

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE	5
MARKET ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT.....	6
CANADIAN ORGANIC STATISTICS	8
CONSUMER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH	10
ORGANIC CAMPUS CHAMPIONS LEAD.....	11
REGULATORY AND POLICY UPDATE	12
GLOBAL TRADE.....	13
ORGANIC INTEGRITY: STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT AND IMPORT SYSTEMS	14
ORGANIC ACTION PLAN: A STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR SECTOR GROWTH	15
DOMESTIC PROTECTION OF CERTIFICATION AND CLAIMS	16
STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS AND SECTOR RESILIENCE	17
LOOKING AHEAD	18
ORGANIC SUMMIT & ORGANIC PARLIAMENT DAY	19
BUILDING VALUE THROUGH MEANINGFUL MEMBER ENGAGEMENT	20
CELEBRATING LEADERS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ORGANIC.....	21
COTA AT WORK.....	22
OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS	23
OUR ADVISORY COUNCIL.....	23
OUR TEAM	24
OUR SPONSORS	25
2024-2025 FINANCIAL REPORT	26



PRESIDENT'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Dear COTA Members,

2025 was a transformative year for the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA), marked by bold leadership, historic milestones, and meaningful progress for the organic movement in Canada and beyond. Thanks to your support and the dedication of our staff and Board, COTA helped drive federal advocacy, elevate Canada's global organic presence, and chart a path toward a resilient and thriving organic future.

One of our most significant achievements was the final drafting of Canada's National Organic Action Plan. This groundbreaking document, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders across the country, represents a unified, strategic vision for the future of organic in Canada. It highlights the organic sector's essential contributions to public health, climate resilience, and economic development, and outlines the policies and investments needed to support organic's continued growth. The Action Plan is not just a policy roadmap—it's a clear and compelling statement of our sector's values, impact, and vision for the future.

Marking a pivotal milestone in our advocacy efforts, COTA submitted a formal recommendation to the Government of Canada's pre-budget consultation process—affirming our role in shaping national budget priorities and securing a voice at the federal policy table. This action ensures that the needs and contributions of the organic sector are being recognized at the highest levels of government—and opens the door to greater public investment in the people and businesses driving this movement.

This year also saw COTA deepen international relationships through a series of incoming and outgoing trade missions with Indo-Pacific partners. These efforts are already expanding market access for Canadian organic products abroad, strengthening trade relationships, and positioning Canada as a trusted global leader in organic integrity and innovation.

The numbers continue to tell a powerful story. Globally, the organic food market surpassed USD \$228 billion in 2024, and is projected to more than double in the next decade. Here in Canada, our domestic organic market grew to nearly CAD \$9.75 billion, solidifying our place as the fifth largest organic market in the world. These figures reflect growing consumer confidence in organic, and the strength of the standards that make the Canadian organic label one of the most trusted in the world.



Looking ahead, COTA remains focused on securing federal recognition of organic as a strategic national priority. With the National Organic Action Plan full developed, we are actively working to transform it into policy—ensuring organic farming and businesses receive the resources, infrastructure, and legislative support they need to thrive. At the same time, we continue to support our members by amplifying the organic story—showcasing the real-world benefits of organic for people, communities, and the planet.

Having served on the COTA Board since 2022 and now as President, it is a deep honour to work alongside this extraordinary community of farmers, processors, retailers, advocates, and visionaries. Your innovation, resilience, and belief in a better food system continue to drive our collective progress.

As we look toward 2026, I am more confident than ever in the strength of this sector—and the ability of COTA to lead us forward. Together, we are shaping not only a growing industry, but a better future.

Warm regards,

Carrie-Anne Palmeri

Carrie-Anne Palmeri, President
Canada Organic Trade Association



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



In the words of Vandana Shiva, *“The health of the planet and the health of people are one and the same.”* And Wendell Berry reminds us that *“The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all, our most pleasing responsibility.”*

This past year, our community has embraced that responsibility with courage, conviction, and collaboration. Together, we have taken bold steps toward building Canada’s **National Organic Action Plan**—a strategic vision grounded in ecological integrity, fair compensation for ecosystem services, and the belief that organic is a catalyst for renewal, not just a method of production.

As members of the Canada Organic Trade Association, you are part of something far greater than any one organization. You are stewards of a future where food regenerates the land, where farmers are empowered, and our collective work is rooted in the values of health, care, ecology and fairness.

We are not merely advocating for organic—we are cultivating a culture of possibility. With your support, we are transforming ideas into action, and action into impact. The momentum we’ve built in 2025 is just the beginning. Together, we are shaping a future where organic is recognized not only as a strategic priority, but as a national imperative.

Let us continue this journey with the wisdom of those who came before us, and the clarity of purpose that defines our path ahead.

Organically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tia Loftsgard".

Tia Loftsgard, Executive Director



MARKET ACCESS

MARKET ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Market access and development continue to be foundational pillars of COTA's strategic vision, driving international trade and strengthening both domestic and global demand for Canadian organic products. In 2024-25, we made significant strides in opening new markets, deepening trade relationships, and equipping Canadian organic businesses with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive. These efforts were supported through targeted trade missions, robust advocacy, strategic partnerships, and promotional initiatives under the federal AgriMarketing Program.

