



2024 Annual Review

Connecting People and Information, from Field to Plate

Chair's Report 2024

Amanda Knauff, OPMA Chair

It has been a privilege to serve as Chair of the Board for the Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA) over the past year. Our sector continues to evolve, and I remain inspired by the passion, resilience, and innovation of our members as they work to ensure fresh, nutritious produce reaches Ontarians every day.



In 2024, the OPMA built on a solid foundation and welcomed a new chapter of leadership. We were pleased to welcome Rebecca Harris as President of the OPMA in January. With a strong background in association management and a deep commitment to collaboration, Rebecca has already made a positive impact, strengthening the OPMA's role as a connector, convener, and champion for Ontario's produce industry.

From field to plate, our mission has remained constant: to connect people and information in support of a thriving, sustainable produce sector in Ontario.

Advocacy and Government Relations

Over the past year, OPMA has continued to amplify the voice of Ontario's produce industry with government stakeholders, reinforcing the critical role fresh produce plays in our economy, public health, and food security.

We've advanced important conversations with Members of Provincial Parliament and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Our advocacy priorities remain focused on workforce development, increased consumption of fruits and vegetables—especially through programs like Student Nutrition Ontario—and expanding support for the marketing and promotion of Ontario-grown produce.

These efforts are increasingly important as the industry continues to face challenges around labour shortages, cost pressures, and climate-related disruptions. We are proud of the work being done to ensure the produce sector remains strong, competitive, and well-supported.

Highlights of 2024

This year was marked by strategic growth, meaningful partnerships, and impactful programming. A few highlights include:

- Welcoming a new President and supporting a smooth leadership transition that positions OPMA for long-term success.
- Deepening our government engagement through direct meetings with MPPs, ministers, and key ministry staff.
- Strengthening our Young Professionals Network and Women's Produce Network, fostering leadership and inclusion within the sector.
- Continuing to grow our Produce Made Simple campaign, which in 2024 generated over 44.5 million impressions across digital and traditional media and reached new audiences through partnerships, fresh content, and community outreach.
- Providing members with new tools and insights, including enhanced market research reports and an updated member toolkit to support their marketing efforts.
- Hosting engaging networking events, awards celebrations, and educational opportunities that brought the community together to share, learn, and celebrate excellence.

Collaborating with industry stakeholders across Canada, including CPMA, QPMA, BCPMA, Foodland Ontario, and commodity groups to align and amplify our shared goals:

- Strengthening our governance processes through a comprehensive policy review.
- Giving back to our communities by expanding our food hamper program and supporting school nutrition efforts across Ontario, helping thousands of students access healthy produce.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward into 2025, our focus remains on creating value for members through connection, advocacy, and insight. We will continue to elevate the voice of the produce industry, nurture strong relationships across the sector, and support the success of our members. I am sure our incoming Chair, Dan Tukendorf, will lead these efforts wonderfully and I wish him success in his new role.

None of our work would be possible without the commitment and enthusiasm of the OPMA staff team, our dedicated Board of Directors, and our volunteers and sponsors. Thank you all for the many ways you contribute to the strength of this organization and the industry it serves.

I'm proud of what we have achieved together in 2024 and excited for the opportunities ahead. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,

Amanda Knauff

Chair of the Board
Ontario Produce Marketing Association



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President's Report 2024

Rebecca Harris, President, Ontario Produce Marketing Association

As we reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished together as a community. The Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA) continues to be a strong and united voice for the fresh produce sector, advocating for the interests of our members, driving industry awareness, and supporting the growth and success of produce businesses across the province.



The Vital Role of the Ontario Produce Sector

Ontario's produce industry is not only a cornerstone of our agri-food economy but also a vital contributor to public health and sustainability. From growers and distributors to retailers and service providers, our members work tirelessly to ensure Ontarians have access to fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables every day.

The work of our sector has never been more important. In an era of increasing consumer awareness around health and wellness, local food, and climate-conscious practices, Ontario's produce industry is uniquely positioned to lead. The OPMA is proud to champion this work and to help tell the story of the industry's positive impact—economically, socially, and environmentally.

Strengthening Member Services and Value

This year, we focused on enhancing the services and resources we provide to our members. Our events, professional development sessions, and networking opportunities continue to be key touchpoints for connection, learning, and collaboration. Whether it's our annual Gala & Awards Ceremony, our WPN and YPN Summits, or our annual golf tournament, these experiences help bring the sector together and deepen relationships across the value chain.

We've continued to provide timely communications, government relations support, and market insights to help members stay informed and competitive in a rapidly evolving landscape. From advocacy meetings at Queen's Park to responding to regulatory developments, we ensure that our OPMA member voices are heard where it matters most.

