



Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

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Dear Members and Friends,

2025 was a busy year of knowledge-sharing, farmer-led research and community building at EFAO.

We hosted 88 events that brought together over 2,000 participants at field days, webinars, and meet-ups. The annual conference brought together over 400 participants and opened with the second annual Earth and Sky Gathering, a day that centered the voices and experiences of Indigenous growers and land stewards.

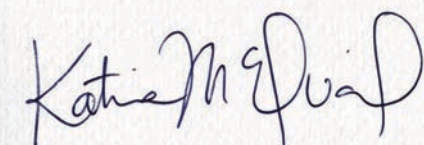
Members were hard at work this season conducting new research trials, with 28 farmers participating in 30 different trials. We celebrated the inspiring work of farmer-researchers at the 2025 conference as we recognized the 10th Anniversary of EFAO's Farmer-Led Research Program.

In 2025 the Small Grains Program supported 63 farmers to plant over 4,000 acres of small grains and cover crops. By the end of 2026, the program will have distributed close to \$1M to farmers to diversify their rotations within a community of peers and support.

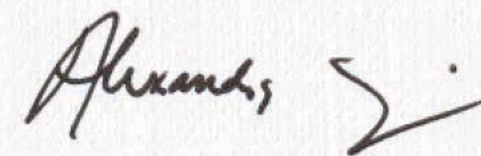
EFAO's membership stayed roughly the same this year, for a total of 1023 members. The diversity of EFAO's membership continues to be one of its great strengths. Members come from across Ontario and grow a wide range of crops and livestock and include growers at all stages of their careers. EFAO's commitment to building relationships and learning alongside Black farmers, Indigenous farmers and land stewards, and other farmers of colour, is reflected in strong engagement and representation within the organization.

The annual report is truly a celebration of all the individuals and organizations that we have the honour to work with. Whether you contributed by volunteering, attending events, sharing your knowledge and experience, conducting research, writing magazine articles, donating, paying membership dues, or partnering on events and projects, you help regenerate this living organization each year.

With much appreciation,



Katrina McQuail,
EFAO Board President



Ali English,
Executive Director

ABOUT EFAO



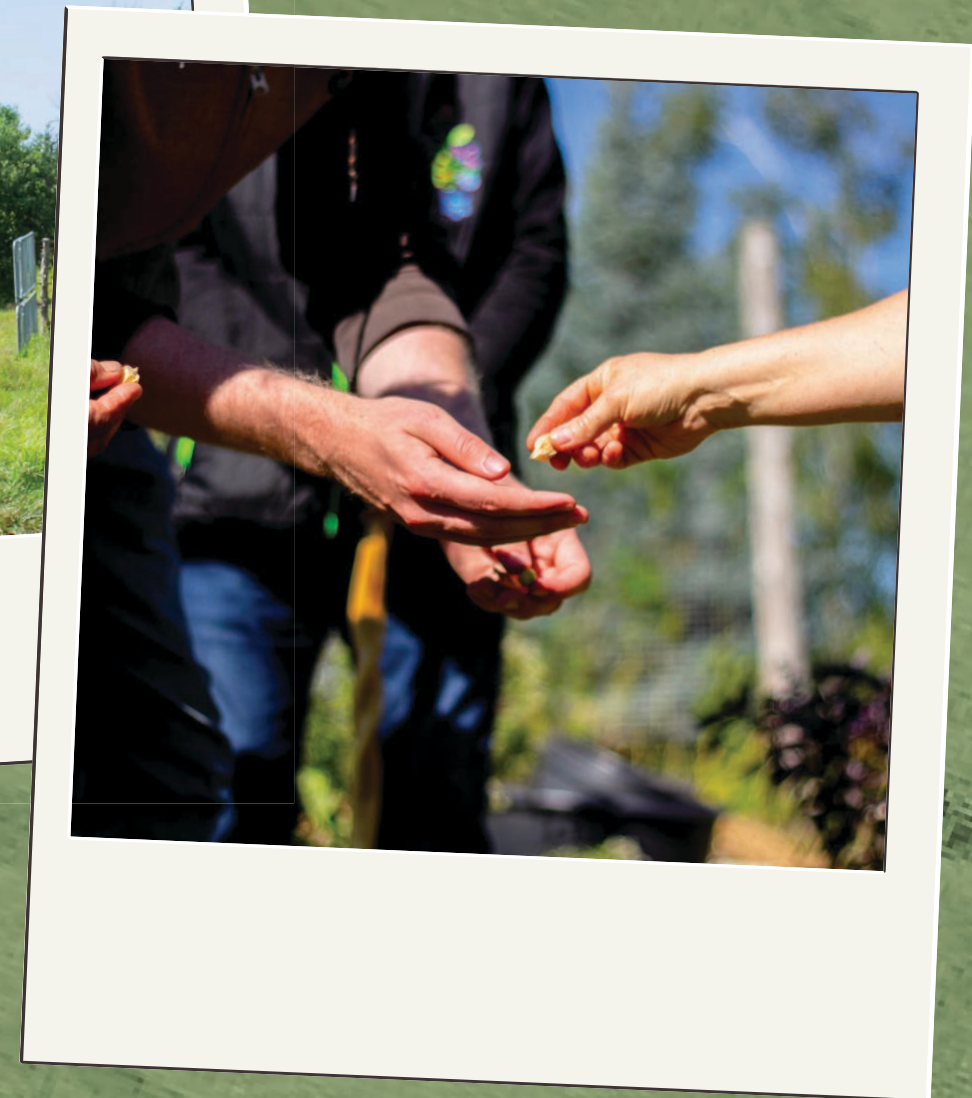
Established in 1979 by farmers for farmers, the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) is a membership organization that focuses on farmer-led education, research and community building. EFAO brings farmers together so they can learn from each other and improve the health of their soils, crops, livestock and the environment, to steward resilient ecological farms.

Vision

We envision an Ontario where thriving ecological farms are the foundation of our food system, and where agriculture protects our resources, increases biodiversity, mitigates climate change, and cultivates resilient, diverse, equitable communities.

Mission

EFAO supports farmers to build resilient ecological farms and grow a strong knowledge sharing community.



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Our Team

2025 EFAO Staff



Thank you to the EFAO staff for their hard work and dedication!

Ali English, Executive Director

Allison Muckle, Director of Northern Outreach, New Farmer Programs & Operations

Angel Beyde, Strategic Partnerships & Eastern Outreach Director

Becky Big Canoe, Indigenous Outreach & Engagement Advisor

Caitlin Hall, Conference Coordinator

Cassie Wever, Education Coordinator

Celeste Smith, Northern Outreach Coordinator

Heather Newman, Farm Viability Program Manager

Habiba Hisham, Communications Manager

Jackie Clark, Small Grains Program Manager

Jessica Gale, Knowledge Mobilization Manager

Katie Baikie, Education & Policy Director

Laura Northey, Magazine Editor

Martina Schaefer, Administrative & Membership Manager

Rachel Lachance, Northern Events Coordinator

Rav Singh, Food Forest Coordinator

Rebecca Ivanoff, Seed Program Manager

Sarah Larsen, Research & Small Grains Program Director

Stuart Oke, Government Relations Coordinator



Our Team

2025 EFAO Board

*Thank you to the
EFAO Board of
Directors for
their leadership.*



Isabelle Rodé



Sally Miller



Sarah Martin-Mills



Annette Peltier-Flamand



Anan Loli



Melissa Watkins



Ricardo Ramírez



Denise Miller



Katrina McQuail



Amy Ellard-Gray



Rav Singh

A person wearing blue jeans is shown from the waist down, tending to a garden bed. The garden bed is filled with pink flowers and green foliage, set against a background of brown mulch. A large, white, torn-edge paper cutout is positioned in the background, partially obscuring the person's legs. The word "MEMBERSHIP" is written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font across the white paper cutout.

