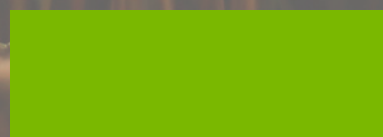


ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020



A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP



When I visited several organic farms and factories over the last year, I am always reminded of exactly why I love being involved with COTA. Members of COTA are changemakers and we are united in our goal to improve the world and address climate change together, one food product at a time.

Our association exists to help facilitate the growth of social change and create positive effects for the many future generations to come. We are proud to play a major role in the organic world - ensuring rigorous standards and regulatory reform while ensuring organic integrity and producing research and consumer education campaigns to help facilitate the growth in both consumption and production. It is an honour to serve our members COTA will be here in the long run to facilitate growth for organic production and consumption in Canada for the years to come.

Tia Loftsgard

Tia Loftsgard, Executive Director, COTA

This past year has been quite busy in terms of adapting to external conditions beyond our control, both in our businesses and in our personal lives. What matters most in these situations is our attitude and ability to react to put the solutions into place. An interesting saying from John Finley captures it well "maturity is the capacity to endure uncertainty".

I am proud to see COTA mature and continue to take its place and demonstrate its value and its absolute necessity in our ecosystem. I sincerely believe that we came out of it stronger. As consumers continue to emphasize the importance of making choices that meet their values, our industry is positioning itself as essential. Thank you for your support and collaboration!



Marie-Michèle Le Moine

Marie-Michèle Le Moine, President, COTA Board



MARKET ACCESS

COTA and its members attended 31 events throughout the year, in Canada and around the globe on your behalf!



There is no doubt that 2020 will be a year that many industries (including organic) faced major disruptions but let's begin with how it started. COTA worked with industry and supported members attend multiple key events such as CHFA East in Toronto where we launched Organic Week and led a successful Incoming Buyers mission for our members. The following month COTA staff supported members to attend ANUGA in Germany and Supply Side West in Las Vegas. Members also attended NatExpo in Paris.

Other market access programming continued into the New Year with COTA members attending Biofach in Germany in the Canadian pavilion while supporting members European business plans.

At CHFA West in Vancouver, a successful Asian incoming mission occurred, wrapping up our year of travel due to COVID-19 grinding operations to a halt.

Expo West was the first show to be abruptly cancelled, with many more that were either cancelled, postponed or transitioned into an online format. COTA worked during this period to assist members transition to new events and or receive refunds for shows which had been cancelled. COTA also developed webinars for some of the content which had been scheduled for Expo West. Much time was spent back and forth with AAFC and our members, polling the needs of the sector to cope with the crisis, and our market access work mostly revolved to solving trade barriers and informing members of government announcements to assist organic trade keep flowing.

As the world began to adjust to this new normal, COTA was able to finalize two new equivalencies with Taiwan and Japan (expanded scope to include livestock) in June. Market access continues to flow after this tumultuous time and we aim to move all events virtually for 2021 to ensure success for our members.



CANADA ORGANIC STATISTICS



Operations

There are an estimated 7.5K certified organic operations in Canada, up from 7K in 2018.

Acres

Canada is currently comprised of 3.4M certified organic acres. Up from 3.3 acres in 2018.

