



organic
ALBERTA

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

ORGANIC ALBERTA: REPRESENTING, SUPPORTING AND
GROWING ALBERTA'S ENTIRE ORGANIC INDUSTRY

ABOUT US

Organic Alberta is the voice of organics in the province. We work with organic farms and other businesses to identify gaps or needs and help to find solutions. In addition to advocating on your behalf to various levels of government, we:

- Communicate with and for the sector,
- Market the organic brand,
- Help experienced, and transitioning producers cultivate better production practices, and
- Advance business development. We lead the industry towards success.

OUR MEMBERS

- 540 Certified organic members
- 47 Corporate members
- 38 Friend members



MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Tim Hoven: President and Southern Region Representative

Eckville, Ab. 115-year-old family farm growing organic 100% grass fed cattle, free range pastured chicken, free range pastured pork, an organic vegetable garden and a CSA.



Dawn Boileau: Vice-President and Central Region Representative

Onoway, Ab. Certified Organic market gardener and year-round producer of shoots and micro greens.



Heather Kerschbaumer: Treasurer and Northern Region Representative

Fairview, Ab. 4th generation family farm selling pasture mixes, hay mixes, reclamation mixtures and native grasses. They also operate Golden Acres Seeds, a forage seed cleaning and marketing service.



Trevor Aleman: Secretary and Southern Region Representative

Coaldale, Ab. "Busy Bea's Market Garden", named for Trevor's mother, Bea. He mainly grows potatoes, onions and garlic for wholesale markets in Calgary, as well as vegetables for Farmers' Markets.



James Thiessen: Northern Region Representative

Tomkins, Ab. Hemp seed production and oats. James is the local farm representative for Hemp Production Services, a buyer for hemp seed.



Abbie Stein-MacLean: Member-at-Large Representative

Edmonton, Ab. Involved in several market development initiatives, including producer-retailer relationships, helping small producers to get their products market-ready, and making it easier for food service buyers to source local organic food.



Charles Newell: Alberta Representative at Federal Level

Radway Ab. Lifelong farmer growing grains and cattle and an experienced Board member in the energy industry



Arnold Van Os: Central Region Representative

Wetaskiwin, Ab. Dairy farm milking 130 cows. Served on the AB Milk board for 8 years. In that capacity he gained valuable experience in lobbying the government.



Bernie Ehnes: Member-at-large Representative

Etzikom, Ab. Grows mostly fall Rye, spring wheat, durum, peas and Red Fife wheat. He also raised organic cattle for a few years and operated an on-farm organic seed cleaning operation for 20 years. Most recently, he has begun working as an organic inspector.



Frank Maddock: Member-at-large Representative

Entwhistle, Ab. Operates a mixed farm with an emphasis on direct marketing of protein: eggs, chicken and turkeys, pork and beef. Cereals and forages round out the cropping side.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

SET BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS UNDERPIN EVERYTHING WE DO

In 2017 we were guided by 5 strategic directions:

Members

Sustainability

Grow the Sector

Strong Standards

Organic Marketing

To help us get there we:

- Hosted 570 people of all generations at our 2 Annual Conferences (Central and Northern Alberta).
- Published 4 Magazines.
- Distributed regular Monthly email updates.
- Launched a new Website.
- Became more active on social media.
- Consulted with Government Ministers (Regulation, local food strategy, fusarium management).
- Developed partnerships with:
 - Applied research groups, Forage Associations, Ag & Food Council, Holistic Management, Egg Farmers of Alberta,
 - Alberta innovates and Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute – biodiversity and carbon cycling models, market development for carbon credits for organic producers,
 - Canadian Organic Growers (COG), Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA).
- Prairie Organic Development Fund – participated on board and as fundraiser - \$300,000 so far!
- Actively participated on National Organic Value Chain Round Table – including work on a national strategic plan.
- Conducted a comprehensive survey of our membership as part of a large, overall strategic planning process (see Winter 2017/18 issue of our magazine for details on what we learned).
- Sent 2 management staff members for mini-MBA training, 1 for advanced leadership training and 1 for mentor-coach training.
- Hosted and trained 9 interns
- Led the campaign to make the provincial government aware of the necessity to put Alberta certified organic producers on a level playing field and to build consumer confidence. As a result, government has recognized the importance of an organic regulation and included it in the proposed Local Food Act for consideration March 2018. We lead the industry towards success!
- And much more...

