

Organic in Canada

By the Numbers

2016 DATA

With two-thirds of Canadian shoppers choosing organics weekly, new organic products introduced every year and sales growing across the country, there is no doubt that the Canadian organic sector is thriving.

Behind this expansion of organics across our farmland and onto our dinner plates are thousands of producers, processors and more.

This annual resource provides estimates on the number of organic operators and acreage in Canada using data provided by Certification Bodies. .



Operations

In 2016, organic operations reached an estimated 5,459, up from 5,051 in 2015.

Producers

There are an estimated 4,156 certified organic producers across Canada.

Processors

In 2016, there was an estimated 1,739 certified processors, handlers, manufacturers and retailers,

Acres

Organic acreage has nearly reached 3 million acres in 2016. This represents an addition of 500,000 since 2015.

NOTE ON DATA COLLECTION

Organic Certification Bodies across Canada and the U.S. voluntarily provide operation and acreage data to the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) for analysis and release. The numbers presented here represent a best estimate using the data provided, which varies in detail, categorization and delivery format. COTA is working with government and industry to improve data quality and breadth and streamline the data collection process for years to come.



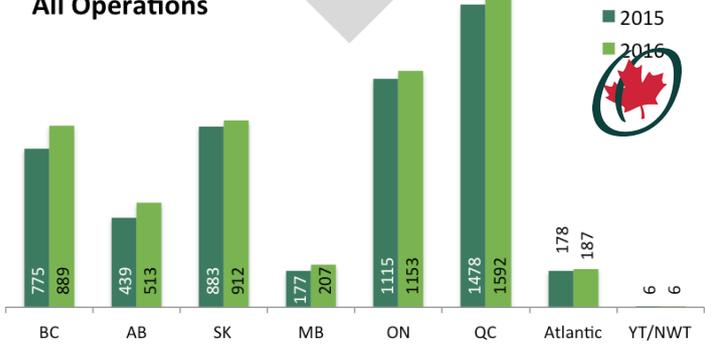
Organic Operators 2016

Please see the final page for notes on the data.

Nationwide, all regions recorded more operations, with the exception of the territories which have remained stable. Quebec has the largest number of operations, reaching over 1,500 in 2016. Quebec and B.C. were tied for the greatest increase in operations with 114 additional operations each in 2016 than in 2015.

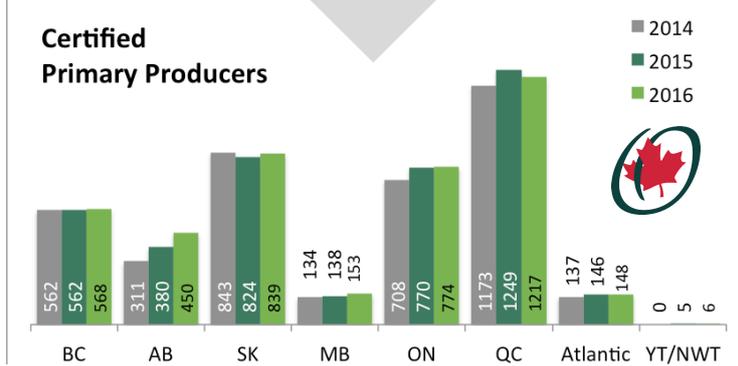


All Operations



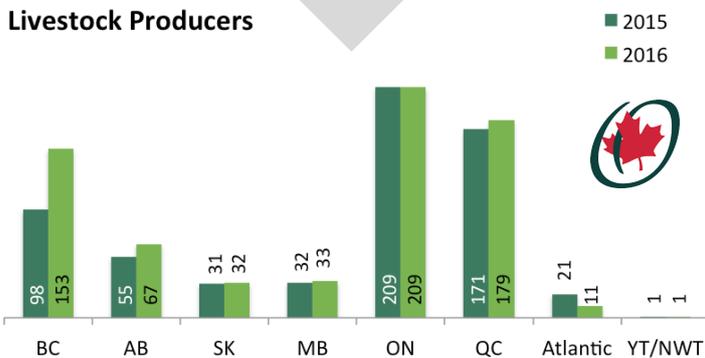
Certified producer numbers have been fairly stable across regions. The number of certified producers increased from 4,074 in 2015 to 4,156 in 2016. Alberta stands out for consistent growth in the number of producers between 2014 and 2016. Quebec still has the greatest number of certified producers, but is the only region showing a loss of producers between 2015 and 2016.

