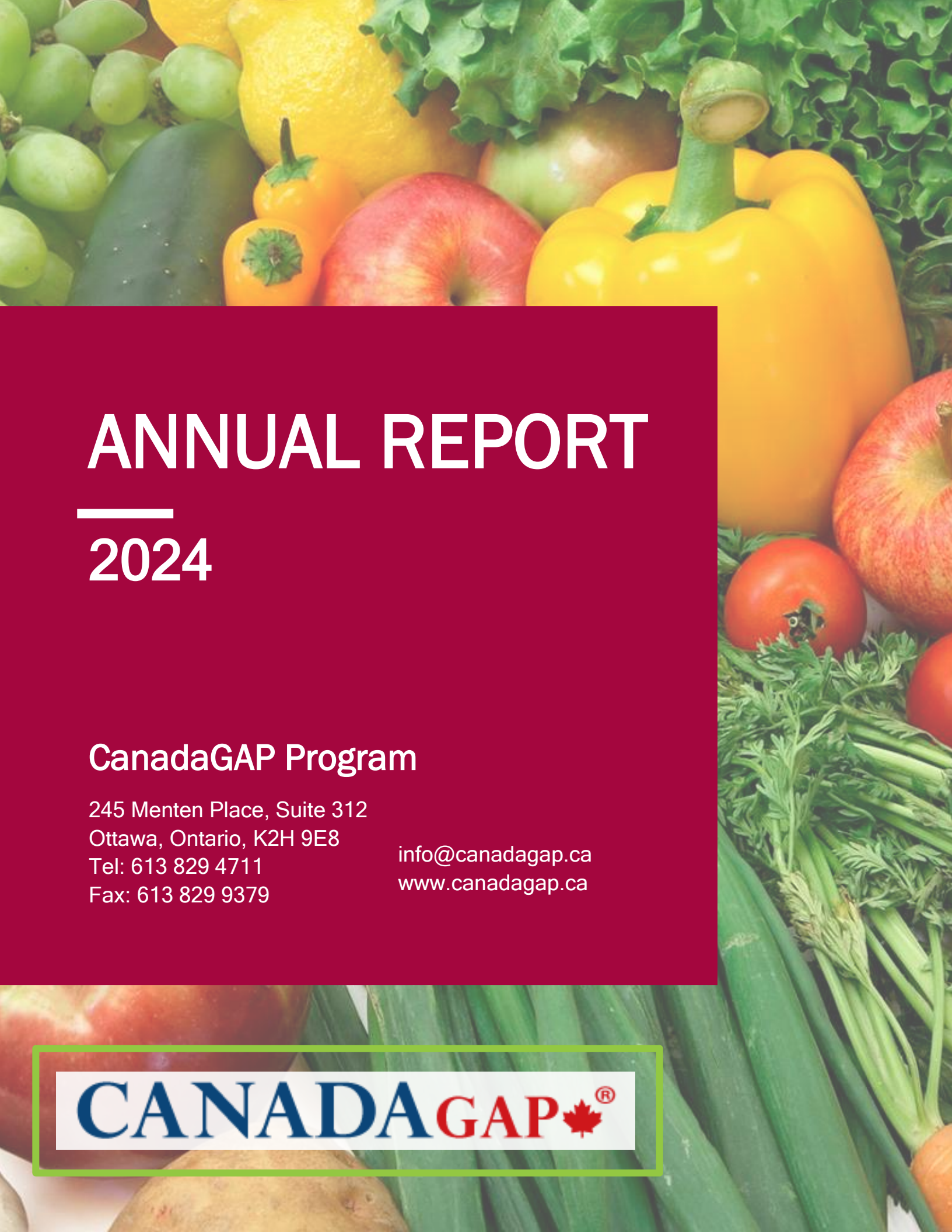




ANNUAL REPORT

2024

CanadaGAP Program

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CANADAGAP 

Annual Report 2024

Program Overview

CanadaGAP[®] is a food safety program for companies that produce, pack, repack, store, wholesale and broker fruits and vegetables. The program has completed fifteen full years of operation as a certification program, and has close to 3,000 participating companies from across the Canadian and U.S. fresh produce industry.

CanadaGAP is designed to help implement effective food safety procedures within fresh produce operations. Audit and certification services for the program are delivered by third party, accredited Certification Bodies. Since 2010, the program has been benchmarked and officially recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) for certification options B, C and D. It is also fully recognized by the Canadian Government and has been benchmarked to the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* to ensure 100% alignment with Canadian regulatory requirements for food safety.

Two manuals, one specific to greenhouses, the second for other fruit and vegetable operations, have been developed by the horticultural industry and reviewed for technical soundness by Canadian government officials. The manuals are designed for companies implementing Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and maintaining an effective food safety program. The manuals are based on a rigorous hazard analysis applying the seven principles of the internationally-recognized HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) approach. Program materials are available for free on the CanadaGAP website at: www.canadagap.ca

Nearly three thousand produce suppliers are currently CanadaGAP-certified. The program enjoys strong support from Canada's retail, processing and food service sectors, as well as international recognition across the range of export markets in the U.S., Latin America, Europe and Asia. Working together, a dedicated team of staff members, Board of Directors, stakeholders and program participants contribute to strengthening food safety implementation across the horticultural sector.



Highlights from 2024

2024 was marked by several key achievements:

- **Marking 15 Years:** CanadaGAP celebrated its 15th full year of operations, with a presence at the CPMA Convention and Trade Show in Vancouver early in the year.
- **Ongoing Recognition:** CanadaGAP successfully completed its 5-year Maintenance of Recognition Review by CFIA under the Canadian Government Food Safety Recognition Program.
- **Strategic Planning:** The CanAgPlus Board undertook its first strategic planning exercise. The five-year strategic plan for CanadaGAP will be published in 2025.
- **Database Upgrades:** Internally, CanadaGAP developed two new databases to maintain the currency of its management system: one will manage Auditor information; the other will manage Operations data.



- **Pollinator Health Addendum:** The CanadaGAP Addendum for Pollinator Health was benchmarked by the IPM Institute of North America and recognized by Walmart. Certification to the new addendum will be offered starting April 1, 2025 to farms needing to meet customer requirements for IPM. Auditor training on the new addendum begins in November 2024. The CanAgPlus AGM, held December 4, 2024, featured an overview of the new Pollinator Health addendum for interested members.

