



2019 Annual Report

CanadaGAP Program

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CANADAGAP 

Annual Report 2019

CanadaGAP[®] is a food safety program for companies that produce, pack, repack, store, wholesale and broker fruits and vegetables. The program officially launched in September 2008 with the enrolment of five hundred potato growers, and has grown to nearly 3,200 participating companies today 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 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

Close to 3,200 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 2019

Below are some of the key achievements and changes over the last year:

- **Alignment with new *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations*:** Federal food safety regulations came into force in Canada on January 15, 2019 under the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* (SFCR). CanadaGAP is recognized as a “model system” for food safety preventive controls that fresh produce operations must have in place under the new regulations.

CanadaGAP has been focused on ensuring full alignment between the SFCR and CanadaGAP program requirements, and 2019 saw increased communication with industry about the program’s status with government. To ensure that CanadaGAP-certified companies are well-positioned to meet the new regulatory requirements, CanadaGAP renewed participation in a CFIA-led project that involved the Canadian Food Inspection Agency completing a comparison of CanadaGAP program requirements with the published regulations.

The comparison project was a success, showing that CanadaGAP is 100% aligned with the SFCR with respect to food safety requirements. The positive results of the comparison, as well as further details about how CanadaGAP fits with regulatory initiatives in Canada and the U.S., are published at <https://www.canadagap.ca/publications/presentations/>.

- **Renewal of Government Recognition:** CanadaGAP first received full Government Recognition in 2017 under the Canadian Government Food Safety Recognition Program. In 2019, CanadaGAP underwent the required 20-month “Maintenance of Recognition” process. On an ongoing basis, to maintain recognition, CanadaGAP must continue to demonstrate sound management of the certification system, align with all applicable regulatory requirements, and receive approval from CFIA for any proposed changes to the program.
- **Maintenance of GFSI Recognition:** CanadaGAP has been benchmarked and officially recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) since 2010. To maintain our recognition, in addition to re-benchmarking each time GFSI updates its requirements, the program is newly subject to biannual spot checks and an annual office audit by GFSI. The first year of integrity assessments was successfully completed in 2019. These activities remain crucial to securing support for CanadaGAP certification from retailers, processors and food service customers.
- **Introduction of the GFSI Knowledge Exam to CanadaGAP Auditors:** This year, CanadaGAP began administering the GFSI Knowledge Exam. Starting in 2019 all new auditors auditing to a GFSI-recognized program must first pass a general exam to assess basic knowledge of food safety, HACCP, and auditing skills and techniques. A number of new CanadaGAP auditors succeeded the exam and were brought on board this season. In addition, the majority of existing CanadaGAP auditors also sat the GFSI exam. The remainder have until December 2021 to complete the exam.

- **Changes to CanadaGAP Program Scope:** Driven by changing risk profiles and emerging research, several technical decisions were taken in 2019 that will impact program participants going forward. In 2020, CanadaGAP certification for microgreens will no longer be available; likewise, aquaponic production systems will be phased out of the CanadaGAP program scope. For further information on these changes and the implementation dates, visit the [CanadaGAP website](#).
- **Updates to the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals:** The CanadaGAP Stakeholder Advisory Committee and technical staff have been working hard since June 2019 to finalize updates to the Food Safety Manuals, which will be issued in late January or early February 2020. A number of changes are being driven by new GFSI initiatives to be published in Version 8 of the Benchmarking Requirements. Changes to the program take effect for CanadaGAP audits occurring on and after April 1, 2020.
- **Growth in Option D:** Since receiving GFSI recognition in 2016 for repacking and wholesaling, CanadaGAP Option D has attracted a growing number of companies involved in repack, wholesale and brokerage activities. Customer demand for supply chain certification continues to drive uptake of Option D, leading to another double-digit (15%) growth rate over the last year. The target of 100 clients that was set when the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) Repacking and Wholesaling standard was integrated into the CanadaGAP program five years ago has now been met and surpassed!