Certified Primary Producers



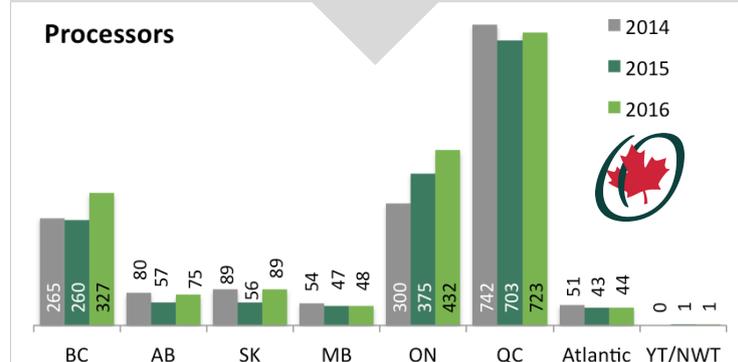
In 2016, livestock operators totalled an estimated 685, up from 618 in 2015. This expansion was primarily driven by new producers in B.C. and Alberta. Ontario continues to have the most number of organic livestock producers, followed by Quebec.

Livestock Producers

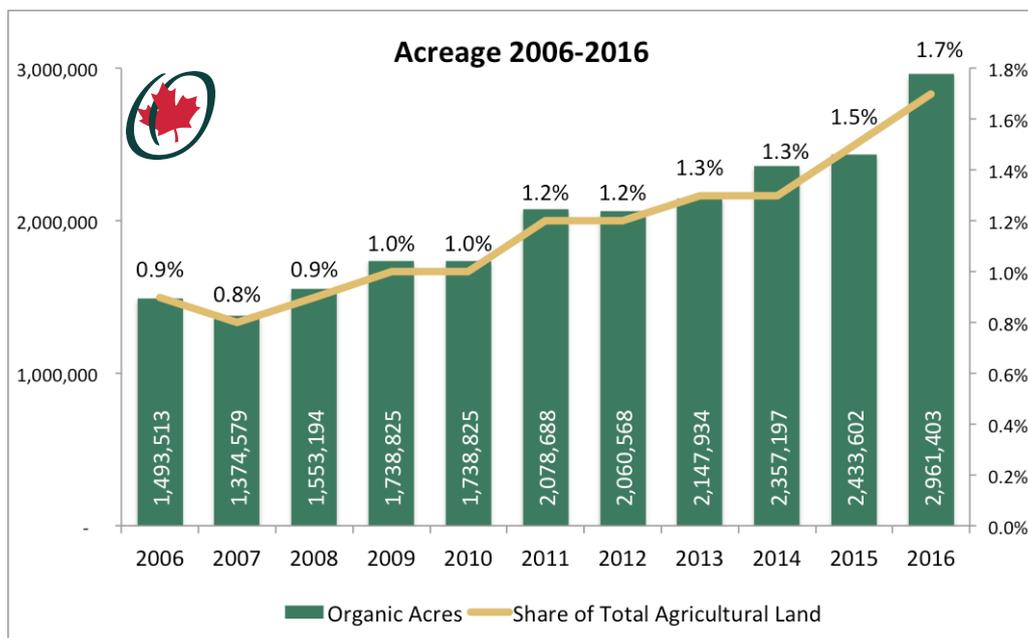


The country has seen a steady increase in organic processors, handlers, manufacturers and retailers. Between 2015 and 2016 there were nearly 200 new processors, bringing the total to an estimated 1,739. B.C. and Ontario had the greatest increase in processors, with 67 and 57 respectively. Quebec continues to have the largest number of processors - partly because provincial regulation allows for the certification of retailers.