Certification Body Changes:

- **New Certification Body:** CanadaGAP welcomed another new certification body, MSVS (Management Systems Verification Services) at the end of 2023. The new certification body began program delivery in 2024. With the addition of MSVS, CanadaGAP is pleased to offer program participants a choice of five different audit service providers.
- **Stabilization of Resources:** Like most businesses, CanadaGAP certification bodies were affected by many staffing changes during and following the pandemic. Fortunately, 2024 was marked by increasing stability in human resources at the certification body level.
- **Auditor Pool:** CanadaGAP also saw an unprecedented turnover of auditors in recent years. Numerous experienced auditors retired, leading to significant efforts to identify and recruit new candidates. This focus on qualification of additional CanadaGAP auditors has been largely successful. While a number of new auditors joined the roster in 2024, overall the program is experiencing a welcome stabilization of the auditor pool.



Auditor Recognition:

- **Sheri Nielson Award:** Established in 2022, the annual Sheri Nielson Auditor Recognition Award celebrates CanadaGAP auditors who have shown extraordinary heart, dedication and commitment to their role.
- **2024 Award Recipients:** This year's award recipients were announced in conjunction with the CanAgPlus AGM in December 2024. Warm congratulations are extended to:
 - Amélie Lachapelle (Québec)
 - Danni Kneeland (rest of Canada)



Amélie Lachapelle



Danni Kneeland

GFSI Benchmarking

CanadaGAP has maintained international recognition by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) since 2010. GFSI published new benchmarking requirements (Version 2024) at the end of the year. Re-benchmarking of the program to the new GFSI requirements will begin in 2025.

There continue to be challenges with the GFSI requirement for unannounced audits on-farm, one of the least popular changes introduced to the program in 2021. CanadaGAP and other stakeholders participated actively in the GFSI public stakeholder consultation through 2024, in an effort to highlight these and other challenges with the benchmarking requirements for primary production.

Program Participant Achievements

Despite increasingly stringent food safety requirements and many other challenges facing the industry in recent years, the average audit score for CanadaGAP program participants continues to improve. For the one-year period ending August 31, 2024 **the average audit score for CanadaGAP program participants was 96.44%** – an outstanding achievement by certified companies. Based on preliminary audit results (before corrective actions were implemented), the overall average of 96.44% was measured across participants of all CanadaGAP certification options. As in 2023, even higher audit scores were seen among Option C and E program participants, with those scores averaging above 97% – another very significant accomplishment.

Average audit scores in the past year were higher among Potato and Small Fruit operations, compared to average scores in 2023. Audit scores were slightly lower across other commodity groups covered by the CanadaGAP program, including Tree and Vine Fruit, Greenhouse, and Field Vegetables. Repacking and Wholesaling (Option D) audit scores were slightly above 2023 levels, averaging 94.31% on the CanadaGAP audit checklist before corrective action implementation. Those results demonstrate a highly commendable effort on the part of fresh produce suppliers and a clear commitment to achieving and maintaining a robust food safety program within their businesses.



Report from the Board

Annual General Meeting

CanAgPlus, the not-for-profit corporation that owns and operates the CanadaGAP program, holds its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for members each year in late November or early December. The 2024 AGM was held virtually on December 4, 2024. Further details are posted on the CanadaGAP website at www.canadagap.ca/events/annual-general-meeting/.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets face-to-face at least once a year and holds regular virtual meetings. The Board met at the CanadaGAP office in September to continue work on implementation of its five-year strategic plan. The plan will be published on the CanadaGAP website in 2025.

The Board is comprised of eight volunteer directors who serve two-year rotating terms, with four directors elected annually. The Board welcomed four returning directors at the 2024 AGM.

<u>Elected during 2024 AGM</u>	<u>Elected during 2023 AGM</u>
Alvin Keenan, Rollo Bay Holdings	Denis Desjardins, Desjardins Seed Farm Ltd.
Jody Mott, Holland Marsh Growers' Association	Ian McDonell, Snow Road Solutions
Susan Ranck, Ranck & Associates, LLC	Beth Pattillo, Noggins Corner Farm II Ltd.
Scott Wright, University of Saskatchewan	Julian Sarraino, Fresh Taste Produce

The full list of directors and their biographies are posted at:

<http://www.canadagap.ca/history/governance/>.

Scott Wright served as Board Chair for 2024. Scott is with the University of Saskatchewan and had previously served as Vice-chair of the Board in 2022 and 2023. Beth Pattillo, a tree fruit producer, packer and repacker at Noggins Corner Farm II Ltd. in Nova Scotia, served as Vice-Chair for 2024. CanAgPlus officers will be elected by the new Board and announced in January 2025.

Management Review

The annual management review of the program was held with senior management and representatives on September 12, 2024. During the management review, directors and staff consider the following elements of program performance and opportunities for improvement:

- requests for modifications to the program
- performance of CanadaGAP Certification Bodies
- complaints and their handling
- internal audit results
- auditor training undertaken and its outcomes
- resource needs
- policies related to conflict of interest and confidentiality, among others.

Recommendations arising from the management review are presented to the full Board of Directors for further discussion and action.



CanadaGAP Technical Advisory Committee

CanadaGAP receives many requests each year from program users to revise the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals, generic HACCP models, and audit checklist. The CanadaGAP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprises a group of qualified experts who are instrumental to providing recommendations on proposed changes to the technical standard. Requests are first considered and researched by staff, and information is presented to the committee for discussion and expert input.

Nominations to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) are accepted annually, and appointments are made by the Board for one- or two-year terms. While the Board makes efforts to appoint members who

are representative of the various crop groupings within CanadaGAP’s scope, given the committee’s role the primary criteria for members is food safety knowledge, education and technical expertise. Consideration is also given to representatives with expertise in various types of production, storage, packing, repacking and wholesaling, as well as other relevant expertise (e.g., industry experience). The size of the committee is set at a maximum of nine members, along with a chair drawn from the Board of Directors, to maximize the efficiency and productivity of meetings. Board member Beth Pattillo served her fourth term as TAC Chair in 2024, and was reappointed to the role for 2025. All members generously volunteer their time to the work of the committee.

The Technical Advisory Committee meets every summer to consider the requests for program modifications. The 2024 meeting was held remotely in June, with a pre-meeting call taking place in May to review all agenda items and ask any questions in advance of the full day meeting.