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 November/December. Last year's AGM was held in Ottawa on December 6, 2018 with strong online participation by members. For the first time, CanadaGAP will take the 2019 AGM on the road. The 2019 AGM takes place in Charlottetown, PEI on November 28. An interactive Q&A Town Hall-style session with members will be held in conjunction with the AGM. We thank the meeting sponsors who are helping to make this event possible:



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is comprised of eight volunteer directors. In keeping with the by-laws developed by the corporation's founding organizations, four directors are approved by the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) and two by CPMA, with another two directors at-large. Directors serve two-year rotating terms, with four directors elected annually. Four positions are available to aspiring candidates at the 2019 AGM.

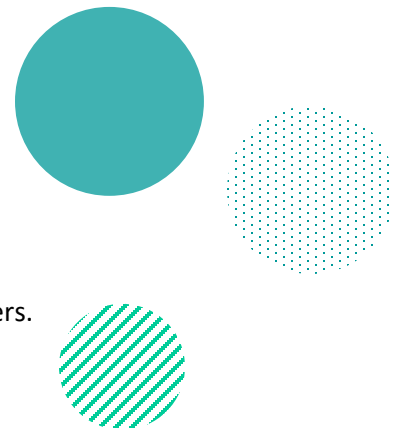
With retirements in 2018 of long-time Board Chair Jack Bates and vice-chair Hugh Bowman, two new directors were elected and welcomed to the Board for 2019: Mike Furi (The Grocery People) and Alvin Keenan (Rollo Bay Holdings Ltd.). The Board also selected a new chair, Stephanie Lariviere (Erie James Ltd.) and vice-chair, Scott Wright (Star Produce).

The Board meets face-to-face twice annually and holds regular conference calls. The full list of directors and their biographies are posted at: <http://www.canadagap.ca/history/governance/>

Management Review

An annual management review of the program is held each June with senior management and representatives from the Board. During the management review, representatives 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.



Stakeholder Advisory Committee

CanadaGAP has a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) that is appointed by the Board and whose role is to review requests for technical changes to program materials. The Committee meets face-to-face each summer and holds conference calls as needed. At the June 2019 meeting the Committee had another full agenda. CanadaGAP receives dozens of requests each year for changes to the food safety manuals, audit checklist or other technical documents. Each request is considered and researched by staff, and recommended changes are presented to the Committee for discussion and input. While commodity-specific representation on the committee continues to be important, a number of positions on the SAC are reserved for food safety specialists. The list of SAC members for 2019 is available on the [CanadaGAP website](#).

Nominations to the SAC are accepted annually, and appointments are made by the Board for one-, two- or three-year terms. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply through the nomination process each summer.

Marketing, Education and Outreach

CanadaGAP is involved in a significant number of education and outreach activities. As in 2018, the particular focus continues to be on building awareness and uptake of the available tools and resources that CanadaGAP has produced to assist producers with program implementation.

Program Participant Survey – Have your say!

Every three years, CanadaGAP surveys program participants on various aspects of program operations. The focus of the 2019 program participant survey is on auditing issues and communications from CanadaGAP. This fall, every program participant will receive the short survey, which can be completed online or on paper and returned to the CanadaGAP office. In addition, the program has an open-door policy to receive feedback, suggestions for improvement, and request for modifications to program requirements at any time.

CanadaGAP Website

The CanadaGAP website makes freely available a range of handouts, posters, training tools, and other communication materials to support employee training and improve understanding of food safety requirements. CanadaGAP has also developed a two-day introductory course called ‘Understanding the CanadaGAP Program’, which is being delivered by various training partners across the country. Further information is available at: <https://www.canadagap.ca/program/training-resources/>

Communiqués

CanadaGAP communicates frequently with program participants and other stakeholders through regular communiques, available at: <https://www.canadagap.ca/publications/communiques/>. A listing of media coverage is also maintained on the CanadaGAP website at: <http://www.canadagap.ca/media/articles/>



Events and Presentations

The table below identifies various activities and outreach in which CanadaGAP participated in 2019:

