

National Organic Action Plan for Canada

Strategic Plan for the Growth of the Organic Sector

Consultation Draft

August 26, 2025

Prepared by the Canadian Organic Alliance



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Partners

Canada Organic Trade Association
Canadian Organic Growers
Organic Federation of Canada
Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network
Canadian Organic Seafood Alliance
Filière biologique du Québec
Growers of Organic Food Yukon
Manitoba Organics
Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada
Organic Alberta
Organic BC
Organic Council of Ontario
Organic Nova Scotia
PEI Certified Organic Producers Cooperative
Responsible Organic Customer Association
SaskOrganics
Union des producteurs agricoles

Acknowledgments

Provincial Organic Sector Organizations
Holmbeck Eco Consult
[Others to be added]

Abbreviations

AAFC - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
CB - certification body
CFIA - Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CGSB - Canadian General Standards Board
COA - Canadian Organic Alliance
COR - Canada Organic Regime
COS - Canadian Organic Standards
CVB - conformity verification body
ECCC - Environment and Climate Change Canada
OAP - Organic Action Plan

Executive Summary

Unlocking the Organic Opportunity for Canada

Agriculture faces unprecedented challenges, including economic and geopolitical pressures, trade barriers, and climate change. Building more resilient food and farming systems is an imperative. **Organic agriculture is a proven, practical tool the Canadian government already has at its disposal to help meet national priorities for economic growth, food security, public health, biodiversity, and climate action.** It is time to leverage it to its full potential.

Organic food and farming deliver measurable environmental, economic, and social benefits. The system is federally regulated under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), third-party verified according to the Canadian Organic Standards (COS), and internationally recognized through nine equivalency arrangements with 35 trading partners. Organic is a credible, enforceable production system with broad application across Canada's diverse agricultural landscape, and growing global demand.

In 2023, Canada's organic market surpassed \$9 billion, up from \$6.3 billion in 2019, making it the fifth largest in the world in a growing global market now valued at over \$200 billion. The U.S. market is projected to grow 2.5 times by 2033, reaching US \$159 billion¹, while the Indo-Pacific market is expected to double by 2029, reaching US \$95.9 billion² — offering significant trade and export opportunities for Canadian producers.

But Canada is not keeping pace. Domestic organic production has stagnated, acreage is down, and imports are rising as companies struggle to find Canadian organic products. In 2023, Canada experienced its first decline in certified organic producers since the Canada Organic Regime (COR) was established in 2009.

Meanwhile, Canada's key competitors, including the United States (US) and European Union (EU), have identified organic's potential, and have deployed dedicated organic strategies. As a result, the US now invests 8 times more per acre into its organic sector than Canada, while the EU invests 200 times more.³

Organic production in Canada supports increased farm profitability, GHG emissions reductions, biodiversity and soil health, water protection and animal welfare, stronger rural economies, and

¹ Renub Research. (2025, March). United States organic food market size and share analysis – growth trends and forecast report 2025–2033. <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/report/united-states-organic-market>.

² Export Development Canada. (2025, March 25). Organic food agreements open global markets to Canadian exporters. <https://www.edc.ca/en/article/organic-food-agreements-open-global-markets-to-canadian-exporters.html>

³ Organic Task Force Report, 2025, Appendix 4. <https://cog.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/organic-task-force-appendix-4.pdf>.

diverse new entrants to agriculture.⁴ It is a strategic, market-driven production system that directly supports Canada's policy goals. To meet its 2030 goals, Canada needs scale. Organic provides a ready-to-implement framework for sustainable agriculture, at scale, today.

Despite these benefits, **Canada has no policy framework to support the development of organic farming and markets**, resulting in limited dedicated public support. Without action, we risk missing opportunities to meet climate goals, strengthen domestic food supply, and compete globally.

It is time for a new era of organic agriculture and food; one marked by unleashing the sector's full growth potential, with an emphasis on competitiveness, productivity, and environmental stewardship. Canada has already invested in the architecture - national standards, certification, international recognition. Now we need to unlock its full potential. This plan outlines a clear pathway to helping Canada realize this opportunity.

A National Organic Action Plan

The Organic Action Plan (OAP), developed by the Canadian Organic Alliance (COA)⁵, outlines a strategy to unlock organic's growth potential and position it as a pillar of Canada's sustainable agri-food economy. It proposes a public-private partnership model, with sector-led commitments and clear roles for government.