Candidates interested in serving on the TAC are encouraged to apply through the public nominations process each fall. The list of current TAC members is published on the CanadaGAP website and includes:

Member	Affiliated Organisation
Luciana Las Casas Celere	Exeter Produce & Storage
Sara Cook	Provision Analytics
Adrien Corbiere	Whole Leaf Ltd.
Nirmal Dhaliwal	Dhaliwal Family Farm
Jeff Hall	Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA)
Kylin Han	Sensei Ag
Lily Indajati	Westmoreland Sales Group
Stéphanie Levasseur	Au Cœur de la pomme
Quinton Woods	Gwillimdale Farms
Board Liaison:	
Committee Chair	Beth Pattillo

CanadaGAP wishes to remind all stakeholders that the program has an open-door policy to receive feedback, suggestions for improvement, and requests for modifications to program requirements from all parties, at any time. Contact information for the CanadaGAP office is available at www.canadagap.ca

Marketing, Education and Outreach

CanadaGAP is involved in a significant number of education and outreach activities. 2024 was another busy year with engagement by CanadaGAP representatives both in-person and remotely in a number of important ongoing initiatives. The table on the following pages provides a summary of these activities.

Month	Event / Topic	Location
January	CanadaGAP Webinar for Certification Bodies on 2024 program updates	Microsoft Teams

Month	Event / Topic	Location
January	International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) Food Safety Committee call	Online
January, February, April, May, June, September, October	Meetings of the GFSI US-Canada Local Group and GFSI update calls	Online/in-person
January to December	Monthly calls of GFSI-recognized Certification Programme Owners	Microsoft Teams
February	Auditor Refresher Q&A Session with CanadaGAP Staff	Online
February	Certification Body Performance Review	Cambridge, ON
February, April, July, September, December	Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition Board meetings	Zoom calls
February to May	Certification Body Auditor Calibration sessions	Online/in-person
March	Understanding the CanadaGAP Program course (Food Safety Solutions)	Online
March	Understanding the CanadaGAP Program course (Gestion Qualiterra)	Online
March	Meetings with ANSI-ANAB	Online
March	CanadaGAP Presentation for Potatoes New Brunswick District Meeting	Online
March, April, October	International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Food Group meetings	Online
April	North American Produce Food Safety Working Group meeting	Online
April	Global Food Safety Conference	Singapore
April	CPMA Annual Convention and Trade Show (CanadaGAP Booth)	Vancouver, BC
April	CPMA Sustainability Summit	Vancouver, BC
April	CPMA Food Safety Committee meeting	Conference call
April to October	CanadaGAP Witness Audits	Across Canada
May	CPMA Workshop on Pathogens	Online
May	Certification Body Internal Audit	Quebec, QC

Month	Event / Topic	Location
May	Understanding the CanadaGAP Program course (Food Safety Solutions)	Online
May	CanadaGAP Webinar for Accreditation Bodies on 2024 program updates	Webinar
May	CanadaGAP Technical Advisory Committee pre-meeting call	Zoom
May	ANAB Webinar on Managing Electronic Records	Online
June	University of Guelph Food Safety Seminar (GFSS) on Foodborne viruses and their global impact	Webinar
June	Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition AGM	Zoom
June	Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) Update	Webinar
June	Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative webinar	Webinar
June	CanadaGAP Technical Advisory Committee meeting	Zoom
June and July	Annual Performance Review Meetings with Certification Bodies	Microsoft Teams
July	CanadaGAP Technical Meeting with Certification Bodies	Microsoft Teams
August	FDA Webinar on Basic Mushroom Growing, Harvesting, Holding, and Packing Activities Under the Produce Safety Rule	Webinar
August-September	Liaison calls with BC Ministry of Agriculture and BC Fruit Growers Association	Online
September	Annual meeting with ANAB-ANSI	Zoom
September	CanadaGAP Management Review	CanadaGAP Office
September	CanAgPlus Board Nominations Committee calls	Online
September	CanAgPlus Board meeting and planning session	CanadaGAP Office
September	CPMA Food Safety Committee Meeting	Online
September	Coalition Board Meeting with CFIA	Ottawa, ON
September	CFIA Call Maintenance of Recognition	Online

Month	Event / Topic	Location
September	EPA Training on Integrated Pest Management (IPM)	Webinar
September	Ontario Food Protection Association AGM and Panelist	Toronto, ON
September-October	Stakeholder calls and final submission to GFSI public consultations on Benchmarking Requirements and Auditor Competency Framework	Online
October	CanAgPlus Board AGM Resolutions Committee	Online
October	International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) Food Safety Committee meeting	Online
October	Annual meeting with Standards Council of Canada	Online
October	CPMA RPC Task Force call	Online
October	University of Guelph Food Safety Seminar: GFSS 21st Annual Symposium	Webinar
November	ANAB Update on ISO 17065 revisions	Webinar
November	CanAgPlus Board Audit Committee	Zoom
November	ANAB Meeting for Scheme Owners	Online
December	Coalition Member Update with CFIA	Ottawa, ON
December	Sheri Nielson Auditor Recognition Award Ceremony	Online
December	CanAgPlus Annual General Meeting and Board meeting	Zoom
December	CFIA Update on Food Safety Recognition Program	Online
December	Understanding the CanadaGAP Program course (Food Safety Solutions)	Online
December	Coalition Planning Group for Food Safety Education Day in Canada	Online
December	CanadaGAP Webinar for Certification Bodies on 2025 program updates	Microsoft Teams

Program Participant Surveys

CanadaGAP is committed to surveying program participants every three years to obtain their views and feedback on various topics related to program delivery. The most recent CanadaGAP program participant

survey was completed in November 2022; hence, a new survey of program participants will occur in 2025. Results from the 2025 survey will be shared when the analysis is complete. CanadaGAP wishes to thank all respondents to our surveys and welcomes stakeholder feedback on the program at any time.

CanadaGAP Website

The CanadaGAP website www.canadagap.ca contains guidance to improve understanding of food safety requirements and comprehensive information about how the program works. It is updated on an ongoing basis. Those interested in receiving the latest news from CanadaGAP can subscribe directly through the website by entering their information in the 'Sign up' section at the bottom of every page.

The website also makes freely available a range of handouts, posters, training tools, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and other communication materials to support operator and employee training. The most frequently accessed sections of the website include:

- Manuals downloads page
- List of CanadaGAP certified companies
- Presentations
- Hand washing signs
- FAQs



Other Stakeholder Communications

CanadaGAP communicates regularly with program participants and other stakeholders through regular communiques. CanadaGAP issues approximately 30 public communiques each year. Any interested parties can sign up on the CanadaGAP website to receive communications. Past communiques can be accessed at: www.canadagap.ca/publications/communiques/.