Month	Event / Topic	Location
January	CanadaGAP Auditor Training course (SGS)	Burnaby, BC
January	Presentation to Crop Life Canada	Ottawa, ON
January	GFSI Exam Review calls	Conference calls
January	CPMA Food Safety Committee	Conference call
January	Understanding CanadaGAP course (SGS)	Mississauga, ON
January-February	CFIA briefings on Safe Food for Canadians Regulations	Conference calls
January-December	GFSI Primary Production Task Force and Stakeholder Advisory Forum calls	Conference calls
February	CanadaGAP Webinar for Certification Bodies	Webinar
February	Global Food Safety Conference, GFSI Board and technical meetings	Nice, France
February, April	Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition Board	Conference call
March	CanadaGAP Auditor Training course (NSF)	Abbotsford, BC
March	CHC AGM and presentation to Food Safety Committee	Halifax, NS
March	CanadaGAP Auditor Training course (NSF)	Guelph, ON
March	Understanding CanadaGAP course (NSF)	Guelph, ON
March-May	NSF Auditor Calibration	Webinars, Guelph and Longueuil, QC
April	CPMA Trade Show and Convention	Montreal, QC
April	Internal Audit at Certification Body office	Guelph, ON
April	BNQ Auditor Calibration	Quebec City
May	CanadaGAP Auditor Training courses	Quebec City and BC

May	Agri-Food Subcommittee on Food Safety	Ottawa, ON
May	CFIA Government Recognition (20-month Maintenance of Recognition)	Ottawa, ON
May	Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition AGM	Ottawa, ON
May	CPMA meeting with CFIA on Produce Traceability	Ottawa, ON
May	International Federation for Produce Standards Food Safety Committee	Conference call
June	CanadaGAP Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Board meetings	Ottawa, ON
June	Annual meeting of CanadaGAP Certification Bodies	Ottawa, ON
June-July	Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition Board	Conference calls
June	GFSI Annual Office visit (integrity assessment)	Ottawa, ON
July	CFIA Webinar on Food Labelling Modernization	Webinar
July	CPMA Webinar on CFIA Establishment Risk Inspection	Webinar
July	CanadaGAP Witness Audits	Saskatchewan & BC
July	Annual meeting with American National Standards Institute	Washington, DC
August, September	GFSI Stakeholder Advisory Forum	Conference calls
September	ISO TC34/SC17 and WG36 meetings on ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO Technical Specification 22003	Ottawa, ON
Sept-November	GFSI Data Sharing eWorking Group	Conference calls
October	United Fresh Webinar on Listeria Sampling	Webinar
October	GFSI Task Force and Board meetings	Chengdu, China
October	Annual meeting with Standards Council of Canada	Ottawa, ON
October	CanadaGAP Auditor Training course (NSF)	Guelph, ON
October	GFSI Exam Review calls	Conference calls
November	Canadian Government Industry Meeting (CPMA)	Ottawa, ON
November	Understanding CanadaGAP course (AFPA)	Calgary, AB

November	United Fresh Webinar on Romaine Task Force Recommendations	Webinar
November	Understanding CanadaGAP course (NSF)	Guelph, ON
November	Presentation at Agromart Innovation Days	London, ON
November	CanAgPlus Annual General Meeting and Board meetings	Charlottetown, PEI
Nov-December	CanadaGAP Auditor Refresher Assessment calls	Conference calls
Nov-December	CanadaGAP Program Participant Survey	Ottawa, ON

Program Participation

Close to 3,200 producers are participating in CanadaGAP. The table below shows year-over-year growth in the number of producers participating in the program. The growth rates below reflect net growth – i.e., they already account for departures from the program, which may be due to changes in a farming operation, retirement, voluntary termination of certification, etc.