MEMBERSHIP

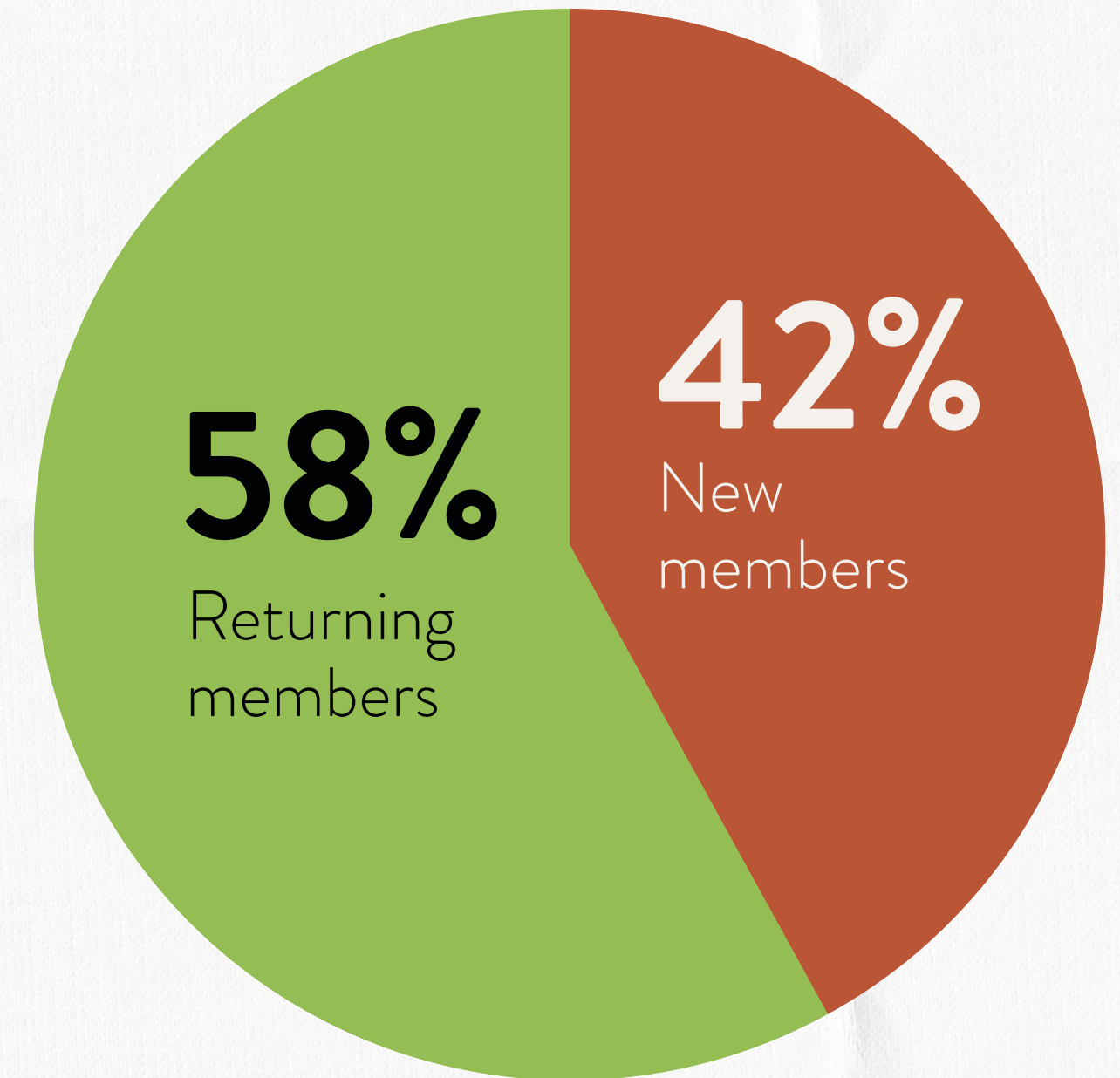
Membership Highlights

By the numbers...

1023 Members in 2025

56% Membership retention rate

5% higher than last year



acres

Member Farm Acreage

By the numbers...

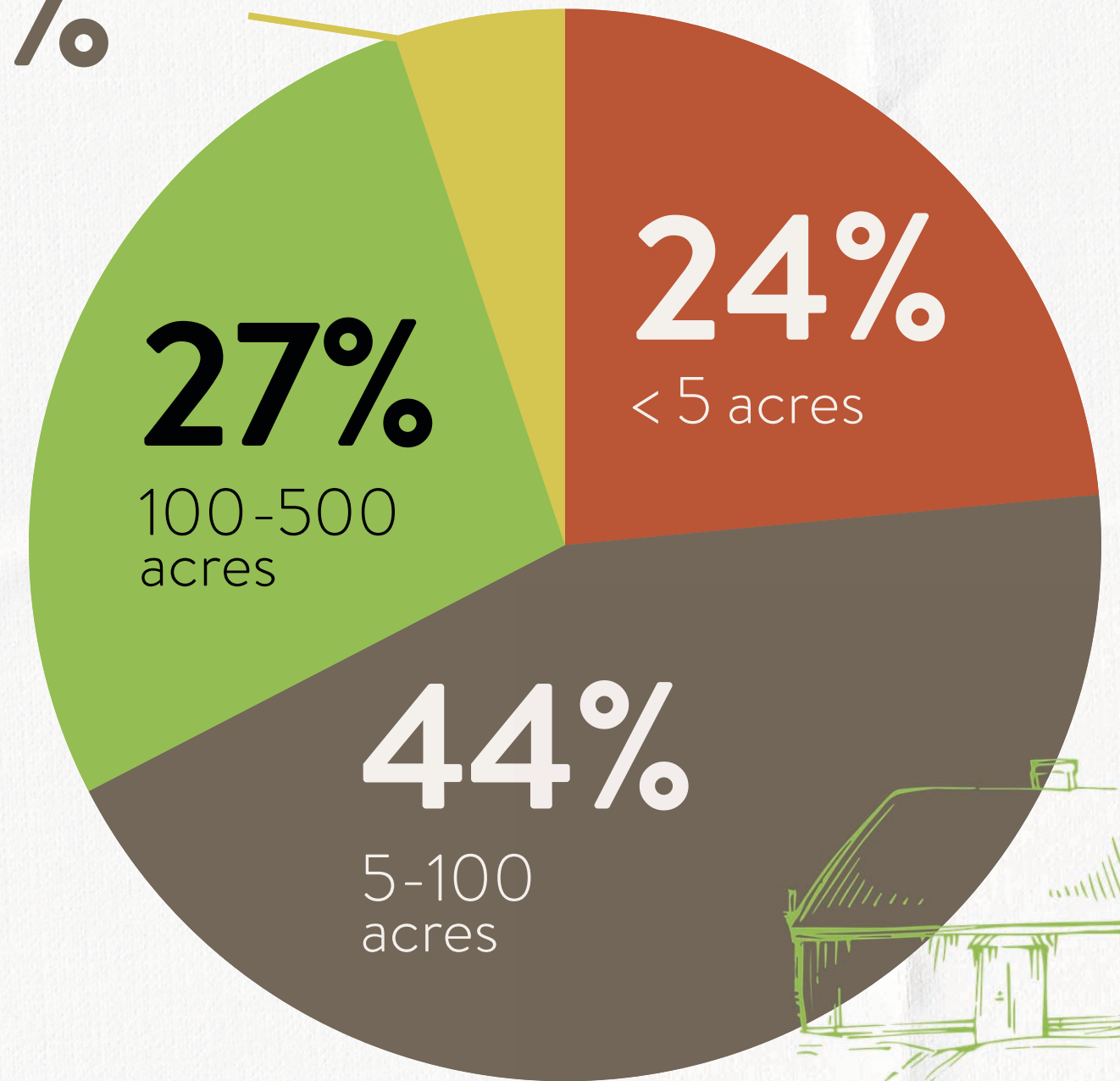
EFAO members farm a total of **70,255** acres

Average farm size of **121** acres

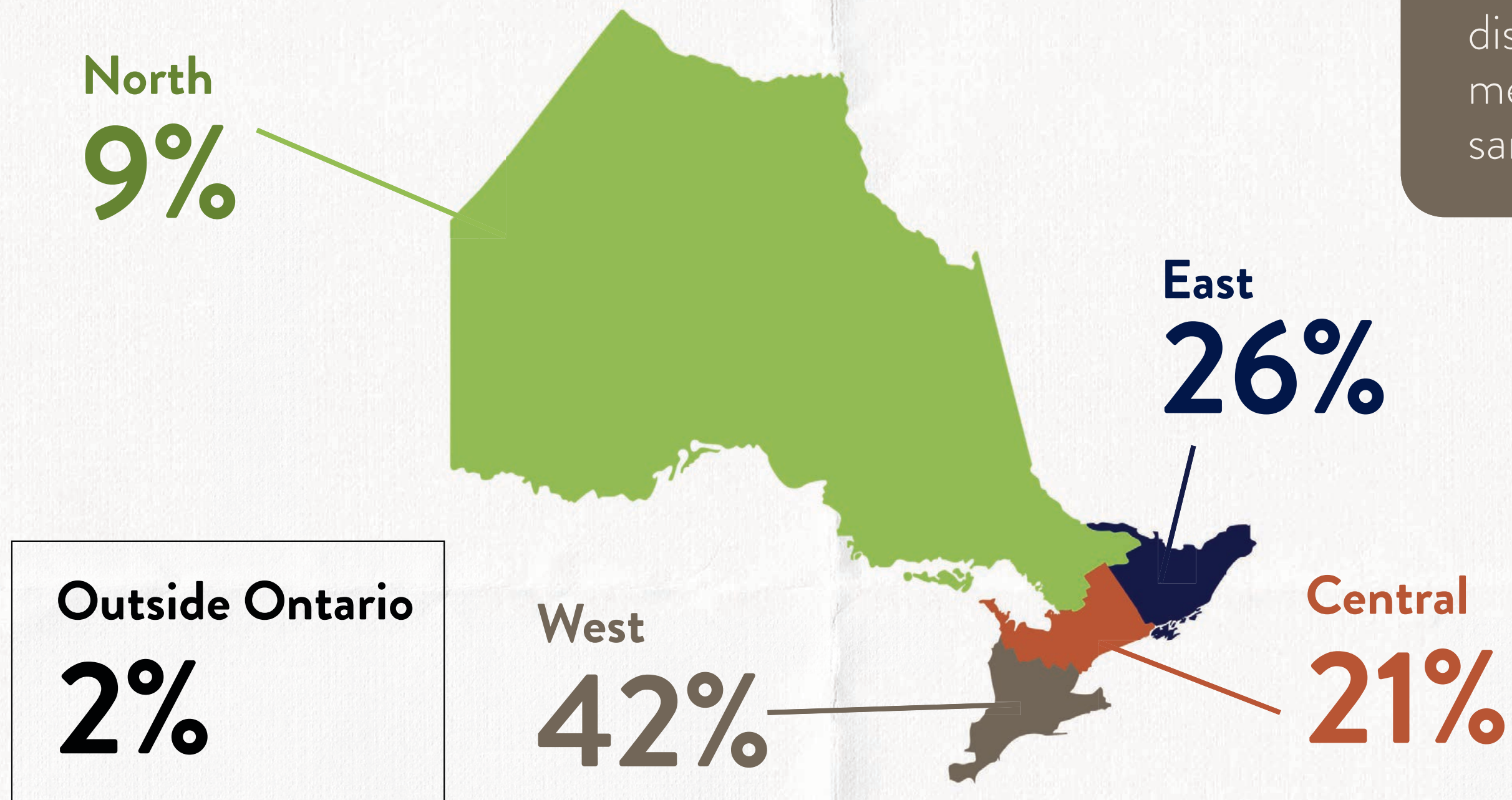
Median farm size of **50** acres

Since 2024, the number of members who farm on less than 5 acres increased **3.5%**

5% 500+ acres



Regional Distribution of Members



The geographic distribution of EFAO members remained the same in 2025 as in 2024

How members identify in their farming practice

The number of members who identify as aspiring or planning to farm grew by 7% this year