Auditor training notes are also distributed to affected stakeholders, including auditors, Certification Body representatives and program participants. These materials are equally available on the CanadaGAP website by visiting the 'Auditors' page.

For a listing of media coverage of CanadaGAP, consult the website at: <http://www.canadagap.ca/media/articles/>

Understanding the CanadaGAP Program course

In 2014, CanadaGAP developed a two-day orientation course entitled 'Understanding the CanadaGAP Program'. The two-day course is designed to educate attendees on the main elements of the CanadaGAP program and provide some fresh produce food safety background to assist with their understanding of program requirements. The course materials are available from CanadaGAP upon request, in both English and French.

While CanadaGAP does not provide training directly, the 'Understanding the CanadaGAP Program' course is offered by various approved training providers. Training providers are permitted to deliver the course provided that they use a facilitator approved by CanadaGAP to offer the training. The facilitator must be

familiar with the CanadaGAP Program and manual requirements (e.g., must have successfully passed the CanadaGAP Auditor Training Course).

A number of courses are offered by training partners each year in English and French. Four public courses were offered virtually in 2024. Courses are publicly advertised through the CanadaGAP website ‘Calendar of Events’ or by signing up to receive CanadaGAP communications directly at: www.canadagap.ca/publications/communiques/.

Further information is available at: <https://www.canadagap.ca/program/training-resources/> or by contacting the CanadaGAP office.

Program Participation

Nearly 3,000 producers are currently participating in CanadaGAP. Although program participation has still not fully recovered from the impact of the pandemic, the level of new enrolments has been maintained over the last year. However, there has been an overall decline in participation since 2023, due to the departure of many BC tree fruit growers following the dissolution of the BC Tree Fruit Cooperative, the organization that maintained certification for its approximately 200 member growers under a group management system. Since August 2024, individual BC tree fruit growers have been returning to the program under certification options designed for independent operations; however, as of the reporting period, a full return to 2023 participation levels had not yet been achieved. As a result, CanadaGAP ended the year with a 7% net decline in participation levels.



The table below shows year-over-year changes in the number of producers participating in the program since its inception. The numbers below reflect net growth or decline, which factors in normal attrition resulting from changes in farming operations, retirements from the industry, voluntary terminations of certification, etc.

Year-over-Year Changes in CanadaGAP Participation

Year (Sept – Aug)	Number of producers	Increase (Decrease)	Annual Rate of Growth (Decline)
2008-2009	537	537	100%
2009-2010	781	244	45%
2010-2011	1879	1098	141%
2011-2012	2204	325	17%
2012-2013	2440	236	11%



2013-2014	2526	86	4%
2014-2015	2927	401	16%
2015-2016	3042	115	4%
2016-2017	3127	85	3%
2017-2018	3156	29	1%
2018-2019	3185	29	1%
2019-2020	3233	48	2%
2020-2021	2930	(303)	-9%
2021-2022	3097	167	6%
2022-2023	2978	(119)	-4%
2023-2024	2772	(206)	-7%

Participation Trends

The following participation trends are noteworthy for 2024:

Regional Trends

- As indicated, participation levels in 2024 declined most steeply in British Columbia (tree fruit industry), with smaller drops in participation in the Prairie and Atlantic provinces.
- 2024 growth in the program was most marked in Alberta and the United States, with small gains also seen in Ontario and Quebec.
- British Columbia continues to maintain the highest enrolment levels overall, at 28% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies (down from 35% in 2023), followed by Ontario (24% of program participants) and Quebec (19% of program participants). The ratios of Ontario and Quebec participants both increased by 2% from 2023.

Certification Options

- **Declining participation in Group Certification:** Group Certification (Option B) continued to see a decline in 2024. At the time of reporting, CanadaGAP currently has no producers participating in group certification. In addition to 2024 setbacks in the BC tree fruit industry, many growers who were part of previously CanadaGAP-certified groups left the program in recent years to seek group certification under other programs that are not GFSI-recognized.

- Growing participation in non-GFSI recognized certification (Options A1, A2, E and F):** Consistent with increases seen over the last three years, 2024 saw another bump in the number of companies enrolled in the four-year audit cycle (Option A1 or A2). The proportion of Option A1 and A2 growers is now 30% of all program participants, up 2 percentage points since last year, and up 8% from 2020. Uptake of Options E and F remains steady, with 3% of program participants enrolled in these non-GFSI recognized options. The industry continues to gain understanding and acceptance of Options E and F, which were introduced in 2022. The chart below provides an overview comparison of GFSI-recognized certification options C and D, with the two new certification options (E and F):

Options C and D (GFSI-recognized)		Options E and F (Not GFSI-recognized)	
<u>SAME:</u>		- Food Safety standard - Audit criteria - Audit rigour - Audit frequency (annual) - Autofail items	
Unannounced Audits: No advance notice from the auditor		Unannounced Audits: 2 to 5 business days’ notice from the auditor	
Passing score: 100% All non-conformities corrected prior to certification		Passing score: 95% Some wiggle room for minor non-conformities or items requiring a significant capital investment	

Further information about CanadaGAP certification options is available on the website at: www.canadagap.ca/certification/certification-options/

- Growth in Option C participation levels:** The proportion of program participants enrolled in Option C has increased from 57% of participating companies in 2023 to 62% in 2024. Some of this growth is due to the transition of individual BC tree fruit growers to Option C from their previous group certification (Option B).
- Growth in Repacking and Wholesaling certification:** Option D has increased another percentage point over last year, now representing 5% of program participants. Overall participation in CanadaGAP from the repacking and wholesaling sector continues a slow but steady growth trajectory, representing 8% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies.



Commodity and Sector Trends

- Declines were seen in participation by fruit producers (both in the Tree and Vine Fruit and Small Fruit crop groupings) in 2024, with corresponding proportional increases in participation by the field vegetable, greenhouse vegetable, and potato sectors.
- For the purposes of analyzing participation trends, enrolment figures are broken down by five crop groupings:
 - Tree and Vine Fruit
 - Field Vegetables
 - Potatoes
 - Small Fruit
 - Greenhouse

Total participation in CanadaGAP is 100%. The proportion of that total occupied by each crop grouping is presented below and within the attached program statistics, where further details as well as a provincial breakdown are included. Data is current as of August 31, 2024.



