



2020 DATA Organic Agriculture in the Prairies

A Report by the Canada Organic Trade Association
commissioned by the Prairie Organic Development Fund



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This report was commissioned by the Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF) and prepared by Laura Telford, Manitoba Agriculture and the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA). All figures reported are best estimates using data provided by organic certification bodies.



Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA)

The Canada Organic Trade Association is the membership-based trade association for the organic sector in Canada, representing producers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmer associations, distributors, consultants, retailers, and all points along the organic value chain. COTA promotes and protects the growth of organics to benefit the environment, farmers, the public, and the economy. To learn more, visit www.canada-organic.ca.



Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF)

The Prairie Organic Development Fund was incorporated in 2015 under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act as an investment platform for building the organic sector in the Canadian Prairies. PODF builds resilience in the sector by investing in organic provincial associations (Capacity Fund) and high impact programs (Innovation Fund) related to marketing, research, policy, education and capacity development that have broad public benefit to the organic sector. The fund is directed by a board of directors made up of organic producers, grain buyers, organic brands, researchers and provincial organizations. To learn more, visit organicdevelopmentfund.org.

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List of Abbreviations

- AB – Alberta
- BC – British Columbia
- MB – Manitoba
- NB – New Brunswick
- NL – Newfoundland and Labrador
- NS – Nova Scotia
- ON – Ontario
- PEI – Prince Edward Island
- QC – Quebec
- SK – Saskatchewan
- YT/NWT – Yukon Territory/Northwest Territories





Executive Summary

Now in its seventh year of publication, the Organic Agriculture in the Prairies report provides a snapshot of the health of the organic sector in the Canadian Prairie.

Key Findings

- Certified organic operations declined to 1957 in 2020 below 2019 numbers, primarily due to losses in the organic handling sector.
- The number of crop producers remained unchanged from 2019.
- The largest loss of operators and acreage occurred in Manitoba.
- Despite no real increases in producer numbers, organic acreage expanded by 161,719 acres to 1,884,509 acres in 2020 while the Prairie share of national organic acreage declined from 50 to 45%.
- Cereals and oilseeds demonstrated the greatest gains in acreage over 2019 with 20% and 18% growth, respectively. Wild harvested crops - most notably wild rice, reported the biggest loss of acreage with a 27% year-over-year reduction.
- Livestock production was relatively flat with seven fewer mixed organic operations in 2020 while actual livestock numbers increased from 2019.
- The number of Prairie organic handlers dropped precipitously from 292 to 265, a 10% drop over 2019.





Methodology

Organic certification bodies (also called certifiers) that operate in Canada voluntarily supply data to the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) for analysis and release in aggregated format.

These data are confidentially analyzed. Data can vary due to the different classification and data collection methodologies of the certification bodies. Despite our best efforts, we also continue to have missing data as not every organic certification body agrees to submit their data to us voluntarily. For this reason, the numbers in this report represent a best estimate using the data provided.

Notes:

- **HISTORICAL DATA:** Data are revised to account for any historical errors or gaps that have been resolved. For this reason, the figures presented may not align with past reports.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Land use is measured in acres.
- **CERTIFIED ONLY:** This analysis includes only operations and acreage that are certified organic as per the Canadian Organic Standards. Acreage and operators in transition are not included, as tracking is nearly impossible since operators are not required by law to register with a certification body until they are 15 months away from achieving organic certification. Operators with only *Attestations of Compliance* are excluded.
- **OPERATION TYPES:** There are three operation types. An operation may fall in multiple categories:
 - “**Handlers**” includes a spectrum of organic operations, including food and feed processors, handlers, seed cleaners, abattoirs, broker/buyer/importer/exporter, retailers and operators with packaging and labelling certificates and excludes operations that have only an attestation of compliance.
 - “**Crop producers**” are defined as those who produce or collect crops (field crops, vegetables, fruit, nuts, wild harvest, etc.).
 - “**Livestock operations**” are those with certified organic livestock in their operations.
- **COLLECTION:** Data for 2009-2012 were collected by the Canadian Organic Growers (COG). Data for 2013-2020 were collected by COTA.
- **ESTIMATIONS:** Two certification bodies, TCO-Cert and Where Food Comes From did not submit data for 2020. In one case we estimated operator and acreage data based on the previous year’s numbers, while in the other, acreage for each crop was estimated based on the proportion of the total that that crop represented.





Photo: Laura Telford, Manitoba Agriculture, Larry Pollock, Pollock Farms, Brandon, MB

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CCOF Certification Services Inc. (CCOF)

Centre for Systems Integration (CSI)

Consorzio per il Controllo dei Prodotti Biologici

EcoCert Canada

Fraser Valley Organic Producers Association (FVOPA)

Islands Organic Producers Association (IOPA)

Kootenay Organic Growers Society (KOGS)

LETIS S.A.

Living Earth Organic Growers Association (LEOGA)

North Okanagan Organic Association (NOOA)

Organic BC

Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA)

Organic Producers Association of Manitoba (OPAM)

Pacific Agricultural Certification Service (PACS)

Pro-Cert Organic Systems Ltd.

Quality Assurance International (QAI)

Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers

Association (SOOPA)

Società a responsabilità limitata (CCPB)





The Prairies in Context

In 2020, Canada had 4,205,301 acres under organic management nation-wide, representing growth of 22.8% since 2019. This land was managed by 5,972 organic producers – an increase of 5.4% over 2019. Producers with livestock made up 13.4% of total producers (799), a decrease of 1.4% over 2019. The number of organic handlers was up by 1.1% since 2019 to 1,800. The total number of certified entities across the country was up almost 2% over the preceding year to 7,624.

While organic acreage expanded by 161,710 acres, a 9% increase over 2019, the Prairies did not see growth in the number of organic operators. In fact, the number of certified operations in the Prairie declined by 3% between 2019 and 2020. Organic producer numbers were relatively unchanged from 2019 (up by 0.5%), livestock producers were down by 6% and the number of organic handlers declined by a whopping 9.2%.

In 2020, the Prairies represented:

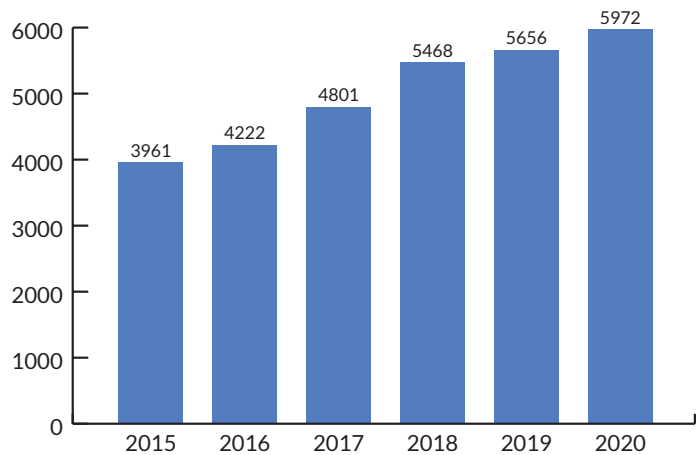
- 26% of Canadian organic operations
- 29% of Canadian organic producers
- 15% of Canadian organic handlers
- 14% of Canadian organic livestock operations
- 45% of Canadian organic acreage
- 80% of Canadian organic field crops
- 86% of Canadian organic cereals
- 97% of Canadian organic pulses
- 60% of Canadian organic oilseeds
- 83% of the Canadian organic wild harvest
- 7% of Canadian organic fruit and vegetables, and
- 29% of Canadian organic pasture, forage, green manure and natural areas

Organic Agriculture in Canada

Producers

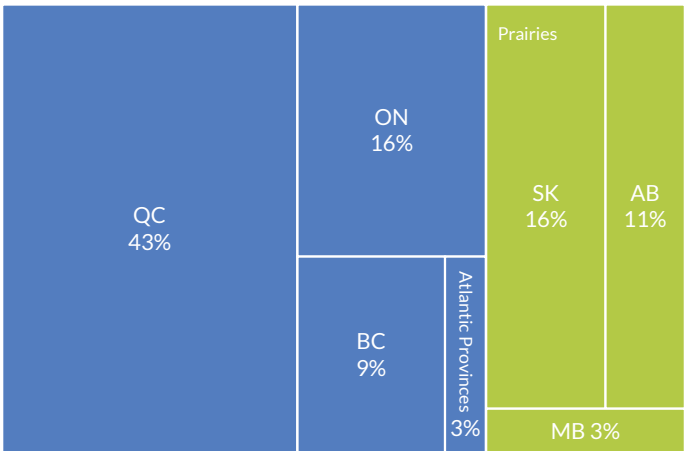
The total number of Canadian organic producers in 2020 was 5,972 – a healthy growth of 6% over the previous year and a whopping 51% increase in just five years (Figure 1). The numbers include both crop and livestock operations.

FIGURE 1: Number of Canadian Organic Producers, 2015–2020



In Figure 2, the Prairie Provinces are shown in green, while the remaining provinces are in blue. The Territories are not included due to small numbers. Quebec continued to lead the provinces in share of organic producers, but this share declined from 46% in 2019 to 43% in 2020. Saskatchewan and Ontario increased their shares over 2019 with 16% each. Alberta had 11% of all organic producers, up from 9% in 2019. Collectively, the Prairies held a 29% share of national producers in 2020, up from 27% in 2019. Ontario led in share of livestock operations with 37% of the total, followed by Quebec at 31%.

FIGURE 2: Provincial Share of Organic Crop Producers, 2020



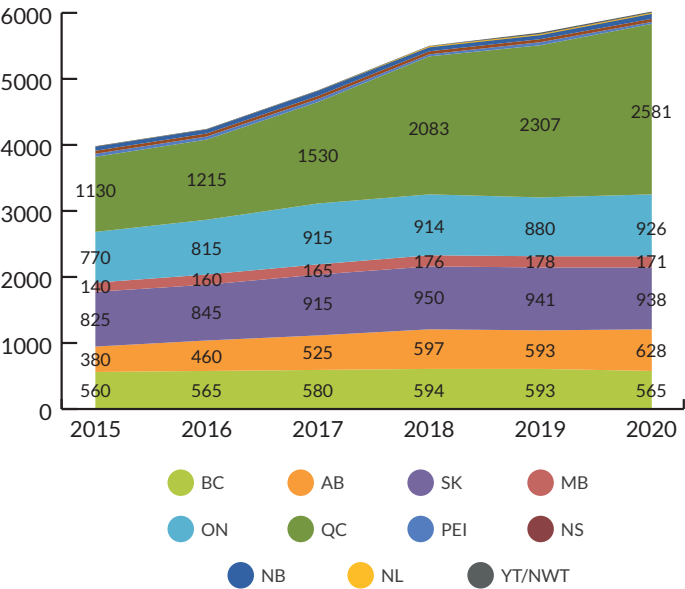
Northwest Territories and Yukon are not shown, as values are too small

Figure 3 shows the growth trajectory of the adoption of organic agriculture among producers over the six years between 2015 and 2020. In addition to the largest number of organic producers (2,581 in 2020), Quebec



had the greatest rate of increase with a gain of 128% since 2015, followed by Alberta at 65% and Yukon/Northwest Territories at 60%. Only Prince Edward Island saw a decline in organic producer numbers over this period, while growth in British Columbia and Saskatchewan was flat. In terms of year-over-year growth, Quebec again led the pack with 11% more producers in 2020 than in 2019, followed by Alberta (6%) and Ontario (5%). Yukon/North West Territories (-11%), Nova Scotia (-8%), British Columbia (-5%), Manitoba (-4%), and Prince Edward Island (-3%) all lost organic producers.