The OAP is organized around **three pillars and outlines 16 key actions** to remove barriers to growth, strengthen competitiveness, and build a resilient domestic supply of organic food that can meet rising demand and deliver high-quality products at home and abroad:

1. **Strengthen Policy, Regulatory, and Data Infrastructure:** Establish policy direction and a supportive regulatory environment, and invest in industry and government to lead organic development and uphold integrity and compliance.
2. **Accelerate Growth and Innovation in Organic Production:** Expand domestic organic supply by enhancing transition supports, risk management tools, and expanding research, extension, and innovation to improve productivity and sustainability.
3. **Grow Organic Markets and Demand:** Create stable and more predictable market conditions for organic products, build processing and distribution infrastructure, and

⁴ Organic Task Force Report, 2025. <https://cog.ca/policy/organic-task-force/>.

⁵ About COA: The Canadian Organic Alliance (COA), made up of the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA), Canadian Organic Growers (COG), and the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) — which federates the provincial and territorial organic associations — brings together Canada's organic organizations and represents over 7,500 organic operators across Canada—including almost 6,000 producers and 1,600 processors—managing 3.18 million acres and supplying a wide range of products and ingredients for value-added foods and beverages.

stimulate demand through consumer education, public procurement, and retail and supply chain partnerships.

This plan offers a shared framework for action across federal, provincial, and territorial governments, while recognizing regional priorities and flexibility in implementation. A coordinated approach can drive market development, expand farmland under organic management, and deliver benefits for farmers, consumers, and the public.

The COA calls on federal and provincial governments to adopt this strategy and invest in organic as a strategic pillar of Canada's competitive and sustainable agri-food system. The COA and its partners are ready to work with government to implement the plan and position organic as a key part of Canada's food, trade, and climate future.

Canada cannot meet its climate, biodiversity, or public health goals without transforming agriculture. This requires investment in underserved segments of the sector. Organic is not the only answer—but it is defined, verified, and ready to scale. Let us invest in what works.

Vision and Outcomes

The Organic Action Plan envisions that organic agriculture and food production thrive in Canada. The following six visions describe the desired future state of the sector, based on the values and ambitions of Canada's organic community. Specific targets and performance indicators will be co-developed during implementation, and progress will be tracked through a dedicated monitoring and evaluation framework.

1. The Canadian organic sector is a major component of the Canadian food and agriculture system.
2. Organic farmers achieve fair livelihoods.
3. Organic farming leads in environmental and climate innovation, and Canada's system is recognized globally as best in class.
4. Organic is widely understood by Canadians as a verified sustainable production system.
5. Organic foods are accessible and affordable for all Canadians.
6. The organic processing sector is vibrant.
7. The adoption of organic farming systems contributes to rural revitalization.

From Roots to Resilience: Investing in Canada's Organic Future

Organic agriculture in Canada is more than a certified production system. It is rooted in Indigenous food systems that have long prioritized balance, biodiversity, and reciprocal relationships with land, water, and living beings. These systems laid the foundation for ecological farming approaches that later developed into the organic movement. Organic agriculture today draws on this legacy while integrating scientific, regulatory, and market-based tools to support sustainability and food system resilience.

Organic agriculture is a science-based, federally regulated system that supports healthy ecosystems, resilient farms, and trusted food to Canadians and the world. In Canada, organic production⁶ is governed by the COS and enforced through the COR⁷ under the CFIA. Organic claims are subject to third-party verification and audit, providing transparency and market confidence.

Canada's organic system gained legislative recognition in 2009 with the *Organic Products Regulations*, which were later incorporated into the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* in 2018. Organic is internationally recognized through nine equivalency arrangements with 35 trading partners. It defines clear standards, ensures compliance, and enables access to premium markets while meeting consumer demand for transparency and sustainability.

Despite this strong regulatory foundation, Canada's approach to organic has focused primarily on enforcement, rather than sector development. While consumer demand has surged, public investment and policy tools to grow the sector have not kept pace either with the needs of the growing sector or with its potential. Sector expansion efforts—including standards maintenance, trade development, and extension—have been driven by the industry itself, without secure support or a reliable funding mechanism.

In contrast, key trading partners such as the EU and U.S. have adopted organic strategies, provided transition supports, and invested significantly in research, market and supply chain development. Their agriculture departments actively lead the sector's growth. The EU's Farm to

⁶ Organic agriculture is defined in the Canadian Organic Standards as “a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock, and people. The principal goal of organic production is to develop enterprises that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment.” See: Organic production systems: general principles and management standards. <https://www.publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.894375/publication.html>.