Proportion of CanadaGAP Participants represented by crop grouping:

Based on # of producers	Tree and Vine Fruit	Field Vegetables	Potatoes	Small Fruit	Greenhouse	Repacking, wholesale & brokerage	Total CanadaGAP Participation
Percentage of CanadaGAP participants in 2024	16%	31%	20%	17%	8%	8%	100%
For comparison:							
2023	21%	29%	19%	17%	7%	7%	100%
2022	24%	27%	18%	19%	6%	6%	100%
2021	21%	29%	19%	19%	6%	5%	100%
2020	24%	30%	17%	18%	6%	5%	100%
2019	24%	29%	18%	19%	7%	3%	100%
2018	24%	27%	18%	20%	8%	3%	100%
2017	24%	25%	19%	21%	8%	3%	100%
2016	30%	24%	18%	20%	8%	Not reported	100%
2015	33%	23%	18%	18%	8%	Not reported	100%

Audit Trends

- *Number of CanadaGAP Audits (for Options A1, A2, C, D, E and F, and Group Management System audits)*

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
No. of audits reported	1940	1885	1921	2019	1748	1650	1589	1538

Reporting period from September 1 to August 31 based on certificates issued.

- *Average Audit Score by Crop Grouping (from September 1 to August 31 based on certificates issued)*

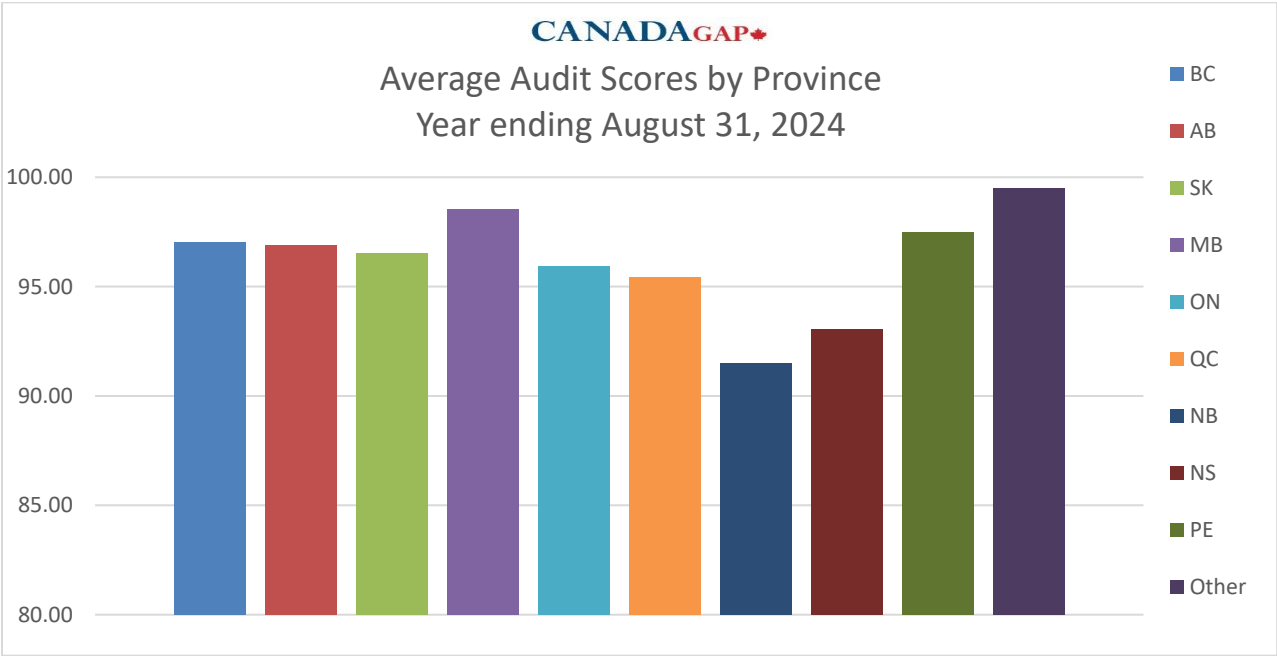
<i>Crop Grouping</i>	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Potato	96.39	95.91	95.81	94.55	94.59	94.46	94.98
Greenhouse	96.89	97.43	97.24	96.91	95.66	96.63	96.36
Tree & Vine Fruit	95.44	95.97	94.61	93.54	93.76	92.84	93.75
Leafy Vegetable & Cruciferae	96.38	96.51	95.57	93.95	93.78	93.82	94.61
Small Fruit	97.34	96.89	95.77	94.45	94.25	92.92	93.29
Combined Vegetable	96.82	97.14	96.18	94.87	94.38	94.50	94.61
Overall Average	96.44	96.38	95.70	94.61	94.28	93.98	94.34

Based on preliminary audit results (before corrective actions were implemented), the overall average of **96.44%** was measured across participants of all CanadaGAP certification options. This result for 2024 represents **the highest ever average audit score for CanadaGAP program participants**. Average audit scores have remained largely consistent across commodity groups, with slight improvements reported for the Potato and Small Fruit sectors.

Big congratulations are extended to CanadaGAP-certified companies, for continuing to maintain and achieve high levels of food safety within their operations!



The graph below illustrates average audit scores by province:



Random Audit Programme

CanadaGAP offers certification on a four-year cycle to companies participating in Option A1 and A2. These certification options are not GFSI-recognized as they do not fully meet GFSI benchmarking requirements.

To become certified, companies undergo a scheduled audit in the first year of the four-year cycle. To be recertified in the subsequent three years, they may be randomly chosen for an audit in any or all of the three years. If they are not randomly selected, they must complete a self-declaration and self-assessment and submit it to the Certification Body to demonstrate their ongoing adherence to program requirements.

The table below compares certification audit scores to random audit scores since 2012. The interesting trend observed since 2017 continues, with operations randomly selected for an audit achieving on average *higher* scores than Option A1/A2 operations undergoing their regularly scheduled audit. Data pertaining to 2024 random audits will be available in 2025.