FIGURE 3: Organic Crop Producers by Province, 2015–2020



Handlers

This category includes food processors, ingredients handlers, and other entities that have organic certification. Operations that have Attestations of Compliance are not included in the count. Growth in this category has not been as steady as that in the producer category (Figure 4). Since 2015, the number of handlers has increased by 19%. In 2020, year-over-year growth in the category was only 1%. The slower growth may in part be related to changes in how the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has categorized handlers over the years. In recent years, certain types of handlers such as seed and vegetable cleaners and abattoirs have received Attestations rather than organic certification. Some marketers and exporters also now receive Attestations. This has caused an overall decline in the number of certified handlers.

The type of handlers tends to be quite different in different parts of the country. For instance, organic food processors are clustered in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, while handlers in the Prairie region are predominantly grain seed handlers – a category in which most companies have switched from certification to an Attestation.

FIGURE 4: Number of Canadian Organic Handlers, 2015–2020

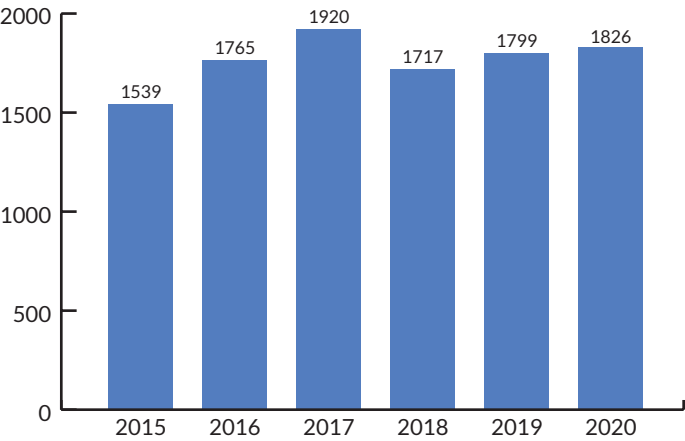
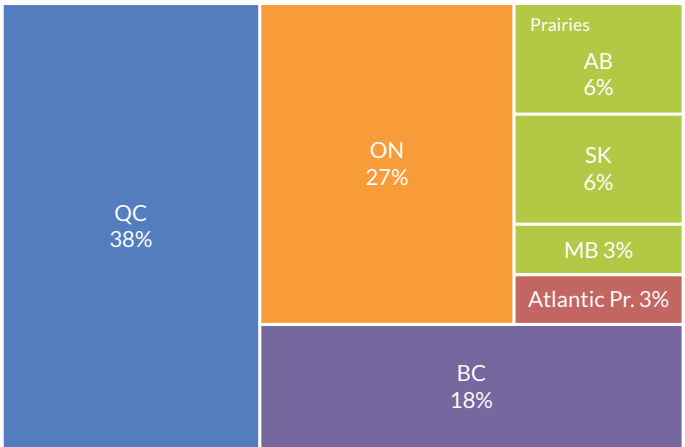


Figure 5, shows that more than one-third (38%; 690) of Canadian organic handlers are based in Quebec. Many of these businesses are food processors. ON ranks second with 27% of handlers (491), followed by British Columbia with 18% (325).

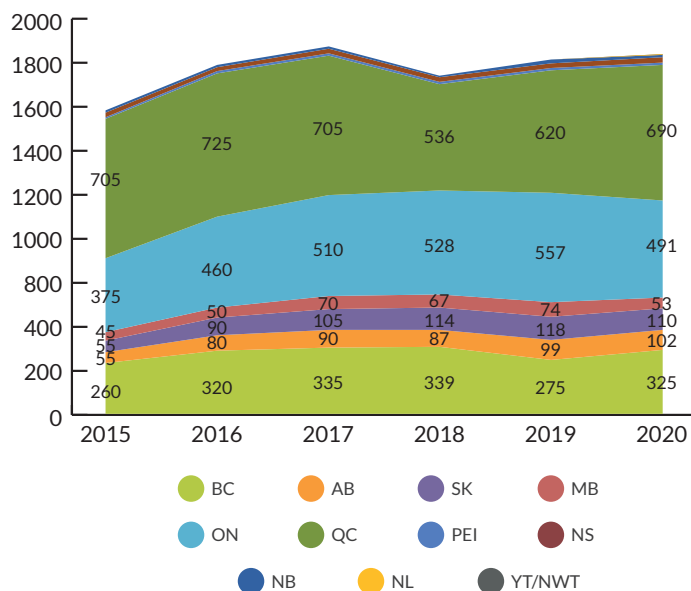
FIGURE 5: Provincial Share of Organic Handlers, 2020



The leading Province in the handler category, Quebec, lost 2% of its organic handlers since 2015, possibly for the reasons outlined above (Figure 6). However, 2020 growth in Quebec was strong with an 11% increase in the number of handlers over 2019. Only British Columbia showed greater single year growth with 18%. Manitoba (-29%), New Brunswick (-26%), and Prince Edward Island (-17%) all demonstrated large category losses between 2019 and 2020.



FIGURE 6: Organic Handlers by Province, 2015–2020



Operations

The number of organic operations, a term that includes all certified entities - from primary producers to intermediaries and food processors, continued to grow in Canada, albeit at a lower rate in 2020 than we have seen in the past (Figure 7). Since 2015, annual year-over-year growth peaked in 2017 at 16%. In 2020, national growth slowed to 2% with 7,624 organic operations.

FIGURE 7: Number of Canadian Organic Operations, 2015–2020

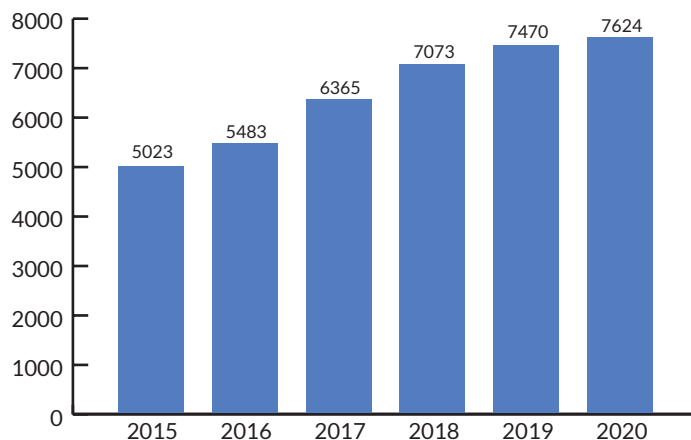
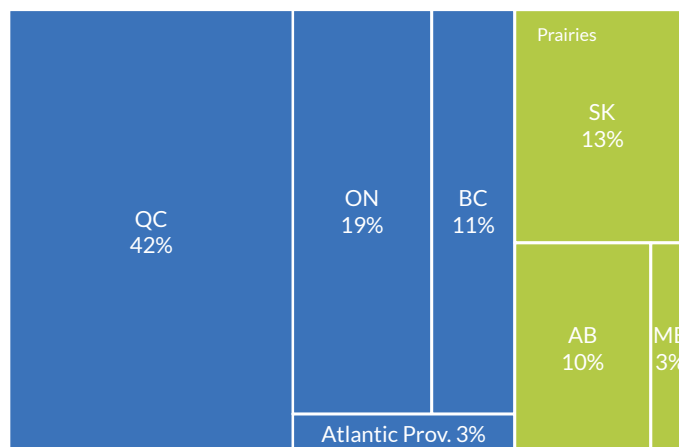


Figure 8 shows the national share of organic operations across Canadian provinces. Quebec, home to the largest number of organic operations (3,195 in 2020), consolidated its lead over the other provinces by increasing its share of operations from 38% in 2019 to 42% in 2020. Ontario ranked second with a 19% share, down from 20% in 2019. Saskatchewan was third with 13%, down from 14% in 2019. The Prairie region was home to 26% of Canadian organic operations in 2020, down a percentage point over the preceding year.

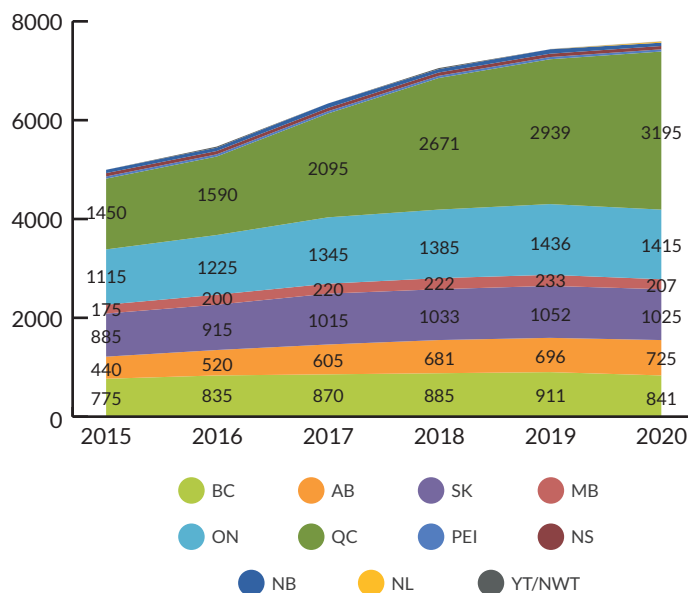
FIGURE 8: Provincial Share of National Organic Operations, 2020



Northwest Territories and Yukon are not shown, as values are too small

Most organic operations are in Quebec and Ontario, which have greater numbers of processors and producers (Figure 9). In 2020, Quebec led the expansion in total operations with a gain of 9% over 2019, followed by Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador at 5%. Five of the 11 jurisdictions that have organic operations posted losses in 2020, with Manitoba losing 11%, followed by British Columbia at 8%, Alberta at 4%, and Saskatchewan at 3%.

FIGURE 9: Organic Operations by Province, 2015–2020

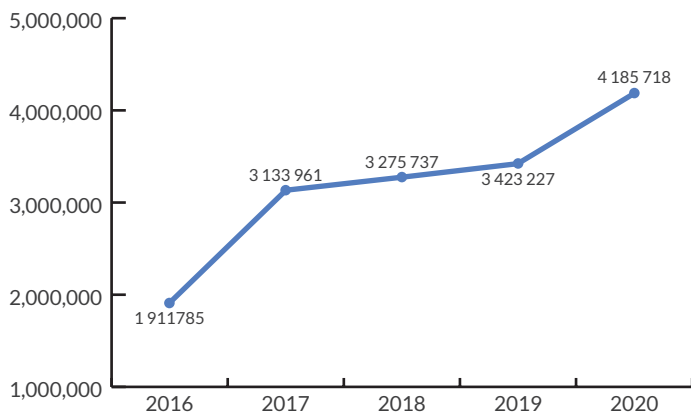


Acreage

There is no direct relationship between number of producers and acreage. Different types of agriculture require different amounts of land. Land under organic management in Canada more than doubled in the four years since 2016 from 1,911,785 to 4,205,301 acres in 2020 (Figure 10). Of the provinces, Saskatchewan had the largest land share with 1,174,648 acres - 28% of the total.



FIGURE 10: Canadian Organic Acreage, 2016–2020



Crops

Table 1 shows the acreage of organic crops grown Canada-wide for the years 2016 to 2020. Two-thirds (66%) is made up of animal forages, green manures and natural areas, while one-third is field crops. Just under 2% of the total organic land base is used to produce fruit and vegetables.