ORGANIC GRAIN PROGRAMS

ACROSS ALBERTA

As part of the Prairie Organic Grain Initiative, each province receives a budget to use for regionally-specific programming. Add in some sponsor and other income and here are a few of the things we did in 2017:

- Talked to 100 high school students at an Agriculture Career Fair.
- Shared the organic agricultural experience with thousands of grade four students at Amazing Agriculture 2017.



- 63 people interested in transitioning to organic grain at a Pre-Conference Workshop in La Crete.
- Organic Grain and Field Crops Conference in La Crete attracted 124 participants.
- 30 people traveled to Manning to learn about Transitioning to Organic Grains and Livestock.
- Shared the Green Manure toolkit and other organic production resources at AOPA meetings.



- 162 people joined us in Mackenzie County, Peace Region, Ferintosh and Lethbridge.
- Nicole Masters taught us about soil health and soil microbes.
- At Fort Vermilion we learned about new organic research, crop varieties, and cover crops while touring fields of barley, canola, corn, faba bean, field peas, flax, hemp, oats, quinoa, soybean, and wheats.
- We brought Michelle Carkner to MARA's new pollinator and cover crop sites to speak on varieties for organic production.
- We travelled to Flatrock, BC to learn about new organic research, organic management techniques and cover crops.
- At Mans Organic Farm approx. 50 people spent the day discussing hemp production, soil health, tissue sampling, cover crops, specialty crops and research updates from AAFC in Lethbridge.



- Distributed resources and answered questions at both organic and non-organic focused trade shows in Mackenzie County and Edmonton.



YOUNG AGRARIANS

GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ECOLOGICAL FARMERS

Through the generous support of our funders combined with additional contributions from our members and corporate friends we hosted nearly 1,000 participants at 5 mixers, 6 potlucks, 9 workshops and 8 farm tours. 8 apprentices served on 5 different host farms. We received seed money to develop a farmer engagement strategy to build networks and were able to address barriers that affect all young farmers including land access, financing and training education. An amazing learning experience for all involved! Funded by Peavey Mart, ALMA, and Status of Women.

We know that many new farmers don't necessarily come from a farming background, and these new entrants are often working with smaller farms, using sustainable farming practices and exploring new business models to make their farm enterprise work.



ORGANIC ALBERTA LIVESTOCK PROGRAMS

- \$101,250 over 2 years, thanks to the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency.
- Met with Egg Farmers of Alberta (EFA) to establish an Organic Alberta representative on their Egg Industry Advisory Committee and to address the need for more organic eggs at independent retailers.
- Partnered with:
 - Holistic Management Canada to present the conference in Lacombe,
 - NPARA to organize a joint transition to organic workshop,
 - Olds College to bring speakers on organic livestock production to their classes. Met with Alberta Beef, Canada Beef and A&W at the Public Trust summit.
- Supported new and young livestock farmers by funding the livestock apprenticeships and developing a mentorship program.
- Supported a grazing farm club and a farm club interested in fatty acid levels in grass-fed meats.
- Hosted 4 field days with 80 participants!
- Held 5 production workshops with 150 participants focusing on: "Whole Farm Planning", "Marketing Your Meat", "Livestock Start-Up", "Ecological Farm Design" and "Telling Your Farm Story" workshops.
- 2 value chain workshops attracted 100 participants interested in "Pasture to Plate: Understanding Fatty Acids in Meat" and "Lessons in Livestock Marketing from the Butcher".

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

- \$96,100 over 2 years, with generous funding from Status of Women
- Addressing the needs and challenges of women who wish to become primary farm operators.
- Established farmer-to-farmer training, apprenticeships and mentorships for women.
- Partnered with the Ag and Food Council to expand their Success for Women in Agri-Food program and to make it accessible to more women farmers. Participants have been attending online and in-person business training workshops that include sessions on strategic planning, business planning, selling yourself, and participating in policy discussions.

PRAIRIE ORGANIC GRAIN INITIATIVE (POGI)

We are just finishing the 3rd year of this \$2.2 million 4-year program designed to achieve resiliency and stability in the organic sector across the prairies. Organic Alberta houses the prairie-wide initiative, made possible through the generous support of Western Diversification, Bauta, the Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF) and many industry funders and contributors.