⁷ The Canada Organic Regime (COR) is a comprehensive system involving the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and conformity verification bodies (CVBs), which assess and monitor certification bodies (CBs). CFIA regularly audits CVBs, which, in turn, accredit CBs that certify organic operators and products.

Fork Strategy⁸ aims for 25% of its farmland to be certified organic by 2030, with new investment and regulatory changes, which will have an impact on Canadian organic competitiveness and potential loss of market. In 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) made its largest single investment in organic farming, investing US \$300 million into a five-year Organic Transition Initiative (OTI), including support for production, market development, and risk management. Without similar leadership, Canada risks missing the full environmental, economic, and trade benefits that organic agriculture can offer.

Canada has the potential to be a global leader in producing high-quality organic crops, thanks to its favourable climate, fertile soils, strong quality assurance, and robust logistics, which can contribute to Canada's agricultural export target. Organic agriculture is not limited to niche markets—it is a cross-sectoral production system that can enhance value and opportunity across all agricultural commodities and their agri-food products, from grains and pulses to livestock and horticulture. This versatility positions organic as a key contributor to Canada's agricultural export targets and domestic food security. However, despite the expansion of Canadian organic production, supply continues to lag behind both global and domestic market growth, which has exceeded 8% annually over the past four years, leading some Canadian organic food processors to rely on imports and face challenges in securing consistent ingredients across multiple commodities.

After 15 years of oversight, and in light of rising demand and global competition, Canada must move into a new phase—one focused on active organic sector development, not just enforcement, backed by new tools and investment. The Organic Action Plan provides the framework to do so.

⁸ Council of the European Union. From Farm to Fork: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/from-farm-to-fork/>.

Pillar 1: Strengthen Policy, Regulatory, and Data Infrastructure

To unlock the full potential of Canada's organic sector, a robust and coordinated framework is essential. This includes foundational reforms to build institutional capacity, modernize governance, and ensure long-term sustainability. By strengthening policy, regulatory, and data infrastructure, Canada can foster a thriving organic ecosystem that is competitive globally, aligned with national priorities, and resilient in the face of environmental and economic challenges. These reforms will help balance supply and demand and enable a self-sustaining financial model that supports innovation and growth.

1.1 Establish Policy Framework for Organic Food and Farming

Canada's lack of a national policy framework for organic agriculture puts farmers and food businesses at a competitive disadvantage compared to peers including in the U.S. and EU. Establishing a clear federal policy direction and supportive regulatory environment are essential steps to unlock the sector's full economic and environmental potential, improve farm livelihoods, and meet growing demand for sustainable food. Organic agriculture aligns with federal priorities on climate, health, and economic development, and must be included in future food and farming policy.

Sector Commitments:

1. Set priorities and production and market targets for growth based on available statistics.

Government Recommendations:

2. Create a dedicated organic mandate within AAFC to lead domestic and global growth, coordinate across departments, and implement a new policy framework.
3. Establish an interdepartmental task force (including AAFC, ECCC, Health Canada, CFIA, StatsCan, Global Affairs, industry) to set national goals for organic growth, including farm area, operators, sales, procurement, and exports.
4. Conduct a cross-government policy review to align climate, biodiversity, food security, and procurement goals with support for organic farming, transition, research, and markets. Integrate organic into national strategies as a tool to advance international commitments (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals, Biodiversity Protocols, Nationally Determined Contributions).
5. Establish a Council for Organic Food and Farming, a permanent government-industry advisory body, to advise the Minister of Agriculture, monitor organic policies, and develop action plans.

1.2 Develop Organic Capacity in Sector and Government

Despite rapid growth in the organic sector, federal capacity has declined, with fewer dedicated organic staff at CFIA and AAFC than a decade ago—even as the market has grown fivefold (from under \$2 billion a decade ago). Strengthening government and sector capacity is essential to support organic operators, ensure consistent program access, and uphold and enforce strong standards. Targeted investments in staffing, training, and organizational models will enable the sector to scale effectively, respond to emerging challenges, and maintain Canada’s reputation for organic integrity.

Sector Commitments:

6. Strengthen organic sector collaboration on strategic priorities across regions and nationally.
7. Explore collaborative organizational models to expand sector capacity.

Government Recommendations

8. Enable a funding mechanism for the organic sector, including to support core functions, build capacity, and support policy implementation in production and markets.
9. Hire dedicated organic specialists (full-time equivalents, FTEs) at AAFC to adequately support sector development, policy, programs, and growth.
10. Increase CFIA staffing to enhance oversight, enforcement, and delivery of the COR.
11. Require COR training for AAFC and CFIA staff, relevant to their job function.
12. Fund training for public and private agrologists and extension specialists to build capacity for education in organic practices and systems.