Year-over-Year Increase in CanadaGAP Participation

Year (Sept – Aug)	Number of producers	Increase	Growth Rate
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%

Participation Trends

The following participation trends are significant for 2019:

- Participation rates have been stable since 2016. While new participants continue to enrol in the program each year (we received more than 250 new applicants in 2019), a significant number of retirements and farm sales have also occurred, offsetting any notable growth in enrolment figures.
- Participation in 2019 rose most markedly among producers in Alberta and Nova Scotia. Among commodity groupings, moderate increases were seen in the Field Vegetable sector, with a slight proportional drop in participation from the Greenhouse and Small Fruit industry.
- BC continues to maintain the highest enrolment levels overall, at 38% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies.
- Growth in Option D enrolments for repacking, wholesaling, and brokerage operations continues to increase, up 15% over last year. More than 100 Option D companies are now CanadaGAP-certified.
- CanadaGAP continues to attract U.S. growers, many of whom are organized into groups to pursue food safety certification.
- Group certifications comprise 20% of all enrolments, while 24% of certified companies are enrolled in the four-year audit cycle. The number of program participants moving to an annual audit under Option C is increasing, representing 53% of participants in 2019.
- 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, 2019.



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 2019	24%	29%	18%	19%	7%	3%	100%
For comparison:							
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, and Group Management System audits)*

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
No. of audits reported	1650	1589	1538	1390	1270	1037	1031

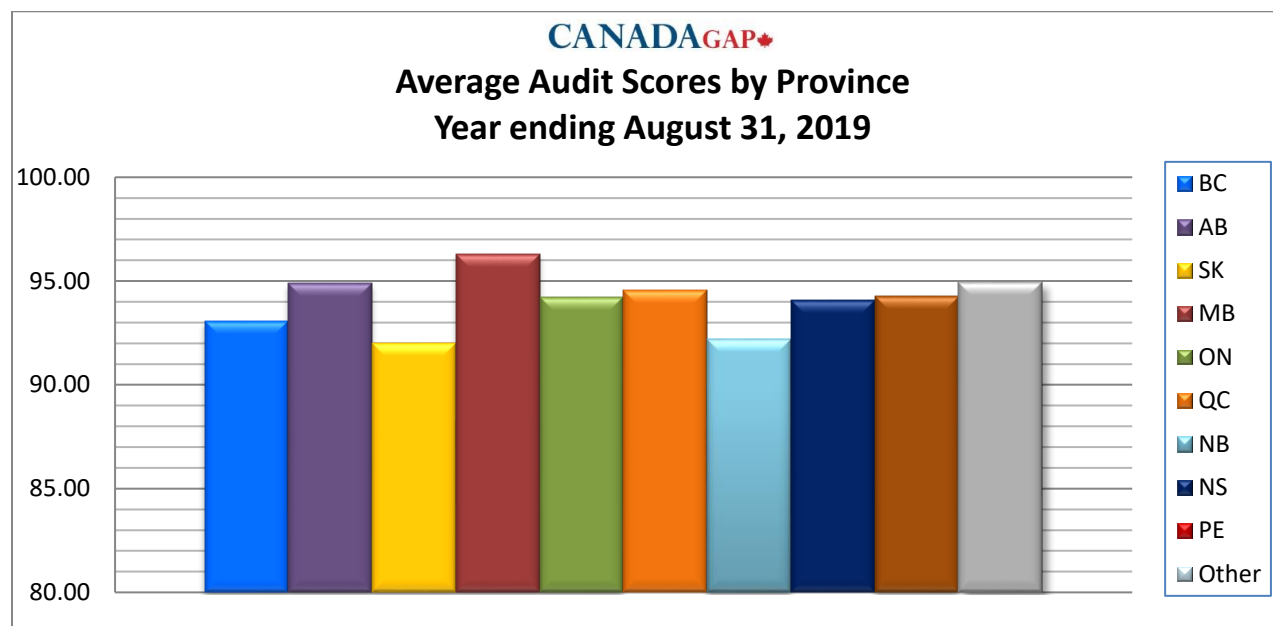
Reporting period from September 1 to August 31 based on certificates issued

In addition, approximately 100 farms that belong to groups are audited each year.