19%

Aspiring Farmer / Planning to Farm / Landless Farmer

41%

Commercial Farmer

5%

Farm Worker

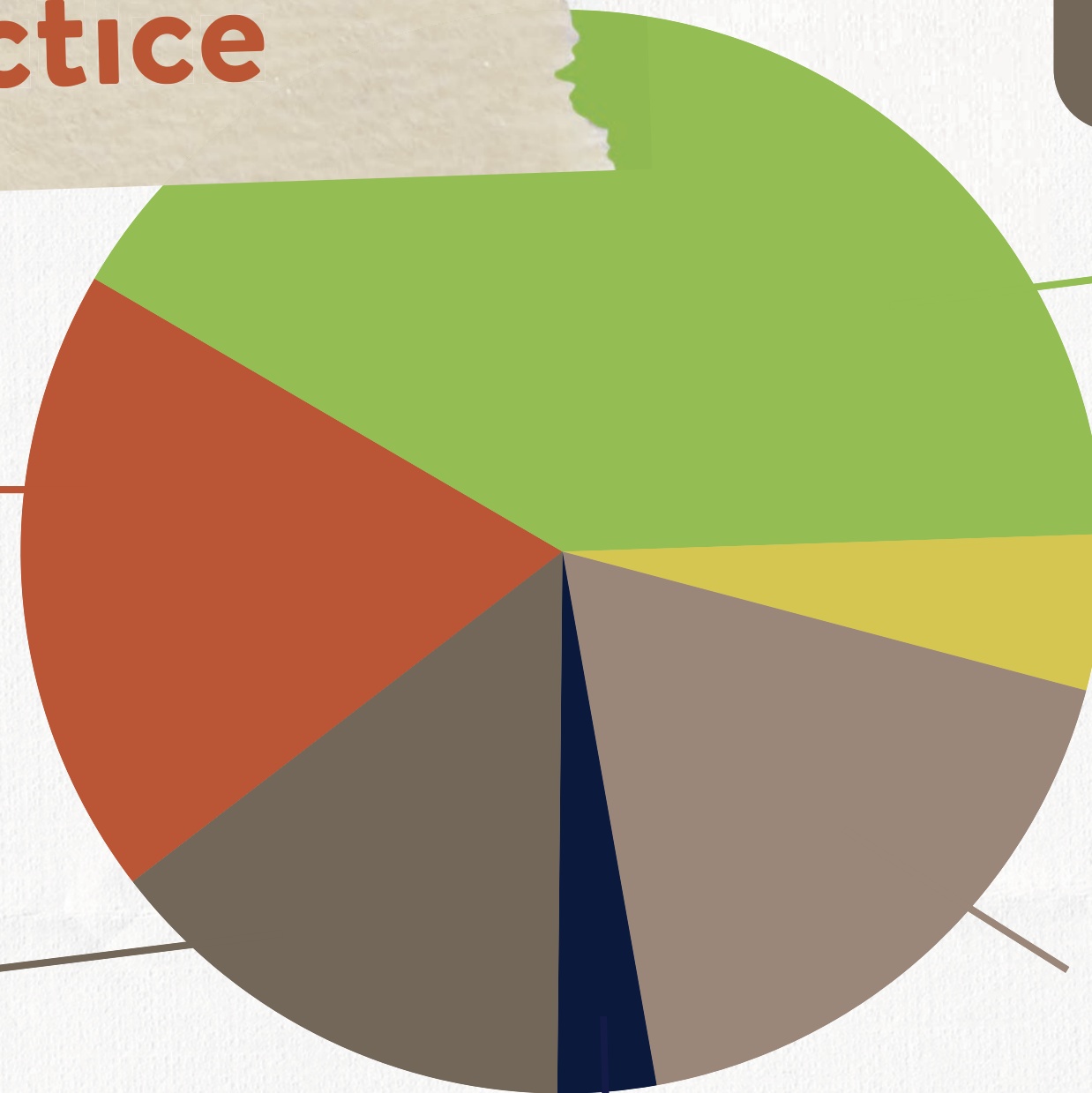
14%

Business / Organization / Supporter

18%

Home Gardener / Community Gardener / Homesteader

3% Indigenous Land Steward



How long members have been farming/growing

