

COTA's ORGANIC LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER BIOS

ORGANIC INNOVATOR



**RECIPIENT: RIVERSIDE NATURAL FOODS LTD.
ACCEPTING: NIMA FOTOVAT, President**

Nima Fotovat is the President at Riverside Natural Foods Ltd. Nima has over 15 years of experience in the food processing industry, starting with his time working alongside his siblings to successfully grow their father's fruit and nut company. After the family sold their shares of the company in 2012, Nima and his sisters, Sahba and Salma, made the decision to combine their expertise and launch a family-run company, Riverside Natural Foods Ltd., that aimed to take health food manufacturing to the next level. Under the brand name, MadeGood® Foods, the company launched an organic, gluten-free and top-eight-allergen-free snacks that don't just taste good, they do good. Beyond their B Corp certification, Riverside Natural Foods is also a proud TRUE Zero Waste business with a silver rating. Through this initiative, Riverside diverts a minimum of 90% of their manufacturing waste for reuse, recycling, composting and recovery for use in nature or the economy. Additionally, Riverside supports organic farmers and non-profit organizations, such as SickKids Hospital and 1% for the Planet.

MadeGood® Granola Minis are organic, gluten free, Non-GMO project verified and contain the nutrients in one full serving of vegetables from six different sources. One full serving of hidden vegetables from six different kinds of vegetables is packed with vitamins A, C, D, E and B6 to help live a healthy lifestyle.

Granola Minis are the portable snack packed with nutrition and flavour. These wholesome bites come in five flavours and are made with all-natural ingredients which adhere to the industry standards for non-GMO, organic, vegan and gluten-free products to support optimum nutrition.

These products have been featured in the Safe Snack Guide by SnackSafely.com as well since the granola is manufactured in a facility free from the 8 most common kinds of allergens; peanut, tree nut, soy, dairy, egg, fish, shellfish, gluten, and sesame.



**ORGANIC SUPPLIER
RECIPIENT: FRUIT d'OR/ PATIENCE FRUIT & Co.
ACCEPTING: MARIE-MICHELE LEMOINE**

Since its foundation in 2000, Fruit d'Or has been a pioneer in the production and processing of organic cranberries. Indeed, Fruit d'Or ranks first worldwide for growing organic cranberries, and second as an organic wild blueberry processor. Most Fruit d'Or berries come from its own fields. The rest are supplied by 45 well-established producers who work closely with Fruit d'Or to meet demand.

Furthermore, sustainability and long-term thinking have always been central to Fruit d'Or's ways of doing, both in the fields and in the board room. The company has proven how organic farming and cutting-edge technology can come together to produce quality products. And how a solid team and people-centered leadership translate into success. Every day, Fruit d'Or works to preserve the natural goodness of its fruits and build authentic relationships based on integrity.

For 20 years, Fruit d'Or continued to expand its range of products to meet the ever-changing needs of different markets. Its team serves distributors, repackers, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers from Quebec City to Tokyo. The company's supply structure allows it to quickly and reliably distribute to over 50 countries, maintaining its world-class expertise.

In addition, Fruit d'Or is in constant process of helping to develop the organic sector. The company's agronomists are always working on new tools and processes to optimize the farming practices of the company's producers. Recent efforts include developing a crop management application. Every year, the Fruit d'Or agronomists carry out three to four new studies to improve the company's practices and help advance the industry.

Sustainability is an integral part of Fruit d'Or's current practices with nearly 95% of production being environmentally certified. Organic production is up by 228% in the last five years and energy consumption at the Plessisville factory has been reduced by 30%.

Fruit d'Or is also involved in several organizations, promoting organic on a larger scale such as the Sustainable Food Trade Association, Le Semoir, an initiative specializing in social reforestation, Filière biologique du Québec, the only organization that is 100% dedicated to the Quebec organic sector's development. Fruit d'Or has been a strong member of the Canada Organic Trade Association in which Marie-Michèle Le Moine has been involved on the board for many years now and in addition, they have been a proud sponsor of the Organic Week every year.

In addition, in 2015, Fruit d'Or launched their own Patience Fruit & Co. brand, an inspirational retail brand name that offers bigger, softer and juicier berries and chocolate covered berry snacks.



ORGANIC CHAMPION

RECIPIENT: WALLACE HAMM OF PRO-CERT ORGANIC SYSTEMS LTD.

ACCEPTING: WALLACE HAMM

Mr. Hamm is a native of southern Manitoba and now a permanent resident of Saskatchewan. He brings over 50 years of experience as a professional agrologist and grain farmer to the organic industry. He obtained his Bachelor and Master's degrees in Agriculture from the University of Manitoba and completed course work towards a Ph.D. at the University of Saskatchewan. He was the Director of the Saskatchewan Soil Testing Laboratory and a soil fertility specialist at the University of Saskatchewan for 12 years. Following this he opened an agricultural/ environmental consulting firm specializing in soil, crop and water damage assessment.

In 1990, Wally and his son, Byron Hamm, founded Pro-Cert Organic Systems (Pro-Cert). Wally was approached by an independent group of organic farmers, needing an independent third party to verify their compliance to an organic standard to allow their continued access to European organic markets. On review of the standard, he immediately began work on revising to the standard to include a focus on soil health and crop nutrition in the requirements, as well as a focus on equivalency with the newly minted European Union standards. This new standard became the first Pro-Cert Organic Systems standard which was maintained and updated through to the publication of the first Canada Organic Standard. This was the start of his next 30 years of involvement with the standards making process.

Aside from his professional obligations, Wally also owned and operated his own farm. The Hamm family farm was converted to organic production in 1996. He continues to operate a growing organic dryland farm in Central Saskatchewan, currently producing on 2,500 acres of organic farmland.