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

<i>Crop Grouping</i>	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Potato	94.46	94.98	93.84	94.36	94.03	94.19	92.54
Greenhouse	96.63	96.36	95.55	95.98	96.63	92.40	94.80
Tree & Vine Fruit	92.84	93.75	93.97	93.20	91.92	89.19	92.71
Leafy Vegetable & Cruciferae	93.82	94.61	93.97	94.41	94.40	91.76	92.43
Small Fruit	92.92	93.29	92.44	92.30	90.17	90.91	92.71
Combined Vegetable	94.50	94.61	92.86	94.11	94.01	92.85	93.40
Overall Average	93.98	94.34	93.24	94.04	92.84	92.70	92.81

Overall, the average audit score of 93.98% is consistent with the average over the last five years. No significant changes were notable across commodity groups in 2019. 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 entail an annual on-site audit. 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 2011. Data pertaining to 2019 random audits will be available in 2020.



CanadaGAP Random Audit Results for Option A1 and A2

<i>Year</i>	Average Audit Score during Regular 4-year Audit	Average Audit Score for Random Audits
2011	91.28	90.72
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



CanadaGAP Auditors

- The auditor pool consists of 50 active and qualified CanadaGAP auditors (currently working for a Certification Body). This represents 15% of those who have taken the CanadaGAP auditor training course and 23% of those who have passed the course.

Auditors by region:

	West	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic	U.S.	Total
# auditors	19	12	12	5	2	50
Percentage	38%	24%	24%	10%	4%	100%

Data current as at August 31, 2019

- **Training of New CanadaGAP Auditors**

Summary of CanadaGAP Auditor Training sessions:

	2019 ¹	2018 ³	2017	2016	2015	2014	Total since 2008
Number of people who completed CanadaGAP auditor training course	21	19	48	16	66	27	341
Number of people who passed the course	14	10	32	9	38	13	221
Percentage of people who passed the course	82% ²	59% ⁴	70% ⁵	75% ⁶	58%	48%	68%
Number of auditor training sessions	5	3	7	4	6	3	54

¹ Exams are still ongoing for two courses. These numbers are therefore not considered final or representative.

² Of the 21 people who took the course so far in 2019, 4 were auditing the course so 82% of the participants who attempted the exam passed.

³ At the time of the reporting, exams were still ongoing for one 2018 course. These numbers are therefore not considered final or representative.

⁴ Of the 19 people who took the course in 2018, 2 were auditing the course so 59% of the participants who attempted the exam passed.

⁵ Of the 48 people who took the course in 2017, 2 were auditing the course so 70% of participants who attempted the exam passed.

⁶ Of the 16 people who took the course in 2016, 4 were only auditing the course so 75% of participants who attempted the exam passed.

- **CanadaGAP Auditor Refresher Training and Testing**

Auditor Refresher Testing, introduced in 2014, is repeated every two years to ensure ongoing auditor comprehension of CanadaGAP program requirements.

In 2018, the CanadaGAP Technical Manager conducted mandatory assessments in English for all active auditors, as well as with interested inactive auditors. The assessments took place from November 2018 to January 2019 over the phone with each auditor individually. The assessment consisted of a series of questions to evaluate the auditor's understanding. Three active auditors were given further follow-up work (e.g. review of additional resources, etc.) after their assessments. The auditor refresher assessment calls for French-speaking auditors were postponed to 2019 and are scheduled in November-December 2019.

Certification Bodies

CanadaGAP has two licensed certification bodies with whom auditors are employed or contracted directly. These auditing firms are approved to offer CanadaGAP audits:

- Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)
- NSF Canada Ag (including sub-contractor Gestion Qualiterra in Quebec)



2019 saw the departure of a third certification body, SGS Canada. SGS Canada stopped offering CanadaGAP audits in June 2019, but the certification body continues to hold a number of CanadaGAP certificates, which SGS has indicated will remain valid until expiry.

Integrity Programme to Oversee Certification Bodies

CanadaGAP's integrity surveillance programme for certification bodies consists of:

- Mandatory annual performance review meeting with each certification body
- 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 (NSF: 2014, SGS: 2015, Gestion Qualiterra: 2016; BNQ: 2018; NSF: 2019)
- Audit report spot checks (at least one per auditor each year)
- CanadaGAP participation on calls where auditors receive updates and are calibrated to program requirements and scoring. This gives CanadaGAP staff an opportunity to monitor auditor performance, gaps in auditor knowledge, etc.
- Witness audits – our goal is to see every auditor at least once over the 5-year audit cycle (2012-BC and Alberta; 2013-Atlantic; 2014-Manitoba and Ontario; 2015-Quebec; 2016- Quebec; 2017- Ontario; 2018-BC; 2019-BC and Ontario; 2020-Quebec)
- Auditor Refresher Testing is repeated every two years to ensure ongoing auditor comprehension of CanadaGAP program requirements
- Complaints monitoring and ongoing follow-up.