Producers

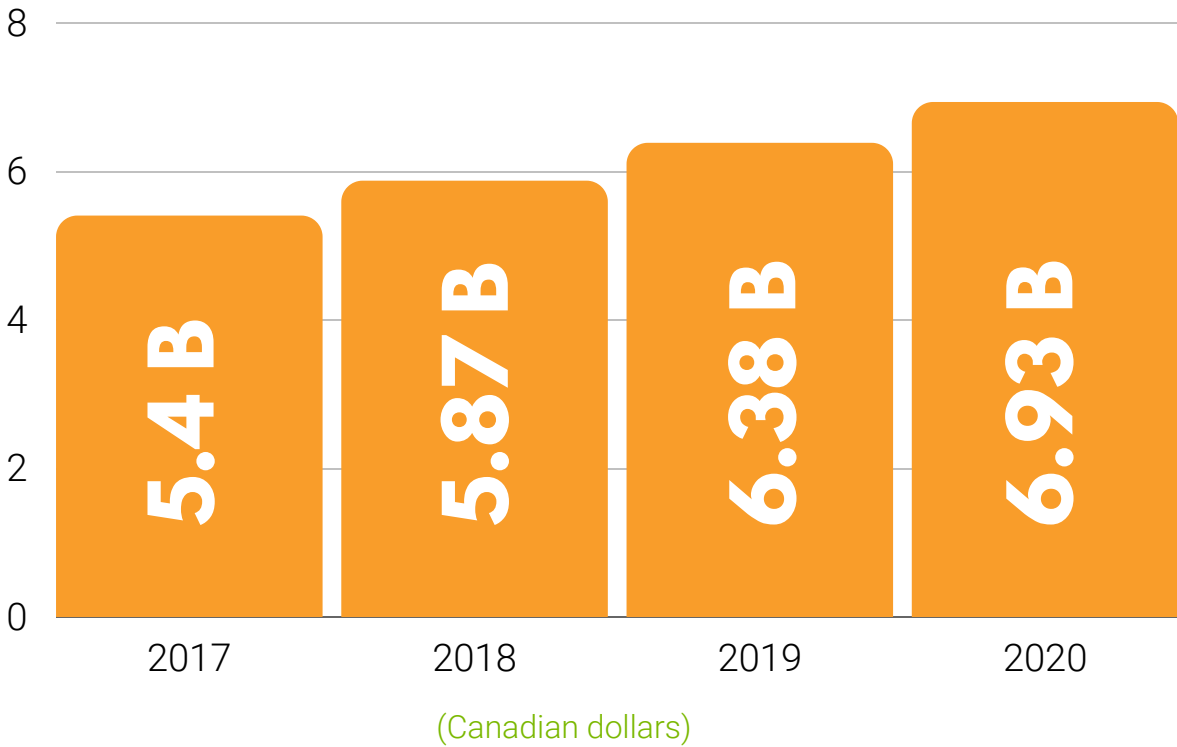
There are an estimated 5.6K organic producers in Canada, up from 5.4K in 2018.

Processors

There are currently 1.7K certified organic processors in Canada, comparable to 2018 data.

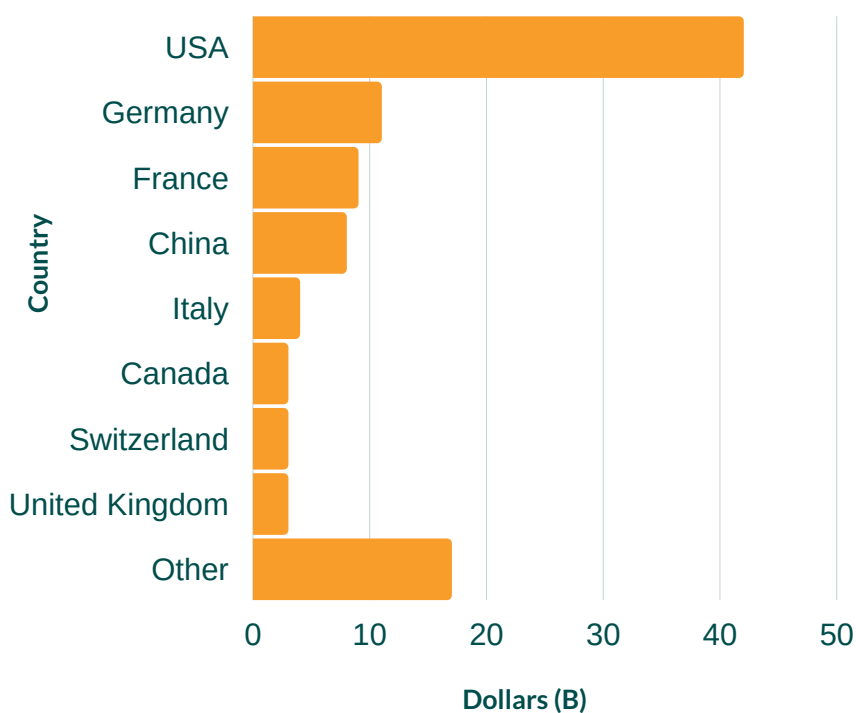
Total Market Sales (2020)