Mr. Hamm was highly active in initiating government regulation of the organic food and fibre industry in Canada. He has been a participating member in the Committee on Organic Agriculture and/or in the standards making process from the years of development leading to the first Canadian standard in 1999 to today. His drive for a strong Canadian Organic Standard also ensured that Pro-Cert led the way as the first certifier to adopt and implement the standard after its publication in 1999.

Wallace is also a strong promoter of a national organic identify in the form of a federal regulatory system. He was involved in the lobby efforts to unify Canada's enforcement of organic standards through regulation since the mid 90's. To this end, he co-founded the ad-hoc Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) with the goal of (and which succeeded in) the industry coming together with a unified voice to work with the government towards regulation. These efforts saw fruition in the publication of the Organic Products Regulation 2009 and the start of the Canada Organic Regime (COR).

Through this time, he has continued to lead Pro-Cert from a one person operation with 40 growers to be a leading certifier in North America with global recognition supporting over 2,500 organic operations with a team of 24 staff and 70 inspectors.



ORGANIC RETAILER OF THE YEAR
RECIPIENT: WHOLE FOODS MARKET CANADA
ACCEPTING: ELAINE ARROWSMITH, Purchasing
Coordinator Western Canada

Founded in 1980 in Austin, Texas, Whole Foods Market (WFM) has been the world's leading natural and organic foods retailer. Whole Foods came to Canada in 2002 yet the largest expansion occurred in 2007 by acquiring the parent company of Capers Market, a well-known institution in Vancouver's natural food scene that had four locations. Now Whole Foods has 13 stores nationally (mostly located around Toronto and Vancouver).

Whole Foods is a pioneer in the health food industry. In 2001, WFM launched 365 Organic Everyday Value brand - the first national commodity priced, all-organic product line. In 2003, WFM became the first certified organic national grocer in the U.S. In 2002, our Canadian stores were initially certified to CCOF's organic retail standards. In 2009, we were proud to support the organic equivalence

arrangement between the United States and Canada which facilitated more trade between the Whole Foods locations. The certification of the WFM retail stores transitioned in 2018 from CCOF's retail standards to the Canadian Organic Standards. To this day, every single U.S. and Canadian Whole Foods Market store and distribution center is inspected annually by an accredited third-party to ensure WFM upholds their commitment as a certified organic grocer.

Organic has been a cornerstone of product selection by WFM's purchasing teams, giving many a small company an opportunity to sell their local products, with dedicated staff dedicated to "scavenging for local products". Infrastructure and clear criteria programs have facilitated more farmer capacity to sell to Whole Foods through the offer of the Local Producer Loan program and for small-holder farmers in developing countries to sell via the Whole Trade Guarantee Program. WFM's community support via its three foundations, Whole Kids, Whole Cities and Whole Planet Foundation have made such significant impacts across the country that it is obvious that Whole Foods is more than just a grocery store selling food, it's an institution committed to organic and sustainable change.



ORGANIC LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIC SCIENCE

RECIPIENT: DR. RALPH MARTIN

ACCEPTING: ALLI BEARINGER, niece of Dr. Martin

Dr. Martin's leadership and impact to establish the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada enabled the establishment of national organic networks of scientists and extension specialists. He led the development of the first Organic Science Cluster (\$8 million), which then provided the foundation to secure future Science Cluster funding, resulting in a total of \$30 million for organic science and research between 2009-2023.

Dr. Martin led the first AC Nielsen market survey of organic, established a web-based Certificate in Organic Agriculture at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, established the Expert Committee on Organic Agriculture which identified national research priorities, co-authoring the first national strategic plan for organic agriculture, establishing the OACC website and monthly Organic Friends E-newsletter, and facilitating the Animal Welfare Taskforce. Ralph has been actively called upon in the organic sector to sit on the Organic Value Chain Roundtable, Canadian Organic Standards committee as a voting member, and as a sector presenter to Federal Government committees.

Ralph has co-authored over 50 scientific papers and technical reports relating to organic agriculture and sustainability (<https://www.plant.uoguelph.ca/rcmartin>) and has recently written a book "Food Security: From Excess to Enough". He has been actively engaged in many community sustainability initiatives which has led to his running in the last federal election.

Ralph had a dramatic impact on organic science, teaching and extension through his short 10-year tenure as Director of OACC. Ralph left the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in 2011 to become the Loblaw's Chair in Sustainable Agriculture at the University of Guelph where he continued to support research in sustainable agriculture and participate in organic science initiatives. Ralph retired from the University of Guelph in 2019.



**ORGANIC FARMER OF THE YEAR
RECIPIENT: THE GREEN ORGANIC
DUTCHMAN
ACCEPTING: DAVID BERNARD-PERRON, VP
Operations**

The Green Organic Dutchman (TGOD) starts operations in 2012. Alongside growing cannabis, TGOD has a community farm near Hamilton, Ontario that produces fresh, organic foods that contributes to local communities through food donation programs. The community farm has an orchard, goats, chickens and 2 acres of vegetables. To date, TGOD has donated over 2,000 pounds of food (out of their 3000 pounds of production) to Hamilton food share programs to help feed the hungry.

TGOD owns a 166,000 sq. ft. organic certified facility capable of producing 17,500 kg of organic cannabis. TGOD is committed to environmental practises throughout their operations, using LED lighting in their hybrid facilities, allowing for absorption of natural sunlight when possible. TGOD uses multiple filtration processes, allowing to recycle and reuse 90% of rainwater that is used to feed the plants and are committed to using only recyclable glass and recyclable paper for their final products.