1.3 Launch an Organic Data Strategy

Canada lacks publicly available data on key basic organic metrics, putting the sector at a disadvantage compared to competitor jurisdictions like the U.S. and EU, where tools such as the Organic Integrity Database and TRACES support market development, transparency, and enforcement. While CFIA, AAFC, and Statistics Canada collect some organic data, much of it remains inaccessible to the sector, limiting business planning, policy development, and international competitiveness. Publicly available, standardized organic data is foundational to enable smart on-farm and supply chain decisions, support sector growth, and strengthen integrity.

Sector Commitments:

13. Identify data needs and gaps that impact informed decision-making and growth in the organic sector as well as mechanisms for data analysis and diffusion.

Government Recommendations:

14. Establish a coordinated, interdepartmental approach to collect and publish comprehensive organic data - including on production, supply chains, markets, labour, and trade - with sustained funding for system upgrades and maintenance.
15. Create a government-managed publicly-available Organic Authenticity Database, updated and published annually, to support organic integrity.
16. Update HS-OGD (Harmonized System-Other Government Department) codes in AIRS (Automated Import Reference System) to improve tracking of organic import volumes and values.
17. Publish annual reports analyzing organic production, trade, and sales by product, province, and sector.

1.4 Modernize the Organic Regulatory Framework to Safeguard Organic Integrity

Canada must update its organic regulations to safeguard integrity, enhance enforcement, and support sector growth. A standalone Organic Act and expanded COR would improve market access, align with international standards, and enable broader certification across product categories. Harmonized federal and provincial rules are essential to ensure consistent standards nationwide and foster effective public-private collaboration.

Sector Commitments:

18. Work with the organic sector to identify regulatory barriers, strengthen fraud prevention, explore funding opportunities, and maintain alignment with key trading partners.

Government Recommendations:

19. Pass an Organic Act to strengthen and formalize Canada's organic regulatory framework, improve transparency and enforcement, prevent fraud, harmonize rules, and enable a long-term funding mechanism.
20. Expand the scope of the COR to certify currently excluded products (beyond food, feed, and seed), such as textiles, cosmetics, pet food, and natural health products.
21. Encourage all provinces and territories to adopt organic regulations aligned with the COR to ensure organic products sold within and across jurisdictions meet consistent national standards.

1.5 Ensure Robust Organic Standards that are Up to Date and Credible

The COS must be reviewed every five years to maintain market access and public trust, yet unlike key trading partners, Canada does not provide stable public funding for this mandatory process. This places undue burden on the sector. Permanent government support would ensure timely updates, maintain international market access, and uphold consumer confidence—while freeing sector resources to focus on growth and extension.

Sector Commitments:

- 22. Lead the maintenance and update of the Canadian Organic Standards (CAN/CGSB 32.310, 32.311, and 32.312) at a minimum of every five years.
- 23. Provide ongoing interpretation and training on the standards.

Government Recommendations:

- 24. Provide complete and permanent funding for the mandatory five-year review of the Canadian Organic Standards (CAN/CGSB 32.310, 32.311, and 32.312) – including interpretation, training, and potential amendments – under the sector-led model.
- 25. Direct the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) to work with the organic sector to establish an improved structure for the review of the Standards, including streamlining the maintenance of the process.

Pillar 2: Accelerate Growth and Innovation in Organic Production

Despite growing demand, Canada is losing ground in organic production. Domestic production—both acreage and number of operators—must increase to meet rising demand, reduce reliance on organic imports, and advance Canada’s climate, environmental, and economic goals. In a 2021 national sector survey, nearly half of respondents identified access to a dependable supply of domestic organic raw materials as the greatest supply chain challenge to organic growth, underscoring the urgency of scaling production.⁹ To do so, policy must address persistent barriers, including knowledge transfer gaps, financial and technical risks, limited input access, and transition hurdles, while investing in productivity, profitability, and long-term innovation.

2.1 Expand Education, Extension, and Knowledge Transfer

Organic agriculture is knowledge-intensive, yet Canada faces a critical shortage of trained advisors, agronomists, and extension specialists to support farmers in adopting organic management. This gap limits farmers’ ability to reduce input costs, improve soil health, and successfully transition to or expand organic production. Investing in organic extension, transition advisory services, and peer-to-peer learning is essential to scale sustainable agriculture and benefit both organic and non-organic producers.