Up 28% from 2017

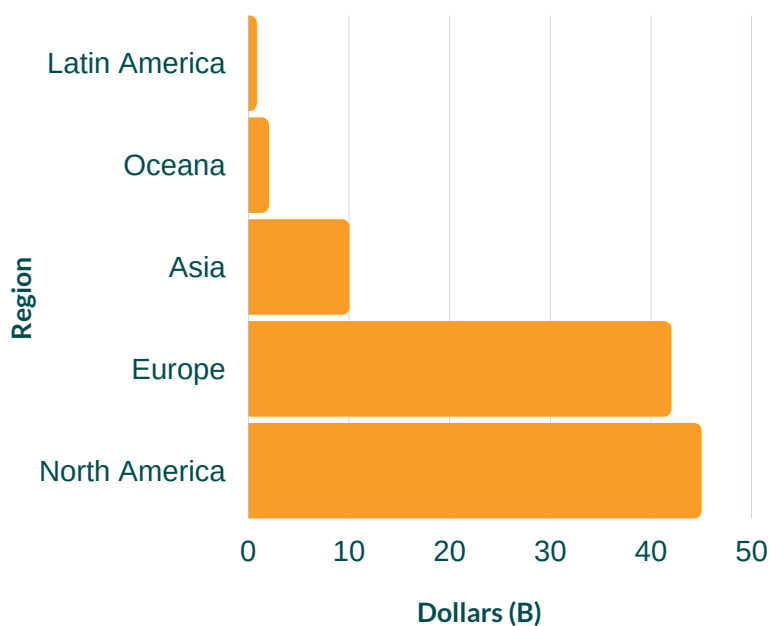


ORGANIC STATISTICS

Global Market for Organic Food: Distribution of Retail Sales Value by Country (2018)

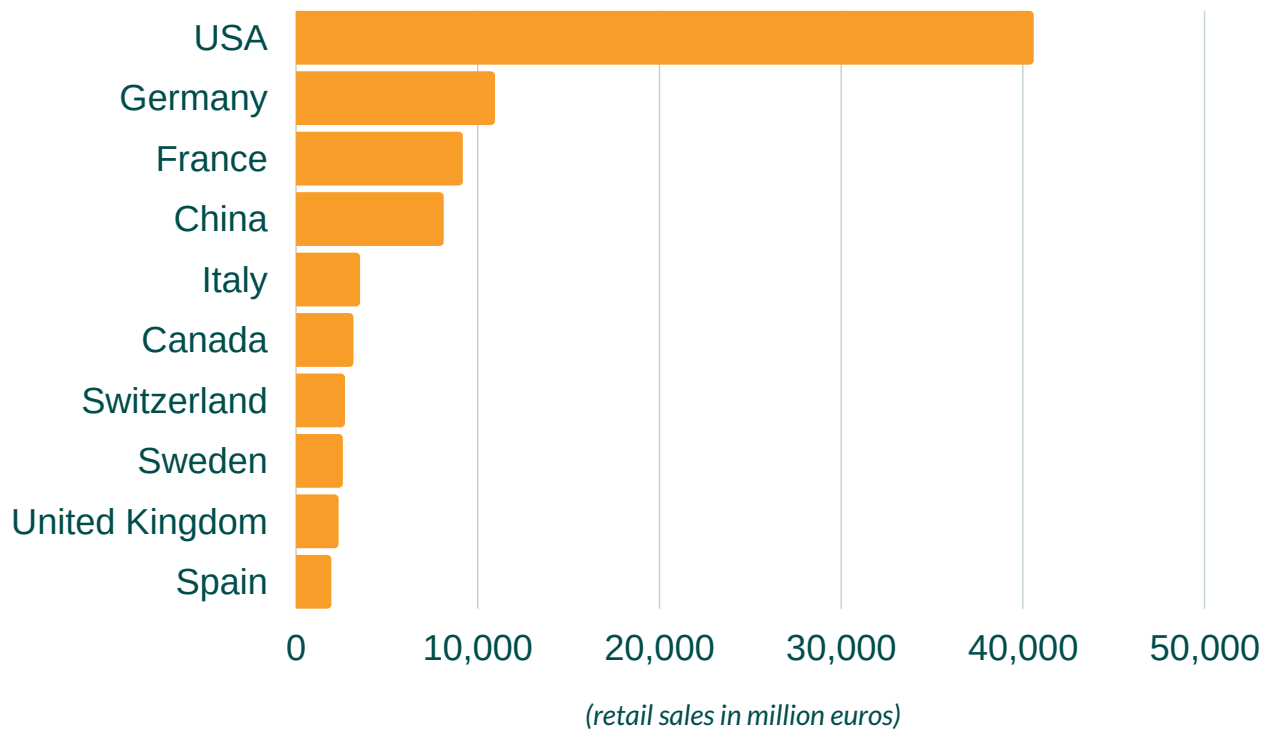


Global Market for Organic Food: Distribution of Retail Sales Value by Region (2018)