TABLE 1: Canadian Organic Acreage, 2016–2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FIELD CROPS	925,225	1,021,680	1,125,812	1,165,871	1,352,891
FORAGE, GREEN MANURE AND NATURAL AREAS	921,300	2,043,700	2,033,530	2,158,623	2,752,491
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	65,260	68,581	79,300	73,364	81,117
WILD HARVEST	—	—	—	25,369	18,802
TOTAL	1,911,785	3,133,962	3,238,642	3,423,227	4,205,301

Organic Agriculture in the Canadian Prairie

Operations – Overview

Figure 11 shows prairie operations by type between 2014 and 2020. Transition to organic farming in the Canadian Prairie has slowed since 2018, possibly due to the rising prices of conventional grains and corresponding sluggishness in the organic marketplace since 2018. Typically, Prairie farmers transition to organic from farming when conventional prices are low and exit when conventional prices are high. Due to lack of data from one large certifier, we underestimated the number of Prairie producers by 17 in the 2019 report. We had reported a loss of producers in 2019 over 2018, however growth was actually in the positive direction, though very flat (an increase of 5 producers). This pattern was replicated in 2020, with a 0.5% increase in organic producer numbers.

Growth in the organic livestock sector has been even more sluggish, going back to 2014. This likely represents the shrink in markets for organic beef as consumers switch to lower priced proteins, including plant proteins. The Prairie does not benefit from the national and continental growth in demand for lower priced organic chicken meat as processing plants tend to go up closer to the organic consumer clusters in British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario. Lack of federally inspected slaughter plants continues to be a barrier to growth, particularly in Saskatchewan. This challenge is difficult to overcome, as food processors will not invest in new facilities or add organic processing capacity without a sufficient number of organic animals.

2020 saw a significant decline (-9.2%) in the number of handlers in the Prairie with organic certification. This trend likely reflects a loss in certified organic grain handling capacity – mostly on-farm, but also off-farm. Some of these losses simply reflect the way that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is categorizing grain handlers. Many seed cleaners now have Attestations of Compliance, rather than organic certification, and are no longer counted as organic operations.

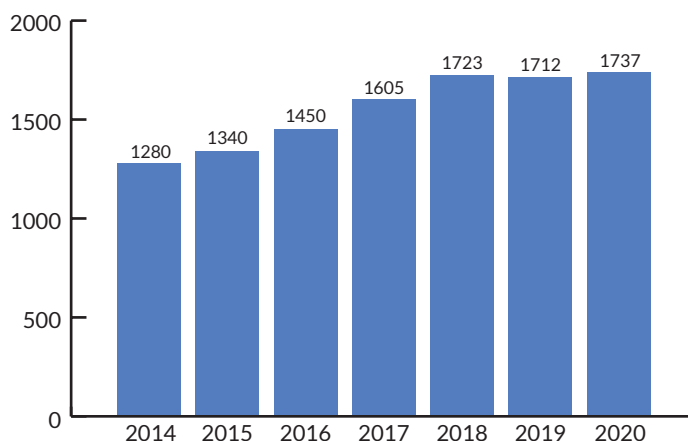
In 2019, organic operator numbers were estimated due to missing data. In 2020, Alberta saw a slight increase (4%) in total organic operations, but both Manitoba (-11%) and Saskatchewan (-3%) reported losses, primarily due to a significant exodus of organic handlers.

Over a longer term (since 2014), the operator growth curve has been steepest in Alberta, with a 65% increase in organic operations since 2014. Manitoba saw 18% growth over this period while in Saskatchewan, growth was 16%.

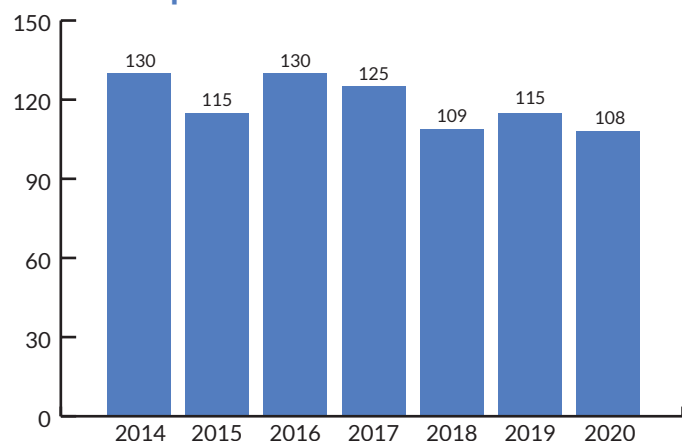
FIGURE 11: Prairie Organic Operations by Type, 2014–2020

The producer category includes both crop and livestock farmers. 2019 data are estimated in the charts below.

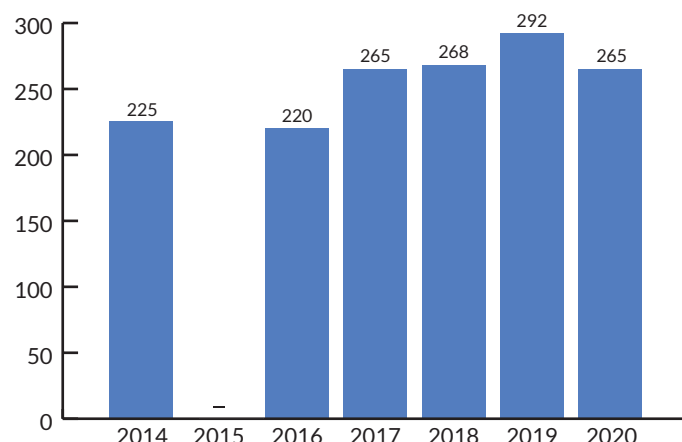
Producers



Livestock Operations

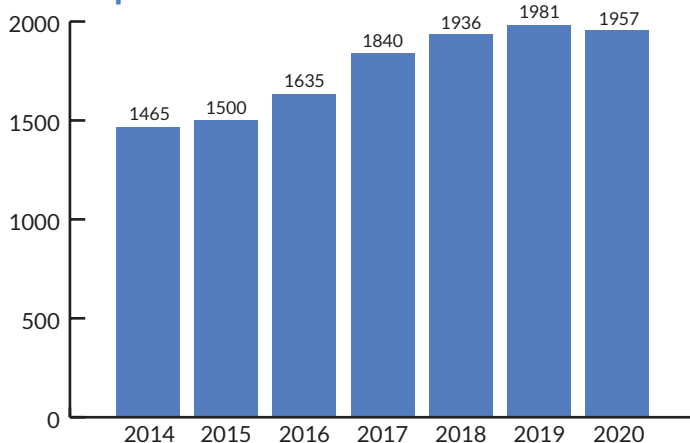


Handlers



Note 2015 is missing due to poor data quality.

Total Operations



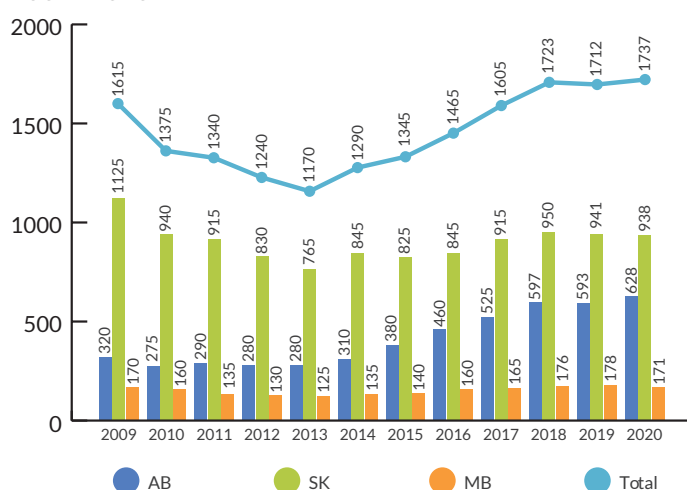
Organic Operators – Details by Province

Note that 2019 data were estimated due to missing data from certifiers.

Producers

The number of organic producers in the Prairie is shown in Figure 12. The region saw higher numbers in the first decade of the current millennium, followed by losses after the global economic recession (2008-2010) and a very slow recovery beginning in 2014. Producer numbers peaked in 2018 and have been static ever since. The future growth trajectory will be determined by macro-economic conditions influencing agriculture as a whole – the most important likely being market prices of conventional grains. With a global pandemic and war ravaging some of the major grain producing areas of the globe, conditions driving conventional grain prices ever higher are unlikely to abate in the short term. Despite strong markets and decent prices for organic grains at the time this report was written in 2022, economic conditions are doing little to entice mainstream crop or livestock farmers to make the switch to organic.

FIGURE 12: Prairie Organic Producers by Province, 2009–2020

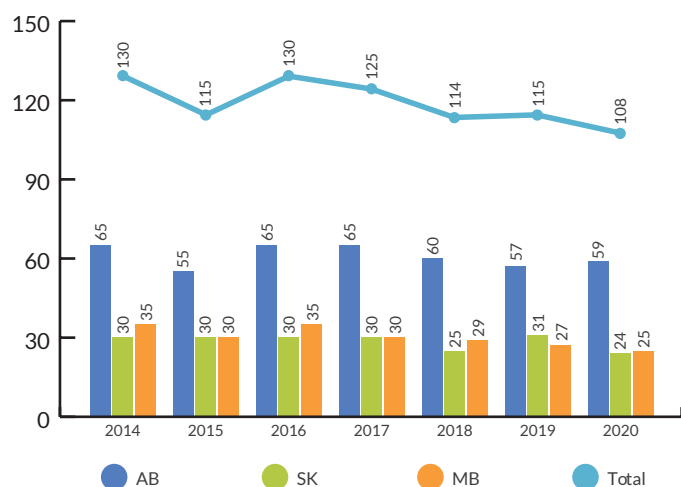


Livestock Operations

Figure 13 shows the number of organic livestock operations in each Prairie Province between 2014 and 2020. Livestock operations peaked in 2016 with 130 operations, declining to 108 by 2020 - the lowest number in seven years. There were seven fewer mixed farms in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in 2020 over the previous year (108 vs. 115), a decline of 6%, while Alberta reported two more organic livestock operations in 2020. Prairie operations represented 13.5% of national organic livestock operations in 2020, down from 15% in 2019.



FIGURE 13: Prairie Organic Livestock Operations by Province, 2014–2020



Certifying bodies provide only partial data on livestock numbers. Therefore, the data in Table 2 should be interpreted as minimum numbers. In 2020, Alberta had the greatest numbers of all organic livestock types, with the exception of goats. Ninety-four percent of organic poultry were raised in Alberta. Alberta is also home to the majority of Prairie bovine, a category dominated by cattle for meat production with 86% of animals, 99% of honeybee hives, 95% of hogs and 96% of sheep. Counts for bovine species increased over 2019 by 5,548 head, despite the fact that the number of livestock operations declined over this period. The number of organic beehives more than doubled from 10,000 in 2019.

TABLE 2: Livestock Numbers by Province, 2020

PROVINCE	POULTRY	BOVINE*	PIGS	SHEEP	GOATS	BEE HIVES
AB	271,710	14,768	888	286	0	21,532
SK	15,879	2,307	21	12	44	182
MB	0**	4,080	25	0	0	0
TOTAL	287,589	21,155	934	298	44	21,714

*Includes cattle, bison and elk

** Manitoba has two large layer operations, but no data was provided by certifiers

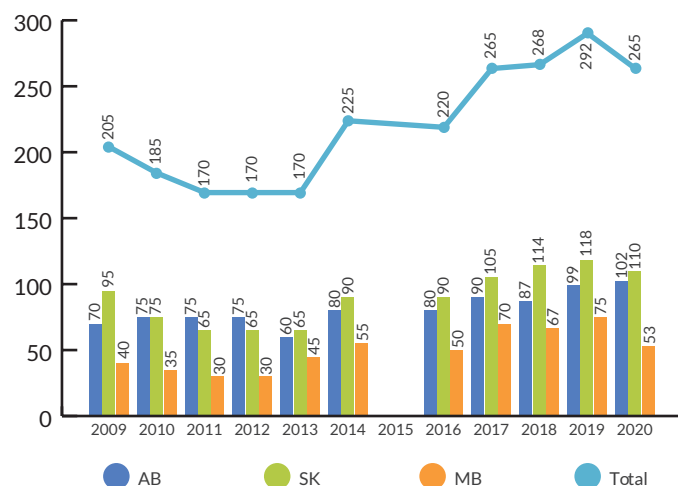
Handlers

In the past, many of the handlers that now have Attestations of Compliance were categorized as certified operations, one of the potential reasons for recent declines in this category. Seed cleaners and abattoirs are two of the types of operations that now routinely receive Attestations rather than certification.