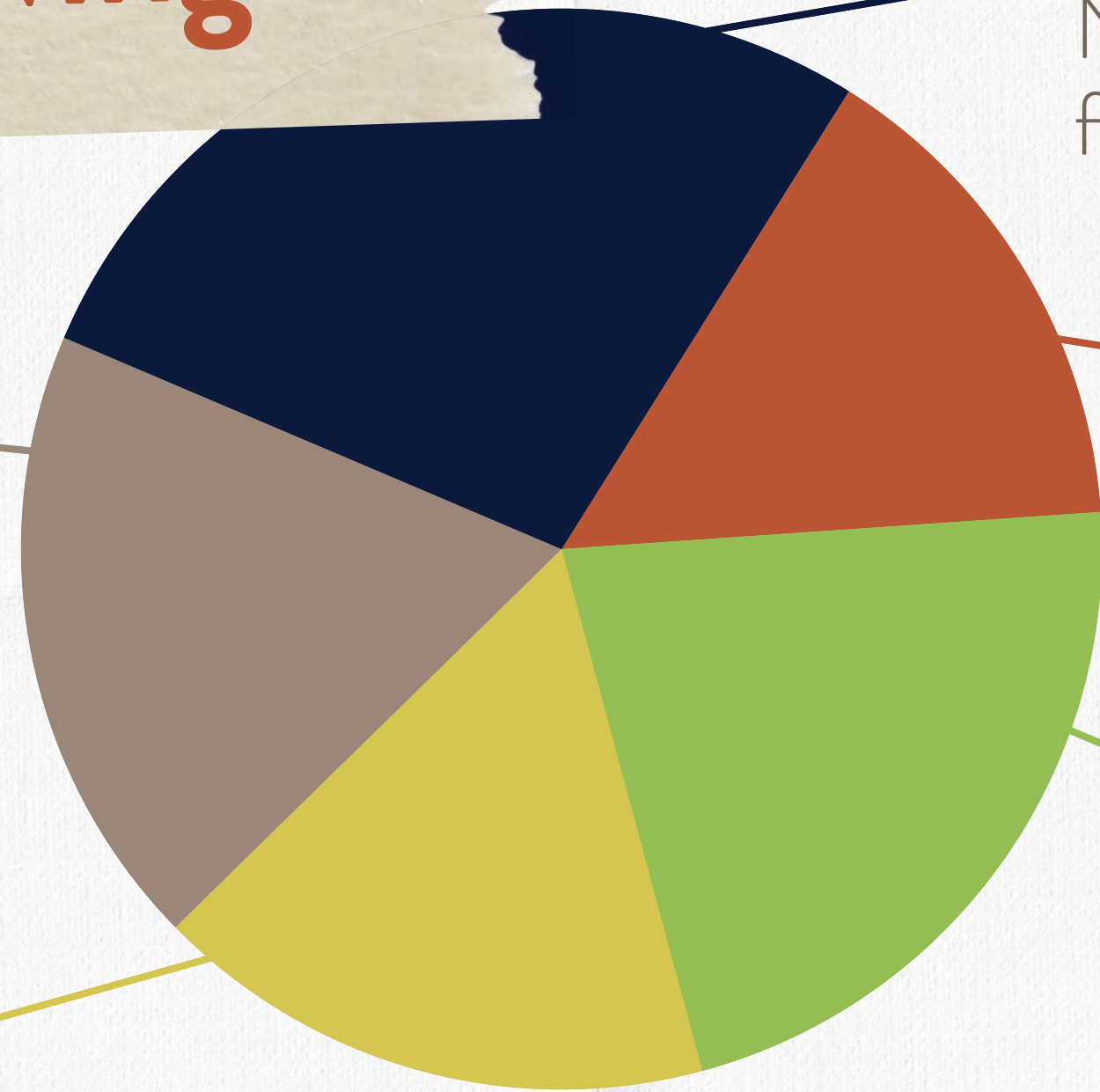
19%
Farming 20+ years

17%
Farming 11-20 years

28%
Not currently farming/growing

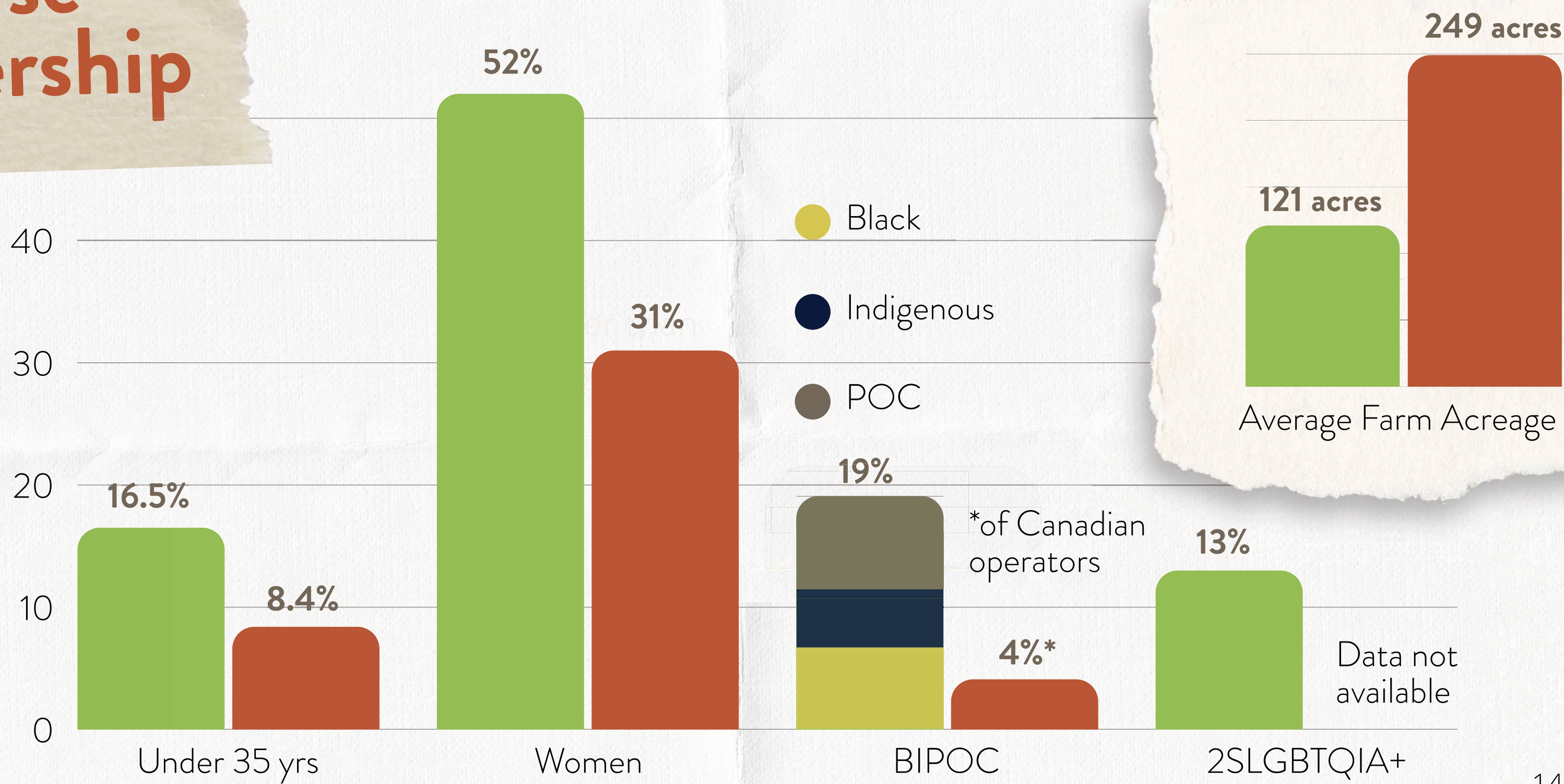
15%
Farming 1-4 years

22%
Farming 5-10 years

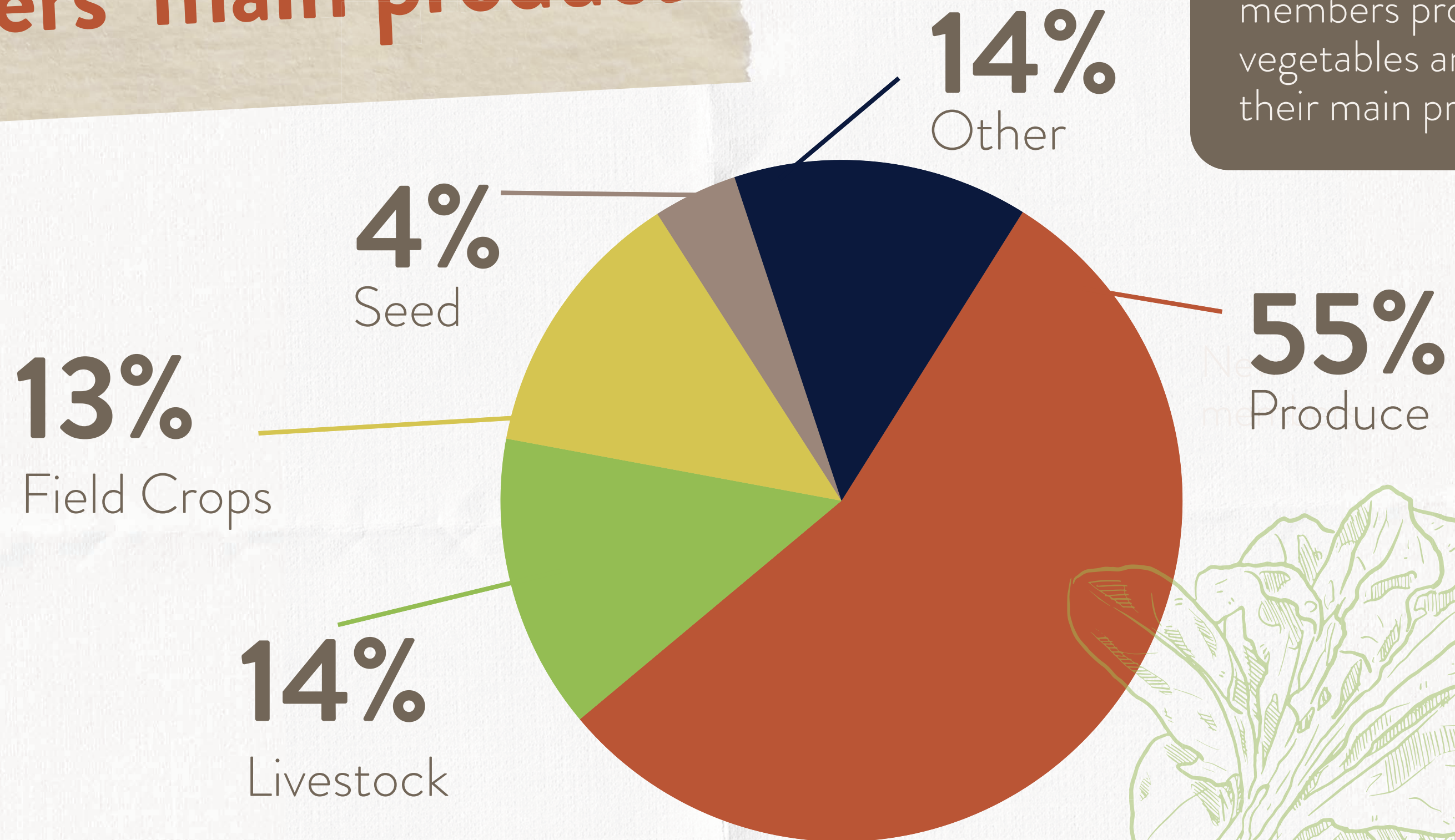


A Diverse Membership

● EFAO members ● Ontario Farm Operators (2021 Census)