A major highlight of the year was the hosting of the Organic Summit, which served as a national platform to advance the Organic Action Plan, address trade barriers, and foster collaboration across the sector. Through this summit and subsequent consultations, we developed a strategic framework to clarify industry roles and regulatory needs, ensuring a more cohesive and responsive organic ecosystem. Our global engagement extended to the IFOAM Organic World Congress in Taiwan, where COTA chaired the global Annual General Meeting and contributed to high-level discussions on seven critical trade issues, including standards review, seed purity, governance cohesion, fraud prevention, data strategy, equivalency negotiations, and tariff challenges.

Domestically, we focused on capacity building and technical support, delivering training to 1,381 participants across the country. We expanded and updated the Global Organic Trade Guide, launched the 2024 Import/Export Report, initiated backend development for the Organic Data Hub, and conducted targeted outreach and matchmaking with buyers from key international markets including Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, the United States, and Germany. Our promotional efforts reached over 62,500 consumers through in-store activations

and national campaigns, reinforcing the visibility and value of Canadian organic products.



We also continued to partner with EcoCert Canada on delivering on the On Farm Climate Action Fund, benefitting over 156 farmers across the nation with financial and technical assistance (up to \$75,000). As we start the fourth year of partnering on this program, the 2024 results speak for themselves: 107,342 acres of farmland (the equivalent of 53,671 Canadian football fields) were a part of the program of which 96% of the operators were already certified organic. Three farmers were never previously certified organic, representing 267 acres that will now be certified organic. Twenty-eight of the 153 of the organic farmers were in the 3-year process of converting more land to organic (3651 acres) than they already were farming on, while 14 were just starting the organic conversion process for another 179 acres to come into organic production.

In the United States, we supported Canadian companies at major trade shows such as Natural Products Expo West, Supply Side West, Newtopia Now, and the Sweets & Snacks Expo.



These missions generated over \$2.65 million in estimated sales, facilitated 160 new leads, and connected businesses with 47 distributor contacts. We also strengthened bilateral relations in preparation for the next iteration of the Canada-USA Organic Equivalency Arrangement and the Canada-EU Organic Equivalency Arrangement, ensuring continued access and alignment between the two markets.

Our presence at BioFach, the world's leading organic trade fair in Germany, enabled Canadian companies to showcase their products to a global audience. Engagements with European and international stakeholders resulted in \$825,000 in estimated sales and connections with 112 buyers, further solidifying Canada's reputation as a trusted organic supplier.

To support strategic decision-making, we invested in market research and data development, releasing updated production and sales statistics,

consumer perception fact sheets, and the 2024 Canadian Organic Market Report. We also contributed to the internationally recognized *World of Organic Agriculture* book, benchmarking Canada's position in the global organic landscape. These efforts identified market opportunities valued at \$4 million, with 7,852 users accessing research data to inform their business strategies.

Our digital promotion and outreach efforts continued to grow, with over 150,000 unique website visits across the Canada Organic and Choose Canada Organic platforms. Together, these initiatives reflect COTA's commitment to advancing market access, supporting organic businesses, and positioning Canada as a global leader in organic trade. By building bridges across borders and strengthening domestic capacity, we are laying the groundwork for a more vibrant, resilient, and competitive organic sector.



CANADA ORGANIC STATISTICS

CANADIAN ORGANIC MARKET

SALES
\$9.75 billion

CANADIANS ANNUAL
SPEND ON ORGANIC

8.21% growth from
2023 to 2024

FOOD &
BEVERAGE
VALUED AT
\$7.77 billion

Based off 2024 data
using CAGR method

A FEW ORGANIC FACTS

Eating organic fruits and vegetables could increase your antioxidants by 20–40%



Mounting evidence shows that food grown organically has a higher concentration of nutrients



Organic reduces health risks by minimizing exposure to toxic and persistent chemicals and pesticides

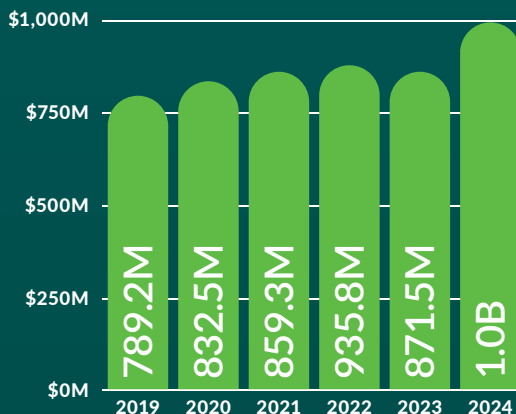


Research shows that organic farming methods can mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon in the soil and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions



Sources can be found on choosecanadaorganic.ca

IMPORTS*

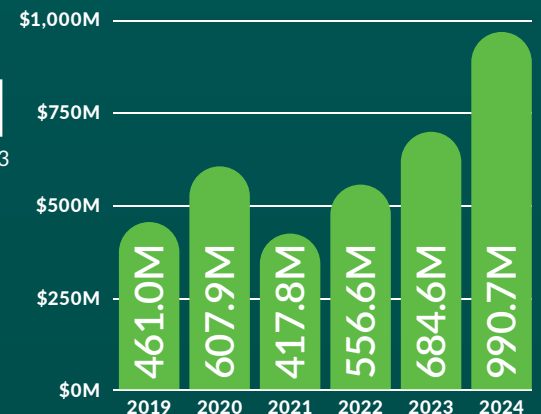


\$1.0B

15% increase since 2023

*Limited to available
Harmonized Sales (HS) code data available
2024 HS Code Statistics Canada Data

