

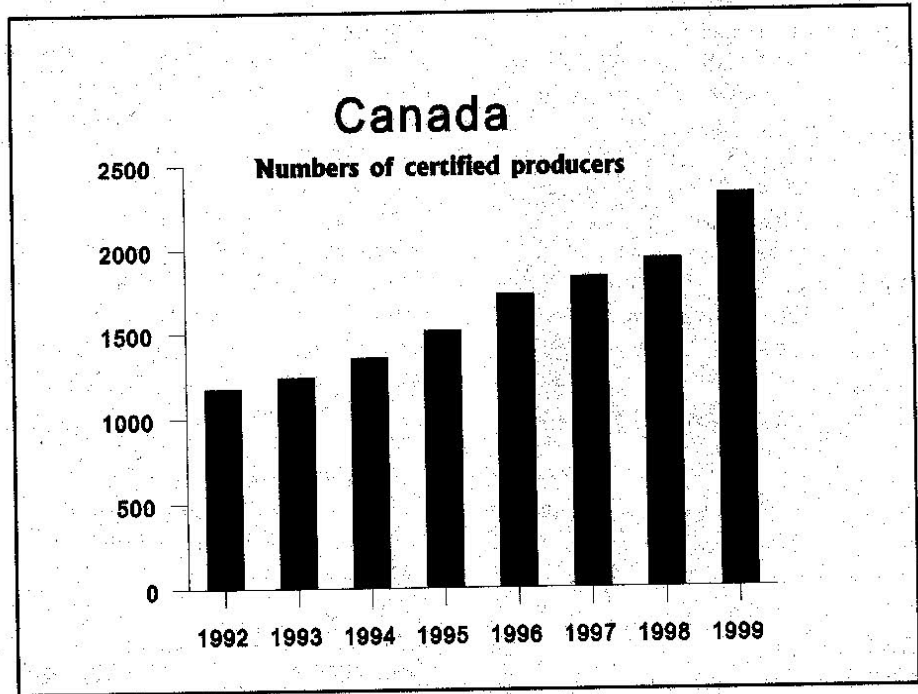
1999 organic statistics

by Anne Macey

Canadian Organic Growers (COG) continues to collect data on numbers of certified producers in Canada by sending out an annual questionnaire to all certifying agencies operating in the country (see previous reports in *Eco-Farm & Garden*, Fall 1998 and Winter 2000). Tables and charts are based on information provided to COG by the certification bodies (CBs). The specific references to fruit and vegetable production were obtained from a September 2000 Statistics Canada report, based on a survey conducted in May 2000*. Numbers of fruit and vegetable farms are therefore considered likely to correspond to 1999 certification numbers but acreage reported was that planned for 2000.

The 1999 total of 2,321 certified organic producers represents a

* Bill Parsons, "Organic Growing Practices establish clear market position", *Vista on the Agri-food Industry and the Farm Community*, Statistics Canada, September 2000. Available free at <www.statcan.ca>.



20% increase from 1998, with Saskatchewan reporting a dramatic increase of 48%. While the total number of organic farms is only 0.8% of the total number of farms in Canada (as reported by the 1996 Census), percentages by province range from 0.5% in Manitoba to 1.7% in British

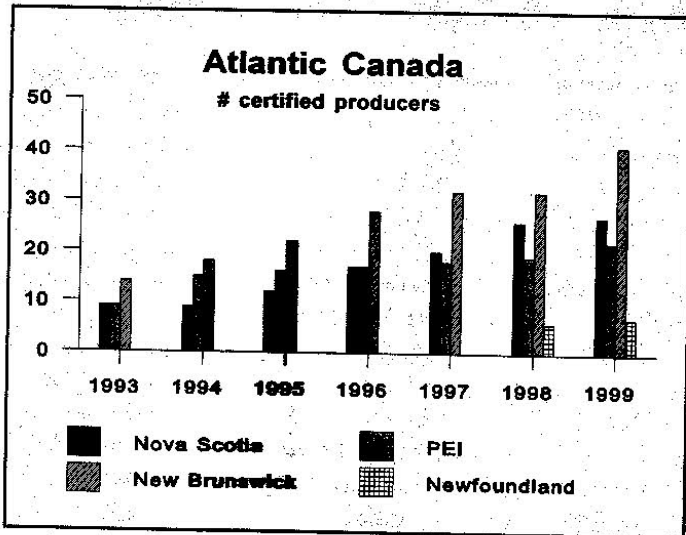
Columbia. Numbers of certified processors and handlers show an increase of 70% to 281, but this may be an overestimate because some processors and handlers are certified by more than one agency. The figures include on-farm processing and seed cleaning.

It is still proving difficult to get

Numbers of Certified Organic Producers and Processors in Canada in 1999

Province	Producers	% increase since '98	% of total farms in province	Number in transition*	Number processors & handlers*	Acres ** estimates only
British Columbia	358	10%	1.7%	106	40	>18,700
Alberta	210	16%	0.4%	11	27	>227,800
Saskatchewan	626	48%	1.1%	95	66	>102,300
Manitoba	121	6%	0.5%	32	17	30,000
Ontario	492	10%	0.7%	19	83	60,000
Quebec	417	16%	1.2%	34	43	>10,000
New Brunswick	41	22%	1.3%		3	4,000
PEI	22	16%	1%	0	1	1,000
Nova Scotia	27	4%	0.7%	7		2,000
Newfoundland	7	17%	1%		1	
Totals	2,321	20%	0.8%	304	281	

** Transition data and acreage data incomplete; actual number will be greater. Processors and handlers may be an overestimate.



acreage data from all CBs; some had not compiled the statistics and others declined to release the data. The figures reported in the table are best guesses based on information provided over the last three years and should not be quoted as accurate. Statistics Canada reports that organic farms account for 1.9% of the commercial fruit area under production and 1.6% of the commercial vegetable area under production. Most of the 640 farms reporting fruit and vegetable production had less than 5 acres in production but there were also farms across the country with over 30 acres.

From the information we have received it is possible to state:

- New Brunswick certified acreage increased from 1,824 acres in 1997 to close to 4,000 in 1999. Certified enterprises include market gardens, livestock, cereal grains and maple syrup. Most of the certified enterprises in Nova Scotia are market gardens.

- In Quebec, there are about 130 certified maple syrup operations. According to Statistics Canada there are 515 acres in organic fruit production (55 farms) and 600 acres in organic vegetable production (75 farms).

- Ontario reported 23,747 acres in 1996; there were probably close to 60,000 acres in 1999, not including the wild rice acreage in northern Ontario. Statistics Canada reports 995 acres in fruit (85 farms) and 2,025 acres in vegetables (140 farms).

- Manitoba 1999 data is incomplete; we estimate close to 30,000 acres based on figures from previous years.

- Saskatchewan data is incomplete. The 102,300 acres reported represents producers certified by 12 of the 16 CBs operating in the province in 1999. It includes over 9,000 acres of wild rice. The majority of organic farms in the province produce cereal grains. Hemp was included in the list of certified crops for the first time.

- In Alberta, 227,800 acres were reported: this includes native pasture. One CB declined to provide data.

- In B.C., 18,716 acres were reported representing approximately 300 of the 358 producers. This figure does not include all land used for grazing. Statistics Canada reports 1,350 acres in organic fruit production (175 farms) or 3.2% of the total fruit area in the province and 1,340 acres in vegetables (415 farms) or 8.7% of the total vegetable area in B.C. Certified processors include two breweries.

COG would like to thank all the certifying agencies for providing their figures.

—Anne Macey, © 2000 Canadian Organic Growers
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