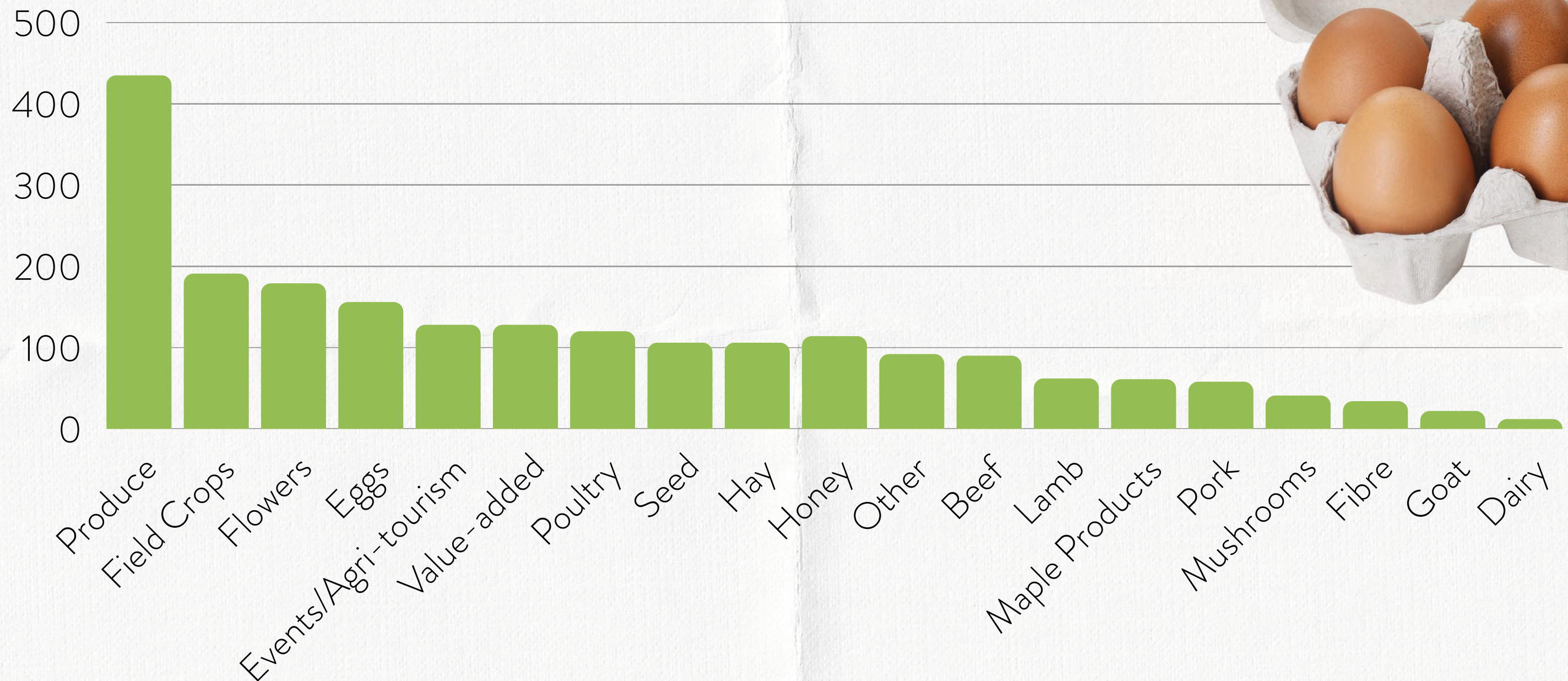


Members' main product

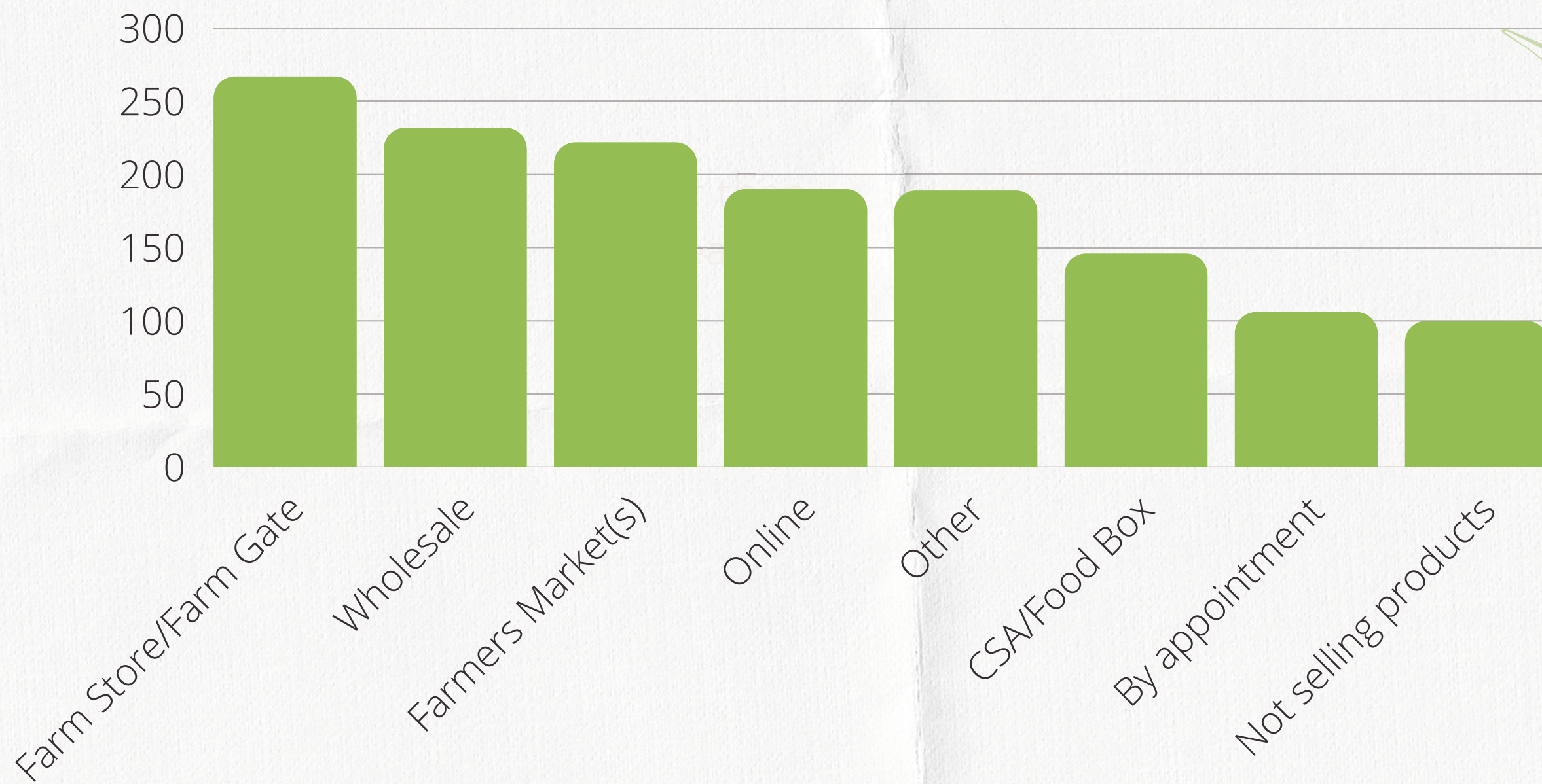


More than half of EFAO's members produce vegetables and/or fruit as their main product

What is produced on EFAO Members' Farms



Marketing methods



What members say about EFAO

"EFAO has influenced our farm's ability to farm organically from the beginning and connect with like-minded farmers."

"EFAO has positively influenced me by being a supportive, inclusive community of wonderful people."

"EFAO has created such an amazing community of farms new and old, it has been a heart warming privilege to be a part of this community."



EVENTS & ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing has been at the heart of EFAO for 47 years and is woven into all areas of the organization's work. We love nothing more than creating opportunities to gather, including field days, meet-ups, workshops, webinars and EFAO's annual conference. EFAO's events are where connections are made and learning opportunities abound.

"I loved seeing other people's farms because it's so easy to work so solitary. It gave me confidence that I know what I'm doing. Everyone has different solutions for their issues and it's great to get new ideas even for seemingly small things!"



Field Day at Rubber Boot Farm in Timmins



Johl Whiteduck gives a tour of Mashkode Bizhikiins Culture Camp in Lindsay



Knowledge Sharing Events

By the numbers: In 2025 EFAO hosted...

190 speakers

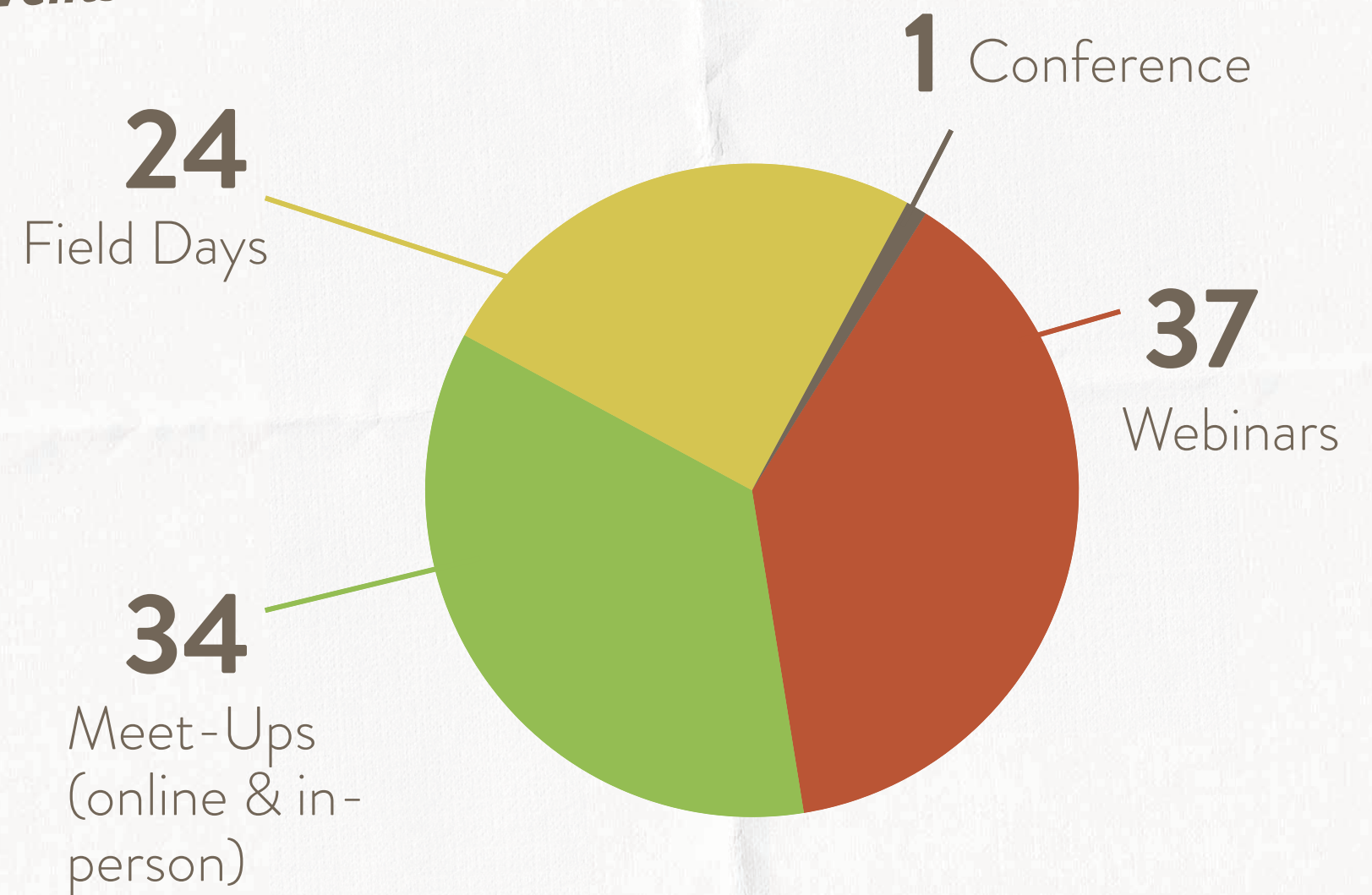
88 events

2,243 participants

EFAO's 2025 webinar series' were:

- Finance February
(109 registrants, 4 sessions)
- Exploring a New Enterprise with Ignatius Farm
(116 registrants, 10 sessions)

Events included:



The most popular events in 2025

Cover Crops Foundations, Tips & Tricks

with Jake Munroe and Stephanie Vickers
(99 registrants)

Understanding Your Soil Test: Parts 1 & 2

with Ken Laing
(69 registrants)

Finance February: Bookkeeping Basics (and Beyond)

(45 registrants)



Learning alongside Black, Indigenous and other farmers of colour at EFAO events

EFAO is committed to advancing anti-racism, equity and belonging in ecological agriculture. Building relationships with, listening to, learning from and supporting Black farmers, Indigenous farmers and land stewards, and other farmers of colour is an important part of this work.

By the numbers:

36% of presenters were BIPOC (+4%)

22% of participants were BIPOC (+6%)



Reducing Financial Barriers for Events

EFAO strives to reduce financial barriers for registration for all events (including the conference) by using a sliding scale model for event registration fees. This initiative is made possible through the support of funders and donors.

In addition, 217 free event passes were accessed by Indigenous growers for webinars, field days and the EFAO Conference.

