

FOOD SAFETY

The average audit score for CanadaGAP is 95.7% — the highest ever

HEATHER GALE

CanadaGAP is a food safety program for companies that produce, pack, repack, store, wholesale and broker fruits and vegetables. The program is now in its fifteenth year of operation as a certification program, with over 3,000 participating companies from across the Canadian and U.S. fresh produce industry.

Highlights from 2022

2022 has been a very active year for CanadaGAP. Several new projects were undertaken at the same time as the world began to emerge from the worst days of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and business started returning to a ‘new normal’.

**New certification options E and F:** The most important development for CanadaGAP in 2022 was the introduction of two new non-GFSI-recognized certification options for CanadaGAP program participants whose buyers may not require full compliance with GFSI. The new options, E and F, are very closely modeled on the GFSI-recognized options (C and D), with two important differences:

- Companies chosen for unannounced audits receive 2-5 business days’ notice before the auditor’s arrival (versus no advance notice for GFSI-recognized options)
- The passing score on the audit is 95% (versus 100% compliance



Based on # of producers	Tree & vine fruit	Field vegetables	Potatoes	Small fruit	Greenhouse	Repacking, wholesale & brokerage	Total CanadaGAP participation
Percentage of CanadaGAP participants in 2022	24%	27%	18%	19%	6%	6%	100%

required for GFSI-recognized options).

In all other respects, including all food safety elements in the standard as well as requirements relating to food safety culture, food fraud, food defense, environmental monitoring, etc. the new certification options are identical to GFSI-recognized certification. To date more than 60 companies are enrolled in the new certification options.

**Other key activities**

Other important initiatives for CanadaGAP in 2022 included:

- In partnership with the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC), CanadaGAP began work on an AAFC-funded project to expand the scope of the Greenhouse Food Safety program. It is expected by April 1, 2023 that producers of many more greenhouse-grown crops will be able to seek certification under the CanadaGAP program – such as companies producing and packing melons, berries, various root vegetables, cruciferous crops and legumes in a controlled environment.
- CanadaGAP worked closely with an affiliate of the program, Provision Analytics, which is a third-party software provider that invested in fully digitizing the CanadaGAP Food Safety

Manuals. Program users who wish to maintain their program electronically can subscribe to the Provision platform to access a complete interactive copy of the CanadaGAP manuals as well as all record-keeping template forms. See the “Food Safety Links” page on the CanadaGAP website for further details about Provision Analytics.

- A new Certification Body, Control Union, was approved and licensed to begin offering CanadaGAP audits and certification in 2022. More information about services offered by Control Union is available on the ‘Certification Bodies’ page of the CanadaGAP website ([www.canadagap.ca](http://www.canadagap.ca)).
- The program successfully concluded a 40-month review by CFIA and provincial partners to maintain Government Recognition for CanadaGAP.


GFSI benchmarking

2022 brought continuing challenges for operations maintaining compliance with requirements for GFSI-recognized certification options (B, C and D). New rules introduced by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) for companies certified for “Production and Packing” under CanadaGAP Options B and C meant that starting April 1, 2022 those operations must have audits each year for both harvesting and packing activities. For some certified operations, depending on the timing of their activities, that means undergoing two audits per year. Further detailed information about the changes made to 2022 requirements is available on the CanadaGAP website at [www.canadagap.ca](http://www.canadagap.ca)

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, 2022 the average audit score for CanadaGAP program participants was 95.70% – an outstanding achievement by certified companies. Based on preliminary audit results (before corrective actions were implemented), the overall average of 95.70% was measured across participants of all CanadaGAP certification options. Even higher audit scores were seen among Option C program participants, with those scores averaging 96.55% – another significant accomplishment.