EXPORTS*



\$990.7M

45% increase since 2023

CERTIFIED OPERATORS**



7560***
CERTIFIED ORGANIC OPERATIONS
 0.03% increase since 2023
 2 new operators

ORGANIC FOOD OPERATORS

3621	1389	809	733	625	209	169	5
Québec	Ontario	Sask.	B.C.	Alberta	Atlantic	Manitoba	Territories



5895
CERTIFIED PRODUCERS
 1.17% decrease since 2023
 Decline of 70 producers

ORGANIC PRODUCERS

3247	1106	752	587	567	123	152	4
Québec	Ontario	Sask.	Alberta	B.C.	Atlantic	Manitoba	Territories



1988
CERTIFIED PROCESSORS
 1.79% increase since 2023
 35 new processors

ORGANIC FOOD PROCESSORS

834	534	335	90	80	63	47	5
Québec	Ontario	B.C.	Alberta	Sask.	Atlantic	Manitoba	Territories



670
CERTIFIED LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS
 3.46% decrease since 2023
 Decline of 24 producers

ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

246	234	94	46	20	16	12	2
Ontario	Québec	B.C.	Alberta	Manitoba	Sask.	Atlantic	Territories



73
CERTIFIED AQUACULTURE OPERATORS
 20.65% decrease since 2023
 Decline of 19 operators

ORGANIC AQUACULTURE OPERATORS

35	24	12	2	0	0	0	0
Atlantic	Québec	Ontario	B.C.	Alberta	Sask.	Manitoba	Territories

** Of the 7560 certified organic operators in Canada, 7059 are COR certified and 501 are certified to a Provincial organic standard. In addition, there are 1323 certified to COR internationally, mostly in Mexico, New Zealand, Thailand and Colombia.

*** Operators can be certified as a grower, processor, livestock or aquaculture therefore the segmented data will not add up to the total amount of operators.

CERTIFIED ACRES



2.61M
CERTIFIED ACRES
 6.2% decrease since 2023

ORGANIC CERTIFIED ACRES (thousand acres)

920	682	425	242	199	177	98	0.5
Sask.	Québec	Alberta	B.C.	Ontario	Atlantic	Manitoba	Territories

CONSUMER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS

Canadian consumers are at the heart of the organic movement, not only through their purchasing choices but also through their growing awareness of the health and environmental benefits of organic products. In 2024, consumer demand drove organic food and beverage sales to \$9.75 billion, marking an 8.21% increase from the previous year. This surge reflects a deepening public understanding of organic's role in reducing exposure to harmful chemicals and supporting sustainable farming practices. The sharp 45% rise in organic imports, totaling \$990.7 million, further underscores the expanding appetite for organic options. These figures highlight the importance of continued investment in consumer education initiatives that inform, inspire, and empower Canadians to make choices that align with their values and contribute to a healthier planet.

Throughout the year, we deepened our connection with organic supporters by keeping them informed and engaged on the issues that matter most—such as farmers' right to save seed, the threat of rising glyphosate residue limits on certain crops, and the introduction of genetic engineering technologies without mandatory disclosure in Canada. Through our monthly “Buzz Builder” educational blog and active social media presence, we provide timely updates and calls to action on the issues that matter most to organic supporters. With 55% of Canadians actively seeking organically produced foods and 60% willing to pay a premium for organic, our education efforts are not only raising awareness—they're empowering consumers to make informed choices that reflect their values. Organic is more than a label; it's a lifestyle and a conscious vote for a healthier, more transparent food system.

CELEBRATING ORGANIC MONTH

Organic Month unites Canadians with a month-long platform of engaging events, online activations, in-stores promotions and retailer collaborations to offer more discounts and promotions for organic consumers. Nine organic distributors participated in the distribution of organic marketing kits to retailers across the nation, helping drive in-store awareness of organic products. Many mainstream grocers participated, educating consumers alongside us with our digital toolkits and Organic Month assets.



Our campaign reached new heights, with more than 40,000 views on [@choosecanadaorganic](#) Instagram, over 10,400+ visits to our websites, and 400 new followers gained across social media platforms! We engaged with influencers, brands and farmers who spotlighted organic through recipes, videos and stories to highlight and educate the benefits of choosing organic. The *Globe and Mail* featured [organic](#) along with several other media outlets, including billboards in the Greater Toronto Area highlighted organic to massive audiences to broaden our reach to households across the country.

As we turn around the corner to look forward to next year's Organic Month celebrations, we do so with gratitude to our seven generous sponsors who made it all possible this year.



ORGANIC CAMPUS CHAMPIONS LEAD

Thanks go to Riverside Natural Foods – Home of MadeGood and Crofter's Organic for their leadership in championing the Organic Campus program, which aims to educate a targeted demographic but also bring new sales opportunities through procurement at the college and university institutional level.

George Brown College renewed its Gold Organic designation, led by the Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts—the largest culinary school in Canada.