Processors

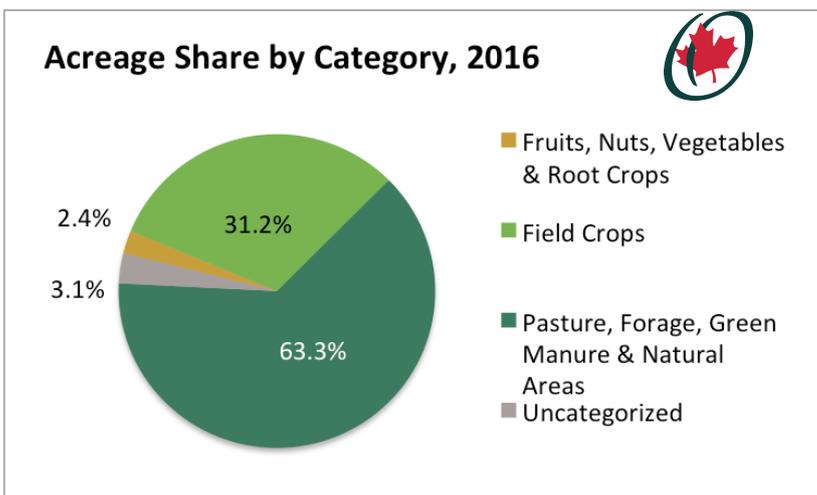
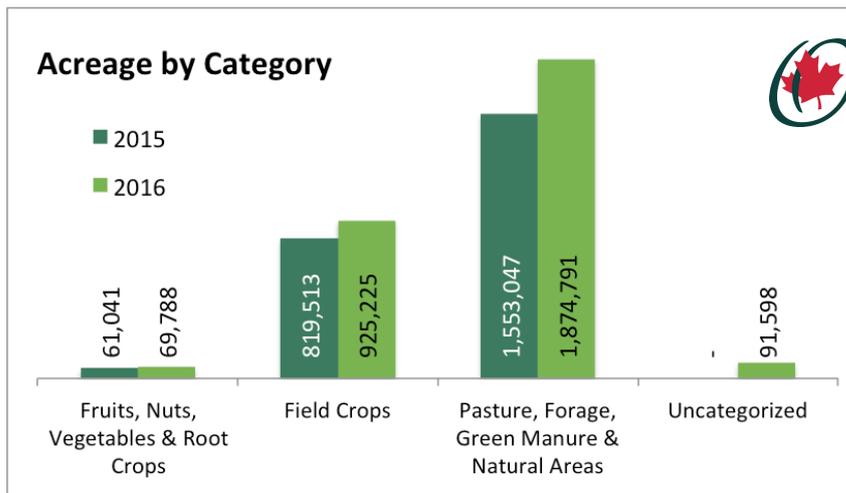


Organic Acreage 2016



Organic acreage has been increasing since it started to be tracked over 10 years ago. According to the data, there were over half a million new acres under organic management in 2016 compared to 2015. Organic acreage share is now at an estimated 1.7% - expanding across our farmlands.

All acreage categories have increased between 2015 and 2016. The diverse category of pasture, forage, green manures and natural areas had the greatest increase with an addition of over 300,000 acres. The 'uncategorized' category was introduced to account for data provided that was not divisible among the other categories.