By the numbers:

36 participants accessed sliding scale registration

\$4,155 was the total value



On the Ground



Woodleigh Farms



Black Sheep Farm



Cedar Down Farm



Hawthorn Farm



Rooted Oak Farm



Ferme Houle Farms



Fairfields Organics



Rutabaga Ranch



Kirkview Farm



Paperkite Farm



Black River Country Gardens



Mimosa Breeding & Research



Leading Cloud Garden



Lakehead University Agri Research Station



Mashkode Bizhikiins Culture Camp



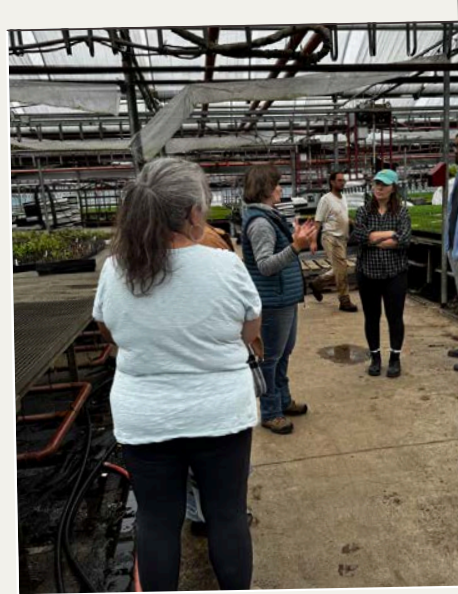
The Urban Orchardist



Up North Lamb Co



Springfield Farm



Radical Gardens



Fiddlehead Farm



Return to Earth Farm



Rubber Boot Farm

What participants said about field days

"The opportunity to meet others interested in ecological farm practices — both those who are active and experienced practitioners — and those aspiring to it, was quite special for me."

"The farmers were able to give us a walk-thru of their operations and we had the chance to ask questions. This is very basic on the surface, but as an aspiring farmer there are a number of things you think you know. Thank you, as this was an incredible opportunity."



Lara Mrosovsky gives a tour of Mashkode Bizhikiins Culture Camp in Lindsay

12th Annual EFAO Conference & 2nd Annual Earth and Sky Gathering

EFAO's annual conference draws farmers, growers, and food producers from across the food system for three days of intensive learning, idea-sharing, networking and celebration with food and friends.

By the numbers:

401

people attended the event over 3 days

55%

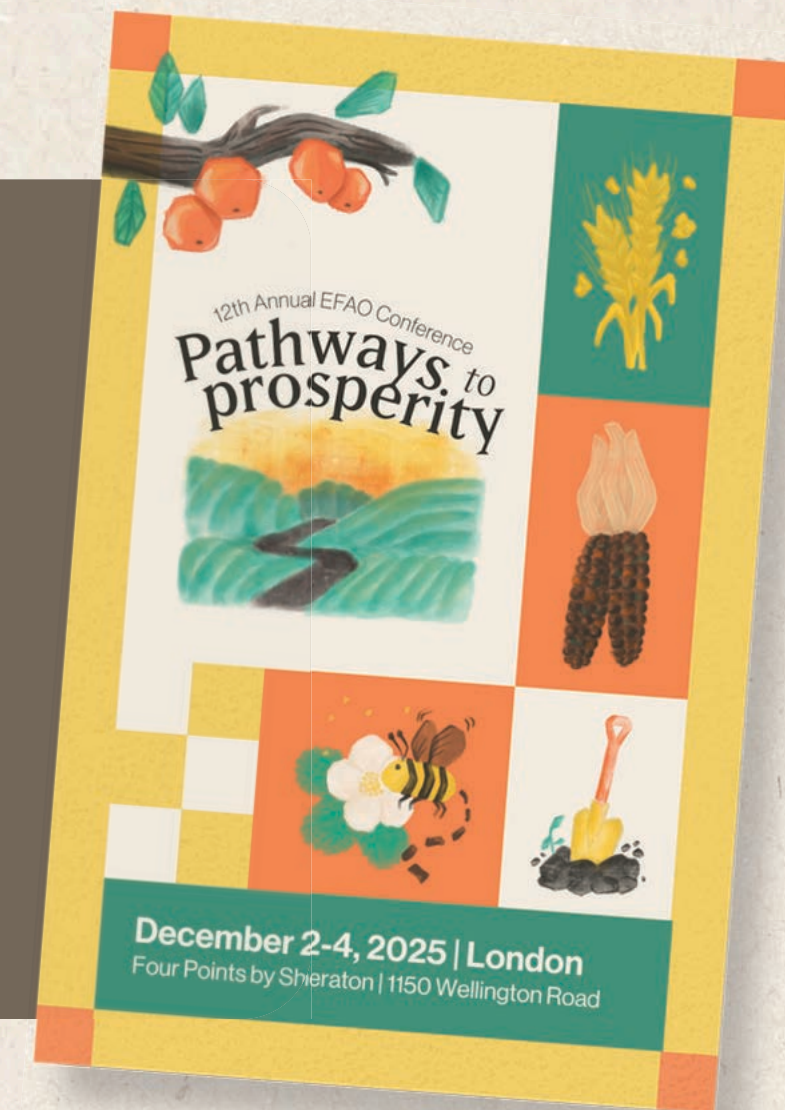
of conference attendees were members

85%

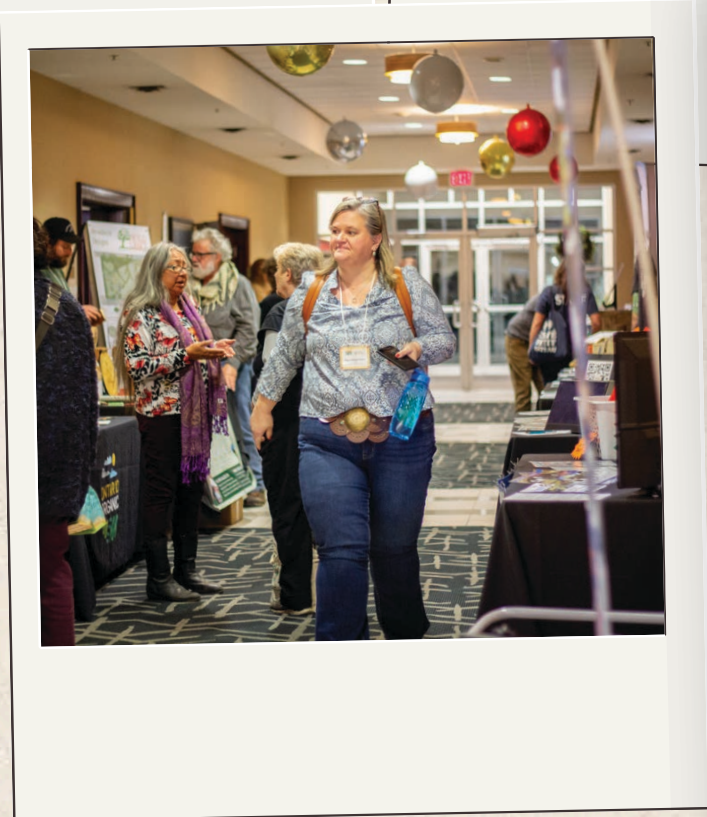
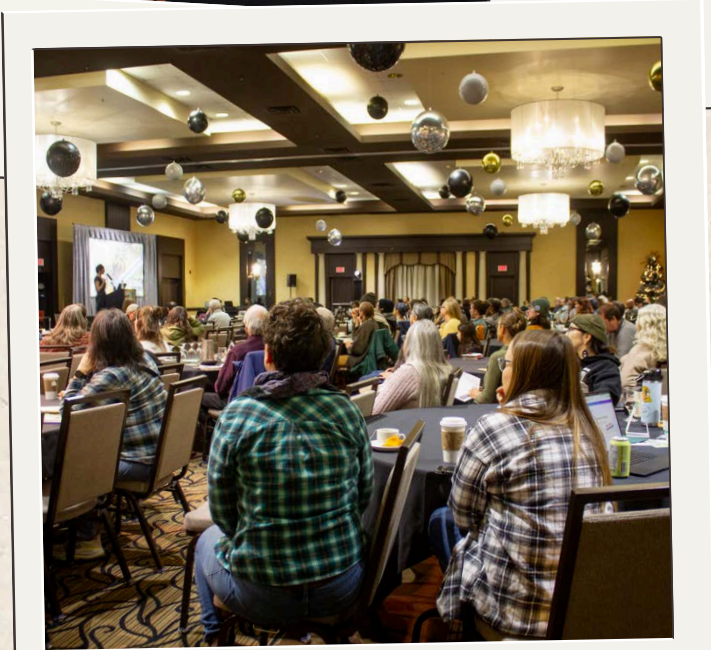
report high to very high change in knowledge

98%

rate the quality as high to very high



On the Ground



"[The] EFAO conference gives us an opportunity to connect in community and share learning, knowledge, triumphs and trials of agroecological farming and is an amazing eye opener to create space for ecological farms and supporters."

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a bright green sweater and blue jeans, is crouching in a garden. She is smiling and looking down at a book she is holding. The book has a colorful cover and the word "Alpaca!" is visible on the spine. In the background, another person is partially visible, holding a wooden tool. The scene is outdoors with sunlight filtering through the trees. A large, white, torn-paper graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text "FARMER-LED RESEARCH" in a bold, brown, sans-serif font.

FARMER-LED RESEARCH

About

EFAO's Farmer-Led Research Program helps farmers combine their curiosity with scientific rigour to answer their most challenging on-farm questions.

By the numbers...