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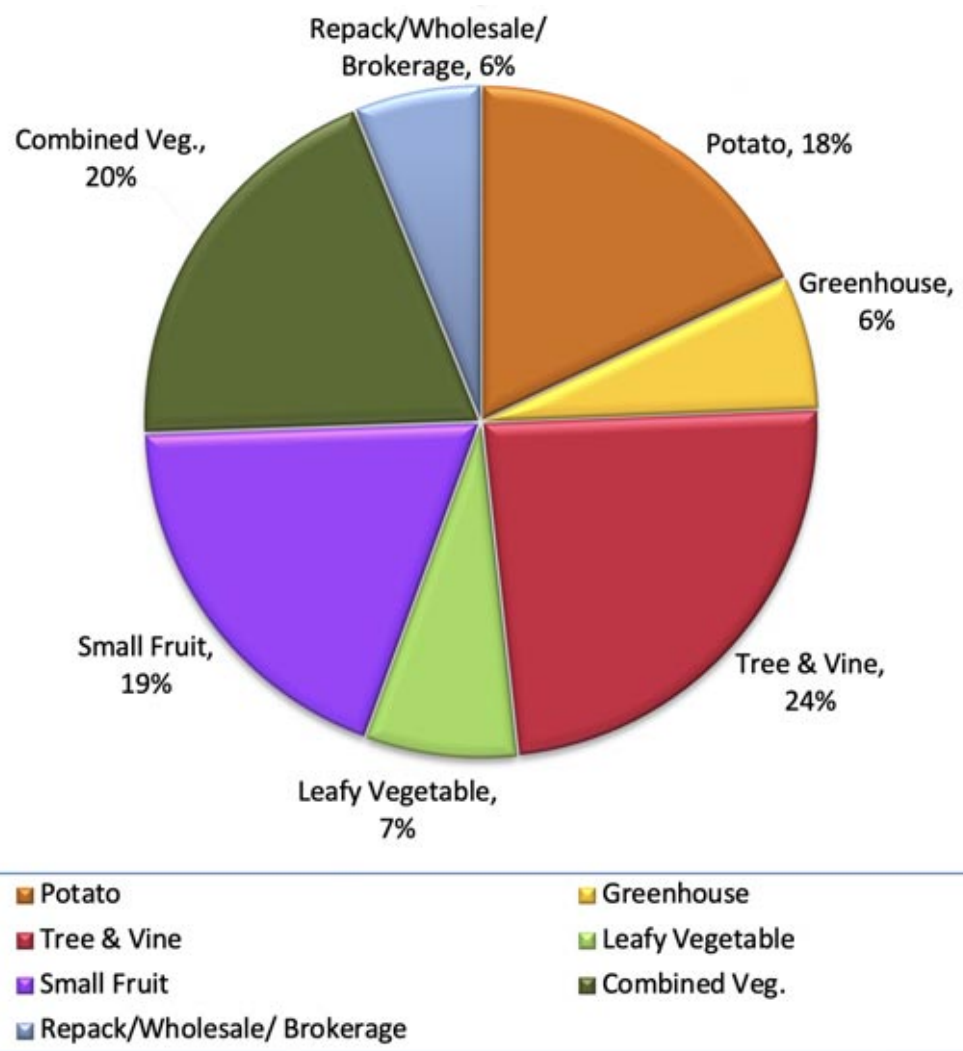




