

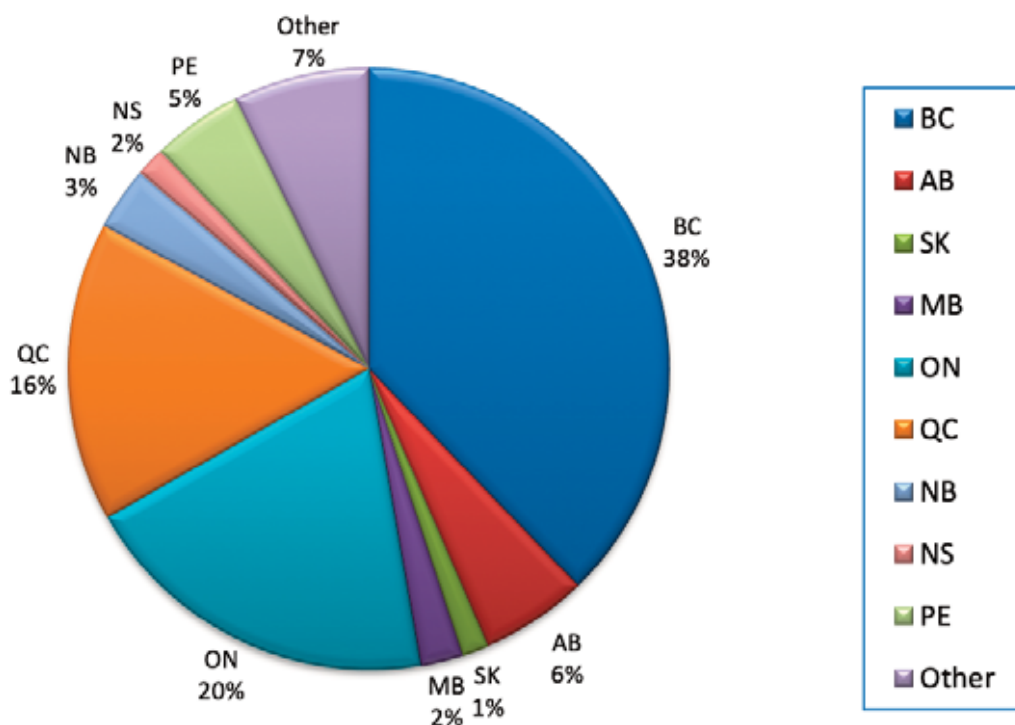
FOOD SAFETY

CanadaGAP annual report 2019



Photos by Glenn Lawson

Operations Enrolled by Province August 31, 2019



HEATHER GALE

CanadaGAP officially launched in September 2008 with the enrolment of 500 potato growers, and has grown to nearly 3,200 participating companies today from across the Canadian and U.S. fresh produce industry.

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.

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 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

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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!

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. 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

Nominations to the SAC are accepted annually, and appointments are made by the Board for one-, two- or three-year terms.

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.

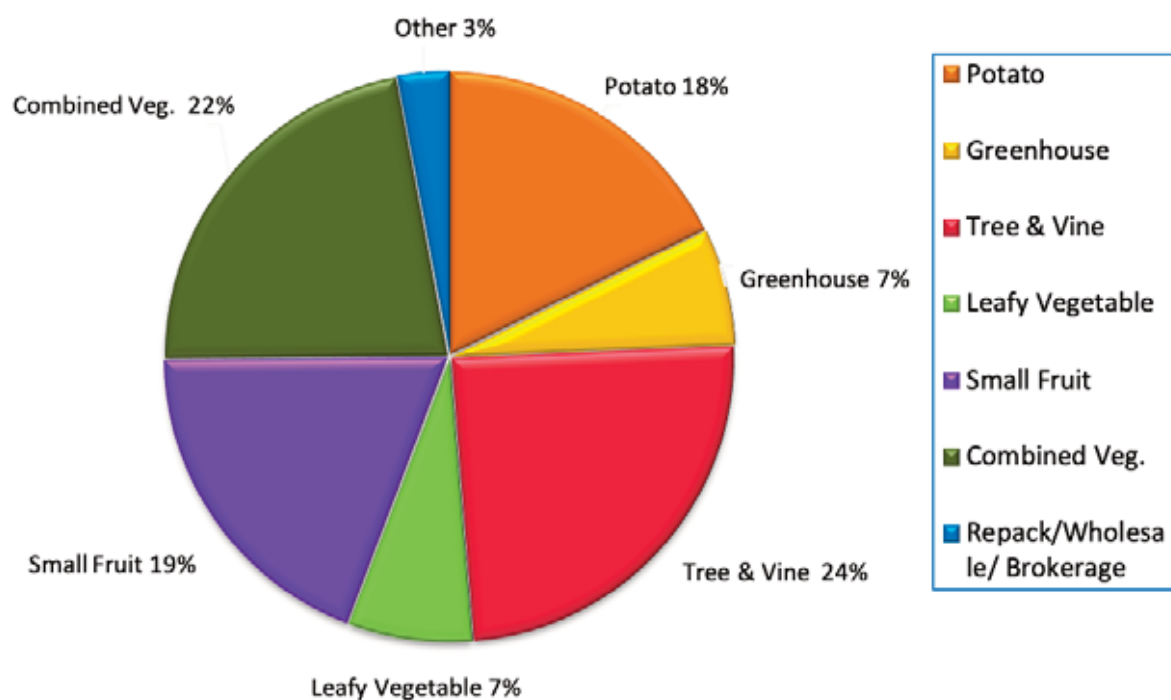
- Participation in 2019 rose most markedly among producers in Alberta and Nova Scotia. Among commodity groupings, moderate increases were seen in the Field Vegetable sector, with a slight proportional drop in participation from the Greenhouse and Small Fruit industry.

- 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

Proportion of CanadaGAP participants represented by crop grouping

August 31, 2019



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:

- o Tree and Vine Fruit
- o Field Vegetables
- o Potatoes
- o Small Fruit
- o Greenhouse

Total participation in CanadaGAP is 100%. The proportion of that total occupied by each crop grouping is presented above 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.

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.

Heather Gale is executive director, CanadaGAP Program, CanAgPlus

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