With over 300 food and beverage classes each week, organic ingredients are integrated into daily learning, making organic a core part of the student experience.

Acadia University, the first Organic Campus in



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

Canada, continues its dedication to organic on campus with several Organic Month events and communication initiatives.

COTA's outreach at the Canadian College and Universities Food Service Association (CCUFSA) sparked strong interest from campus food service leaders nationwide.

Organic Campus comes to life when in-house champions—like sustainability officers, professors, and inventory managers—engage their communities. The program supports institutional procurement shifts and inspires future organic advocates, helping grow the movement and create new opportunities for organic businesses.

RIVERSIDE™
NATURAL FOODS INC.

MADEGOOD®

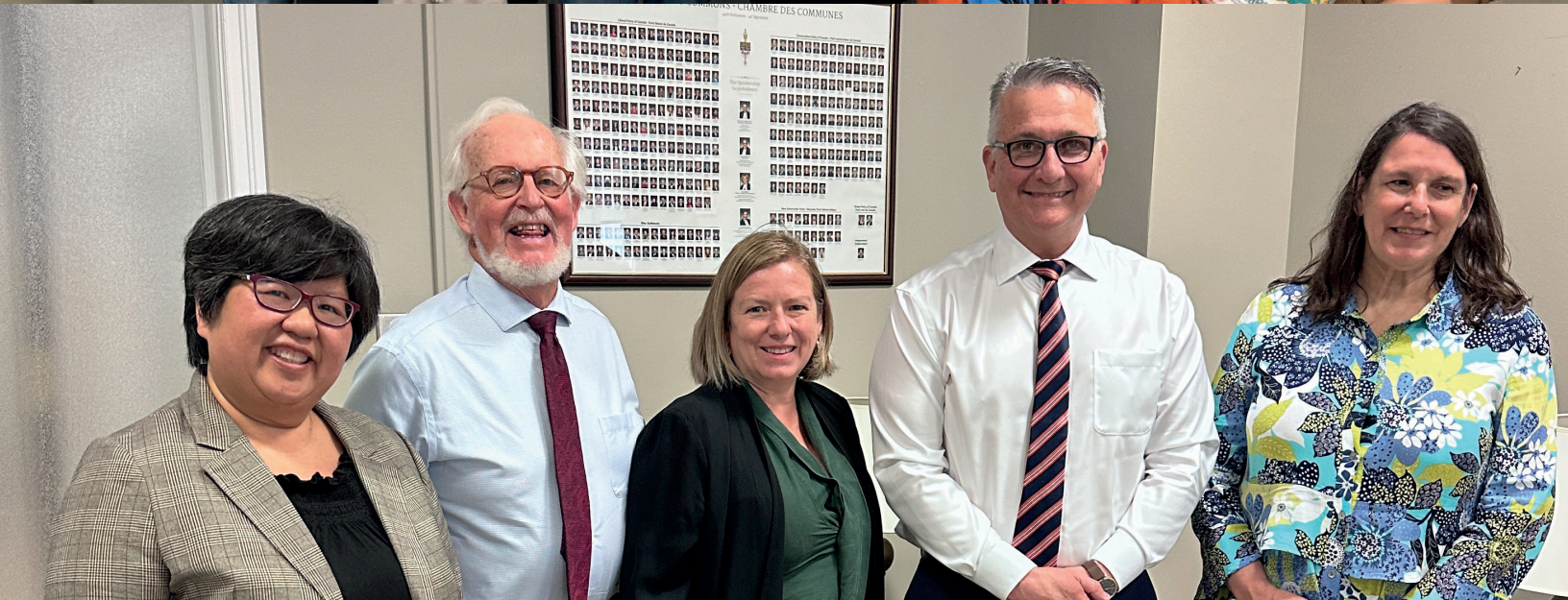
CROFTER'S®
ORGANIC • BIOLOGIQUE



REGULATORY AND POLICY UPDATE

In a year marked by global trade disruptions, shifting regulations, and a change in federal leadership, COTA intensified its policy and regulatory efforts. We remained focused on two core objectives: protecting the integrity of organic certification and fostering sector growth. From sudden tariff changes to renewed momentum for national organic policy, the evolving landscape

brought both risks and opportunities. Through strategic advocacy, regulatory engagement, and sector coordination, COTA kept organic firmly on Canada's policy agenda—helping members navigate uncertainty, maintain compliance, and access new supports, while advancing long-term goals to build a more resilient, competitive, and credible organic system.



Trade advocacy was a top priority in 2024–2025 as tariffs and evolving global trade measures posed significant risks to organic supply chains and market access.

TARIFFS AND GLOBAL DISRUPTION

In February 2025, the U.S. announced new tariffs that impacted Canadian organic exports. COTA participated in over a dozen meetings with the Department of Finance, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to assess impacts and advocate for organic-specific considerations.

Throughout this period of significant uncertainty, COTA served as a trusted source of timely, sector-specific information. We kept members informed through regular updates and offering strategic insights. COTA advocated and updated members on available relief programs and ensured members understood CUSMA compliance requirements. These efforts enabled businesses to navigate a volatile trade environment and underscored the importance of organic-specific advocacy in broader trade policy discussions.