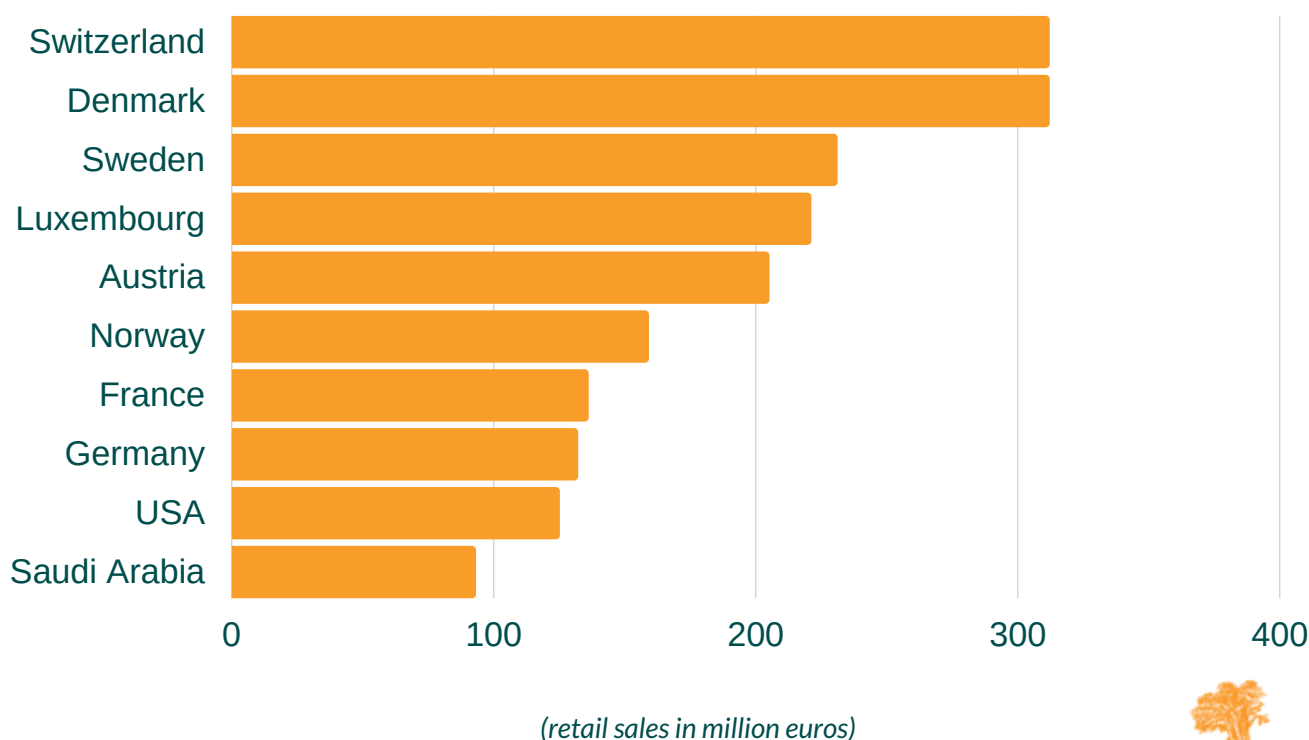


ORGANIC STATISTICS

Top Ten Countries with the Largest Markets for Organic Food (2018)



Top Ten Countries with the Highest Per Capita Consumption (2018)



CONSUMER EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Organic Week 2019

Over the years, Canada's Organic Week has become the landmark opportunity for raising awareness of the far-reaching impacts of organic farming, both for human health as well as for the environment. This past year, Organic Week celebrated its 10th anniversary! From September 9th – 15th, Canada's entire supply chain – from farmers and retailers to industry and consumers – united to participate in a nationwide celebration of organic food, agriculture, and products. The Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) spearheaded the campaign in partnership with the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) and the Canadian Organic Growers (COG). The 2019 campaign was further fortified by the dedicated support of 18 regional sponsors. These ongoing collaborative efforts ensure that Organic Week continues to thrive year after year. In this 10th anniversary year alone, the Organic Week campaign raked in over 3 million social media impressions of the official #OrganicWeek hashtag, over half a million paid advertising impressions, an eight-page printed feature in the Globe & Mail, as well as boasting over 1,300 consumer contest entries.