Sector Commitments:

26. Develop a national organic extension network, with supply chain integration, to provide research-based education aligned with Canadian Organic Standards, expanded training, and farmer-led peer learning. Create a network of organic incubator farms to deliver hands-on training in production, business, and human resources.
27. Create and centralize practical guides for organic transition, production, processing, marketing, and the promotion of soil health, biodiversity, nutrient cycling, water restoration, and farm resilience. Provide organizations with tools and support to help farmers navigate regulations and certification, and enhance financial, agronomic, and environmental performance.
28. Partner with post-secondary institutions to expand education in organic production and value-added sectors, aligned with industry needs.
29. Standardize data frameworks to support on-farm benchmarking and decision-making, focused on soil health, and assist producers with data collection and long-term tracking.

⁹ Organic Federation of Canada. *Access to supply – Organic sector survey (Section Q8-1)*.
https://organicfederation.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sector-Survey_Q8-1.pdf

30. Facilitate cross-collaborative exchange opportunities between organic and non-organic farmers.

Government Recommendations:

31. Establish and fund a National Organic Extension Program to support farmer education, mentoring, and on-farm advisory services, including transition advisory (e.g. conversion checks, farm systems planning, certification guidance, transition monitoring, and market training). Include a cost-share component reimbursing certified and transitioning farmers for 50% of agronomist or agrologist consulting fees, and fund organizations providing extension services and facilitating peer-to-peer networks.

2.2 Invest in Organic Research to Drive Innovation and Impact

Investing in organic research drives innovation in low-input, climate-resilient farming practices that improve soil health, biodiversity, and profitability—benefiting both organic and non-organic producers. Canada’s organic sector has a participatory process for setting national research priorities and coordinated efforts through the Organic Science Cluster, one of the most diverse AgriScience projects, but faces challenges securing match funding given the lack of a clear funding mechanism. Sustained federal investment is needed to advance organic research, improve knowledge transfer, and scale solutions for sustainable agriculture.

Sector Commitments:

32. Streamline the national organic research priority-setting process, ensuring alignment through a coordinated project selection process.
33. Establish a national organic research secretariat at the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada to coordinate research dissemination and strengthen links between research, extension, and on-farm application. Share findings broadly across the agriculture sector.
34. Develop Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) tools to capture the full multifunctional impacts of organic and diversified farming systems.

Government Recommendations:

35. Increase funding for organic research.
36. Ensure that the broad scope of organic agriculture and national organic research priorities are fully covered under the AgriScience Program.
37. Waive or reduce industry cash matching contributions for organic sector research to leverage federal and provincial programs for at least five years, or until a dedicated organic funding mechanism is established.

38. Conduct a comprehensive scientific review of organic research – public and private, domestic and international – on environmental performance, productivity, farm income, and resilience, and use findings to inform evidence-based policy and program development.
39. Integrate organic priorities into AAFC’s research agenda, programs, and research stations, and expand access to Agri-Science and related programs for organic research.
40. Invest in long-term organic trials in all provinces and territories in partnership with federal, provincial, and academic institutions.
41. Expand support for Living Labs and other farmer-led research initiatives, and ensure the inclusion of organic farms.
42. Invest in technology development and transfer tailored to organic practices and systems.

2.3 De-risk Organic Transition & Production

Transitioning to organic farming is financially and technically challenging, with lower short-term returns and limited support despite clear long-term benefits.¹⁰ During the transition period required by the Canadian Organic Standards, farmers must adapt practices and equipment, navigate a steep learning curve, and often experience reduced yields—while still receiving conventional prices. Further, public and private financiers and insurers often overlook the unique risks and context of organic production, leading to inadequate coverage and support. Proven mechanisms like transition payments¹¹, improved insurance and financing options, and certification cost-share have successfully reduced barriers and driven adoption and success in other jurisdictions.

Sector Commitments:

43. Share data on organic farming’s risk profile and environmental benefits with financial and insurance institutions to improve understanding and promote incentives such as favourable credit terms for low-impact producers. Advocate for government incentives that encourage financial institutions to invest in sustainable agriculture.

Government Recommendations:

¹⁰ Organic Task Force Report, 2025, Appendix 1.

<https://cog.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/organic-task-force-appendix-1.pdf>.

