

FOCUS: FOOD SAFETY IN THE VALUE CHAIN

CanadaGap commits to unannounced audits

HEATHER GALE

Over the course of 2017, growth in participation has continued at a steady and stable pace. The number of participating companies now exceeds 3,100 across Canada and the United States. 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.

Key Achievements

2017 has been a very busy and productive year for CanadaGAP. Highlights include the following:

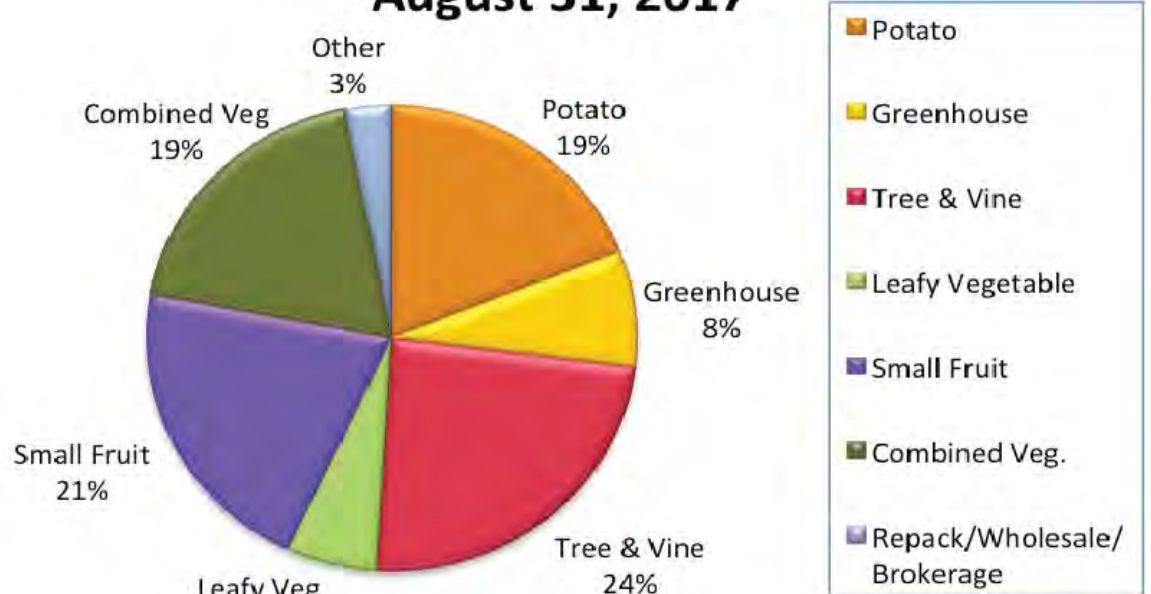
- **Government Recognition:** CanadaGAP achieved full Government Recognition in 2017 under the Canadian Government Food Safety Recognition Program. Please see the section below to read more about what this means for the program and for CanadaGAP-certified companies.
- **Re-benchmarking of the CanadaGAP program to GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) requirements Version 7** got underway this summer. The

process will continue into the winter of 2018. An on-site assessment at the CanadaGAP office will be part of the updated GFSI benchmarking process.

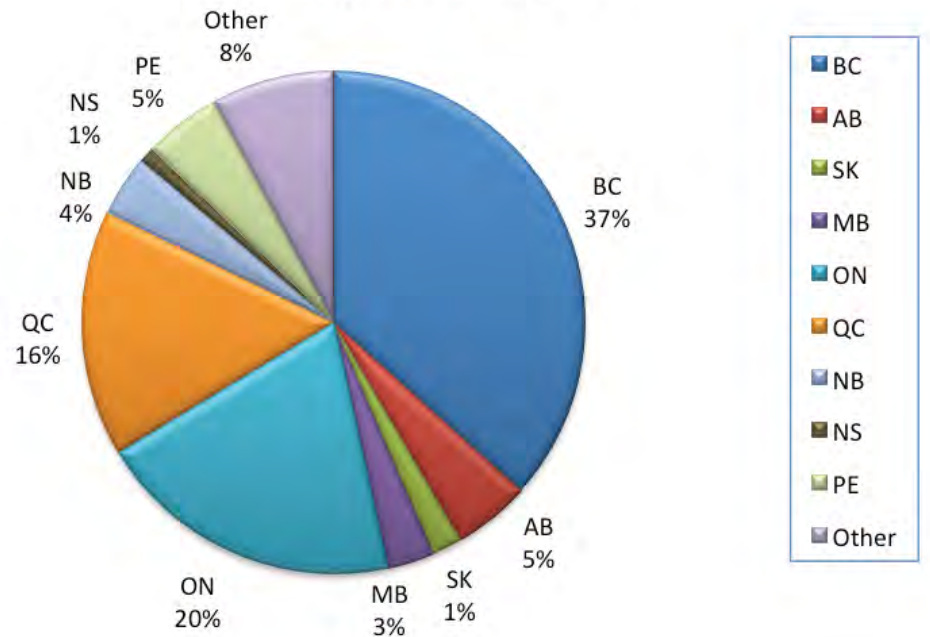
- **Unannounced Audits:** As part of new GFSI benchmarking requirements, Unannounced Audits were introduced by CanadaGAP on April 1, 2017. Under this new element of the program, 5% of CanadaGAP-certified companies are selected each year by their certification body to undergo an audit "unannounced" – i.e., with only 2 to 5 business days' notice. Logistically, this can be challenging for the certification bodies and program participants, since it is already difficult to schedule audits for weather-dependent situations and activities like harvesting, and some crops experience seasonal fluctuations. Despite these challenges, CanadaGAP is committed to rolling out the unannounced audit program to continue to drive integrity and credibility for its certification.