Retailer Program

Each year, the Organic Week Retailer Program works to help Canadian retailers drive traffic to their store, build customer loyalty, and showcase their commitment to the values of Organic. In order to strengthen the connections between Canadian consumers and the local organic scene, the Organic Week campaign provided retailers with a collection of versatile materials to spread awareness and showcase their commitment to organic with their shoppers. These promotional materials included French and English posters, educational brochures, produce sticks, and more! In total, over 1000 promotional kits were distributed to stores across the country – a process that was streamlined with the help of participating Canadian distributors: Jiva Organics, Pure Source Natural Products, Purity Life, United Natural Foods (UNFI), and Horizon Distributors.

Participants were also encouraged to download and use Organic Week's free digital assets, including campaign logos, imagery, social media graphics, email signatures, and more. All materials were designed to facilitate retailer engagement in various ways, including merchandizing, specials, discounts, and customer education - all with the goal of celebrating the importance of organic. As Canada's largest official celebration of organic food and farming, all campaign materials were made available in English and French.





Events

On September 11th, Organic Week Organizers joined forces with top sponsors PC Organics and Nature's Path, to host the official Organic Week Celebration Party. The event was held at Mill Street Brew Pub in the heart of Toronto's historic distillery district. Over a selection of organic beverages, savoury snacks, and delectable small plates, attendees had the opportunity to mix and mingle with over 70 leaders, educators, and spokespeople from across the industry.

The Canada Organic Trade Association leveraged the media coverage of this event in order to present their Annual Organic Leadership Awards to six outstanding recipients.

Consumer Engagement

The 2019 Organic Week hosted two consumer engagement contests. The #ChooseCanadaOrganic Video Challenge asked consumers to tell us why they choose organic as a part of their everyday lives in under 60 seconds. Submissions were received via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The contest was a great success, elevating voices of individuals throughout the organic community while simultaneously offering a platform to personally reflect on their own integration of organic choices into their lifestyles.

The second contest challenged participants to test their knowledge of organics in Canada by taking part in the online Organic IQ Quiz. Participants faced a series of 10 questions, with top scorers being entered into a draw to win one of 12 organic prize packs. The quiz format also provided an opportunity for participants to opt in to subscribing to the Organic Week mailing list.

Back by popular demand this year was the Organic Week live Twitter chat. Using the hashtag #OrganicChat, organic industry members, consumers, academics, and environmental organizations were able to communicate collectively, from far and wide. Many ideas were exchanged, and perspectives were shared. The best part? Our hashtag #OrganicChat ended up trending alongside news of the new Apple release and even a Trump Scandal!



As part of an extra special 10th anniversary celebration, Organic Week took on a new venture in 2019, hosting its inaugural Organic Educational Webinar Series. Some of the country's most brilliant researchers, academics, intellectuals, and government representatives took turns presenting on some of the most controversial and innovative topics within the field of organics. The open-access structure of the webinar platform allowed participants to watch and engage with speakers remotely - truly broadening the scope of the celebrations nationwide! Between September 9th - 13th, five webinars were presented totalling 279 unique registrants. For your convenience, these archived webinars can be accessed [here](#).



Request a copy of the Organic Week Debrief report to see all key performance indicators, strategy and achievements that makes our consumer campaign a success!



Organic Week 2021 is scheduled for September 20-26th! Get involved by contacting info@organicweek.ca for more details!



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

COVID-19

This year, the international COVID-19 crisis consumed governments around the world and profoundly impacted global trade and supply chains, the organic sector included. That being said, Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector became highlighted of it's essential service and brought forth a new vigour to focus on local food supply. COTA has continued its mission to represent its members before government leaders and departmental officials during this tumultous time to ensure the organic sectors needs were addressed.



EQUIVALENCY WORK

Throughout the year, Canada Organic Trade Association chairs the Technical Advisory Committee on Organic Equivalencies and works with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to achieve new equivalencies, or maintain and update current organic equivalencies. This year, Canada was priveleged to host the 4th Annual International Organic Equivalency Summit, welcoming delegates from 9 countries involved in equivalencies worldwide. COTA provided a field day for the delegation, visiting local farms and manufacturers to showcase the Canada Organic Regime and how industry collaborates with government. COTA also had multiple meetings with the organic regime of Japan to finalize the expanded equivalency to include livestock and worked hard to meet the strict deadlines provided by the Taiwan government.