17 Returning farmer-researchers

11 New farmer-researchers

30 Research trials

6 Multi-farm trials

7 Multi-year trials



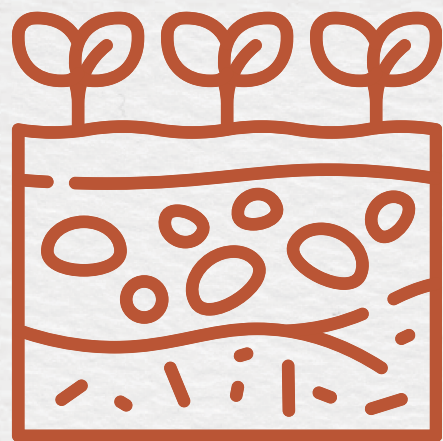
Farmer-Led Research Trials



Disease & pest control

- Polycultures with cucumbers
- Intrac canopy lighting for tomatoes

Soil health



- Finding fungi in perennial agroecosystems (3 farms)
- Interplanting with mushrooms
- Leaves as mulch
- No-till potatoes (5 farms)
- No-till winter squash (5 farms)
- Wool as weed control



Farmer-Led Research Trials



Cover crops

- Plant available nitrogen from cover crops (3 farms)
- Plant available nitrogen from winter cover crops

Seed production, selection and breeding



- Evaluation of white flour maize
- Landrace watermelon evaluation (3 farms)
- Landrace maxima squash (3 farms)
- Okra breeding

Weed control



- Interplanting with mushrooms
- Luffa growing methods

Thank you to members of the Research Advisory Committee: Jason Haribo, Heather Newman, Dillon Muldoon, Patricia Kozowyk, Marie Veliz

EFAO Farmer Researchers



Alberto Suarez Esteban
Cole Etherington
Evalisa McIlffaterick
Manish Kushwaha
Eric Barnhorst
Janice Brant
Michelle Della Corte
Dillon Muldoon

Jesse Way
Norm Lamothe
Larry Dyck
Amy Ellard-Gray
Jon Gagnon
Kristine Hammel
Meghan Robbins
Duncan Ivany

Nathan Klassen
Zack Muma
Amanda Carbis
Janna van Blyderveen
Duane Falk
Lindsey Webber
Val Steinmann
Tara Weerasuriya

Logan Pepper
Sean Smith
Matthew Setzkorn
Ekow Stone

On the Ground

Silver Creek Nursery

Zack and Amanda spent two years conducting farmer-led research to compare the success of two grafting methods: Buddy Tape and Speed Easy Bud Ties. The trial included 743 trees with four rootstock varieties and 29 scionwood varieties: cherry, plum, peach, and apricot.

They found that grafting with Speed Easy Bud Ties was 1.4 times faster than with Buddy Tape, but in fall 2025 they dug and sold twice as many trees grafted with Buddy Tape. Going forward, they plan to use the Buddy Tape method exclusively.

Using farmer-led research methods, Zack and Amanda confirmed their hypothesis and acquired the evidence and assurance they needed to change methods permanently.



Read the report



Celebrating 10 years of Farmer-Led Research in Ontario

In honour of the program's 10th year, EFAO introduced the Constantly Curious award at the EFAO Conference. Angie Koch and Ken Laing were honoured for their longtime contributions to the program, and Dr. Erin Nelson delivered a keynote address entitled, "Nourishing Ecological Farming Networks: Sharing stories & building connections across borders."

By the numbers...

32

Farmer-researchers gathered at the EFAO Conference in December



EFAO's Farmer-Led Research program is the first of its kind in Canada!



Living Lab – Ontario

In 2021, the Agricultural Climate Solutions program introduced a 10-year initiative supporting 14 Living Labs across the country to focus on carbon sequestration, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental co-benefits.

EFAO continues to support three projects (2023 - 2027):

- Collaboration with Leading Cloud Gardens at Apitipi Anicinapek Nation
- Plant available nitrogen from cover crops
- No-till potatoes and squash with mulches

Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the Agricultural Climate Solutions – Living Labs program and by the following partners: Beef Farmers of Ontario, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Pork and Ontario Sheep Farmers. The project is coordinated by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada



On the Ground

Living Lab – Ontario: No-till potatoes and squash with mulches

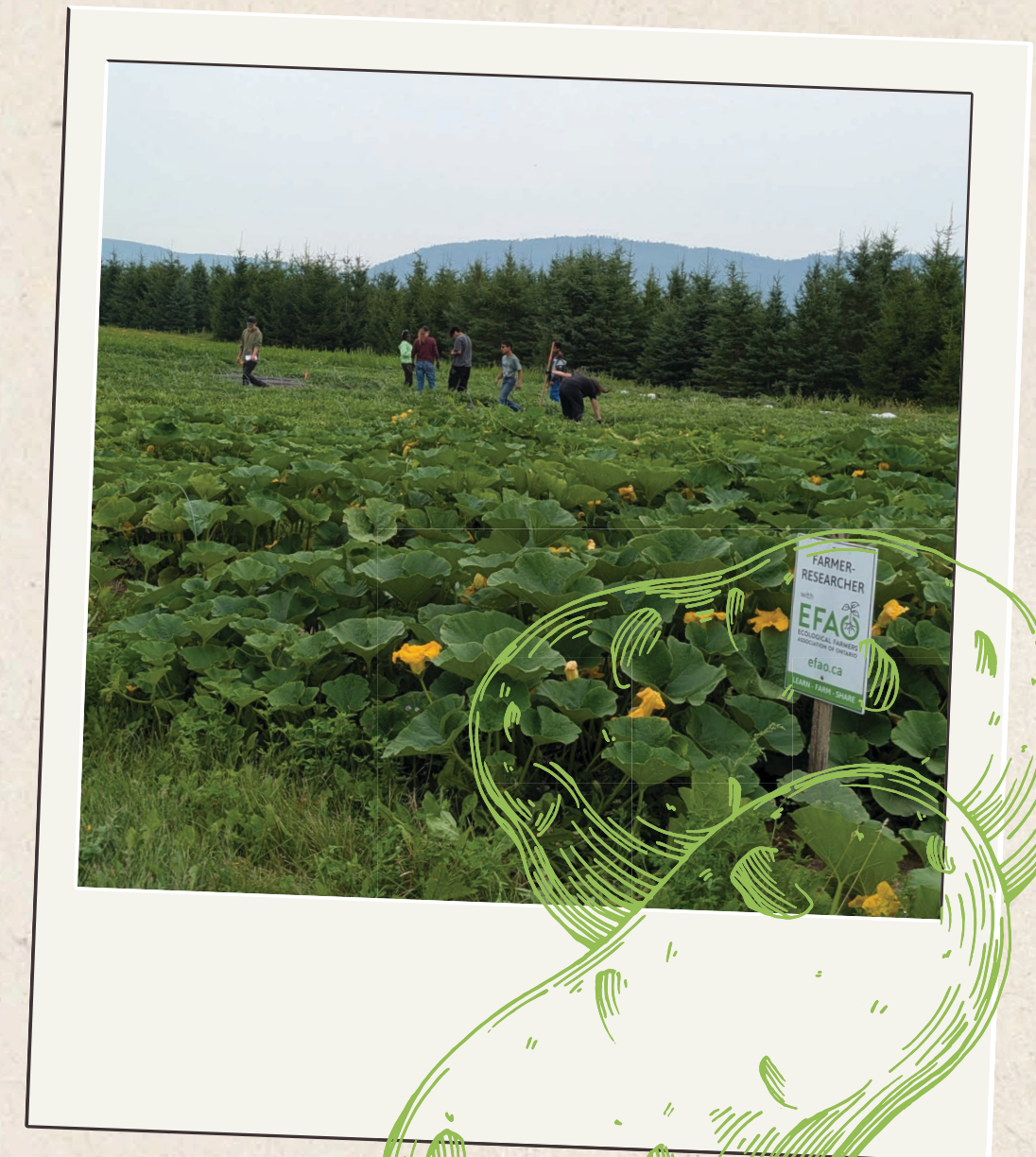
In 2025, nine farmer-researchers trialed wood chips, straw, hay, wool, leaves, and/or deep compost mulch as methods of weed suppression and soil moisture retention for no-till potatoes and winter squash. To assess these methods, they measured overall yield and observed how well they integrated into their production system.

“The addition of both wood chip and mushroom compost mulches provided early-season weed control over the no-mulch control. The addition of mulch might regulate soil moisture during drought (reduced watering needs).”

- Dillon Muldoon

“For a small-scale grower, the complete absence of weeding and watering, and not needing to dig to plant the seed potatoes, made this a very labour-lite method.”

- Amy Ellard-Gray



On the Ground

Living Lab – Ontario: Plant Available Nitrogen Network (PAN)

In 2025, three EFAO farmers across the province continued collecting quantitative data on plant available nitrogen from cover crops, with the shared goal of developing a database of PAN for farmers in Ontario to use to better inform fertility management with cover crops.

“Continuous refinement in our nitrogen, nutrient and cover crop management, based in part on data collected through the FLRP, is improving crop quality and yields and increasing my confidence in making effective nutrient management decisions. Ecological and economic resilience is improving, as we are able to grow more crops using fewer purchased inputs.”

– Jesse Way on the results of their trial



Vegetable Growers Viability Program

EFAO's Vegetable Growers Viability (VGV) Program is a multi-year financial benchmarking study for direct-to-market ecological vegetable growers. It includes practical resource development and educational programming around finances, taxes and bookkeeping. This work is the first of its kind in Ontario, and builds on a pilot study EFAO ran in 2024 and 2025.

A video library and financial management tool were resources created for member and public use.

By the numbers...

109

Unique attendees to the "Finance February" webinar series produced as part of the VGV pilot program, over 4 webinars

5

member farms participated in the initial pilot study



Adaptive Nitrogen Trials (ANT)

The EFAO Adaptive Nitrogen Trials (ANT) are collaborative, on-farm, replicated strip trials designed to help Ontario farmers understand how cover crops contribute to plant available nitrogen in the following growing season. This can help growers determine the most profitable nitrogen application rates for corn after a small grain cover crop. Managed with the Ontario Soil Network (OSN) and Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS), these trials evaluated 2–3 nitrogen application rates on each farm, including the application of zero additional nitrogen, to improve on-farm profitability. Seven farmers participated in the trials in 2025.

By the numbers...