ORGANIC EQUIVALENCY AND TRADE AGREEMENTS

The Canada–EU Organic Equivalency Arrangement, in place since 2011, is also under review as the EU moves toward requiring formal trade agreements for continued recognition of organic standards. While the current arrangement remains valid until the end of 2026, a recent ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union—restricting use of the EU organic logo to products fully compliant with EU regulations—has introduced new trade barriers and stalled progress on equivalency discussions. As lead of the Equivalency Technical Assessment

Committee reporting to CFIA, COTA has actively provided stakeholder input and participated in consultations to ensure the Canada Organic Regime aligns with evolving EU requirements. We continue working with domestic and international partners to address emerging challenges and protect market access for our members.

In fall 2024, we submitted formal input to Canada's first consultation on the 2026 CUSMA joint review. The 2026 review of CUSMA is to coincide with the first planned review of the Canada–U.S. Organic Equivalency Arrangement since it was signed in 2009.

COTA presented to the House of Commons Agriculture Committee as part of its study on border carbon adjustments and reciprocity of standards. COTA emphasized the need for continued investment in organic, regulatory alignment in upcoming trade negotiations, and the exemption of organic products from carbon border adjustments, leveraging existing equivalency arrangements.



ORGANIC INTEGRITY

STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT AND IMPORT SYSTEMS

Beyond tariffs, COTA played a key role in regulatory implementation that directly impacts organic integrity. We supported members through the rollout of the USDA's Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) rule. A new requirement for Canadian importers of record for products destined for the U.S. to be National Organic Program (NOP) certified in some instances created new challenges for many organic businesses. Through coordinated advocacy, COTA secured an extension from May 2024 to July 2025, providing critical time for businesses to comply and maintain uninterrupted access to the U.S. market.

CFIA's Phase I of integrating organic import requirements into the Automated Import Reference System (AIRS) was completed in late 2024, distinguishing organic requirements from conventional import requirements and improve data access for enforcement purposes. COTA supported members during Phase II of CFIA's organic import requirements by providing timely information and answering questions. This phase, which took effect on May 26, 2025, introduced mandatory digital uploads of organic certificates for organic imports.



ORGANIC ACTION PLAN

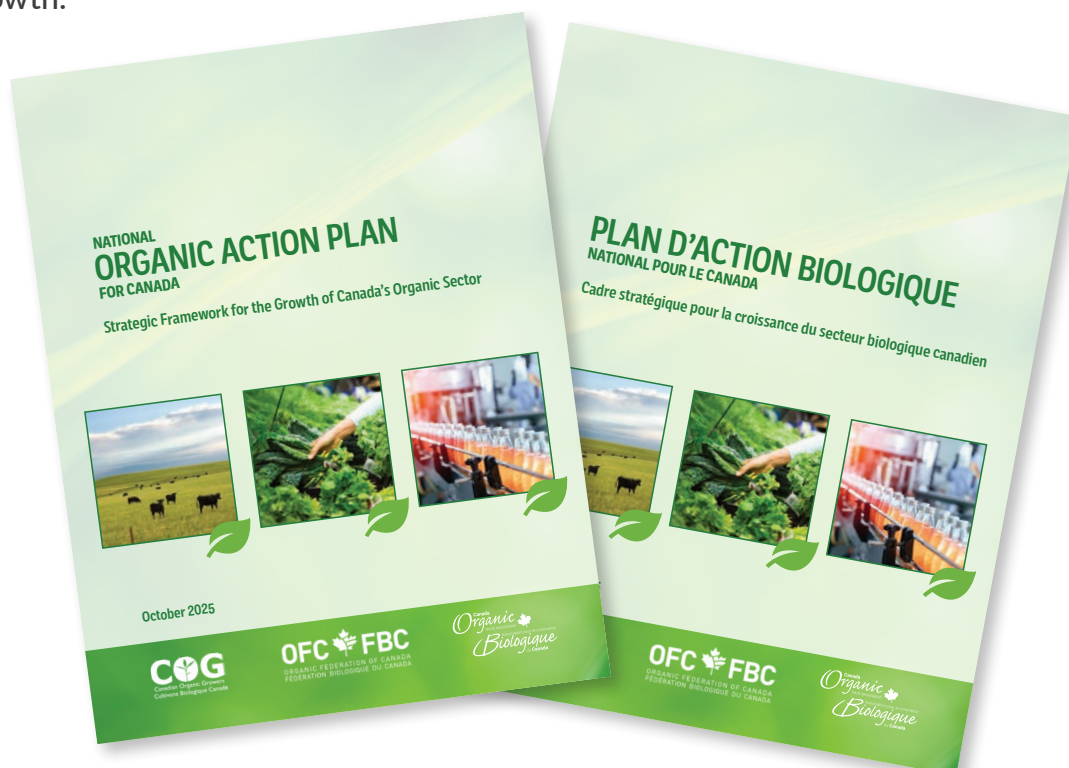
A STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR SECTOR GROWTH

COTA continued to champion the Organic Action Plan (OAP), a strategic roadmap outlines key investments and policy changes needed to unlock the full potential of Canada's organic sector. The plan was developed by the Canadian Organic Alliance (COA) consisting of COTA, Canadian Organic Growers (COG) and the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) in consultation with the provincial organic associations. In 2025, COTA finalized the plan and submitted two federal pre-budget submissions recommending:

- Permanent funding for the Canadian Organic Standards (COS) review.
- A national organic data strategy to improve public access to sector metrics.
- Market development support to grow domestic and export opportunities.
- Transition assistance for producers converting to organic.
- A dedicated mandate at AAFC to drive organic sector growth.