¹¹ For example, Quebec’s organic conversion program was successful in rapidly growing organic production in the province. See: Union des producteurs agricoles. (April 2021). *Benchmarking support measures for organic farming: Quebec’s organic conversion program compared to other jurisdictions*.

https://www.upa.qc.ca/fileadmin/upa/nouvelles/Benchmarking_support_measures_organic_farming_Quebec_to_other_jurisdictions_2021-04.pdf.

44. Provide financial incentives to help farmers offset the costs of transitioning to organic production.
45. Provide cost-share for up to 100% of organic certification fees, with priority for small or socially disadvantaged producers.
46. Streamline the certification process to improve accessibility for diversified small-scale farms.
47. Offer targeted funding for certified organic producers to access consulting services and implement context-specific strategies that improve productivity, profitability, and environmental performance. Include an on-farm research component to assess the outcomes of stacked practices on participating farms.
48. Compensate organic farmers for additional costs incurred to mitigate risks and meet Canadian Organic Standards, such as buffer zone establishment and testing for pesticide residues or GMO contamination.
49. Provide financial recognition for ecosystem services delivered through organic practices, such as payment for ecosystem services based on certified organic production areas.
50. Adapt crop insurance and other Business Risk Management (BRM) programs to reflect the distinct risks and costs of organic farming. Develop organic-specific insurance products in all provinces and territories that account for organic pricing and practices, provide training for insurance providers on organic systems, and explore premium assistance for transitioning producers.
51. Ensure all government and incentive programs are accessible to organic farmers, including new and young entrants. Expand initiatives such as the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) and the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) to reward early adopters and those implementing multiple sustainable practices.

2.4 Improve Access to Organic Inputs

Organic producers face persistent challenges accessing key inputs including organic seed, fertilizers, and specialized equipment, many of which are not available domestically in adequate quantity or quality. As a result, in many cases, producers rely on imported or non-organic seed—permitted under strict conditions when organic seed is unavailable and where seed is untreated with prohibited substances. Expanding input availability and accessibility across all regions and ensuring consistent input verification for compliance with the COS are essential to strengthening organic production, ensuring organic integrity, and removing barriers to growth.

Sector Commitments:

52. Educate and support farm input suppliers in sourcing inputs that comply with organic production requirements.

53. Improve consistency of input approval process across certification bodies and create tools to help organic operators easily identify approved inputs.

Government Recommendations:

54. Expand access to organic seed by investing in domestic seed research and participatory plant breeding programs focused on organic and ecological seed varieties that enhance regional adaptation and climate resilience. Collaborate with the organic sector, research institutions, and government to support this work.
55. Develop tools (e.g. research into rapid and affordable test kits) for producers to protect and maintain the integrity of organic and non-genetically engineered seed, as defined by the Canadian Organic Standards.

2.5 Grow the Next Generation of Organic Farmers

Canada faces a well-documented farm succession challenge that also impacts the future of organic farming. Many new organic entrants are likely to be smaller-scale producers without family farm backgrounds, yet most succession programs focus on traditional family transfers. As a generational shift in agriculture coincides with rising interest in ecological farming, coordinated efforts are needed to fill gaps in support—particularly by funding existing organizations that offer land access and matching services. Significant funding is needed, with a portion specifically dedicated to new entrants into organic production.

Sector Commitments:

56. Strengthen the organic workforce by promoting career opportunities, establishing clear advancement pathways, and supporting employee development through ongoing training and mentorship.
57. Create an Organic Land Trust to increase access to certified organic land for new entrants and transitioning farms.
58. Expand and promote national programs for new organic producers, including land matching, technical assistance, and support for farmer-to-farmer transitions, cooperative models, and long-term lease arrangements through farmland trusts. Ensure integration with broader startup support services.
59. Ensure first-year, young, and aspiring organic farmers have timely access to information about federal and provincial grants and loans to support farmland acquisition.

Government Recommendations:

60. Expand access to a robust Temporary Foreign Worker Program for organic operators, and ensure an efficient application and administrative process.

61. Develop a dedicated regulatory pathway within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to support the entry of newcomer farmers into organic agriculture.
62. Fund programs and organizations that support youth, Indigenous, and newcomer entrants to organic farming, including on-farm apprenticeships, land matching, and tailored new entrant support services.
63. Introduce tax credits for certified organic land and for landowners who offer long-term leases to organic producers.

Pillar 3: Grow Organic Markets and Demand

Ensuring a stable market for the end-products of organic agriculture is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the sector. Strategic collaboration between government and industry can build market readiness, expand access, and ensure the integrity and credibility of Canadian organic products. With targeted investment, clear messaging, and stronger value-chain connections, Canada can position organic as a driver of climate resilience, public health, and economic opportunity—both domestically and globally.