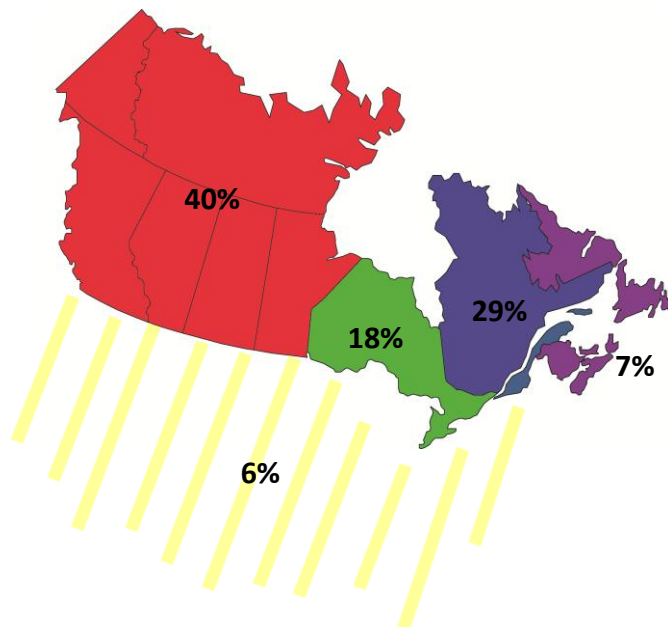
CanadaGAP Random Audit Results for Option A1 and A2

Year	Average Audit Score during Regular 4-year Audit	Average Audit Score for Random Audits
2012	87.56	90.65
2013	91.85	91.55
2014	90.14	91.92
2015	91.03	93.50

2016	91.16	88.05
2017	91.06	93.64
2018	91.82	92.92
2019	90.35	92.69
2020	90.82	94.40
2021	91.82	93.26
2022	92.30	94.52
2023	93.50	94.70

CanadaGAP Auditors

- The auditor pool consists of 68 active and qualified CanadaGAP auditors currently working for a Certification Body (CB). This represents 12% of those who have taken the CanadaGAP auditor training course and 20% of those who have passed the course.
- The map below shows auditors by region:



	# of auditors	Percentage
West	27	40%
Ontario	12	18%
Quebec	20	29%
Atlantic	5	7%
U.S./LatAm	4	6%
Total	68	100%

Data current as of December 17, 2024

With respect to the CanadaGAP auditor pool, 2024 represented a year of stabilization, with a net loss of only one auditor. Encouragingly, the West experienced a notable increase in the number of CanadaGAP auditors. The number of auditors grew by 4 in British Columbia and Alberta, while Quebec and Ontario saw corresponding declines, with the overall pool dropping by 3 auditors in Ontario and 2 in Quebec. Despite

the relatively stable numbers, certification bodies and CanadaGAP continue to actively seek and recruit new candidates to meet the growing number of CanadaGAP audits each year.

Training of New CanadaGAP Auditors

In the last three years, double the number of auditor training courses have been offered to make training available to new recruits for the CanadaGAP auditor pool.

Since 2020, CanadaGAP auditor training courses have been offered remotely due to the pandemic. Virtual courses have reached not only more potential auditor candidates, but also consultants, food safety managers and other stakeholders who attend the courses for education purposes.

Although the course is primarily designed to train potential auditors, the practical knowledge provided in the auditor training course is as beneficial to a food safety manager who is implementing the program at their operation as it is for an auditor who is being trained to verify compliance.

Summary of CanadaGAP Auditor Training sessions:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Total since 2008
Number of people who have taken auditor training course	46	47	50	59	37	25	19	584
Number of people who passed the course to date*	14	24	28	31	13	17	11	335
Percentage of people who passed the course to date*	54%	71%	68%	70%	52%	77%	65%	67%
Number of auditor training sessions	7	7	8	5	5	6	3	87

**Results are cumulative as of December 17, 2024. All seven courses from 2024 have exam rewrites still ongoing (participants have one year from the date they took the training to complete all exams attempts). Data is not yet complete. These numbers are therefore not considered final or representative. Those who attended the course for educational purposes only were not included when calculating the number or the percentage of people who passed the course.*

CanadaGAP Repacking and Wholesaling Auditor Training

The scope of the CanadaGAP program has included certification for repacking and wholesaling operations since 2014. Training of new and current auditors for the additional scope is ongoing. The Repacking and Wholesaling training unit is embedded within the regular CanadaGAP Auditor Training course for new

auditor candidates. At their discretion, Certification Bodies may also opt to offer training in the additional scope to their existing pool of auditors who may not yet hold this qualification. Currently, 47 CanadaGAP auditors (69% of active auditors) are qualified to perform repacking and wholesaling audits. This represents a significant increase – over 10 new auditors trained – since 2023.

CanadaGAP Auditor Refresher Training and Testing

First introduced in 2014, auditor refresher training and assessment have been administered by CanadaGAP to ensure ongoing auditor comprehension of program requirements, including new requirements that have been recently introduced. It is mandatory for currently qualified auditors to complete refresher assessments, and for all internal auditors who work for Groups (under certification Option B).

The most recent refresher assessment was completed in 2020. Generally speaking, auditor refresher assessment is completed every two to three years. Due to resource pressures in 2023, CanadaGAP management made the decision to delay refresher testing for a year. Instead, to ensure auditors continue to maintain their knowledge of current requirements, four mandatory auditor refresher ‘Question and Answer’ webinar sessions (two English and two French sessions) were held in December 2023 for active CanadaGAP auditors.

Refresher testing of active CanadaGAP auditors is occurring in the winter of 2024-2025. An exam based on CanadaGAP material is being administered, and auditors must successfully pass the exam in order to reconfirm the validity of their record of course completion.

Train-the-Auditor Trainer – New Auditor Trainers and Refresher Testing

Trainers delivering the CanadaGAP Auditor Training Course must first be qualified and approved by CanadaGAP. Trainers must have passed their original CanadaGAP Auditor Training course with at least 90%, then must complete an additional Train-the-Auditor-Trainer course.

In April 2024, a private one-on-one course was offered by Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) to one candidate, who subsequently qualified as an approved trainer.

Auditor trainers must also undergo periodic refresher testing by CanadaGAP. Starting in 2022, trainers’ credentials are valid for a five-year period, after which approved trainers must maintain their competency by successfully completing refresher testing. In 2022, eight qualified trainers who were up for renewal successfully completed their refresher exams. All current auditor trainers will undergo refresher testing again in 2027.



Certification Bodies

The following five Certification Bodies were licensed to offer CanadaGAP audits and certification in 2024:

- Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)
- Control Union
- MSVS (Management Systems Verification Services Canada Inc.)
- NSF Canada Ag
- TSLC (TSL Certification Services International Canada Ltd.)



Similar to 2023, 2024 stood out as an exceptionally busy year for CanadaGAP. Staff continued to work closely to provide direction and oversight to the service providers involved in the delivery of CanadaGAP audit and certification services.