Both Manitoba (-21%) and Saskatchewan (-9%) saw significant year-over-year declines in this category in 2020, while numbers remained stable in Alberta (3%). Some of these losses may be due to changes in categorization, but

these jurisdictions likely have lost seed cleaning capacity as some of the larger farms with their own seed cleaning plants have exited organic production. Although the handler category is not broken out by food processor, it is likely that this category of handler has remained reasonably stable as compared to seed processing capacity.

FIGURE 14: Prairie Organic Handlers by Province, 2009–2020

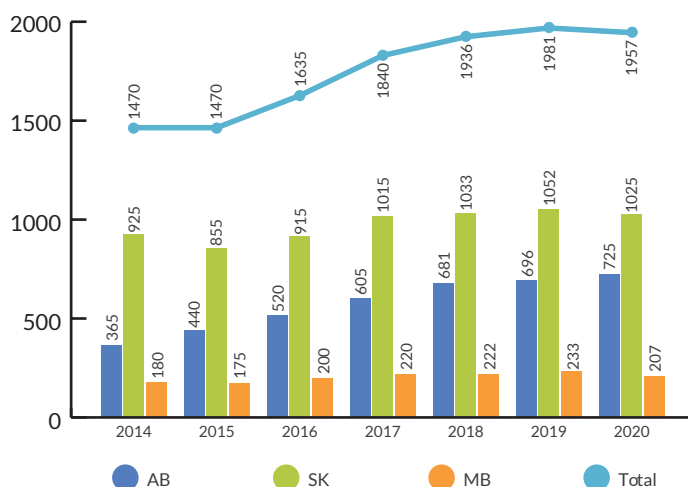


2015 data are not included due to likely data error.

Operations

The total number of Prairie organic operations peaked in 2019 at 1,981, declining to 1,957 in 2020. This represents a 33% increase over the seven years since 2014. Alberta was the only Prairie Province to show a year-over-year increase since 2019 (3%). Manitoba organic operations declined by 12% over this period, while Saskatchewan lost 5% of its operations. Most of the losses were in the Handler category.

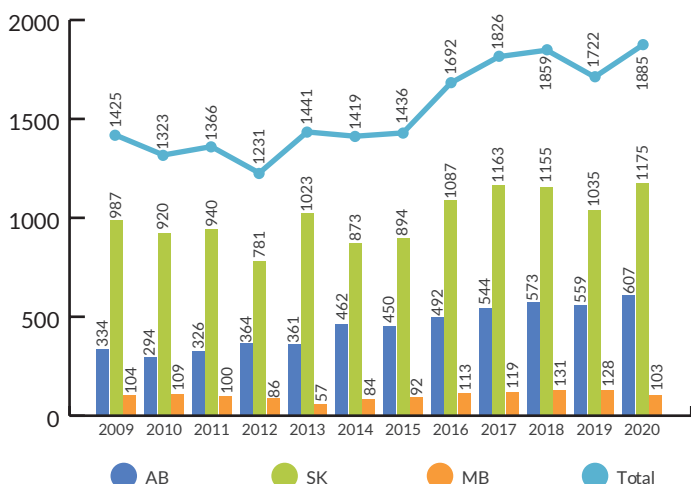
FIGURE 15: Prairie Organic Operations by Province, 2014–2020



Prairie Organic Acreage Overview

Prairie organic acreage expanded by 9.4% in 2020 over 2019 to 1,884,510 acres - a 32% increase since 2009, and 45% of the Canadian total (Figure 16). In Manitoba, acreage contracted by 20%, Saskatchewan experienced growth of 14% despite contraction in the number of producers, while acreage expansion in Alberta was 8%. However, due to missing data in 2019, it is likely that we underestimated acreage in Saskatchewan and Alberta in that year, leading to an inflation of year-over-year growth estimates.

FIGURE 16: Organic Acreage in the Prairies, 2009–2020 (x 1,000)



2020 acreage by crop type is shown in Table 3 for each Prairie Province. Field crops made up the largest share of Prairie acreage at 57% of total certified acres, a 2.5% increase over 2019 and 80% of total Canadian organic field crops. As in previous years, cereals make up the lion's share of Prairie field crops at 71% - up 4% over 2019. Forty-two percent of remaining certified land was in forages, green manures and natural areas. The share of the total for this category increased by 6% over 2019. Land cultivated for fruit and vegetables remained relatively unchanged from 2019 at just over 5,000 acres, only 7% of the Canadian total for this category.

TABLE 3: Prairie Organic Acreage by Category and Province, 2020

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	CANADIAN TOTAL	% CDN TOTAL
FIELD CROPS	324,152	686,754	61,015	1,071,922	1,352,891	80
CEREALS	218,647	502,063	38,944	759,653	887,848	86
PULSES	76,809	89,980	1,800	168,589	172,936	97
OILSEEDS	13,252	76,038	11,143	100,434	169,686	60
OTHER FIELD CROPS*	15,444	18,673	9,129	43,246	122,420	35
PASTURE, FORAGE, GREEN MANURE AND NATURAL AREAS**	281,128	483,103	35,766	799,997	2,752,491	29
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	1,470	1,569	2,234	5,273	81,117	7
WILD HARVEST***	499	3,221	3,597	7,317	18,802	83
TOTAL	607,249	1,174,648	102,612	1,884,509	4,205,301	45

*Other field crops include: corn, intercrops, forage seed, field crop seed and uncategorized field crops

**Pasture, forage, green manure and natural areas includes green manure, forage, natural areas, fallow areas, and straw.

*** Wild harvest includes wild rice, wild crops and maple

Over the six years ending in 2020, the largest acreage expansion occurred in the Other Field Crops category, although this expansion slowed in 2020 (Figure 15). This category includes hemp, buckwheat, corn, intercrops, field crops for seed production and uncategorized field crops. Details are shown in Table 4. The second largest expansion has been in the Pulses category, although pulse acreage actually contracted by nearly 15,000 acres in 2020. Increases in field crop acreage have come at the expense of the Forage, Green Manure and Natural Areas category, which has been declining since it peaked in 2017 at just over 973,000 acres. Just over 33,000 acres was lost from this category between 2019 and 2020 while 131,967 acres was added to Field Crops. Pulse acreage declined in 2020 by 5% over 2019, while acres planted to cereals and oilseeds expanded by 20 and 18%, respectively. Fruit and vegetable acreage has been relatively constant over the past five years while Wild Harvested crop acres declined by 124% since 2018.



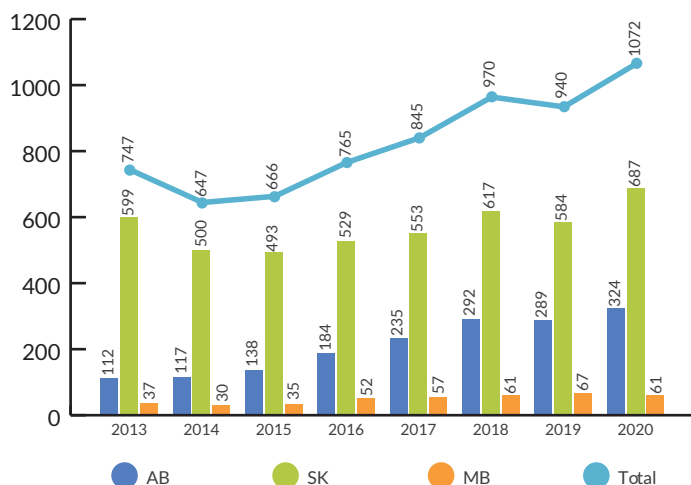
TABLE 4: Organic Acreage in the Prairies by Category, 2015–2020

CROP TYPE	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FIELD CROPS	665,549	765,234	845,811	969,594	939,956	1,071,923
CEREALS	498,900	565,000	574,900	652,872	632,439	759,655
PULSES	88,600	117,400	141,100	192,364	177,837	168,590
OILSEEDS	69,100	63,600	90,800	77,933	84,880	100,433
OTHER FIELD CROPS*	8,949	19,234	39,011	46,425	44,800	43,245
PASTURE, FORAGE, GREEN MANURE AND NATURAL AREAS	758,800	921,300	973,300	867,262	766,942	799,997
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	11,700	5,500	6,400	5,300	4,904	5,273
WILD HARVEST	N/A	N/A	N/A	16,414	10,056	7,317
TOTAL ACREAGE	1,436,049	1,692,034	1,825,511	1,858,570	1,721,858	1,884,509

Detailed Prairie Acreage Field Crops

This category includes cereals, pulses, oilseeds and other crops such as hemp, corn, buckwheat, field crop seeds and intercrops. Other than slight dips between 2013 and 2014 and 2018 and 2019, Prairie field crop acreage has risen steadily over the six years prior to 2020 (Figure 17). The Prairie region is home to eighty percent of Canadian organic field crops, a share unchanged from 2019. Saskatchewan has more than double the acreage of field crops than Alberta and more than ten times that of Manitoba.

FIGURE 17: Organic Field Crop Acreage 2013-2020 (x 1,000)



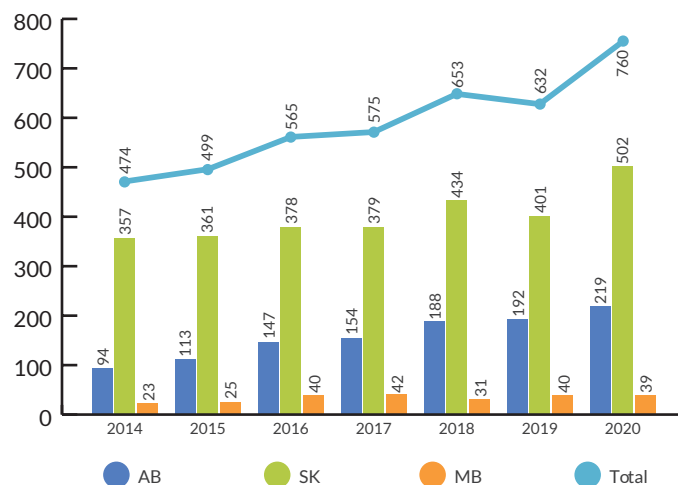
Cereals

Eighty-six percent of all organic cereal crops grown in Canada are grown in the Prairie region, a drop from a 92-percentage share in 2019. This reflects the rapidly increasing acres of field crops in Ontario and Quebec.

Saskatchewan continues to lead the Prairie Provinces in organic cereal production with 502,064 acres in 2020 (Figure 18). However, Alberta has seen the greatest expansion of cereal acreage with growth of 133% since 2014, followed by Manitoba at 70% and Saskatchewan at 41%.

Between 2019 and 2020, organic cereal grain expansion was highest in Saskatchewan (25%) while cereal acres contracted slightly in Manitoba (-2%).