3.1 Establish Funding Mechanisms for Market Development Activities

A dedicated Organic Market Development Fund would address a long-standing gap in sector support by providing stable funding for promotion and marketing. This fund would help level the playing field for organic producers and businesses, enabling strategic investments in consumer education, processing, and value-chain development to accelerate growth and competitiveness.

Sector Commitments:

- 64. Leverage Marketing Board Funding to support organic market development activities.

Government Recommendations:

- 65. Establish an Organic Market Development Fund to ensure fair market access to target markets and build consumer trust in organic products. This fund will support consumer awareness and education, market information and analysis, organic processing and distribution capacity, value-chain collaboration, and partnerships with retail and food service sectors for market development.

3.2 Increase Processing Capacity, Regional Food Systems and Supply Chain Collaboration to Expand Market Access

Canada's organic sector faces bottlenecks in processing and distribution, limiting the availability of value-added products and weakening supply chain resilience. Investing in regional infrastructure and fostering collaboration across the value chain will reduce reliance on imports, improve logistics, and ensure that organic integrity is maintained from farm to shelf.

Sector Commitments:

- 66. Expand regionally-based value-chain partnerships to enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration among producers, processors, distributors, and retailers,

supporting industry growth and maintaining organic integrity throughout the value chain.

67. Expand processing capacity amongst manufacturers to add more Canadian organic value-added products to the product range available in Canada.
68. Expand innovative organic product offerings by supporting product development and commercialization, value-added processing capacity, and supply chain collaborations for organic operators.
69. Stimulate innovation and visibility in the organic sector through awards recognizing excellence in production, product development, collaboration, and sales.
70. Create more direct sales opportunities between farmers and consumers.
71. Promote and support local and regional organic producers and markets to prioritize Canadian production over imports to meet domestic demand.
72. Conduct matchmaking between producers and brands to expand market opportunities domestically and internationally.

Government Recommendations:

73. Provide financial incentives to increase processing capacity, supporting new or expanded aggregation, processing, handling, storage, marketing, and distribution mechanisms for organic products and commodities to create a path to market for producers, including purchase and installation of equipment.
74. Invest in infrastructure to strengthen food systems by funding local and regional producers and markets to grow Canadian organic production that meets local demand, and aligning efforts with provincial local food strategies.
75. Identify domestic and international market opportunities for producers and brands through reports, environmental scans, and matchmaking services.
76. Ensure adequate infrastructure (including transportation) for organic products to access both domestic and international markets while maintaining organic integrity.

3.3 Raise Consumer Awareness Regarding Organic Value

Educating consumers about the full value of organic is essential to growing demand and building long-term trust. Many Canadians are unaware of organic's broader contributions to environmental protection, climate resilience, animal welfare, and community well-being. A national communications strategy can help bridge this gap—highlighting not only the benefits of organic but also its relevance and accessibility to everyday consumers. Government investment in awareness campaigns is critical to shifting perceptions around affordability and availability, making organic a more informed and attainable choice for all.

Sector Commitments:

77. Develop a national communications strategy for organic to support and coordinate messaging on the value of organic, including its role in creating a resilient food system adapted to climate and economic challenges.
78. Regularly monitor and report internally and to the government on consumer perception trends for organic and purchase behaviours, as well as advisory support on value-added strategies for processors and retailers.

Government Recommendations:

79. Allocate annual funding to promote the Canada Organic Brand and raise consumer awareness of the benefits of organic farming for the environment, climate, animal welfare, local economies, and food security. Provide 100% financing for awareness and trust-building campaigns until 2030.

3.4 Engage with Retail Actors to Accelerate Organic Sales

Retailers are vital partners in expanding consumer access to organic products. Strategic collaboration can increase shelf space, enhance merchandising, and elevate storytelling—boosting visibility, availability, and long-term sales growth.

Sector Commitments:

80. Build new partnerships with leading retail actors to increase market access for producers and manufacturers while growing organic sales and footprint at the retail level. Support retailers in expanding organic product assortments, enhancing organic marketing and product presentations in-store and online, and effectively communicating the benefits of organic products to consumers.

Government Recommendations:

N/A

3.5 Strengthen Public and Private Procurement of Organic Products

By leveraging their purchasing power, governments and businesses can create stable demand, giving organic businesses the confidence to invest, innovate and expand. This demand stability reduces market volatility, supports long-term planning, and encourages more farmers to transition to organic practices while reinforcing public sector goals. Public institutions can lead by example, while private sector commitments can scale impact across supply chains.