- **Food Fraud:** Also within the context of GFSI re-benchmarking, CanadaGAP introduced new requirements to the 2017 standard relative to assessing and managing risks related to Food Fraud. Food Fraud is defined as economically

Proportion of CanadaGAP participants represented by crop grouping August 31, 2017



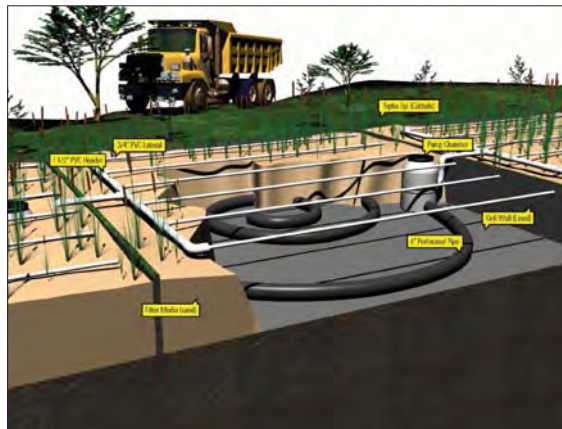
Operations Enrolled by Province August 31, 2017



The 'AQUA Wetland System' "A new breed of constructed wetland"

AQUA Treatment Technologies Inc. designs and installs the 'AQUA Wetland System' (AWS) for tertiary treatment of many types of waste water including sanitary sewage, landfill leachate, dairy farm & abattoir wastewater, greenhouse irrigation leachate water & mushroom farm leachate water (i.e. manure pile leachate) and high strength winery washwater.

The 'AQUA Wetland System' is operated out of doors and can achieve year-round tertiary treatment of wastewater. This sub-surface, vertical flow constructed wetland consists of sand & gravel beds planted with moisture tolerant plant species. Water is pumped vertically from cell to cell. There is no open or standing water. Treatment occurs through physical filtration & biological degradation. Plants shade & insulate the cells, cycling nutrients while preventing algae growth. There is no production of sludge.



The AWS has been approved for use by the Ontario Ministry of Environment through over 40 Environmental Compliance Approvals. Recently the Region of Niagara began approving the AWS for treatment of 'small flow' winery washwater i.e. < 10,000 liters per day. Other agencies who have issued approvals include Health Canada, USEPA and OMAFRA. Recent projects include:

- 1) treatment & re-use of greenhouse irrigation leach water at greenhouses in Niagara & Haldimand
- 2) treatment of winery wastewater at Greenlane Estates Winery & numerous other in Niagara
- 3) treatment of landfill leachate at sites in Pembroke, Niagara and Alabama

For additional information please contact Lloyd Rozema at 905-327-4571 or email lrozema@aquat-t.com



motivated intentional adulteration of product that could impact consumer health. To assist with implementation and auditing of the new record-keeping requirement for Food Fraud, earlier this year CanadaGAP issued a note providing further guidance to program participants, certification bodies and auditors regarding completion of the new Form U.

- **Growth in Option D:** Interest in CanadaGAP certification for repacking, wholesaling and brokerage operations continued growing at a steady pace in 2017. Option D for repacking and wholesaling activities was successfully benchmarked by GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) in 2016. Seventy-nine repacking, wholesaling or brokerage operations are now CanadaGAP-certified. Customer demands for supply chain certification continue to drive uptake of Option D.