2023-2025 Strategic Plan

The 2023-2025 strategic plan focused on the following key priorities:

1. Promoting the Produce Industry (Education and Awareness)
2. Information and Resources for Membership
3. Government Relations, Lobbying and Advocacy
4. Networking and Business Development Opportunities
5. Industry Data, Research and Benchmarking

Our strategic map of focusing on the member value proposition, building stakeholder engagement, and executing the important networking opportunities achieved significant results in 2024 including, but not limited to:

- The Young Professionals Network (YPN) continued to grow, attracting new members with exciting opportunities and events to promote collaboration and career growth amongst up-and-coming talent in the industry.
- The Women's Produce Network (WPN), which provides a platform for women in the industry to learn and be empowered, continued to grow and the WPN Summit was a huge success bringing together 75 women to learn and network together as a community.
- We engaged with Ontario government officials including, but not limited to:
 - meetings at Queens Park with MPPs;
 - attending a roundtable with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agri-Business and Premier Ford;
 - hosting a tour at an OPMA member facility with MPP Jamie West;
 - attending a press conference with Premier Ford on the carbon tax;
 - attending the Grow Ontario Food Summit hosted by Minister Thompson;
 - participating in CPMA's advocacy events on Parliament Hill;
 - and attending meetings of the "Development of Sustainable Produce Packaging Guidelines to Promote Alignment in North America (SPPA)" a joint initiative of CPMA/Western Growers;
- Our partnership with Numerator expanded our research capabilities, providing members with quarterly reports on consumer shopping habits in Ontario's fresh fruit and vegetable sector.
- Our annual food hamper packing day saw 1,050 boxes of fruits and vegetables distributed to families across the province.
- Our audience on the Produce Made Simple platform continued to grow, with engagement remaining on par with industry standards.
- We continued to offer industry education opportunities with panel discussions, webinars, and in-person events.

Produce Made Simple

Together we have a stronger voice. Our Produce Made Simple platform had 25 Million views in 2024!



Highlights from Produce Made Simple in 2024 include, but are not limited to:

- We offered a “Beat the Winter Blues” webinar in collaboration with our RD partners. The dietitians spoke about how nutrition affects mood and demonstrated two easy recipes (with mushrooms and apples) to stay healthy and happy through the winter season. Instagram posts for the webinar achieved over 25K impressions, with just over 250 attendees.
- Asparagus Farm Tour - We took a group of 10 industry professionals on a farm tour in Norfolk County, visiting Sandy Shore and Dalton White Farms. They got a behind-the-scenes look at growing and processing asparagus and got to taste the farm fresh, in season asparagus at a creative luncheon in the Dalton barn.
- Greenhouse Tour with Del Fresco - We took a group of 9 industry professionals on a farm tour in Leamington, visiting Del Fresco and Pelee Island Winery. They got a behind-the-scenes look at growing and processing greenhouse vegetables, and got to taste those same farm fresh vegetables at a creative luncheon at the winery. The content collectively shared from this experience generated over 100K impressions.
- Out of Home Ads - Creative was designed with key messages that adding local produce to your meals is simple. Creative had one liner content and eye-catching imagery ex., “Breakfast Made Simple” and “Park Days Made Simple”. The ads were distributed in Toronto on both the TTC and GO train. There were 400 ads in marketing during the campaign period.
- TV Segments - Three CHCH segments throughout the year with our brand ambassadors Bailey (Harvest Table Nutrition) and Nik (Weekend at the Cottage). Commodities featured: apples, potatoes, carrots and onions.
- Elle Gourmet Feature - “Elevate Every Meal with Ontario Onions and Carrots”. The campaign ran in November across ELLE Gourmet’s digital media channels (website, social, e-newsletters). Campaign reach: 201.5K. Impressions: 268K

Full details on all Produce Made Simple work in 2024 can be found in the annual report available at <https://theopma.ca/reports/>.

Grower Retailer Program

Thanks to the funds contributed by the Grower-Retailer program, we continue to promote local produce commodities (apples, greenhouse vegetables, mushrooms, asparagus, tender fruit, potatoes, carrots and onions, pears) to an engaged consumer audience across Ontario.

We work with our grower groups to align on key messages and create marketing campaigns that educate consumers on how and where to buy local, and how to eat more fruits and vegetables. The overarching goal is to increase share of plate (get people to buy more produce overall) and buy local when in season.



Government Relations and Advocacy

One of the key pillars for success within our strategic plan is to expand our lobbying and advocating efforts on behalf of the members to government. We are pleased to communicate that we have made significant progress on the government relations file with productive meetings with government and industry stakeholders.

We continue to meet with government representatives to discuss the regulatory processes impacting our industry, the growing concern for skilled labour, and the promotion of local Ontario produce to markets.