Focus:

- Increase Quantity and Quality of Organic Grains
 - Monthly industry teleconference calls,
 - PIVOT and GROW website,
 - Transitioning Farmer downloadable Starter Kit,
 - Online Green Manure Tool Kit,
 - Organic production videos,
 - Organic Farmer Profiles,
 - On-farm Nutrient Consultations,
 - Organic production Fact Sheets,
 - On-Farm Trials and Intercropping Study,
 - 1-800# dial an expert,
 - Online Business to Business Directory,
 - Agronomist Training Program,
 - Sponsorship of field days, production and transition workshops, conferences, Ag college visits and young farmer events across the prairies.
- Market Development
 - Online Exporter Directory,
 - Prairie Acreage Data Reports,
 - Tracking market trends,
 - Grain Quality education,
 - Trade shows
 - ✓ Sent 28 companies to trade shows.
 - ✓ Attended 23 domestic and international trade shows to promote prairie organic grain
 - Met with 1011 international buyers

THE BAUTA FAMILY INITIATIVE ON CANADIAN SEED SECURITY



Organic Alberta is the prairie host of the Bauta Initiative, building a movement for resilient seed systems across Canada. Working with farmers, seed producers, researchers, and others we help support and build a Canadian seed system that provides a solid foundation for seed security, climate resilience, and vibrant local communities.

Four Key Areas of Work:

Capacity Building

Farmer-led Research

Biodiversity Conservation

Building the Seed Movement

BAUTA + POGI = Great Things!

By joining forces with the Prairie Organic Grain Initiative, we were able to:

- Create Fact Sheets,
- Produce a YouTube Video Series,
- Showcase grain cleaning equipment at field days,
- Participate in organic oat variety trials,
- Train agronomists in organic management practices,
- Introduce budding chefs and consumers to local organic grain via Tasting Events,
- Provide funding to farmers to run their own on-farm research trials.

In addition, we:

- Support Participatory Plant Breeding across the Prairies,
- Make capacity building grants available to vegetable producers,
- Connect with other food projects across the Prairies including the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture and Community Collaborative,
- Bring expert speakers in to the Organic Alberta conference.

MACKENZIE COUNTY ORGANIC SUCCESS PROGRAM

In late 2017 Alberta Economic Development and Trade approved our application for funding over 2 years. Combine this with some very generous support from our partners (Mackenzie Applied Research Association, Mackenzie County Council, Regional Economic Development Initiative, and many individual organic companies) and we have a budget of \$276,050 to support Mackenzie County entrepreneurs!

- 2 research trials to enhance best practices as well as a trade and marketing component.
- 2 separate streams of programming will focus on key priorities that will have the greatest impact.

For transitioning and new growers:

- Certification process
- Finances during transition
- Marketing
- Weed management
- Soil fertility

For experienced growers:

- Building soil fertility
- Managing weeds
- Designing crop rotations for weed and fertility management
- Maximizing grain quality
- Increasing trade

We have begun the process of identifying the specific needs of the region and will build those into a strategic framework for learning and a full-blown implementation plan.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

STATUS OF THE ORGANIZATION AT DECEMBER 31, 2017

- Staff:
 - Becky Lipton, Executive Director
 - Karen Snethun, Program Director, Prairie Organic Grain Initiative
 - Debbie Miller, Finance and Member Services Manager
 - Iris Vaisman, Prairie Organic Grain Initiative/ Organic Alberta Grain Program Manager and Prairie Coordinator for the Bauta Initiative on Canadian Seed Security
 - Cari Hartt, Communications Coordinator
 - Lindsey Oh, Program and Event Coordinator/Administrative Assistant
 - Samantha Flasha, Organic Grain Program Coordinator
 - Kolby Peterson, Young Agrarians Apprenticeship Coordinator, Mackenzie County Organic Success Interim Program Coordinator
- Contractors:
 - Dana Penrice, Young Agrarians/Livestock Program Manager
 - Lilli Klamke, Young Agrarians Coordinator, Peace River Region
 - Greg DeJong, Organic Alberta Data Management and POGI Program Support

We finished 2017 in a strong financial position, with assets of \$367,870. This includes cash on hand of \$231,568, a reserve fund of \$48,399, and \$71,292 in current receivables.