What's Ahead for 2020?

- Updated CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals take effect April 1, 2020
- Re-benchmarking to GFSI (Version 8 Benchmarking Requirements)
- Refresher testing for CanadaGAP auditors and trainers
- Participation in Leafy Greens Task Force and Science and Technology Advisory Forum at GFSI
- Continued promotion of CanadaGAP inside and outside of Canada.

Report prepared by

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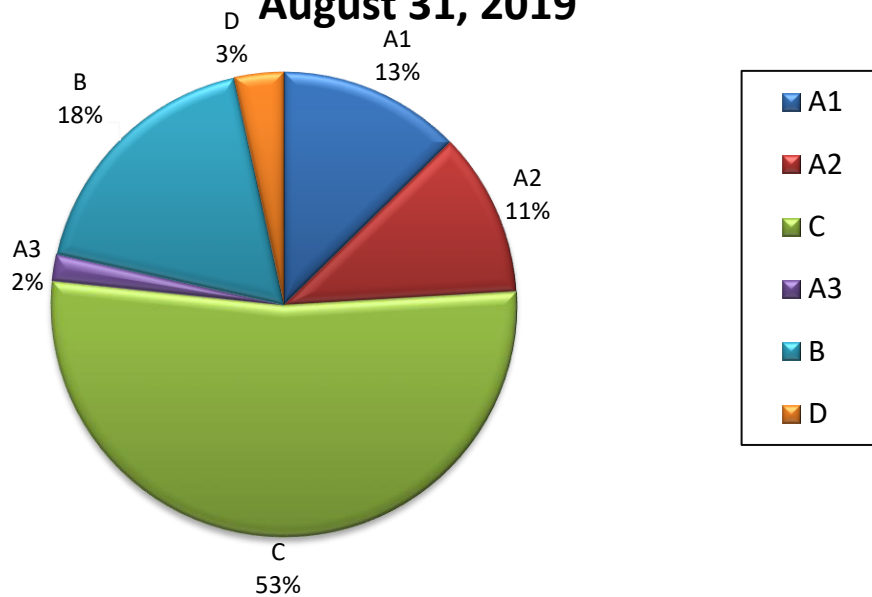
CanadaGAP