FIGURE 18: Organic Cereal Crop Acreage 2014-2020 (x 1,000)



In 2020, wheat was the dominant organic cereal grain grown in the Prairie region, as it has been since we began tracking acreage, at just under half of all organic cereals (49%). Oats comprised 37% of organic cereals followed by barley at 10%. From Table 5 you can see that oats achieved the highest share of Canadian cereal grains in 2020 at 94% of the Canadian total, followed by barley at 89% and wheat at 83%.

TABLE 5: Organic Cereal Acreage by Province, 2020

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	CANADIAN TOTAL	% CDN TOTAL
BARLEY	29,841	43,021	6,213	79,075	88,484	89
OATS	121,036	145,288	14,540	280,864	299,226	94
RYE*	1,788	14,311	1,769	17,868	24,918	72
WHEAT**	64,817	295,356	15,577	375,750	450,266	83
OTHER CEREALS***	1,165	4,088	845	6,098	24,954	24
TOTAL CEREALS	218,647	502,063	38,943	759,653	887,848	86

* All uses – cash crops, cover crops and grazing

**Wheat includes triticale, ancient wheats and spelt, durum, winter, spring and KAMUT®

***Other cereals include quinoa, millet, sorghum, and uncategorized cereals



Wheat

While the national share of organic wheat grown in the Prairie region declined from 93% in 2019 to 83% in 2020, Prairie wheat production actually expanded by 12%, to 375,750 acres. Organic wheat production in the Prairies increased by 45% between 2015 and 2020, with all three provinces showing similar growth. Year-over-year growth was attributable solely to Saskatchewan, which grew its acreage by 20% from 2019. Organic wheat acreage declined dramatically – by 22% in Manitoba and more moderately (-8%) in Alberta.

Oats

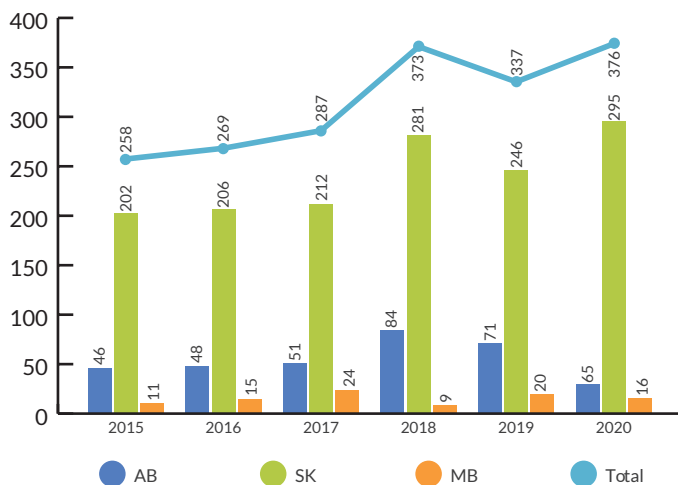
Growth of organic oat production in the Prairies has been on an upward trajectory since 2017 and the national share of oats grown in the Prairie increased by a point to 94% in 2020. Acreage has expanded by 83% since 2015, with year-over-year growth of close to 30% between 2019 and 2020. Growth was similar for all three provinces between 2019 and 2020, but Manitoba saw the largest expansion (184%) of organic oat acreage since 2015.

Barley

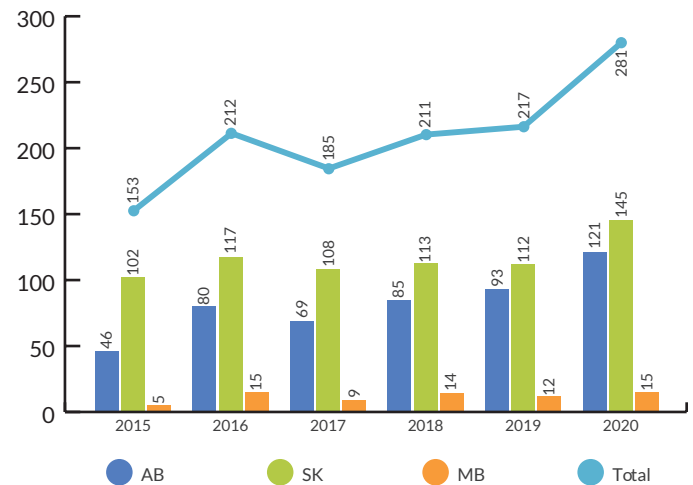
Prairie organic barley production has rebounded to 79,075 acres since a decline in 2018, slightly exceeding its peak of 77,800 acres in 2017. Since 2015, barley acreage has expanded by 46% in the region, with the greatest expansion in Manitoba (138%). All three provinces expanded barley acreage between 2019 and 2020, with total growth of 30%, led by Saskatchewan with a 46% increase in acres. Despite this expansion, the national share of organic barley grown in the Prairie region declined from 91% in 2019 to 89% in 2020.

FIGURE 19: Organic Wheat, Oat, Rye and Barley Acreage 2015–2020 (x 1,000)

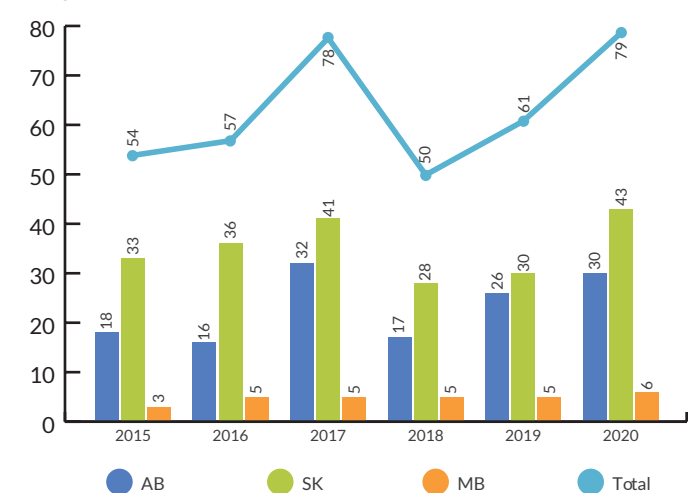
Wheat



Oats



Barley

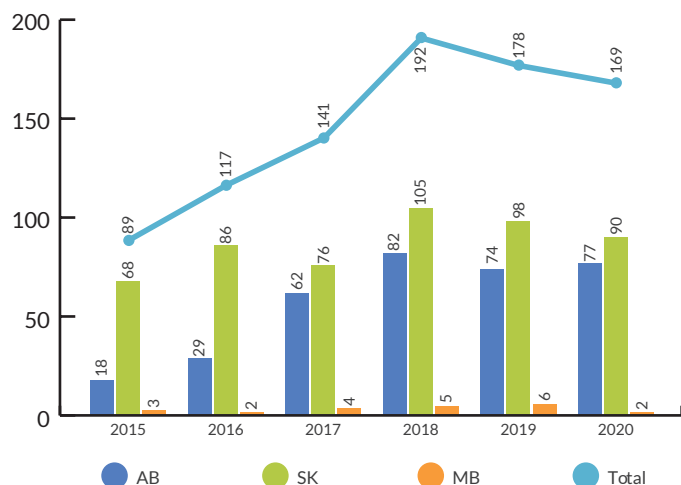


Pulses

Organic pulse acreage continued its two-year decline from a peak of 192,400 acres in 2018 to just over 168,000 acres in 2020. The national share of Prairie pulse crops maintained the same 97% share held in 2019. In 2020, Prairie pulse acreage was down 5% over 2019, while acreage grew 129% over the previous five years.



FIGURE 20: Organic Pulse Acreage, 2014–2020 (x 1,000)



In 2020, Saskatchewan had the largest pulse acreage in the region with just under 90,000 acres, although this represented a contraction of 8% over 2019. Acreage of pulses in Manitoba was very small (1,800 acres in 2020), possibly because of the higher average rainfall in the region, a factor correlated with higher disease pressure in pulse crops.

TABLE 6: Organic Pulse Acreage by Province, 2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	CANADIAN TOTAL	% CDN TOTAL
BEANS*	436	1,156	176	1,768	3,401	52
LENTILS	9,779	42,639	618	53,036	53,120	100
PEAS	64,867	45,348	851	111,066	112,620	99
OTHER PULSES**	1,727	838	155	2,720	3,795	72
TOTAL PULSES	76,809	89,981	1,800	168,590	172,936	97

* Beans include dried, edible, exclude fava and soybeans.

**Other pulses include chickpeas, fava beans, and pulses for which we have no detailed acreage.

Soybeans are categorized with oilseeds.

Peas

In 2020, peas, by far the largest Prairie pulse crop, remained unchanged at 111,000 acres from the previous year. However, both years were down from the peak in 2018 at around 124,000 acres. Pea acreage in Alberta and Saskatchewan was flat between 2019 and 2020, while declining by 70% in Manitoba.

Lentils

Organic lentil production in the Prairie region is concentrated in the dry areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan had over four times the acreage of Alberta in 2020. Production reached its peak in 2019 at just over 61,000 acres; declining by 13% (8,000 acres) in 2020.

Acreage of both chickpeas and fava beans declined across the Prairies between 2019 and 2020 for a combined total of 1,949 acres (Table 7).

FIGURE 21: Organic Lentil and Pea Acreage, 2015–2020 (x 1,000)

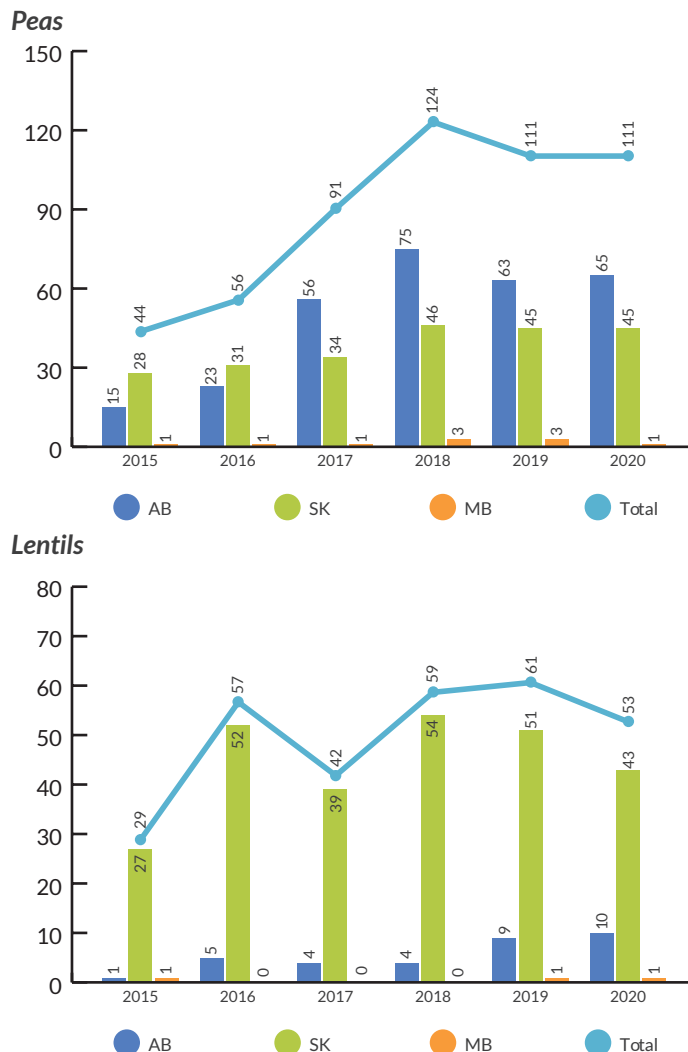


TABLE 7: Other Pulses, 2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	TOTAL
FAVA BEANS	500	325	150	975
CHICKPEAS	790	184	0	974
TOTAL PRAIRIE	1,290	509	150	1,949

Oilseeds

Organic oilseed acreage was up from 84,881 acres in 2019 to just over 100,000 acres in 2020, a gain of 15,553 acres (18%) and the largest organic oilseed crop in 7 years (Figure 22). The Prairie share of the national organic oilseed total remained the same as in 2019 at 59%.