As part of this strategy, COTA advanced efforts to improve organic data infrastructure. Following the release of a sector white paper on data gaps and coordinated advocacy by the COA, the federal government convened an interdepartmental data committee to enhance coordination and publicly available statistical data on organic.

These priorities were shared during Organic Parliament Day in November and in meetings with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Assistant Deputy Ministers at AAFC and CFIA, and the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Agriculture Ministers' meeting. They were also shared with key government staff and in meetings with elected officials and through House of Commons/ Senate testimony throughout the year. The OAP has become a cornerstone of COTA's long-term advocacy strategy, aligning stakeholders with a shared vision for organic advancement while providing a framework for shorter term more focused priorities.



CERTIFICATION AND CLAIMS

PROTECTION OF ORGANIC CLAIMS AND CERTIFICATION

COTA actively monitored and responded to domestic policy developments that could impact organic certification, consumer trust, and market access.

Canadian Organic Standards Review: COTA was a voting member on the Technical Committee and submitted a member-informed submission during the consultation period.

Bill C-5 (Free Trade and Labour Mobility Act): Led the advocacy for an exemption for organic, preserving the Canada Organic Regime's (COR) role in interprovincial trade. This included high-level meetings, a joint sector letter to ministers from national and regional organic organizations, and participation in consultations led by the Privy Council Office.

Bill C-59 (Competition Act – Anti-Greenwashing Legislation): Submitted comments to ensure organic claims are protected and not considered misleading. We continue to support members in making credible claims aligned with COR certification and are updating communication tools to reflect these changes.

Gene editing: Although gene editing was deregulated in Canada in 2023, COTA continues in a supporting role on two related committees to ensure organic integrity: the Plant Breeding Innovation Transparency Steering Committee, which oversees the Seeds Canada database, and the CGSB 32-310 voluntary labelling GE standard review, where changes have been proposed that would exclude gene editing from the definition of genetic engineering—potentially misaligning with the Canadian Organic Standards.



STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS AND SECTOR RESILIENCE

COTA maintained regular touchpoints with CFIA and AAFC through monthly meetings. We also engaged in the Federal Government's Agile Regulations Table, an initiative to modernize regulatory frameworks, and Organic Market Demand and Consumer Trust Roundtables.

Internationally, COTA strengthened relationships with USDA, the Organic Trade Association

(OTA), Trade Commissioners, and global partners including International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement (IFOAM) and international organic associations as we engaged to ensure regulatory coherence and the protection of organic integrity across jurisdictions.



LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the year ahead, COTA will continue to advocate for a regulatory environment that supports innovation, integrity, and growth. Key priorities include:

- Advancing domestic and international trade and tariff supports.
- Ensuring that the Canada Organic logo and certification maintain their status for interprovincial trade.
- Executing a workplan related to the Organic Action Plan and securing federal commitments.
- Improving public access to organic data and sector metrics.
- Publishing new sector guidance, including a Greenwashing Guide.
- Participating in the 2026 Canadian Organic Standards update.
- Continue leading on equivalency arrangements and trade agreements, such as CUSMA and the EU-Canada organic agreement.

COTA's policy and regulatory work remains foundational to building a resilient, trusted, and thriving organic sector. Through proactive advocacy, strategic collaboration, and a commitment to integrity, we are shaping a future where organic continues to lead in sustainability, transparency, and consumer confidence.



ORGANIC SUMMIT & ORGANIC PARLIAMENT DAY

Annually COTA hosts the Organic Summit in Ottawa, followed by an Organic Parliament Day, bringing our members together with Senators and Members of Parliament to discuss organic interests. In 2024, the Organic Summit was held on November 18 in Ottawa as a hybrid event, followed by a members-only Organic Parliament Day on November 19.

The Organic Summit featured nine speakers, including representatives from NielsenIQ, Export Development Canada, and the Rodale Institute, who shared their insights on affordability challenges, export opportunities, and scientific research on nutrient density in organic products. The Summit served as platform for learning, networking, and showcasing the role of organic in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and human and soil health.

Parliament Day continued our tradition of direct engagement with policymakers. COTA members met with supportive Members of Parliament and Senators to advocate for the implementation of Canada's Organic Action Plan (OAP). These meetings focused on securing political support for national targets, transition funding, research investments, and strategic policy alignment across government agencies. The need for enhanced enforcement mechanisms at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and transparency around genetically engineered seeds were among our main advocacy points.

With momentum building around the Organic Action Plan, the 2024 Organic Summit and Parliament Day marked a pivotal moment in aligning industry, science, and policy toward a more sustainable and resilient organic future.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

BUILDING VALUE THROUGH MEANINGFUL MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

As a member-driven association, COTA's strength lies in the diversity and dedication of our members. In the 2024–2025 membership year, we proudly welcomed 17 new members from across the organic value chain—each bringing fresh energy and perspective to our growing organic business network.