- **MSVS** launched its first full year of providing CanadaGAP services in 2024. MSVS is a new Canadian owned and operated certification body with headquarters in Abbotsford, British Columbia.
- **TSLC** completed its second year of operation in 2024 after being licensed by CanadaGAP in 2023. **Gestion Qualiterra inc.** joined forces with TSLC in the summer of 2023 as a subcontractor, and has continued through 2024 to offer audit services in Quebec for TSLC.
- Longstanding partners of the CanadaGAP program, **BNQ** and **NSF** continued to provide audit and certification services to clients. BNQ serves primarily Quebec and New Brunswick. NSF is the largest certification body for CanadaGAP and offers services across the country.
- **Control Union**, a relatively new certification body for CanadaGAP, continued to attract new clients through 2024.
- **dicentra**, a certification body headquartered in Toronto, left the program in 2024 after only one year of offering services for CanadaGAP. Over the course of the 2024 season, dicentra clients were successfully transitioned to one of the other five CanadaGAP certification bodies.

CanadaGAP auditors are employed or contracted directly by the Certification Body, and some auditors work for more than one CB. Information about each Certification Body is available on the CanadaGAP website at: <https://www.canadagap.ca/certification/certification-bodies/>

Integrity Programme to Oversee Certification Body and Auditor Performance

CanadaGAP's integrity surveillance programme for Certification Bodies consists of:

- Mandatory annual performance review meeting with each CB
- Service standards set out in licensing agreements, monitored and reported on annually
- Certification Body office audits encompassing all service providers over a 5-year cycle (Gestion Qualiterra: 2021; PJRFSI: 2022; NSF: 2023; BNQ: 2024; TSLC: planned for 2025)
- Audit report spot checks (at least one per auditor each year)
- CanadaGAP participation on certification body calls where auditors receive updates and are calibrated to program requirements and scoring. CanadaGAP staff have an opportunity in this way to monitor auditor performance, gaps in auditor knowledge, etc. and support certification bodies and auditors as needed.
- Witness audits – our goal is to see every auditor at least once over the 5-year audit cycle
- Auditor Refresher Testing is repeated on a regular basis to ensure ongoing auditor comprehension of CanadaGAP program requirements
- Complaints monitoring and ongoing follow-up.



What's Ahead for 2025?

- GFSI has published a new version of its Benchmarking Requirements (Version 2024). CanadaGAP will begin the process of re-benchmarking the program to GFSI requirements in 2025.
- A Correction Notice for the CanadaGAP Food Safety manuals (Version 10.0) is being published in early 2025. No new version will be released.
- CanadaGAP is publishing an updated Audit Checklist for 2025.
- The CanadaGAP Addendum for Pollinator Health launches on April 1, 2025. The addendum is available on the CanadaGAP website at: <https://www.canadagap.ca/audit-checklist/pollinator-health/>
- Auditor refresher testing is being administered by CanadaGAP this winter (2024-2025).

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- Program Participant Survey will be sent in Fall 2025.
 - Publication of the CanAgPlus 5-Year Strategic Plan will occur in 2025.

Thank you to CanadaGAP Staff and Valued Partners

CanadaGAP extends sincere thanks and appreciation to our partners at the Certification Bodies – BNQ, Control Union, MSVS, NSF Canada Ag and TSLC – and to each hard-working CanadaGAP auditor.

Management and directors wish to express heartfelt thanks to the small, dedicated team of highly competent staff members who are instrumental to the smooth and efficient functioning of the CanadaGAP program.