Production was greatest in Saskatchewan with 76,038 acres (45% of Canadian oilseed acres). Organic oilseed acres have expanded by 20% from just over 83,000 acres in 2014.

FIGURE 22: Organic Oilseed Acreage, 2014–2020 (x 1,000)

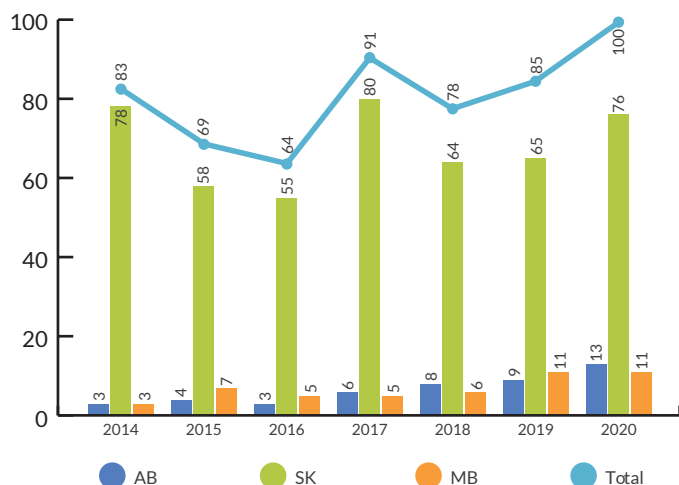


Table 8 shows organic oilseed acreage for each Prairie Province in 2020. Almost all (99%) of Canada's organic flax and 98% of organic mustard is grown in the Prairie region. The Prairie share for other oilseeds is much smaller, primarily because this category includes soybean, which is predominantly grown in higher heat unit regions in Ontario and Quebec.

TABLE 8: Organic Oilseed Acreage by Province, 2020

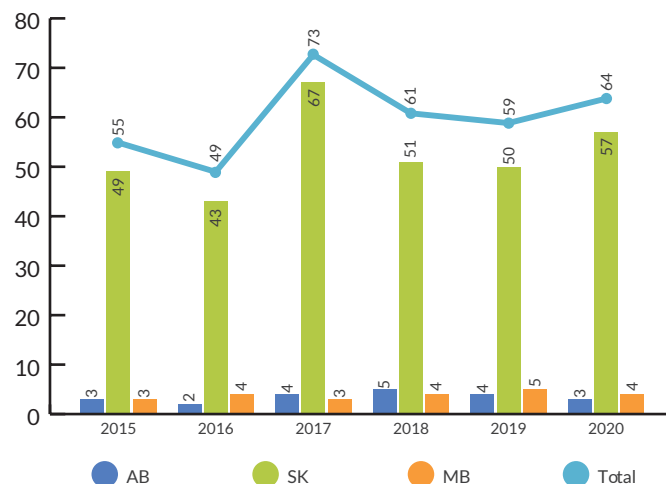
CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	CANADIAN TOTAL	% CDN TOTAL
FLAX	2,657	57,077	3,907	63,642	64,438	99
MUSTARD	3,086	12,298	550	15,934	16,213	98
OTHER OILSEEDS*	7,509	6,663	6,686	20,858	89,035	23
TOTAL OILSEEDS	13,252	76,038	11,143	100,434	169,686	59

* Includes sunflower, camelina, soybean and canola

Flax

Organic flax production peaked in 2017 at 73,400 acres. Acreage increased slightly over 2019 in 2020 to 64,642 acres, up from 59,000. Alberta lost 21% of its flax acreage since 2015, while both Manitoba (22%) and Saskatchewan (18%) posted increases. Only Saskatchewan showed growth (15%) between 2019 and 2020. Alberta was down 36%, while Manitoba was down 24%.

FIGURE 23: Organic Flax Acreage, 2015–2020 (x 1,000)



Mustard and Other Oilseeds

Mustard was grown on 16,000 acres in the Prairies in 2020, up 7% from 14,900 acres in 2019. Acreage of other oilseeds was up significantly from 2019 (by over 17,000 acres), with sunflower and camelina growth flat, soybean acres up slightly and canola acres up significantly from just over 3,000 acres in 2019 to close to 12,000 acres in 2020. Saskatchewan had no organic canola acres in 2019 and 4,632 acres in 2020. Because of the significant acreage of soybean in Ontario and Quebec, the Prairie region grows only 23% of the other oilseed category.

TABLE 9: Other Oilseeds, 2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	CANADIAN TOTAL	% CDN TOTAL
SUNFLOWER	319	165	82	566	1,109	51
SOYBEAN	15	0	2,288	2,303	69,577	3
OILSEEDS, NO DETAIL	1,202	974	0	2,176	2,185	99
CANOLA	5,974	4,632	1,297	11,903	12,185	98
CAMELINA	0	892	3,018	3,910	3,979	98
TOTAL OTHER OILSEEDS	7,510	6,663	6,685	20,858	89,035	23

Other Field Crops

This is a catchall category, with 35% of organic crops in this category grown in the Prairies in 2020. Hemp grain was the category leader in the Prairie, while corn led the category overall. There was 23,811 acres of organic hemp in 2020, up 33% over 2019. Prairie organic hemp represented 92% of the Canadian total for this crop in 2020. Buckwheat acres in the Prairie represented 32% of the Canadian total in 2020 at 4,437 acres, with the largest acreage in Manitoba. Organic corn acreage in the Prairie region has always been low with just under 300 acres in 2020.



Intercrops, characterized by fields planted with more than one crop species, were up by several thousand acres over 2019 to 14,244 acres in 2020. This was close to half (46%) of Canadian organic intercrop acreage. Ninety-four percent of intercrop plantings included cereals and pulses, with peas being the most common pulse by far. Four percent of intercrops were cereal-oilseed combinations and 1% were cereal-cereal combinations. Oats and barley were grown in the majority of cereal intercrops, although wheat (including triticale) and rye were also used.

TABLE 10: Other Field Crops, 2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	% OF CATEGORY	% CDN TOTAL
HEMP	8,805	10,323	4,683	23,811	26,017	92
BUCKWHEAT	60	893	3,484	4,437	13,713	32
INTERCROPS	6,566	7,256	422	14,244	31,131	46
FIELD CROP SEEDS	0	0	94	94	576	16
CORN	9	3	287	299	48,753	1
NO DETAIL	4	198	158	360	2,230	16
TOTAL OTHER FIELD CROPS	15,444	18,673	9,129	43,245	122,420	35

Fruit and Vegetables

This is the second year the data report has provided acreage information for the types of organic vegetable, herbs, and fruit crops grown on the Prairies, providing a more complete understanding of this segment of organic crop production. Taken together, organic fruit and vegetables from the Prairie make up only 7% of the Canadian total. However, in 2019, the Prairie share of the national total was only 3%.

Vegetables

This category includes vegetables, flowers, herbs and products grown for their health benefits, such as wheatgrass and dandelion. Total acreage in this category was relatively unchanged from 2019 at 4,973 acres (Table 11). Potatoes made up 45% of the category with an even larger share than in 2019. Manitoba had the largest vegetable acreage as it did in 2019, with potatoes making up the lion's share of the category. Saskatchewan had the largest acreage of herbs and medicinal crops as it did in 2019. Organic flower acreage was negligible.

TABLE 11: Vegetables, Herbs, and Medicinal Plants, 2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	% OF CATEGORY
ASPARAGUS	74	13	6	93	2
BRASSICAS	124	277	129	529	11
CARROTS	74	0	42	116	2
GARLIC	61	0	0	61	1
HERBS AND MEDICINAL PLANTS	218	429	19	666	13
MUSHROOMS	7	0	44	50	1
ONIONS	38	0	169	207	4
OTHER VEGETABLES	323	129	232	684	14
POTATOES	155	546	1,543	2,244	45
SWEET CORN	321	0	0	321	6
TOTAL VEGETABLES, HERBS, AND MEDICINAL PLANTS	1,395	1,394	2,185	4,973	100

Fruit and Nuts

The contribution of fruit and nuts to Prairie organic acreage is very small. In 2020, total acreage was around 300, roughly 50 acres short of the 2019 total (Table 12). Berries made up more than half of the total (54%), a slightly larger share than in the previous year. Cherries and melons were the only other fruit crops of significance.

TABLE 12: Fruit and Nuts, 2020 (acreage)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	% OF CATEGORY
APPLES	8	3	2	13	4
BERRIES	56	91	14	160	54
CHERRIES	3	61	0	64	21
MELON	0	0	32	32	11
NO DETAIL	7	0	0	8	3
NUTS	0	16	0	17	6
RHUBARB	0	5	0	5	2
TOTAL FRUIT AND NUTS	75	176	49	299	100

Wild Harvested Crops

The 2020 Prairie organic wild harvest was less than half (-56%) the size of the 2018 crop. The Prairie share of the national wild harvest has also declined since 2018. In 2020, the 499 acres of wild harvested crops from Alberta



consisted of strawberries, mint and other unspecified crops collected from the wild. In both Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the wild harvest consisted exclusively of wild rice. Between 2018 and 2020, wild harvest acres in Saskatchewan increased by 85%, while in Manitoba wild rice acres dropped precipitously (-56%), largely as the result of fluctuations in water levels in the northern lakes where wild rice is grown. Although wild harvested crops represent less than 1% of the total acres under organic management in the province, they make a significant contribution to supporting local wild crafters and economies.

TABLE 13: Wild Harvest*, 2020 (acres)

PROVINCE	2018	2019	2020
AB	5,864	4	499
SK	1,740	1,954	3,221
MB	8,810	8,098	3,597
TOTAL WILD HARVEST	16,414	10,056	7,317
% OF CANADIAN TOTAL	47	40	38

* Beans include dried, edible, exclude fava and soybeans.

Pasture, Forage, Green Manures and Natural Areas

Pasture, forage, green manures and natural areas play an important role in organic systems for fertility management, building soil organic matter, animal fodder and carbon sinks. This has typically been a catchall category that includes animal fodder crops (including silage and green feed and excluding field crops used for animal feed), farm yards, natural areas, including agroforestry (includes Christmas trees), cover crops, and fertility crops that include legume plow downs and alfalfa and clover crops as well as fallow land. Since certifiers do not provide information on the end uses of crops, by necessity we make many assumptions about how crops are used. For instance, if the description 'forage peas' is used by a certifier, the crop is categorized as a green manure, but this crop could also be a livestock feed and even a cash crop, though the latter seems less likely. It is more likely that some of the crops coded as 'peas' could actually be forage peas, but in the absence of information, we coded them as cash crop peas and overestimated the acres of peas destined for the human food system.

In 2020, acreage in the pasture, forage and natural areas category expanded by 4% over 2019 across the Prairies to 799,997 acres, with the greatest expansion in Saskatchewan (8%) and a large reduction in Manitoba

(-29%) (Table 14). This category has not yet recovered from a peak of 973,300 acres in 2017. The national share held by this category in the Prairie region declined from 36% in 2019 to 29% in 2020.