- **Spanish Manuals:** For the first time, CanadaGAP made available a translation of the Greenhouse and Fruit and Vegetable food safety manuals

in Spanish, in response to a growing number of requests.

- **FSMA Resources:** Also in response to requests from users, CanadaGAP developed and published a series of resources to help CanadaGAP-certified companies understand the impact of the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act on their export or U.S.-based business. The resources include the following documents, which are available on the CanadaGAP website under "Food Safety Links":

- Information for Canadian exporters to the United States about the Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP)
- Comparison of CanadaGAP requirements with the U.S. Produce Safety Rule
- Guidance on whether the U.S. Preventive Controls Rule applies to your business
- Links to external sources containing useful information about implementation timeframes, exemptions and exclusions, flow charts, etc.

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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 | 31% |
| 2010-2011 | 1879 | 1098 | 58% |
| 2011-2012 | 2204 | 202 | 10% |
| 2012-2013 | 2440 | 236 | 9% |
| 2013-2014 | 2526 | 86 | 3% |
| 2014-2015 | 2927 | 401 | 14% |
| 2015-2016 | 3042 | 115 | 4% |
| 2016-2017 | 3127 | 89 | 3% |



Board Chair and Vice-Chair

The Board Chair and Vice-Chair are elected annually. Currently serving as Chair is Jack Bates, and Hugh Bowman as Vice-Chair. 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/about-us/governance/>

Management Review

An annual management review of the program is held each June with senior management and representatives from the Board. The management review encompasses a review of:

- requests for modifications to the program
- performance of CanadaGAP certification bodies
- complaints and their handling

- internal audit results
- auditor training undertaken and its outcomes
- provision of resources
- policies related to conflict of interest and confidentiality, among others.

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• **Sustainability:** Last year, CanadaGAP entered into a partnership with the North American Potato Sustainability Initiative (PSI) to offer verification audits for potato growers.

The first Potato Sustainability audits occurred in late 2016 and early 2017 in conjunction with the processing potato shipping season. Nine CanadaGAP auditors have been cross-trained on the PSI requirements.

Program Participation

Over 3,100 producers are now participating in CanadaGAP. The table below shows year-over-year growth in the number of producers participating in the program. The growth rates below are net of departures from the program, which may be due to changes in a farming operation, retirement, voluntary termination of certification, etc.

Participation Trends

The following participation trends are significant for 2017:

- The rate of growth in CanadaGAP participation has slowed over the past year, to 3%. There were a significant number of retirements and farm sales in 2016-17, as growers

aged out of their operations. However, the growth in enrolments continues to offset those leaving the program.

- For the first time, the fastest growing participation rate across the provinces was in Alberta, thanks to the entry of several new haskap growers. Ontario has the next greatest increase in enrolments, made up mostly of potato growers enrolling in Option C, and repacking and wholesaling operations. Modest increases were also seen in segments of the Quebec and British Columbia industries, as packers and processors increasingly seek to source their supply of product from certified producers.

- Growth in Option D enrolments for repacking, wholesaling, and brokerage operations continues to increase, up nearly 20% over last year.

- U.S. grower participation in the program also continues to rise. CanadaGAP is attracting American farmers who are organizing in groups to pursue food safety certification.

- BC maintains the highest enrolment levels overall, representing 37% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies. This number has dropped from its peak of 42% of

all participating producers in 2016.

- Participation in the four-year audit cycle has leveled off, with very little change in the number of Option A1 and A2 participants since last year. Approximately 25% of CanadaGAP-certified farms participate in these certification options.

- Enrolments in Option C (annual audit) have exceeded half of all program participants for the first time, representing 52% of all certified companies this year.

- Group certifications have seen a modest decline, standing at 21% of all enrolments, which is down from 24% last year.

- 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

What's Ahead for 2018?

- GFSI Re-benchmarking to Version 7
- Implementation of GFSI Auditor Competency program
- Coming into force of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

- Updates to 2018 Manuals – publication in January, revisions effective for audits starting April 1

- Continued promotion of

CanadaGAP inside and outside of Canada

Heather Gale is executive director, CanadaGAP Program, CanAgPlus

Grower Pesticide Safety Course & Pesticide Safety for Farmer Assistants

- ✓ Farmers must be certified to buy and use Class 2 or 3 pesticides on farms.
- ✓ Farm workers who assist with pesticide application under the supervision of a Certified Farmer must be trained.

For a list of opportunities, visit www.opep.ca



Sign up online or call us at 1-800-652-8573 to register for the

Ontario Pesticide Education Program