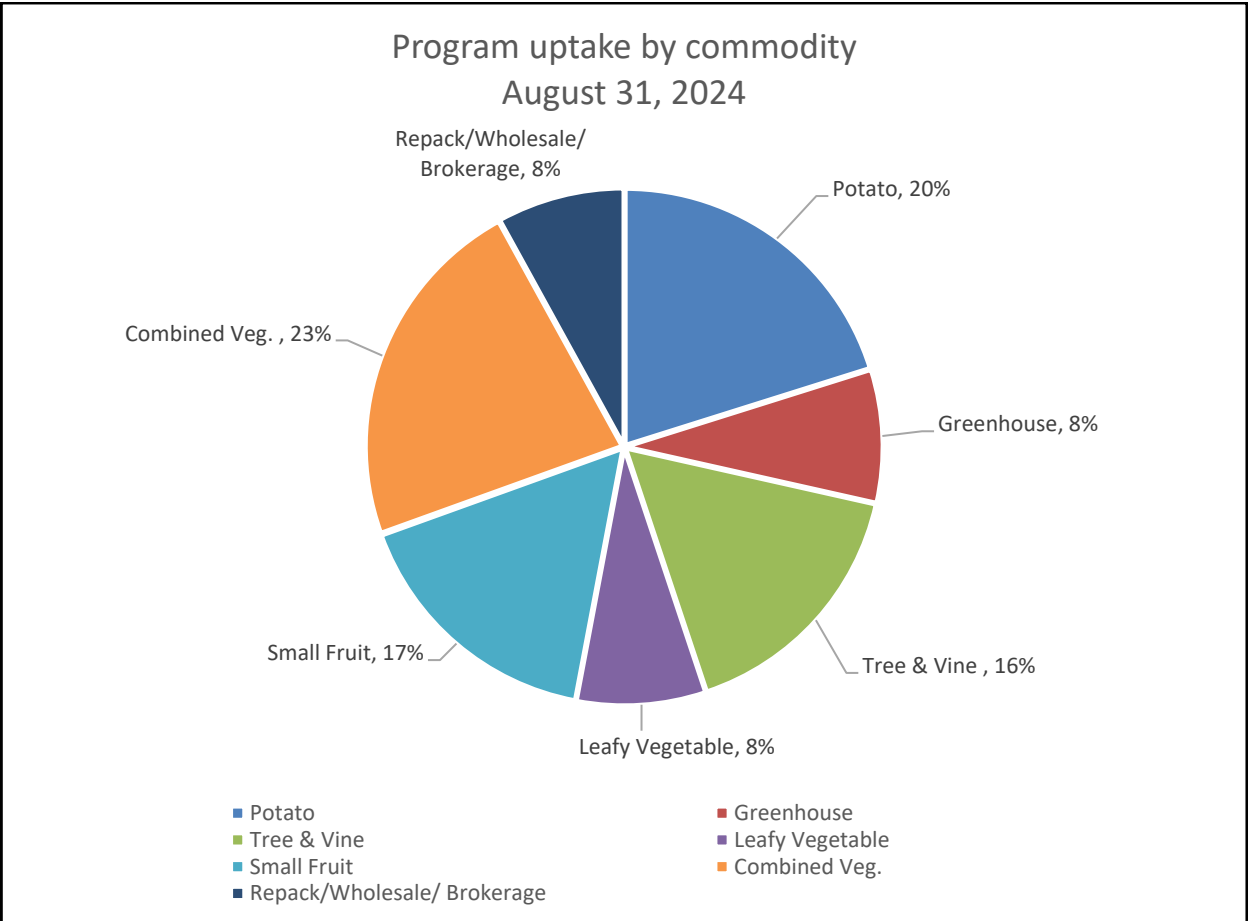
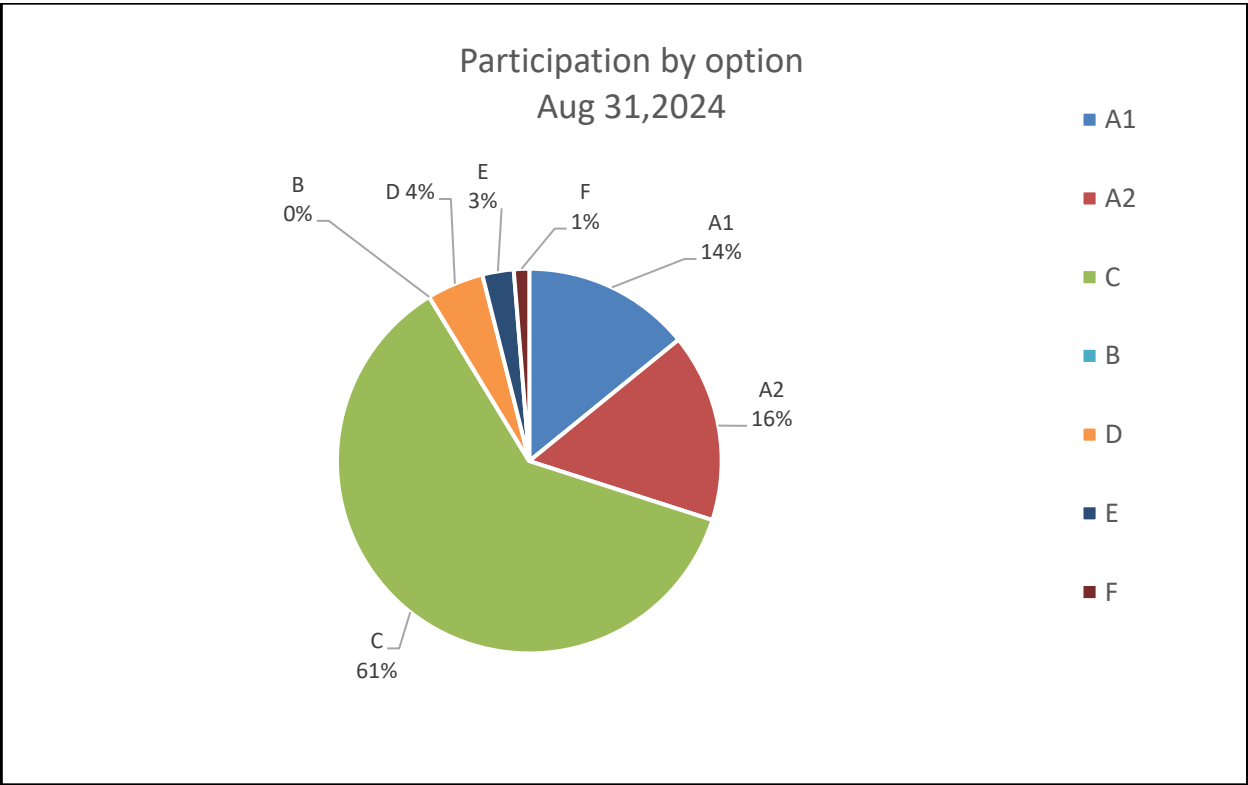
CanadaGAP thanks the hard-working volunteers from industry who make up our talented Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee. We value and appreciate the ongoing interest from those across the country who generously give their time and energy to participate in CanadaGAP activities.

CanadaGAP Program staff and Directors recognize and appreciate the efforts of every CanadaGAP-certified operation in their commitment to producing food safely for the benefit of all.

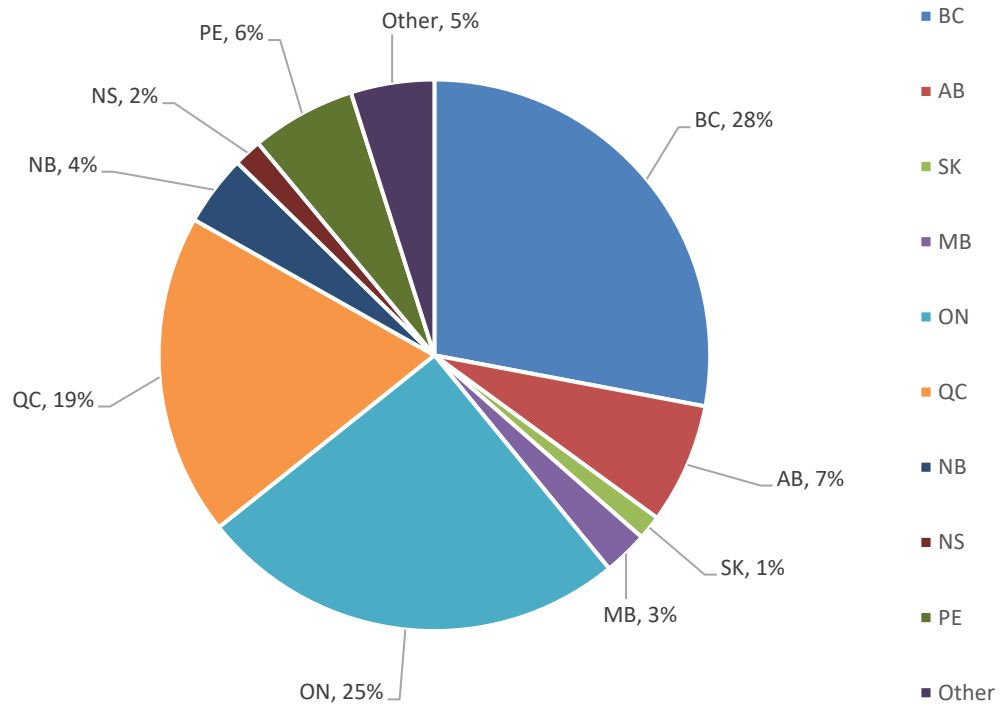
CanadaGAP

Program Uptake

Statistics



Operations enrolled by province Aug 31, 2024



Commodity by Province - August 31, 2024