ORGANIC SUMMIT

In November 2019, The Organic Summit gathered some of the best academics, researchers, and professionals in the organic sector. The theme of the two-day conference was "Organic is Part of the Solution" and highlighted how organic can help achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.



In September 2015, Canada and 192 other UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. COTA's 2019 conference showcased how organic can directly contribute to achieving these goals by 2030. The Conference was a great success, and brought together 60+ organic industry leaders including government representatives, provincial association leads, farmers, processors, and academics two full days of informative speaker sessions. Additional breakout sessions allowed participants the time to delve further into issues and get updated on specific topics of interest. COTA will work to continue to host more events that deepen our collective knowledge and expertise on the pressing organic issues in Canada. On Monday, November 18th, the day concluded with an Organic Reception and Dinner at Jackson Restaurant at the Ottawa Art Gallery.

As a whole, the conference and dinner served as a fruitful networking opportunity, where leading industry actors came together to connect, collaborate, and continue striving toward a more sustainable future!



WORKING ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERSHIP

The COTA membership base continues to flourish annually as more and more actors in the value chain see the benefits and services we provide to our members. COTA experienced an 8% increase year over year, attracting thirty new members. During this period, there was a significant increase in farmstead membership which may be attributed to the launch of the **Support Organic Change Fund** which provided financial subsidies to farmers transitioning to organic certification or expanding their existing operations. We also saw a surge in new membership interest from Quebec! With Filière Biologique du Quebec joining alongside Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) (who renewed for a second year of membership), the stage was set for further collaboration with QuebecBio (the communications division of Filière) to partner on reaching the large consumer market in Quebec.

ORGANIC LEADERSHIP AWARDS

COTA also introduced several new leadership awards to recognize our members in Vancouver, at our Annual Organic Leadership Awards Gala showcasing excellence in Farming and Science in addition to Organic Innovator, Supplier, Champion, and Retailer. The purpose is to shine a spotlight, award excellence and continue to share best practices with all sectors of our industry, across the country.

TESTIMONIALS FROM MEMBERSHIP

'If you are new to the organic world as a grower, importer, processor, or brand owner, the COTA community is a welcoming resource for up to date valuable data and information. Being a member for several years, I have learned so much about Organics in Canada literally from the ground up, through industry seminars, trade shows, and up to date market access. I recommend anyone in the supply chain for organics in Canada to take advantage of being a member today!' **Jill Baxter, Commercial Director, Natural & Organics, Cambrian Solutions**

'In an ever changing and evolving landscape, being a COTA member has played a key role in helping us stay abreast of critical organic industry changes, while providing a great platform to expand our network and engage with leaders in the Canadian organic sector.' - **James Sculthorpe, CEO, Yorkshire Valley Farms**

'For us, at The Big Carrot, being a COTA member means having access to valuable data, great resources, timely information and reliable updates on issues impacting our sector. We especially value the opportunities COTA creates for members to make our voices heard by taking part in COTA's regulatory and policy events and to connect with like-minded Organic businesses throughout the value chain. We are confident that COTA is working hard to protect Organic integrity and grow Canada's Organic movement' - **Maureen Kirkpatrick, Quality Standards Program Manager, The Big Carrot**