TABLE 14: Pasture, Forage, Green Manure, and Natural Areas, 2015–2020 (acres)

PROVINCE	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AB	305,900	305,900	306,300	272,712	268,881	281,128
SK	396,700	556,600	607,900	533,460	447,959	483,103
MB	56,200	58,800	59,100	61,090	50,102	35,766
TOTAL PASTURE FORAGE, GREEN MANURE, AND NATURAL AREAS	758,800	921,300	973,300	867,262	766,942	799,997

As in 2019, the crop type with the greatest area in the category was for livestock feed and grazing (Table 15). This includes hay, silage, perennial pastures (coded by certifiers as grass, meadows or pasture), as well as land planted in annuals for grazing. In 2019, this category comprised 48% of the total category, while in 2020 it was 36%. The percentage of land dedicated to livestock fodder was much lower in Saskatchewan in 2020 at 26% versus 51% in Manitoba and 50% in Alberta. This may reflect the smaller percentage of mixed farms in Saskatchewan.

TABLE 15: Pasture, Forage, Green Manure, and Natural Areas, 2020 (acres)

CROP TYPE	AB	SK	MB	PRAIRIE TOTAL	% OF CATEGORY
ALFALFA + MIXES	19,046	49,499	5,721	74,265	9
BIODIVERSITY AREAS	57,363	59,309	2,326	118,998	15
CLOVERS	12,899	40,945	4,661	58,505	7
GREEN MANURES	52,589	205,584	4,619	262,793	33
LIVESTOCK FODDER	139,230	127,767	18,439	285,436	36
TOTAL PASTURE, FORAGE, GREEN MANURE, AND NATURAL AREAS	281,128	483,103	35,766	799,997	100



Provincial Reports

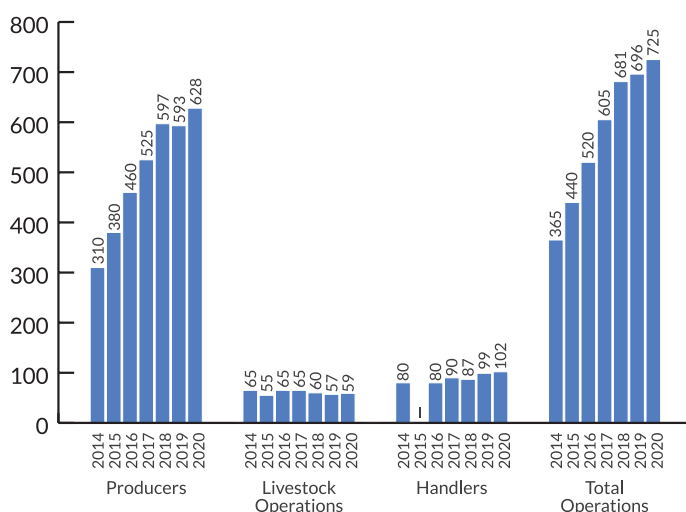
Alberta

Operations

Alberta was the only Prairie Province to show growth in all categories in 2020 (Figure 24). Organic producer numbers increased by 6%, livestock operations increased by 4%, handlers increased by 3% and total operations increased by 4% over 2019.

The province has both the largest number of organic livestock operations (59) and livestock in the Prairie region. It has the largest bovine numbers (14,768), a category dominated by cattle for meat production, 99% of Prairie honeybee hives (21,532), 94% of Prairie poultry (271,710), 95% of Prairie pigs (888), and 96% of Prairie sheep (286).

FIGURE 24: Alberta Organic Operations by Type, 2014 –2020



Acreage

Alberta reported 607,249 organic acres in 2020, an increase of over 48,000 acres from 2019 (9%) and 35% growth since 2015. Ninety-nine percent of Alberta's organic land base was field crops (53%) and pasture, forage, green manures and natural areas (46%).

Cereal Crops

Oats were the most significant organic field crop in the province as they have been since at least 2015 at 121,036 acres. Oat acreage represented a 30% expansion over

2019 and 163% growth over 2015. Wheat remained the second most important field crop at 64,817 acres, but wheat area declined by 8% over 2019. Barley acres were up 14% over 2019 (29,841 acres), while rye acres (1,788 acres) were down 35%.

Pulses

Organic pulse acres rose by 4% in 2020 over the previous year to 76,809 acres, but this was down from a six-year high of 82,442 acres in 2018. Peas were by far the most important organic pulse crop with 64,867 acres in 2020, growth of 2% over the preceding year and representing 84% of all organic pulses grown in the province. Alberta remains the dominant organic pea-producing region in the country. Organic lentil production has been growing gradually over the past decade with 1,000 acres in 2015 and just under 10,000 acres in 2020, representing growth of 878% in six years. Other organic pulses have yet to make large gains in Alberta.

Oilseeds

While organic oilseed plantings in Alberta have been rising steadily over the past six years, total acreage remained small in 2020 at 13,252 acres. This represented 46% growth over the preceding year. Canola (under 'other oilseeds') made up 45% of total organic oilseed acreage. Additionally, there was 3,086 acres of organic mustard and 2,657 acres of organic flax. The flax crop was the smallest since 2016. Organic soybean acres were negligible in 2020.

Other Field Crops

This category includes, hemp, buckwheat, intercrops and field crops not categorized by certifiers. In Alberta in 2020, this category was split between hemp (8,805 acres) and intercropped acres (6,566 acres). Alberta has become an important province for organic hemp production (second after Saskatchewan) with a doubling of acreage (107%) over the preceding year and a 267% increase since 2015. Since much of the hemp acreage is grown under irrigation, yields tend to be much higher, thus the tonnage of hemp seed produced in Alberta likely eclipses Saskatchewan production. The dominant crop used in Alberta intercrops in 2020 was peas. The most common intercrops reported by certifiers were barley-pea and oat-pea. Smaller acreages were seeded to oat-barley-pea and oat-pea-triticale.



Fruit and Vegetables

Alberta had 1,395 acres of organic vegetables, herbs, flowers and medicinal plant crops in 2020 and only 75 acres of organic fruit crops. The largest individual crops were in the other vegetables (323 acres), sweet corn (321 acres) which represents all of the Prairie sweet corn reported by certifiers, herbs and medicinal plants (218 acres), potatoes (155 acres) and brassicas (124 acres) categories. Berries were the largest fruit crop with 56 acres. None of the other fruit crops posted significant acreage.

Wild Harvest

The wild harvest category includes wild rice, other wild crops and maple production. In Alberta, no wild rice was harvested in 2020 and total category acreage was 499 acres, up from the previous year, but down dramatically from 2018. The wild harvest consisted of strawberries and wild mint, with an additional 104 acres in which no detail was provided.

Pasture, Forage, Green Manures and Natural Areas

Alberta reported 281,128 acres in this category in 2020, up almost 5% over the previous year, but down 8% from 2015 (305,900 acres). In 2015, this category was almost 68% of the total organic land base versus only 46% in 2020. Fifty percent of the category consisted of crops described by certifiers as animal fodders, 20% was in a category called biodiversity areas and 19% was seeded to green manures. An additional 7% of category acreage was seeded to alfalfa and alfalfa mixes and 5% to clovers. These latter two crops may have been seeded as either animal fodder or as fertility crops, or both.

TABLE 16: Alberta Organic Acreage, 2015–2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FIELD CROPS	138,063	184,153	235,429	292,351	288,830	324,152
CEREALS	113,200	147,200	154,200	188,155	192,431	218,647
BARLEY	18,400	16,100	31,600	16,700	26,173	29,841
OATS	46,000	79,800	68,500	85,200	92,878	121,036
RYE	2,000	2,300	2,000	2,300	2,767	1,788
WHEAT	45,500	47,500	51,300	83,600	70,577	64,817
OTHER CEREALS	1,300	1,500	800	355	36	1,165
PULSES	17,700	28,700	61,500	82,442	73,941	76,809
BEANS	500	800	1,100	842	341	436
LENTILS	1,000	4,700	3,500	3,900	8,983	9,779
PEAS	14,800	23,200	56,300	75,300	63,389	64,867
OTHER PULSES	1,400	—	600	2,400	1,228	1,727
OILSEEDS	4,300	3,000	6,400	7,810	9,076	13,252
FLAX	3,400	2,300	3,800	5,200	4,272	2,657
MUSTARD	200	400	2,300	1,600	3,214	3,086
OTHER OILSEEDS	700	300	300	1,010	1,590	7,509
OTHER FIELD CROPS	2,863	9,953	13,329	13,944	13,382	15,444
HEMP	2,400	2,500	6,000	5,200	4,247	8,805
BUCKWHEAT	63	153	29	444	176	60
OTHER FIELD CROPS	400	2,600	7,300	8,300	8,959	6,579
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	6,400	2,000	2,100	1,800	1,276	1,470
WILD HARVEST	—	—	—	5,864	4	499
PASTURE, FORAGE AND NATURAL AREAS	305,900	305,900	306,300	272,712	268,881	281,128
TOTAL	450,363	492,053	543,829	572,727	558,991	607,249



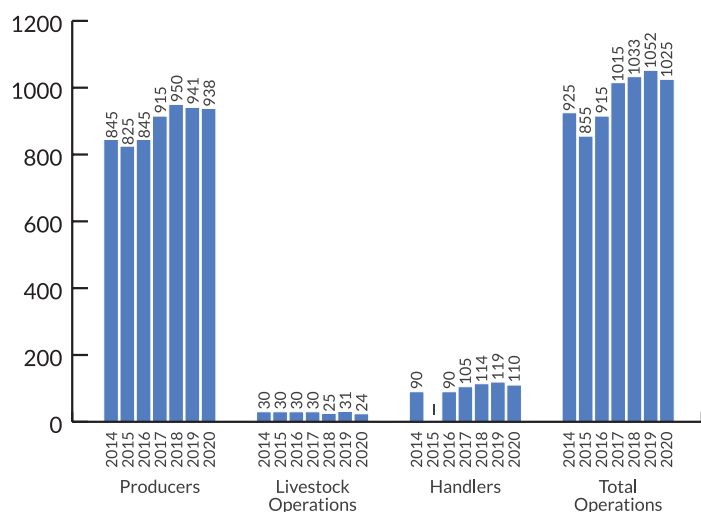
Saskatchewan

Operations

Saskatchewan organic operations contracted slightly in 2020 from 2019 (Figure 25). The total number of producers declined only marginally (by 3), but organic livestock operations were down by 23% (to 24 from 31), handler numbers were down by 7% (from 118 to 110) and the total number of operations was down by 11% (from 1,052 to 1,025).

Saskatchewan had significantly fewer organic livestock than Alberta in 2020, with 15,879 poultry, 2,307 bovine species, 182 beehives, 44 goats, 21 pigs and 12 sheep.

FIGURE 25: Saskatchewan Organic Operations by Type, 2014–2020



Acreage

Despite the decline in the number of organic operations and producers, Saskatchewan increased its organic land base in 2020. It had 1,174,648 acres under organic management, an increase of 13% over 2019. This represents 29% of land under organic management in Canada and 62% of the organic acres in the Prairies. Between 2019 and 2020, there was a 5% decrease in the overall number of organic operations in the province. The largest decline was in the organic handler category (-7%) followed by the organic producer category (-2%).

Cereal Crops

Saskatchewan leads the Prairie Provinces in organic cereal crop acres and cereals continued to dominate field crop acres in 2020. A total of 502,064 acres was planted in organic cereals, representing 73% of organic field crops and a 25% increase over 2019. Wheat continued to be the most widely grown organic crop, representing 59% of organic cereal acres in 2020 (295,356 acres). Between 2015 and 2020, organic wheat acres increased by 46%. Saskatchewan was the only Prairie province to report a gain in organic wheat acreage in 2020 adding close to 50,000 acres, a 20% expansion over 2019. Organic oats were the second most common organic crop with 145,288 acres in 2020, representing almost 30% of cereal crop acres. Organic oat acreage expanded by 42% between 2015 and 2020.