To better capture member insights, the member satisfaction survey was strategically redesigned to improve relevance. Staff actively prioritized outreach efforts to maximize survey responses and ensure broader member representation resulting in increased participation of over 59 percent from the prior year. Two survey highlights:

- With a 90 percent agreement rate, respondents overwhelmingly reported that they would recommend COTA to their network
- Over 91 percent said that they feel that COTA keeps them well informed about industry issues affecting their business

Whether we are coordinating market access benefits and programming, strengthening data insights, advocating for regulatory reform, or championing organic interests on Parliament

Hill, our work is rooted in amplifying the voices of our members. The milestones highlighted in our Annual Report reflect both COTA's vital role in Canada's organic business landscape and the exciting potential for continued market growth.

This year, we focused on deepening relationships within the breadth of the membership by expanding outreach and raising awareness of the full spectrum of COTA's benefits. We encouraged members to:

- Access funding opportunities and data.
- Join new committees such as the Market Development Committee, Organic Association's Federal Provincial Territorial Committee and Certification Body Task Force.
- Attend exclusive events and webinars.
- Respond to calls for action that shape the future of organic.

At COTA, we are focused on delivering real value to our members. That means being responsive, building meaningful relationships, and staying tuned in to what matters most to our members. By working together, we help shape a stronger, more resilient organic sector in Canada—one that reflects the voices and priorities of our network. When we collaborate, our impact grows.

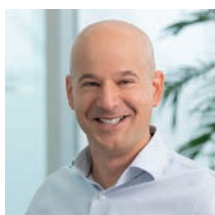


LEADERSHIP AWARDS

CELEBRATING LEADERS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ORGANIC

This year's Organic Gala & Leadership Awards, held at Seasons in the Park in Vancouver, marked nine years of recognizing excellence in Canada's organic sector. Industry leaders, innovators, and advocates came together to celebrate the remarkable individuals and businesses shaping the future of organic through their impact and vision.

The evening highlighted achievements across the value chain, with awards presented in eight categories:



ORGANIC CHAMPION OF THE YEAR
Nima Fotovat



LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIC SCIENCE
Caroline Halde, Ph.D., agr.



ORGANIC RETAILER OF THE YEAR
Choices Market



ORGANIC SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR
Grain Millers Canada Corp.



ORGANIC INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR
Blume



ORGANIC FARMER OF THE YEAR
St. Francis Herb Farm



DISTINGUISHED SUPPORTER OF THE YEAR
Leah Taylor Roy, Member of Parliament
for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill



ORGANIC JEDI (JUSTICE - EQUITY - DIVERSITY - INCLUSION) LEADER OF THE YEAR
Nature's Path Organic Foods

The awards honoured the leadership and innovation driving growth, sustainability, and collaboration in Canadian organic.

Congratulations to this year's award recipients. Their contributions continue to inspire our community and strengthen the future of organic in Canada.



COTA AT WORK



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are deeply grateful to our Board of Directors—visionary leaders who generously volunteer their time, expertise, and passion to guide COTA's work. Their commitment strengthens our ability to meet challenges, seize opportunities, and advance our mission for a thriving organic sector. The dedication, leadership, and wisdom they bring to the table are instrumental in shaping a more resilient and sustainable future.



PRESIDENT
Carrie-Anne Palmeri
Organic Program
Manager at
Nature's Path Foods



VICE PRESIDENT
Tim Rundle
General Manager
at Creative Salmon
Company Ltd.



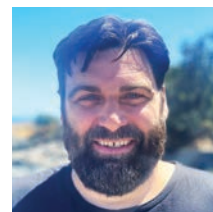
TREASURER
Nima Fotovat
Co-founder &
President at
Riverside Natural
Foods Ltd.



SECRETARY
Emma Barrett
Head of Marketing at
Mill Street Brewery



Ali Davies
Vice President of
Sales at UNFI



Travis Heide
President at
Organics Canada



Viren Malik
Chief Sales
Officer at
Salt Spring Coffee



François Pelletier
Strategic Advisor
at Satau



Ian Walker
CEO, Left Coast
Organics and Left
Coast Naturals

OUR ADVISORY COUNCIL

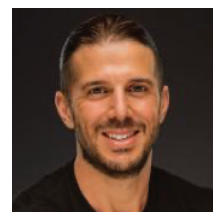
WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR ADVISORY COUNCIL



Jill Baxter



Dag Falck



Mike Fata



**Andrew
Hammermeister**



Maureen Kirkpatrick



Gordon Truscott



OUR TEAM

MEET OUR DEDICATED TEAM

At the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA), we are the driving force behind our mission to support and advance organic trade in Canada. With our combined expertise, innovation, and dedication, we work tirelessly to uphold organic standards, advocate for policies that foster growth, and provide meaningful support to our members. Our passion and commitment are at the heart of everything we do, and we are proud to represent and serve the vibrant organic community across Canada.