FINANCE REPORT

2019 - 2020 REVENUE

Sponsorships & Contributions: **\$157,480**

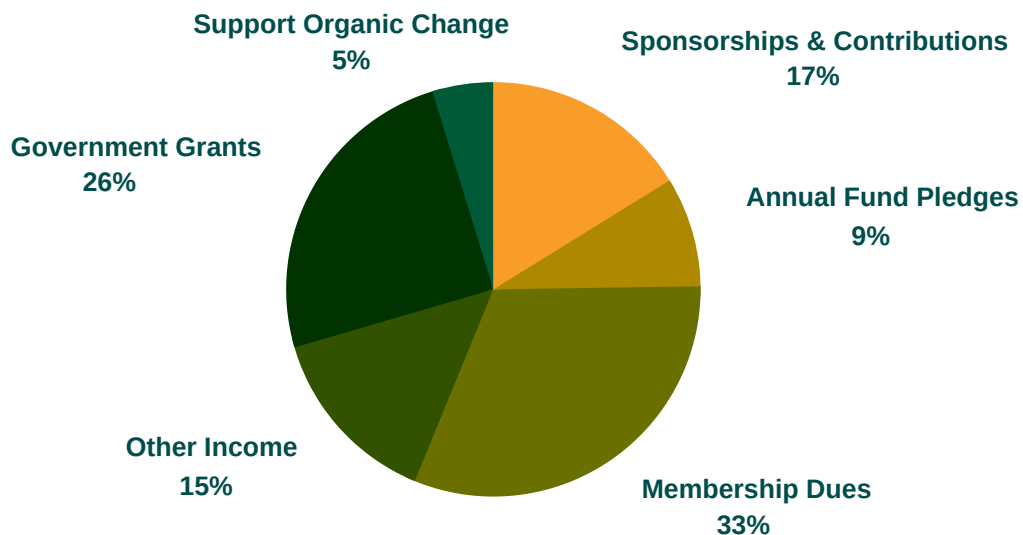
Annual Fund Pledges: **\$52,399**

Membership Dues: **\$262,089**

Other Income: **\$132,830**

Government Grants: **\$298,320**

Support Organic Change Fund: **\$46,039**



2019 - 2020 EXPENSES

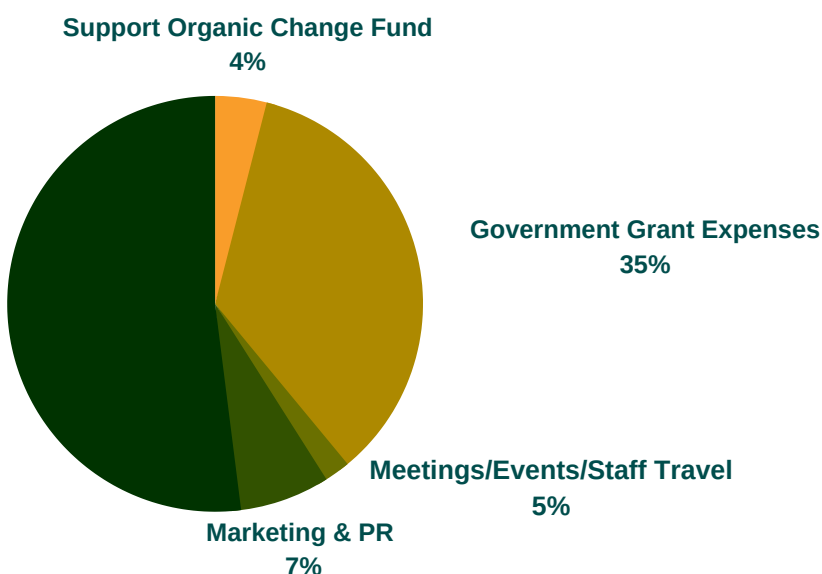
Operations: **\$503,525**

Government Grant Expenses: **\$334,890**

Marketing & Public Relations: **\$65,632**

Meetings/Events/Staff Travel: **\$21,490**

Support Organic Change Fund: **\$38,289**



MEET COTA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



(from left to right) **Marie-Michèle Le Moine**, Fruit d'Or, **Marise May**, Cha's Organics, **James Sculthorpe**, Yorkshire Valley Farms, **Maureen Kirkpatrick**, Big Carrot, **Steve Abrams**, Mill Street Brewery



(from left to right) **Dag Falck**, Nature's Path, **Jill Baxter**, Cambrian Solutions, **Travis Heide**, Organics Canada Ltd., **Tim Rundle**, Creative Salmon



COTA STAFF



Staff (from top left to bottom right): **Tia Loftsgard**, Executive Director, **Ann Fisbein**, Executive Office Manager, **Karen Squires**, Member Relations and Business Development Manager, **Caroline Bernard**, Member Relations and Executive Coordinator, **Monica Boucher**, Communications Coordinator, **Lauren Howard**, Events Coordinator

COTA AT WORK



COTA Board Member Dag Falck with COTA Manager of Membership Relations Karen Squires at the 2019 Guelph Organic Conference.



Incoming Buyers Mission at CHFA East



Staff at work at the COTA booth at CHFA East!



COTA Board at 2020 Strategic Planning Session