Pulses

In 2020, organic pulse acres represented 13% of organic field crop acres in Saskatchewan. Between 2015 and 2020 organic pulse acres increased by 32%, although between 2019 and 2020 organic pulse acreage actually contracted by 8% (from 97,818 to 89,981) and by 14% from its peak in 2018. Despite an overall decline in pulse acres, organic bean acres increased by 100% (by 578 acres to 1,156 acres) between 2019 and 2020 and organic pea acres increased by 2% in the same time period (to 45,348 acres). Fava bean and chickpea acreages were very small with 325 and 184 acres, respectively.

Oilseeds

Organic oilseeds are a high value niche crop for organic farmers in Saskatchewan. In 2020, there were 76,038 acres in organic oilseeds representing 11% of all organic field crops in the province and 76% of organic oilseed acres in the Prairies. Organic flax acreage expanded 18% over 2015 to 57,077 acres. Mustard was the second largest organic oilseed crop with 12,298 acres (16% of organic oilseed acres in the province). Between 2019 and 2020 there was a 91% increase in the 'other oilseeds' category which includes sunflower, camelina, soybean and canola and oilseeds for which no detail was provided, demonstrating an interest by organic farmers to experiment and develop niche markets for oilseeds other than flax and mustard. Canola represented the largest crop in this category with 4,632 acres. Camelina had 892 acres and sunflowers had only 165 acres.



Other Field Crops

In Saskatchewan, hemp experienced another large year-over-year increase (73%) from 2019 to 10,323 acres in 2020. Intercrops made up 7,256 of the category acres - the largest intercrop acreage in the Prairie region. The most common intercrop was pea-oat, followed by barley-pea. Other notable intercrops were flax-wheat, oat-pea-triticale, oat-barley-pea and oat-barley. Buckwheat reported 893 acres and undesignated field crop and corn acres were negligible.

Fruit and Vegetables

Organic fruit and vegetable acres increased by 4% (67 acres) between 2019 and 2020 to 1,569 acres. In 2020, potatoes represented the largest organic vegetable crop, followed by herbs and medicinal plants. Saskatchewan had the largest Prairie acreage of herbs and medicinal crops as it did in 2019 as well as the largest acreage of organic fruit, with 176 acres. Organic berries remained the most widely grown organic fruit in the province at 91 acres, followed by organic cherries at 61 acres.

Wild Harvest

All of the wild harvest reported in Saskatchewan in 2020 consisted of wild rice. Between 2018 and 2020, this category saw an 85% increase in acreage.

Pasture, Forage, Green Manures and Natural Areas

Between 2015 and 2020, there was a 22% increase in this category to 483,103 acres. Saskatchewan continues to rank first in the Prairies in this category, and had the greatest expansion (8%) between 2019 and 2020. Forty-three percent of acreage in this category was seeded to green manure in 2020, with 26% in animal fodder, 12% in biodiversity areas, 10% to alfalfa and alfalfa mixes and 8% to clovers.

TABLE 17: Saskatchewan Organic Acreage, 2015–2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FIELD CROPS	492,567	528,920	553,369	616,704	583,856	686,756
CEREALS	361,200	377,800	379,100	434,204	400,545	502,064
BARLEY	33,200	36,000	41,000	27,780	29,460	43,021
OATS	102,300	116,700	107,700	112,510	112,242	145,288
RYE	17,200	15,800	13,800	10,669	8,506	14,311
WHEAT	202,300	205,500	211,700	280,476	246,190	295,356
OTHER CEREALS	6,200	3,800	4,900	2,770	4,147	4,088
PULSES	68,100	86,300	75,500	104,797	97,818	89,981
BEANS	200	2,500	1,700	555	578	1,156
LENTILS	27,400	52,300	38,600	54,229	50,686	42,639
PEAS	27,800	31,000	33,700	46,193	44,645	45,348
OTHER PULSES	12,700	500	1,500	3,820	1,909	838
OILSEEDS	58,300	55,400	79,800	64,322	64,547	76,038
FLAX	48,500	43,100	67,000	51,104	49,800	57,077
MUSTARD	8,400	11,400	12,200	11,977	11,266	12,298
OTHER OILSEEDS	1,400	900	600	1,241	3,481	6,663
OTHER FIELD CROPS	4,967	9,420	18,969	13,381	20,946	18,673
HEMP	2,300	2,300	7,800	3,440	5,976	10,323
BUCKWHEAT	567	2,020	769	935	703	893
OTHER FIELD CROPS	2,100	5,100	10,400	9,006	14,267	7,457
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	4,500	1,900	1,900	2,700	1,502	1,569
WILD HARVEST	—	—	—	1,740	1954	3,221
PASTURE, FORAGE, GREEN MANURES, AND NATURAL AREAS	396,700	556,600	607,900	533,460	447,959	483,103
TOTAL	893,767	1,087,420	1,163,169	1,154,604	1,035,271	1,174,648



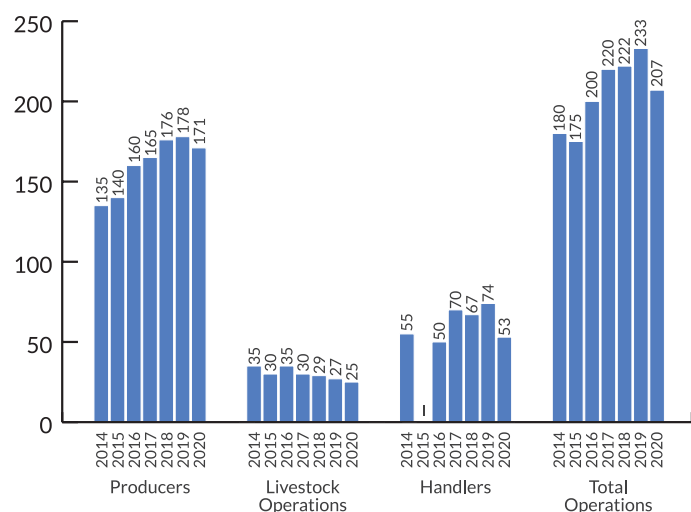
Manitoba

Operations

Manitoba demonstrated the largest contraction in the organic operator base in the Prairie region in 2020 (Figure 26). Loss of operators occurred in every category, but was most pronounced amongst handlers. This category declined by 28% (loss of 21 operations between 2019 and 2020), the largest single year loss of handlers in the country. The majority of the handlers were on-farm seed cleaning businesses and it is likely that some switched from certification to Attestations. Organic producer numbers were down by 4% (by 7 to 171), livestock operations were down by 7% (to 25), and the total number of operations was down 11% to 207.

Certifiers reported 4,080 organic bovine species and 25 organic pigs in Manitoba in 2020. Presuming that all of the bovine counted are beef cattle, this represents an increase of 59 cattle between 2019 and 2020. Manitoba has several large organic laying operations, but certifiers did not report laying hen numbers in 2020.

FIGURE 26: Manitoba Organic Operations by Type, 2014–2020



Acreage

Land under organic management also declined dramatically from 127,597 acres in 2019 to 102,612 acres in 2020 (Table 18). The largest acreage loss occurred in the Pasture, Forage, Green Manure and Natural Areas category, which declined from 50,102 acres in 2019 to 35,766 acres in 2020, a loss of close to 30%. Field crop acreage contracted by 9% over the previous year, with an 87% loss in oilseed acres and a 70% decline in pulse acreage.

Cereal Crops

In 2020, Manitoba had 38,944 acres of organic cereal crops, representing a decline of 1% from 2019 and an increase of 59% from 2015. The most important organic cereal crop in 2020 was wheat with 15,577 acres, a decline of 22% over the previous year. The second most important cereal, oats, grew from 11,664 acres in 2019 to 14,540 acres in 2020, a gain of 25%. Barley acres also grew, by 19% to 6,213 acres. Rye acres decreased 15% to 1,769 acres.

Pulses

Pulse acres took a significant hit in 2020 losing 4,278 acres resulting in just 1,800 acres in 2020. All pulse crops showed year-over-year losses, with the other pulses category and field peas posting the largest losses with 87% and 72% acreage declines, respectively.

Oilseeds

Organic oilseed production was down very slightly from 2019 (-1%) to 11,143 acres. The other oilseeds category was the largest with 6,686 acres. This was comprised of 3,018 acres of camelina, 2,288 acres of soybean and 1,297 acres of canola. The organic flax crop was smaller than usual with only 3,907 acres (down 24% from 2019), while the mustard crop was 550 acres in 2020.

Other Field Crops

Hemp was the largest crop in this category with 4,683 acres (down 5% from 2019), followed by buckwheat at 3,484 acres (up 7% from 2019). Other field crops were mainly comprised of corn and undesignated field crops.

Fruit and Vegetables

In 2020, Manitoba had the largest crop in this category in the Prairie region with 2,185 acres - 44% of the Prairie total. This was up slightly from the 2,056 acres grown in 2019. The largest categories were: potatoes with 1,543 acres which was up slightly from the 1,498 acres grown in 2019, other vegetables (232 acres), onions (169 acres) and brassicas (129 acres).

Wild Harvest

Manitoba's wild rice crop collapsed in 2020 with a loss of 4,501 acres, leaving only 3,597 acres for harvest – a decline of 56% in a single year. Wild rice harvesters have long complained that fluctuations in water levels in the northern lakes that grow wild rice are harming the crop.



Pasture, Forage, Green Manures and Natural Areas

Acreage in this category was down 14,366 acres from 2019 to 35,766 acres in 2020, a drop of 29%. The largest land use in this category was for animal feed at 18,439 (52% of the category). Alfalfa and alfalfa mixes made up 16%, while clovers were grown on 13% of the category land. Green manures were grown on 4,619 acres (13% of the category). Land set aside for biodiversity made up 6% of the land in the category.

TABLE 18: Manitoba Organic Acreage, 2015–2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FIELD CROPS	34,919	52,161	57,013	60,539	67,270	61,015
CEREALS	24,500	40,000	41,600	30,513	39,463	38,944
BARLEY	2,600	4,500	5,200	5,000	5,211	6,213
OATS	5,100	15,100	9,100	13,670	11,664	14,540
RYE	3,500	3,100	3,700	2,300	2,090	1,769
WHEAT	10,900	15,300	23,500	9,097	19,966	15,577
OTHER CEREALS	2,400	2,000	100	446	532	845
PULSES	2,800	2,400	4,100	5,125	6,078	1,800
BEANS	400	1,000	200	325	456	176
LENTILS	700	-	100	0	1,410	618
PEAS	1,300	1,400	1,300	3,200	2,999	851
OTHER PULSES	400	-	2,500	1,600	1,213	155
OILSEEDS	6,500	5,200	4,600	5,801	11,257	11,143
FLAX	3,200	3,900	2,600	4,400	5,123	3,907
MUSTARD	1,500	500	700	485	355	550
OTHER OILSEEDS	1,800	800	1,300	916	5,779	6,686
OTHER FIELD CROPS	1,119	4,561	6,713	19,100	10,472	9,128
HEMP	300	2,200	4,900	3,700	4,925	4,683
BUCKWHEAT	319	961	513	4,100	3,266	3,484
OTHER FIELD CROPS	500	1,400	1,300	11,300	2,281	961
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	800	1,600	2,400	800	2,126	2,234
WILD HARVEST	—	—	—	8,810	8098	3,597
PASTURE, FORAGE, GREEN MANURES, AND NATURAL AREAS	56,200	58,800	59,100	61,090	50,102	35,766
TOTAL	91,919	112,561	118,513	131,239	127,596	102,612



Photo: Laura Telford, Manitoba Agriculture





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