We pay very close attention to our “burn rate”, the amount of money we spend on average to be sure we always have enough of a cash cushion to get us through a few months of “worst case scenario”. At the end of 2017 our average monthly expenses were \$73,222, which means we had a cushion of 5 months expenses, including our reserve funds.

In a perfect world income and expenses would always arrive in the month and/or year in which they are incurred – but in real life that doesn’t always happen. In the case of grants, sometimes we receive all the funds up front, other times we need to spend first, report, and then receive them. At the end of 2017 we had a total of \$277,285 grant/industry support funds that have not been spent yet, and a total of \$28,891 in grant money that has been spent but not received yet. We also have \$69,742 of operating and core activity expenses that came in during 2017 but are for 2018 activities.

Finance Committee:

Our Finance Committee volunteers meet monthly to review the day-to-day financial operations, including scrutinizing the financial statements, ensuring the appropriate policies and procedures are adhered to and making recommendations to the Board of Directors and the Executive Director. We appreciate their input and their guidance.

- Heather Kerschbaumer (Chair and Treasurer of Organic Alberta’s Board of Directors), Golden Acres Seeds
- Jim Schoepp, Homegrown Foods
- Christa Olsen, Producer

FINANCIAL REPORTS

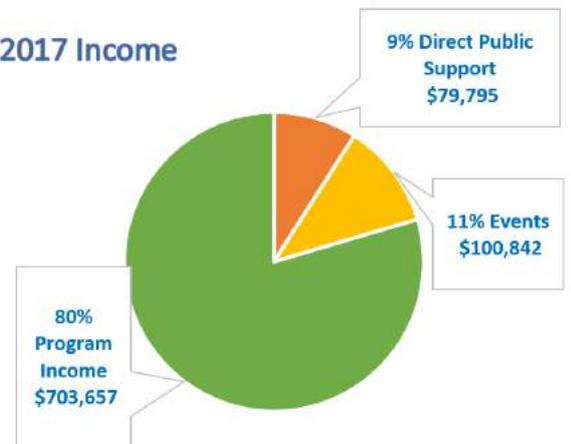
STATUS OF THE ORGANIZATION AT DECEMBER 31, 2017

Our income can be divided into two main categories – core operating income and program income.

Core income is primarily from either direct public support (donations, advertising, corporate and friend memberships, book sales) or events. Our largest event is the central conference (\$89,720) but also includes workshops, field days, etc.

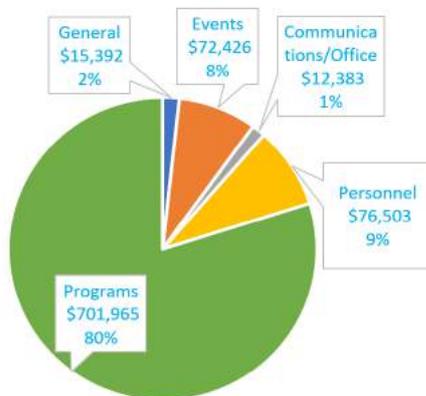
Program income comes primarily from grants, but also includes sponsorships, participation fees, and other industry support money. These funds support the programs you’ve just read about!

2017 Income

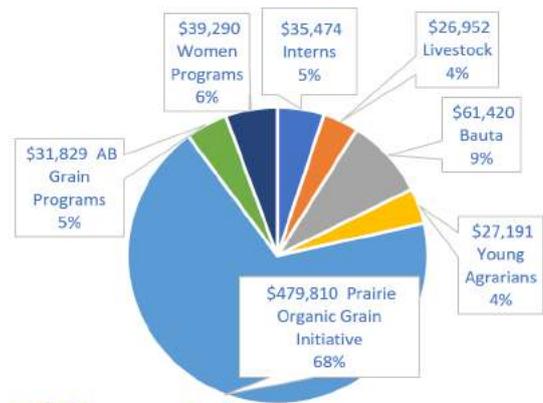


Our expenses can also be divided into two main categories.

Core activities include base personnel expenses, events such as conferences and field days, office/communications (magazine, web site, etc) and general costs such as insurance, memberships.