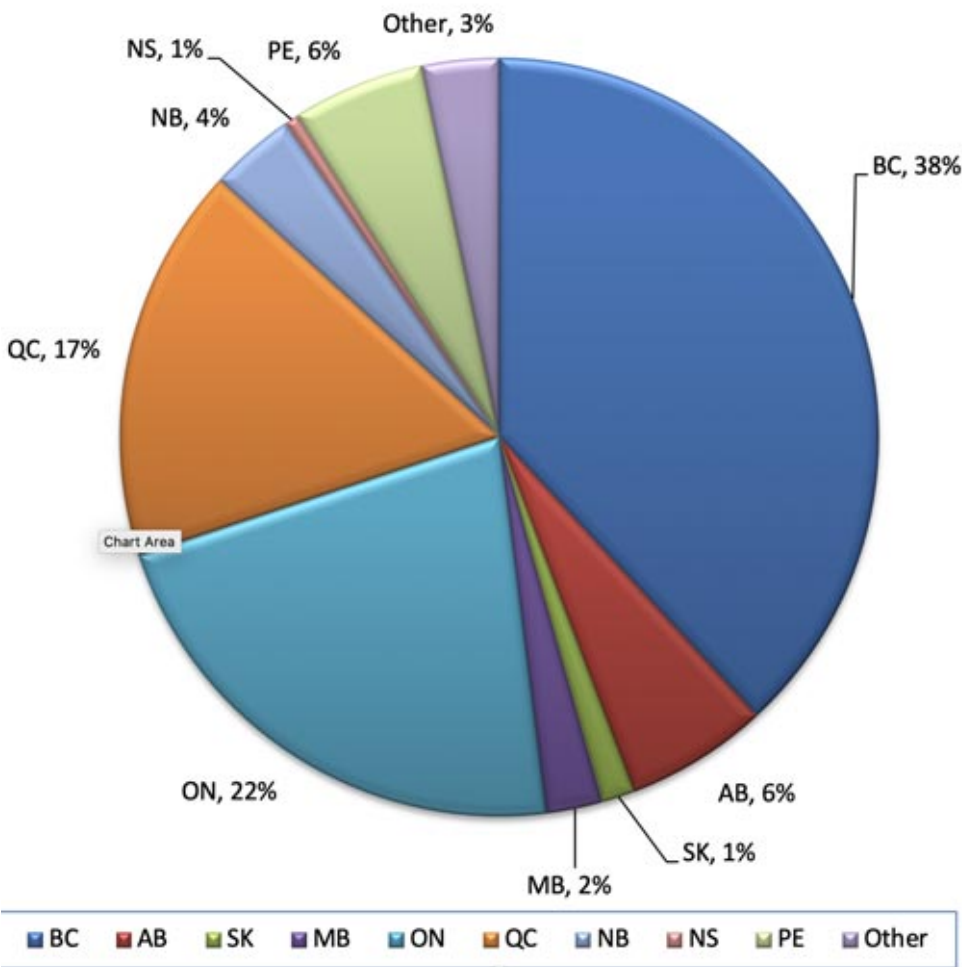
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Program uptake by commodity  
August 31, 2022



Operations Enrolled by Province  
August 31, 2022



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Program participant survey

Every three years, CanadaGAP formally surveys program participants on various aspects of program operations. In 2022, program participants were surveyed relative to the new CanadaGAP certification options introduced earlier this year – Options E and F. Significant communication efforts were made through 2022 to bring awareness of the new certification options to program participants and their customers. The survey is intended to gauge overall awareness and general understanding of how Options E and F compare to other CanadaGAP certification options. The survey was also designed to shed light on whether and where further efforts may be needed to communicate information about CanadaGAP certification options.

The survey is active through November and December 2022. Results will be compiled and shared with stakeholders in the new year. More information is available on the CanadaGAP website at: [www.canadagap.ca/2022/11/survey-of-canadagap-program-participants-2/](http://www.canadagap.ca/2022/11/survey-of-canadagap-program-participants-2/).

Participation trends

The following participation trends are noteworthy for 2022:

Regional Trends

- Participation rose most

markedly among producers in British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and the United States this past year. This turnaround contributed to offsetting some of the departures of BC and US producers from the program in 2021.

- In 2022, slight declines in enrolment were seen in Quebec, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Correspondingly, small increases were seen in the number of participating companies in Ontario and New Brunswick.

- British Columbia continues to maintain the highest enrolment levels overall, at 38% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies, followed by Ontario (22% of program participants) and Quebec (17% of program participants).

What’s ahead for 2023?

- An update to the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals (Version 10.0) will be published for the 2023 season. The Greenhouse manual will reflect the scope expansion that CanadaGAP has been working on over the past year. The manuals are typically published by January, with an effective date of April 1, 2023. For further updates please visit the program website at [www.canadagap.ca](http://www.canadagap.ca)

- CanadaGAP Auditor Refresher Testing is planned for Q4 of 2023.

- Active engagement in GFSI activities will continue, including participation in the US-Canada Local Group, various GFSI “Race to the Top” initiatives, and regular meetings with the GFSI Steering Committee and management.

- Board Strategic Planning activities will continue into 2023, with planned opportunities for stakeholder engagement and consultation.

Heather Gale is the executive director, CanAgPlus, the non-profit organization that operates the CanadaGAP program.

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