Program Uptake

Statistics

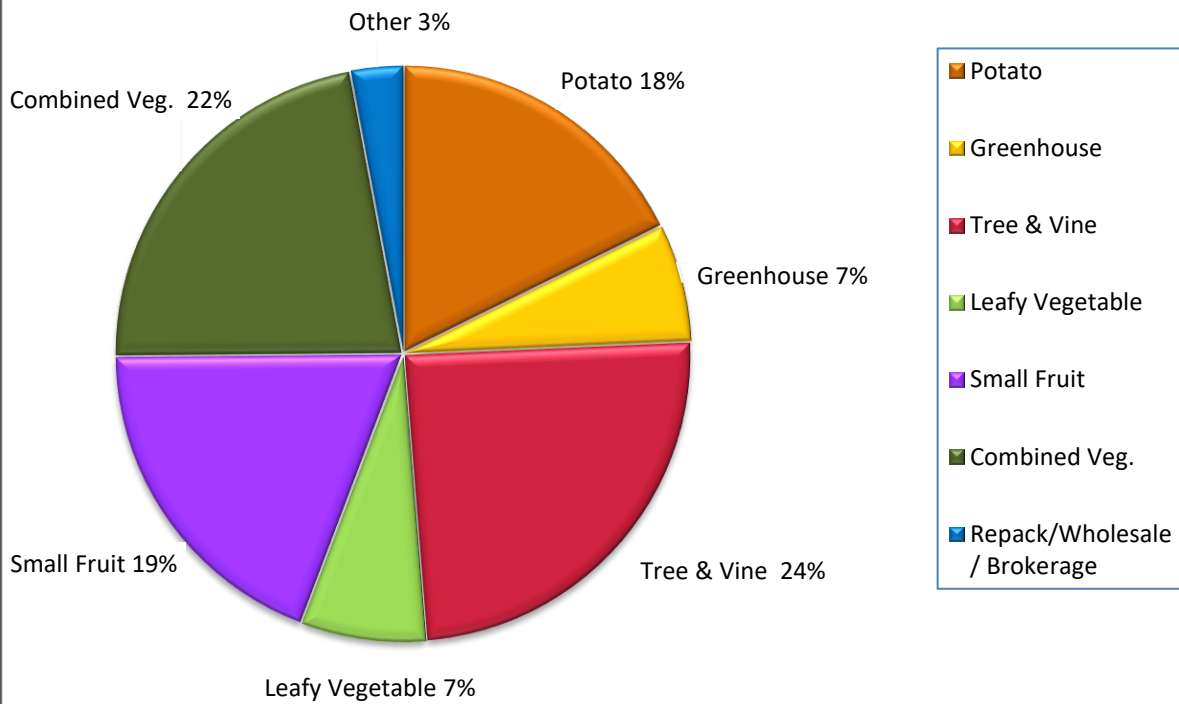
Participation by certification option

August 31, 2019

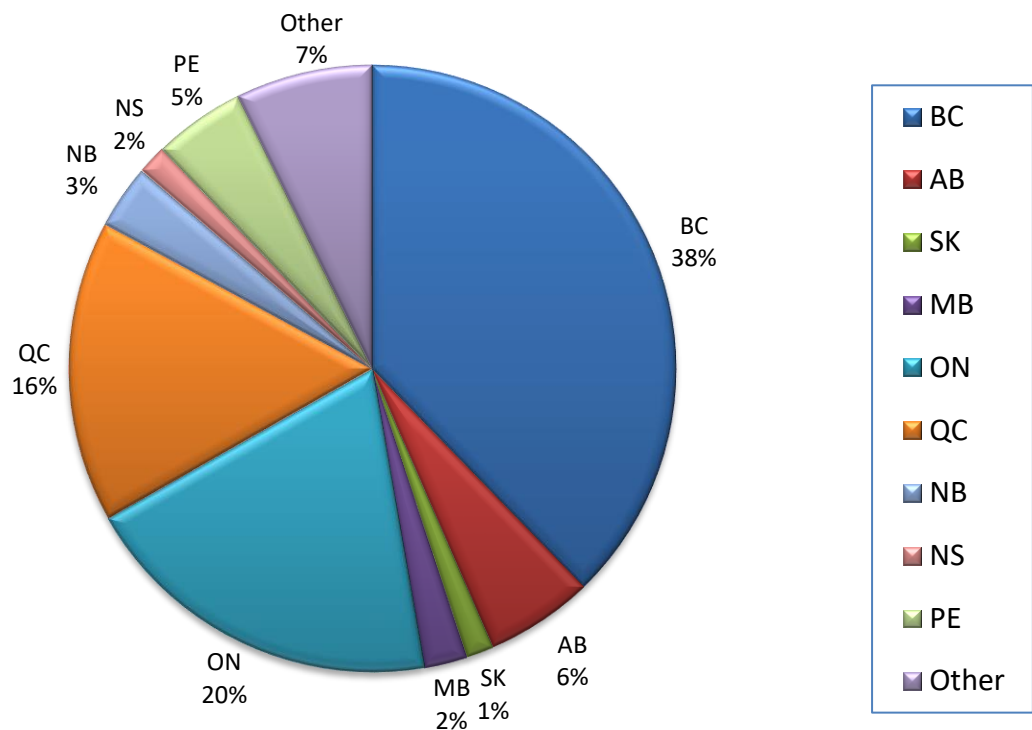


Proportion of CanadaGAP participants represented by crop grouping

August 31, 2019



Operations Enrolled by Province August 31, 2019



Commodity by Province - August 31, 2019