Sector Commitments:

81. Research successful public procurement models (including tenders promoting organics) and kitchen conversions in Canadian public and private food service, as well as in other jurisdictions.
82. Develop a model and build capacity for a nationwide educational initiative to support the transition to organic, climate-friendly, and healthier meals in public sector kitchens, and increasing organic procurement strategies
83. Create and launch an organic cuisine label program for restaurants, hotels, public sector canteens, hospitals, and other public institutions.

Government Recommendations:

84. Launch and fund a National Strategy for Organic Public Procurement, including national goals for organic in public sector kitchens and incentivizing provincial action through co-financing for local organic public procurement initiatives.
85. Incorporate organic procurement into relevant national, provincial, and local policies and programs, including the National School Food Policy and Program.

3.6 Support Organic Export Promotions Through Collaboration

A unified approach to advance Canada's organic export strategy strengthens global competitiveness, builds market readiness, and ensures the credibility of Canadian organic products abroad. Government support amplifies industry efforts, while industry insights guide effective promotion. Together, they open new markets, protect organic integrity, and drive long-term sector growth.

Sector Commitments:

86. Foster collaboration among organic processors and traders for joint export promotions of Canadian organic products, such as trade missions and trade shows.
87. Develop export market intelligence to enhance awareness and export readiness for Canadian businesses, helping them identify and harness international trade opportunities for organic products.

Government Recommendations:

88. Promote organic exports, including by including organic products in Canadian flagship trade shows.
89. Continue to negotiate new and maintain existing organic equivalency arrangements and agreements.
90. Fund testing to ensure organic integrity and protect access to international markets

Implementing the Plan

Successful implementation of the OAP will require strong leadership, dedicated coordination, and collaboration between governments, industry, civil society, and farmers. The COA and its partners are committed to co-developing a practical and phased implementation roadmap, building on existing sector strengths and public policy tools. Key next steps:

- Establish a national coordinating mechanism to oversee implementation and sector engagement;
- Develop detailed workplans for priority initiatives under each pillar;
- Secure funding and partnerships for early action priorities, such as data improvements, extension tools, and market development initiatives;
- Engage provincial and territorial governments to support regionally tailored implementation;
- Develop and launch a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) process to establish targets, track progress, adjust approaches, and ensure accountability.

This plan is designed to evolve. Its success will require a coordinated, adaptive approach and collaboration across partners and stakeholders to unlock the full potential of the organic sector in Canada.

Conclusion: A Path Forward for Canada's Organic Sector

The OAP, grounded in the pillars of 1) Strengthen Policy, Regulatory, and Data Infrastructure, 2) Accelerate Growth and Innovation in Organic Production, and 3) Grow Organic Markets and Demand, offers a clear strategy to grow organic food and farming as a cornerstone of Canada's agri-food system.

Through a public-private partnership model, implementing this plan will expand organic's contribution to the national economy, support farmers in earning fair livelihoods, and position and develop organic agriculture as a leader in environmental and climate solutions. A strong organic processing sector will create value-added opportunities, while market development efforts will help make organic food more accessible and affordable across all regions of Canada.

The broader adoption of organic systems will also contribute to rural revitalization, fostering economic resilience and community sustainability. By advancing this plan, Canada can ensure that the organic sector plays a central role in building a resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for food, farmers, and communities.

About Us

The Canadian Organic Alliance is a national coalition of organic associations. Together we represent over 7,500 organic operators growing and producing nutritious food locally and globally.

The [Canada Organic Trade Association](#) is a national industry association with the mission to protect and promote the growth of the organic sector. Its members span the entire organic value chain. Key areas: regulatory affairs, market access (domestic and international), organic standards and policy development, research, data and consumer education.

[Canadian Organic Growers](#) provides education, advocacy, and leadership to empower farmers and consumers, enhance health, build community, and mitigate climate change, while increasing Canadian food sovereignty. As Canada's oldest organic and regenerative association, COG supports ecologically-based agriculture and advocates for policy and industry development.

The [Organic Federation of Canada](#) prioritizes improving national regulations to support organic industry development, maintaining and interpreting the COS, co-managing the Organic Science Cluster for research and knowledge transfer, and promoting industry growth through information sharing and stakeholder awareness. The provincial and territorial organic associations (listed below) are the members of the OFC.