(left to right) **Kim De Lallo**, Member Relations & Business Development Manager;
Ellie Barlow, Policy and Market Development Analyst;
My-Lien Bosch, Government Relations & Regulatory Affairs Manager;
Ann Fisbein, Finance Manager;
Tia Loftsgard, Executive Director;
Sophie Marvell, Senior Communications Coordinator



OUR DONORS

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE TO OUR ANNUAL FUND AND ADVOCACY FUND DONORS

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the generous donors who invest in the Canada Organic Trade Association's Annual Fund and Advocacy Fund. Your support is a powerful statement: you believe that organic can and must grow—and you're helping make that vision a reality.

Your contributions fuel groundbreaking, foundation-building initiatives that strengthen Canada's organic sector. From expanding market

share to driving innovation that influences consumer choices, your investment empowers COTA to lead with purpose and impact.

By standing with us, you are not only gaining visibility in the organic marketplace—you are helping cultivate deeper roots for organic to thrive. We are grateful for your commitment, leadership, and belief in the collective spirit that drives this movement forward.

Thank you for being an essential part of our work and for helping build a resilient, sustainable future for organic in Canada and beyond.

ANNUAL FUND



**AVAFINA ORGANICS
BAY STATE MILLING
HORIZON GROCERY + WELLNESS**

**LEFT COAST ORGANICS
STONEHENGE ORGANICS**

**ASH STREET ORGANICS
BACK 40 ORGANICS LTD.
BLUME
CREATIVE SALMON COMPANY LTD.
DOM INTERNATIONAL
ECOCERT CANADA
EVERLAND NATURAL FOODS
FLOATING LEAF FINE FOODS**

**GRAIN MILLERS CANADA
GRAPHIC PACKAGING
KEHO LAKE FARMS
LEBEAU EXCEL
MANITOBA HARVEST / FRESH HEMP FOODS
MILL STREET BREWERY
RIVER VALLEY SPECIALTY FARMS
YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE**

ADVOCACY FUND

**PRO-CERT ORGANIC SYSTEMS LTD.
RENEWAL PARTNERS**



2024-2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

COTA concluded the 2024-2025 fiscal year with a positive financial outcome for the second consecutive year, marking a 67% increase over the previous year. This growth reflects our continued commitment to fiscal responsibility and strategic expansion, allowing us to enhance our programs and better serve members of the organic sector.

We remained accountable to our members by allocating over 38.3% of total funds directly to program delivery. Government funding through the Agri-Marketing Program (AMP) continues to be our second-largest revenue source, contributing more than 30% of total revenue. In 2024-2025, AMP grant funding totaled \$394,426. As the current AMP funding program concludes in March 2026, COTA has submitted a re-application under the Canada Agricultural Partnership's AgriMarketing Program for the next three-year cycle.

Additionally, the On-Farm Climate Action Fund administered by Ecocert generated \$52,712 in net revenue and has been approved for another three-year grant. We also launched a dedicated

Advocacy Fund, establishing a restricted reserve to support our advocacy efforts.

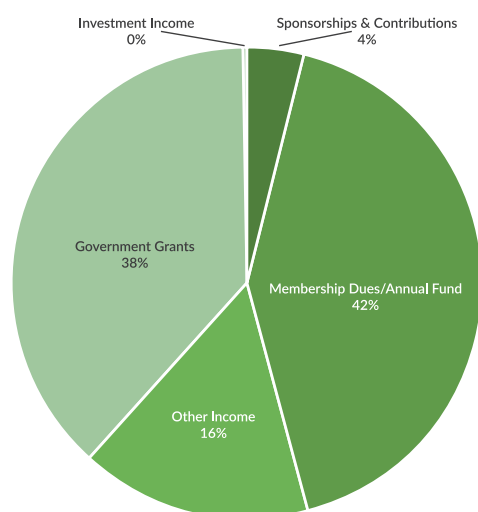
Membership revenue remains our largest single source of income, accounting for 35% of total revenue. While membership revenue decreased by 9.3% to \$408,307, we welcomed 23 new members, contributing \$29,465 in new dues.

AMP-related expenses totaled \$456,312, which was \$84,842 below budget. Overall, COTA's total expenses came in at \$1,129,091, representing an 8.8% reduction from the budgeted amount.

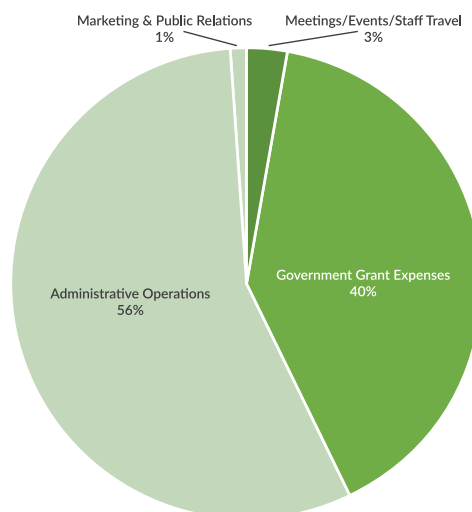
In alignment with our commitment to long-term sustainability, the Finance Committee has allocated the full \$24,779 net profit to the Sustainability Fund.

Finally, none of these achievements would be possible without the generous support of our members. While the path forward may present challenges, we are confident in the strength of our community. Your continued commitment empowers us to drive meaningful change and build a resilient future for organic agriculture.

2024-2025 REVENUE



2024-2025 EXPENSES





Canada
Organic
trade association

Association pour le commerce
Biologique
du Canada