2017 Expenses



2017 Program Costs

It is incredible that in 2017 we were able to take \$5800 of donations from members, add in corporate sponsorships, and leverage it into over \$700,000 worth of programming to build and strengthen the organic community! Can you imagine what we would do if we started with \$20,000 of donations from members? That is our goal for 2018.

Our average donation over the past few years is \$100.

Many of you have been generous with your donations every year for several years, and we are very grateful for that. This year we are asking that you consider increasing your regular donation to help us reach our goal. If you have not donated in the past – then this is a great year to start!

**All the great work we do is only possible because of you!
Thank you for your support!**

2017 ORGANIC HEROES

Thank you to everyone who makes our work possible with their dollars!

\$1-\$50

Isaac & Anna Krahn
Kerry & Lisa Wilson
Jake Wall
Pier or Tiny Brouwer
Teresa & Tymen Van Den Hazel
Jake or Maria Zacharias
Franziska Peters
Loziak Farms
Soames Smith
Sun Prairie Mills Ltd.
Frank M & Margaret Dyck
Tobias & Eva Harms
Denise O'Reilly
Peter & Anna Bueckert
Bar X Ranch Inc
Daryl & Patricia Toma
Donald Bogen
Elizabeth Chrapko
Gumboot Cattle Ltd
Highwood Crossing Foods Ltd.
Jake & Myrna Letkeman
John Derksen
Keith & Lois Burger

Michael & Lorraine Futoransky
Morinville Municipal Seed Cleaning
Peter Wiebe
Robocon Farms Inc
Steve Bank

\$51-\$100

Isaac Martens
Charles & Susan Wieler
Daniel & Marilyn Wiebe
Scott Palmer
Oliver Anderson &/or Janice Fallows
Peter & Judy Zacharias
Free Spirit Cattle Co Ltd
George and Mary Janzen
John H & Susie Wiebe
John Hofer
Phillip & Susan Driedger

\$101-\$200

Hazel Bluff Farm
Frank and Brenda Maddock
Ernest & Rebecca Peters
Dawn Boileau

Mark Gibeau
Steve Snider
Vital Green Farms
Herman & Maria Friesen
Rosemary Wotske
563929 Alberta Ltd
Frank & Shirley Doerksen
Ruzicka Sunrise Farm

\$201 - \$500

Jerry Kitt
Fairwinds Farm Ltd.
Chris & Leah Simeniuk
Mans Organics
Peter & Irene Mihailuk

\$501 - \$1,000

The Organic Box
Sunnyside Natural Market

\$1,000 - \$20,000

Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF)

EVENT & PROGRAM SPONSORSHIPS

\$1 - \$500

Dale Anderson
Grey Wooded Forage Association
Hemp Genetics International
OCIA International - Canada
PHS Organics
TCO Cert Services
XPT Grain Inc.

\$501 - \$1,000

OCIA Chapter Members Assoc Canada
Wetaskiwin Co-op Association
Enviro Perfect Solutions
Ag Service Board
Hemp Production Services

\$1,001 - \$ 2,500

Grower's International (GIOSI)
County of Grande Prairie
Farm Credit Canada (FCC)
Sunrise Foods
Frontier Seed Cleaning Plant

\$2,501 - \$5,000

AFSC
Ecocert Canada (Quebec)
FW Cobs
Hemp Production Services
Penergetic Canada
Pro-Cert Organic Systems Ltd.
Westaqua Commodity Group Ltd.
Alberta Community and Cooperative Association (ACCA)

\$5,001 - \$7,500

Agri-Risk: Canadian Organic Growers (COG)
Ecocert Canada (Quebec)

\$7,501 - \$8,000

Government of Alberta

\$8,001 - \$10,000

Mackenzie Applied Research Assoc
Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
Richardson Milling

\$20,001 - \$30,000

Organic Federation of Canada (OFC)

\$30,001 - \$40,000

General Mills Inc
Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF)
Alberta Youth Green Initiative

\$40,000 - \$100,000

Alberta Status of Women
Bauta

\$100,001 - \$200,000

Western Economic Diversification



Unit #1, 10329 61st Ave NW

Edmonton, AB T6H 1K9

Organicalberta.org

Phone: 587-521-2400 Fax: 780-989-2488

Email: info@organicalberta.org