Governance

We continue to review and strengthen our governance structure and processes to ensure that the OPMA is a high performing organization with the appropriate policies and processes in place.


As previously reported, in 2023 the Governance Committee reviewed our nominations processes to ensure they are fair, transparent, and at arms length from the current Board of Directors. The Committee brought forward a proposal to establish a Nominating Committee tasked with assessing Director nominees annually. The OPMA Nominating Committee was formed in 2024 and new processes are being developed for the 2026 election cycle.

The following is a brief overview of the composition of the Nominating Committee:

- The Nominating Committee is comprised of five members, including the Immediate Past Chair as Committee Chair and four OPMA members who are not currently on the Board.
- The Nominating Committee's composition rotates every two years.
- The Nominating Committee is tasked to evaluate nominees to ensure diversity of gender and industry sector as well as meeting the required Board competencies for the open positions.
- The Nominating Committee is currently developing a process for selection of nominees. This may include changes to the nomination requirements and an interview process.
- In 2026, the new process will be launched for the election of Directors. It may be possible that not all nominees will be included on the final slate. The Governance Committee and Board will review, but not approve, the final slate before the AGM.
- The Governance Committee will evaluate the process each year.

Celebrating Member Success

None of this would be possible without the incredible work being done by our members every day. Your innovation, resilience, and commitment to excellence are what drive this industry forward. We've seen so many inspiring examples this year—from advancements in sustainability and packaging to charitable initiatives supporting food security and local communities.



In 2024 it was a key priority to “get on the road” to meet and engage with our membership. In the 2023-2025 OPMA Strategic Plan, we included a goal to complete a member outreach once every quarter whereby staff would visit locations throughout the province to learn more about our member’s challenges within the produce industry, as well as to communicate what the OPMA was doing on their behalf with other key stakeholders such as government and consumers. This will continue into 2025.

Our membership continues to be a source of pride. Each of you plays a unique and critical role in ensuring the strength and vibrancy of Ontario’s produce supply. The OPMA remains committed to recognizing your achievements and amplifying your impact wherever possible. Please reach out at any time with updates on the work you do, questions you may have, or ideas for future collaboration.

Looking Ahead to 2025-2026

As we look to the future, our focus will remain on growth, collaboration, and continuous improvement. In 2025 and beyond, we will continue to:

- Expand our advocacy efforts with all levels of government.
- Promote local produce through our Produce Made Simple platform.
- Deepen our engagement with members and stakeholders.
- Enhance our programming with a focus on emerging trends and workforce development.
- Strengthen our voice on sustainability and food system resilience.

Thank You

To our Board of Directors, dedicated staff, and all our members—thank you for your continued support, energy, and belief in the power of collaboration. Together, we are building a stronger produce sector in Ontario and setting the standard for excellence in our industry.

The OPMA is here for you—supporting your growth, amplifying your voice, and working every day to advance a thriving, healthy, and sustainable future for fresh produce in Ontario.

With gratitude and optimism,

Rebecca Harris

President

Ontario Produce Marketing Association



2024-25 Board of Directors

Thank you to the Board of Directors who volunteer their time to ensure the effective stewardship of the Association on behalf of all members.

Amanda Knauff

Taylor Farms - Chair

Dan Tukendorf

OFVGA - Vice Chair

Steve Moffat

North American Produce Buyers - Treasurer

Dustin Wellman

Wonderful Sales - Incoming Vice-Chair 2025-26

Adam Donikian

Sobeys Ontario - Immediate Past Chair

Daniel Baldin

Longo's - Director

Eric Biddiscombe

Algoma Orchards - Director

Agnes Boutros

Mastronardi Produce Ltd. - Director

Andrew George

EarthFresh Farms - Director

Ryan Goad

Loblaws Companies - Director

Madison Hopper

Equifruit - Director

Michael Miranda

Farm Boy - Director

Ariel Nevado

Metro Inc. - Director

Greg Ogiba

Windmill Farms - Director

Steve Roberts

Vineland Growers Co-operative - Director

Julian Sarraino

Fresh Taste Produce - Director

Frank Spagnuolo

Burnac Produce - Director

2024 Sponsors

PREMIER PLUS

Algoma Orchards
Ltd.
EarthFresh
Nature Fresh Farms

Taylor Farms
Seaway Farms
TK Fresh Produce

PREMIER

Mucci Farms
Mastronardi Produce Ltd.
North American Produce Buyers Ltd.