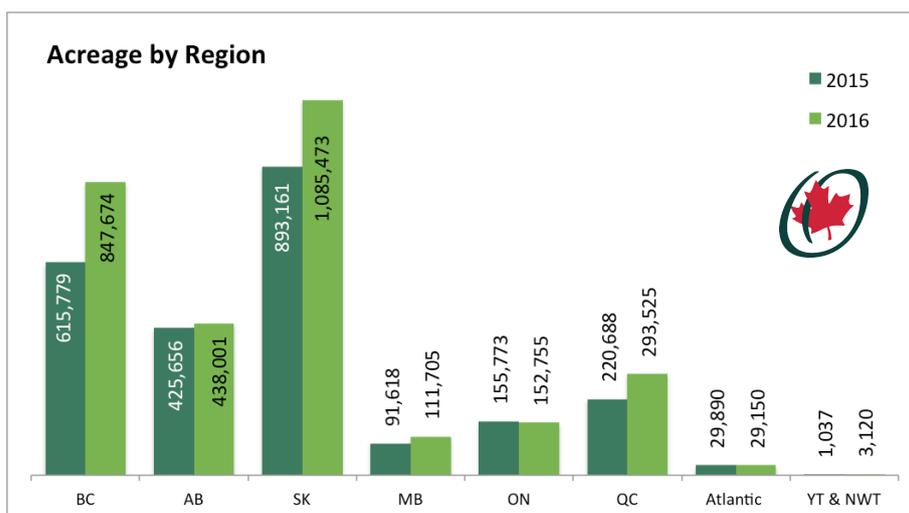


Fruits and vegetables account for less than 3% of organic lands. However, this category is a cornerstone of the organic market as it is highly valued and the most commonly purchased category of organic foods. Field crops account for nearly a third of organic lands. Pasture, forage, green manures and natural areas clearly dominate our agriculture lands - representing nearly two-thirds.



Organic Acreage 2016

Regionally, most of the organic acreage is concentrated in the Western provinces. Saskatchewan is home to over a third of organic acres, with over 100,000 additional acres reported in 2016. B.C. also had a noteworthy jump in acreage which was largely driven by the certification of extensive pasture lands. The estimated decrease in Ontario acreage warrants additional attention to confirm.



	Fruits, Nuts, Vegetables & Root Crops		Field Crops		Pasture, Forage, Green Manure & Natural Areas		Uncategorized	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
BC	10,825	14,215	15,981	8,725	588,973	738,062	N/A	86,673
AB	7,081	1,982	137,216	184,042	281,359	247,242	N/A	4,735
SK	5,604	1,933	490,893	526,919	396,663	556,622	N/A	-
MB	1,270	1,629	34,134	51,311	56,215	58,765	N/A	-
ON	19,218	5,346	78,611	77,969	57,944	69,437	N/A	4
QC	12,934	42,458	53,761	68,962	153,993	182,105	N/A	-
Atlantic	3,711	1,925	8,678	6,119	17,501	21,106	N/A	-
YT/NWT	398	301	240	1,179	399	1,453	N/A	187
TOTAL	61,041	69,788	819,513	925,225	1,553,047	1,874,791	-	91,598



COTA would like to sincerely thank all organic Certification Bodies and associations that provided the data used in this analysis. Their voluntary participation plays a valuable role in understanding and supporting the organic sector across Canada. We extend a well-deserved 'thank you' to the following Certification Bodies:

CCOF
CCPB SRL
Centre for Systems Integration (CSI)
Certified Organic Association of BC (COABC)
Ecocert
Global Organic Alliance (GOA)
International Certification Services Inc. (ICS)

Oregon Tilth
Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA)
Organic Producers Association of Manitoba (OPAM)
Pacific Agricultural Certification Service (PACS)
ProCert
Organic Quality Assurance International (QAI) TransCanada
Organic (TCO) Cert

NOTES ON THE DATA

- Total operations is not an aggregate of all other categories as some operations fall into more than one category (e.g., a farm with processing on site).
- 'Processors' includes processors, handlers, manufacturers and retailers.
- Some transitional operations and acreage were not provided by CBs. For this reason the total number of operations and acreage is likely underestimated and there can be no breakout of changes in transitional within the data presented.
- In some cases, the 2015 data released in 2017 has been modified following reanalysis. For this reason, comparisons with previous COTA data may be inconsistent.

Released by the Canada Organic Trade Association (www.canada-organic.ca).
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