DIAMOND

Ben B Schwartz
Berlos Best
Capespan NA
Dole Fresh Vegetables
Gambles Ontario Produce
Global Citrus
Martin's Family Fruit Farm

Metro Ontario
Pier C Produce
Procyk Farms
Red Sun Farms
System Lifeline
Vineland Growers

PLATINUM

Bondi Produce
Courchesne Larose
CPMA
Highline Mushrooms
Ippolito Produce
Numerator

OGVG
Ontario Potato Board
Sobeys Ontario
The Little Potato Co.
Wonderful Sales

GOLD

DelFresco Pure
Dominion Farm
Erie James
Fresh Taste Produce
FPD East
Goodwave
Grimmway Farms
Highland Farms

J.E. Russell Produce
Koornneef Produce
Niagara Orchard
OFVGA
Pear Bureau
Streef Produce
Westmoreland (Topline)
Willson Intl.

SILVER

Blue Mountain Fruit
Co.
Bolthouse Canada
Canada Garlic
Canadawide Fruits
Canadian Fruit
Downey Potato
Farms
F.G. Lister
Yffes

Gwillimdale Farms
Ontario Apple Growers
Ontario Tender Fruit
Growers
Peak of the Market
Provincial Fruit
Rouge River Farms
Volm Companies
WaudWare

2024 Highlights in Numbers



114,574

PRODUCE MADE SIMPLE
FOLLOWERS

44.5+ MIL

PRODUCE MADE SIMPLE
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

3,400

FOLLOWERS
ON OPMA
SOCIAL MEDIA
ACCOUNTS

275+

ANNUAL GOLF
TOURNAMENT
ATTENDEES

447

WOMEN'S
PRODUCE
NETWORK
MEMBERS

1,050

FOOD BOXES
DISTRIBUTED

436

YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS
NETWORK
MEMBERS

5,817

NEW WEBSITE
USERS

Award Winners

Lifetime Achievement:

Sal Sarraino | Fresh Taste Produce

Fresh Award:

Cristina Di Ielsi | Taylor Farms

Cory Clack-Streef Produce Person of the Year:

George Gilvesy | Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association (OGVG)

Outstanding Achievement:

Dr. Martin Gooch | VCM International

Women's Produce Network Award Winners:

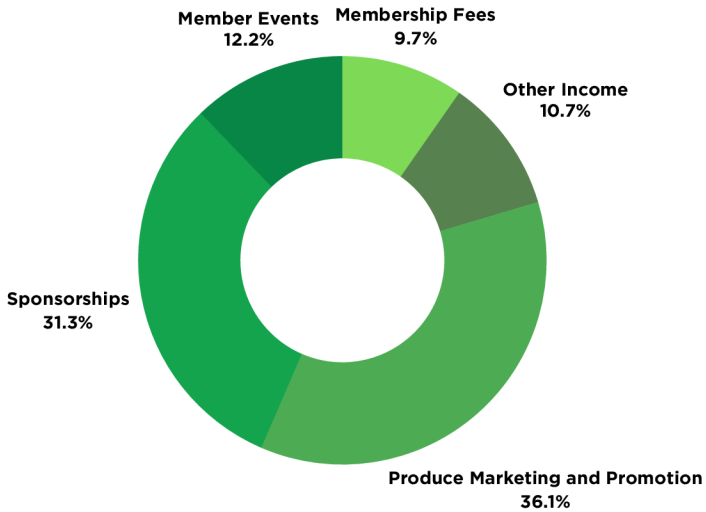
Jessica Wynne | Pfenning's Organic Farms

Jennifer Hatton | Sobey's

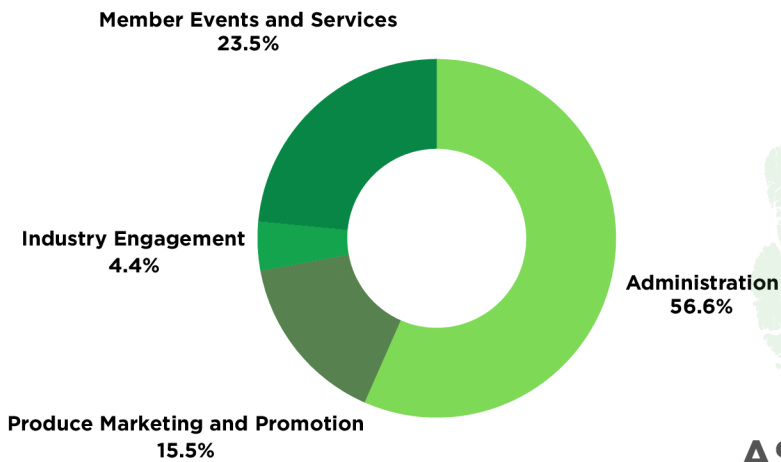
2024 Financial Results

2024 OPMA Members

INCOME



EXPENSES



200+

Members From Across the Industry