80+

Attendees hosted on two on-farm events

60+

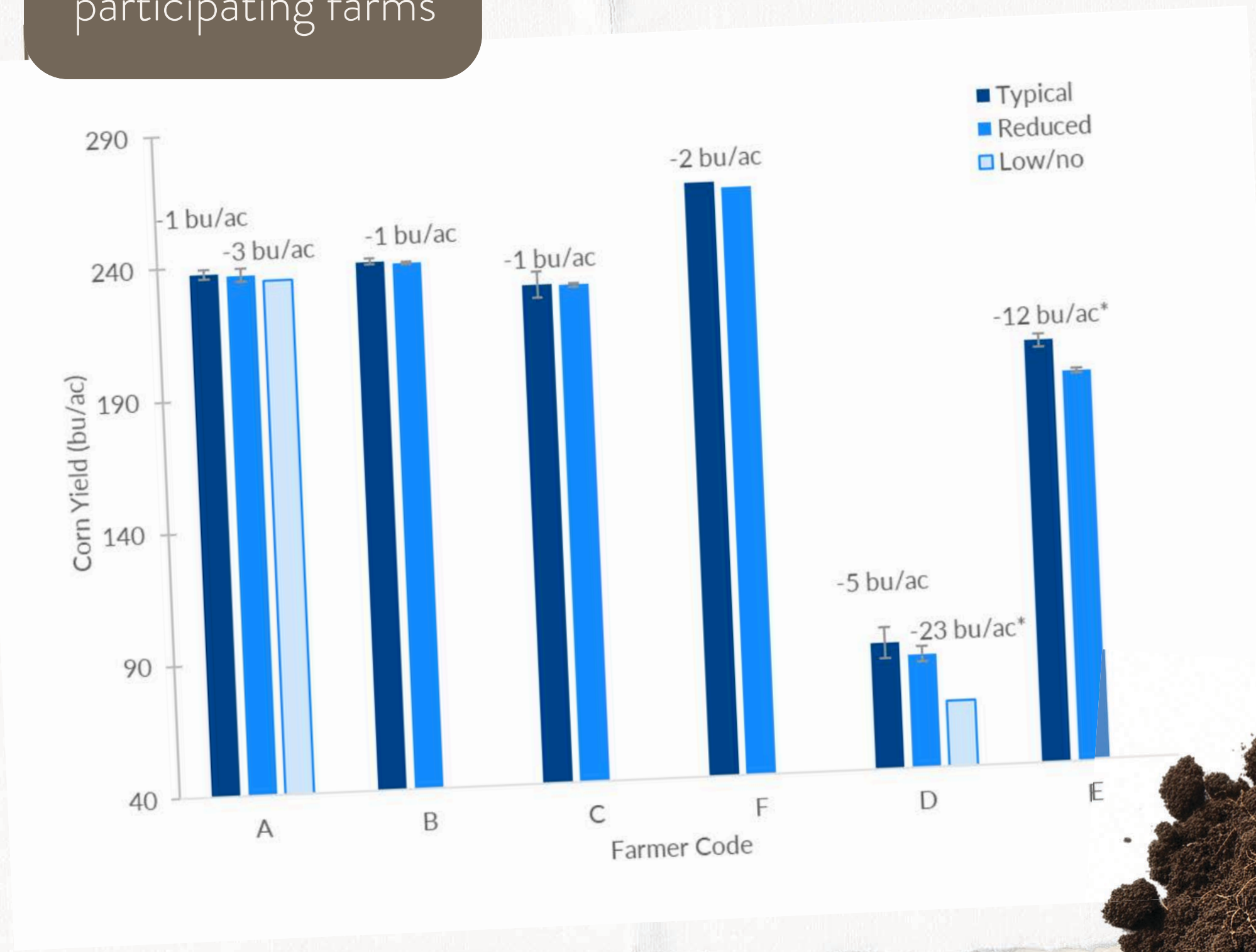
Participants for one post-season webinar



Data from 6 participating farms

ANT Findings

Results of the trials varied by individual farm and season, with most farms seeing no yield loss and some farms seeing increased profitability due to reduced nitrogen treatments.



The Impact of Farmer-Led Research

By the numbers: In their 2025 evaluations of the Farmer-Led Research program...

91% said their participation helped increase their confidence to practice ecological agriculture

87% said it helped them increase their farm's viability and/or resilience and their knowledge or awareness of ecological agriculture techniques

78% said that the top benefits of farmer-led research were an increased capacity to innovate & increased farm resilience, and that increased soil health was the top management benefit

74% agreed that having a community for support was a major benefit

The Impact of Farmer-Led Research

"Sharing and learning with and from other farmers, researchers and other ag sector professionals, sharing some of our research trial findings and getting feedback on it, and learning from others research projects and farming practices has provided new insights and different perspectives. Overall it increased my confidence and excitement for next season."

- Jesse Way

"[The trial] helped me learn more about changing practices we were using to improve the function of our farm in a way that better aligns with our practices. [It] gave me more confidence to perform a trial and also to make mistakes and be able to grow from them vs think of them as failures."

"Trialing these methods in a Randomized Block Design gives us and others more confidence in adopting these agroecological practices, increasing our knowledge in these methods and techniques."

- Dillon Muldoon



On the Ground

Reviving Ancestral Seeds

In 2022, after more than 30 years in frozen storage, a white flour maize from the Roger Brant family was returned to Janice Brant of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. In 2025, Janice and Ken Post grew out the maize and, with support from EFAO's Farmer-Led Research Program, evaluated it for health, viability, expression of ancestral traits, and potential genetic drift or contamination.

Despite severe drought, heat, and smoke, the maize showed resilience and Janice and Ken were able to complete the final year of their assessment of the maize. They now had information they needed about how the maize performed under a variety of conditions. The project wove together observation, ceremony, and cultural knowledge to restore a relationship with the ancestral seed.



On the Ground



Evalisa McIlfaterick, Renata Weber and Farren Weber at the Lakehead University Research Station's watermelon and squash trial plots



Amy Ellard-Gray checking on her no-till potato trial



Squash breeding project



The white corn Janice Brant and Ken Post grew



Okra breeding project



Watermelon breeding trial participant Manish Kushwaha



Corn drying rack for Janice Brant's trial

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large quantity of small, brown, oval-shaped seeds. The hands are positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. The background is a lush green field of plants, possibly corn, with a dense forest of evergreen trees in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. A piece of light-colored, textured paper is held behind the hands, and the word "SEED" is printed in a bold, brown, sans-serif font on the right side of the paper.

SEED

Seed Program

EFAO's Seed Program is woven into many aspects of EFAO's work, including the Farmer-Led Research Program, the annual conference and Indigenous outreach and engagement work. This work strives to increase the quality, quantity, and diversity of ecologically grown, regionally adapted seed.

As the regional hub for The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, a program of SeedChange, this program provides training, supports farmer-led research, and fosters community to strengthen seed stewardship across Ontario. These efforts help farmers adapt to the challenges of climate change by conserving, adapting, and breeding new crops that thrive under local ecological conditions.



Seed Events

By the numbers...

37 events

1,800

participants at meet-ups, webinars, field days and conference sessions

8 national events in partnership with the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security



Seed Research

By the numbers...

4 seed related farmer-led research trials: watermelon, squash and okra breeding; maize revitalization

6 participants in the Canadian Organic Vegetable Improvement (CANOVI) initiative dug into bok choy varieties and carrot breeding

>60% of seed research participants in the trials were Black, Indigenous, or people of colour



On the Ground

A Seed Rematriation Journey

At the 2024 EFAO Conference, Kara Tremblay of Apitipi Anicinapek Nation and Janice Brant of Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory connected and began a shared vision: returning the Algonquin Pumpkin and Speckled Algonquin Bean to Kara's community at Leading Cloud Gardens.

Supported by EFAO throughout 2025, this relationship grew into a living collaboration. Seeds were rematriated, visits were made, and knowledge was shared. By summer, the seeds were thriving — alongside a relationship rooted in reciprocity, care, and the ongoing return of seed and story to community.



On the Ground

The EFAO Conference Seed Share and Exchange

This perennial activity at the 2025 EFAO Conference overflowed in the best way possible. The room was too small for the abundance of seed and interest being shared, with a steady stream of growers moving through all evening. Indigenous, urban, market, and field crop growers gathered around seeds and stories. Tables brimmed with corn, beans, amaranth, peach, peppers, tomatoes, and more. Growers stood behind their seeds, sharing knowledge and care, while a central swap table kept seeds moving. It was a vibrant reminder that seed is a relationship, and the community is growing.



Seed Mentorship

Through Kim Delaney's mentorship, Felix Pozojevic and Shiying Lu were able to learn over a season through regular visits, conversation, and shared practice. Felix deepened their interest in bean seed production, while Shiying explored waxy corn and seed saving in a market garden context. Participants described Kim as "so generous with her time," while Kim shared that she learned too, calling the mentorship "one of the joys of my life."

5 farmers were involved in seed mentorship programming (3 mentees and 2 mentors)



Aramide Taiwo joins Shiying and Felix at a farm visit with Kim.

Where Does Your Seed Come From?

Across EFAO gatherings, one question keeps surfacing: where does your seed come from, and what does it mean to choose it? Through conference sessions, blog posts, meetups, and our national webinar series, EFAO and the Bauta Family Initiative support farmers and growers to make informed seed choices. These choices ripple outward, shaping biodiversity, climate resilience, and farm viability.

In this way, seed — and our relationship to the seed we choose — becomes part of building the Ontario we envision: thriving ecological farms at the heart of a resilient, diverse, and equitable food system.



Watch the webinars



A photograph of a field of tall, thin grasses, possibly rice, with a white, torn paper overlay in the center. The background is a dense line of green trees. The text "SMALL GRAINS" is written in a bold, orange-red font across the white paper.

SMALL GRAINS

Small Grains Program

EFAO's Small Grains Program encourages the adoption of diversified field crop rotations that include small grains and cover crops, through reverse auction funding as well as a community support network, outreach, education, and training.

This program has been funded by the Weston Family Foundation since its inception in 2020.

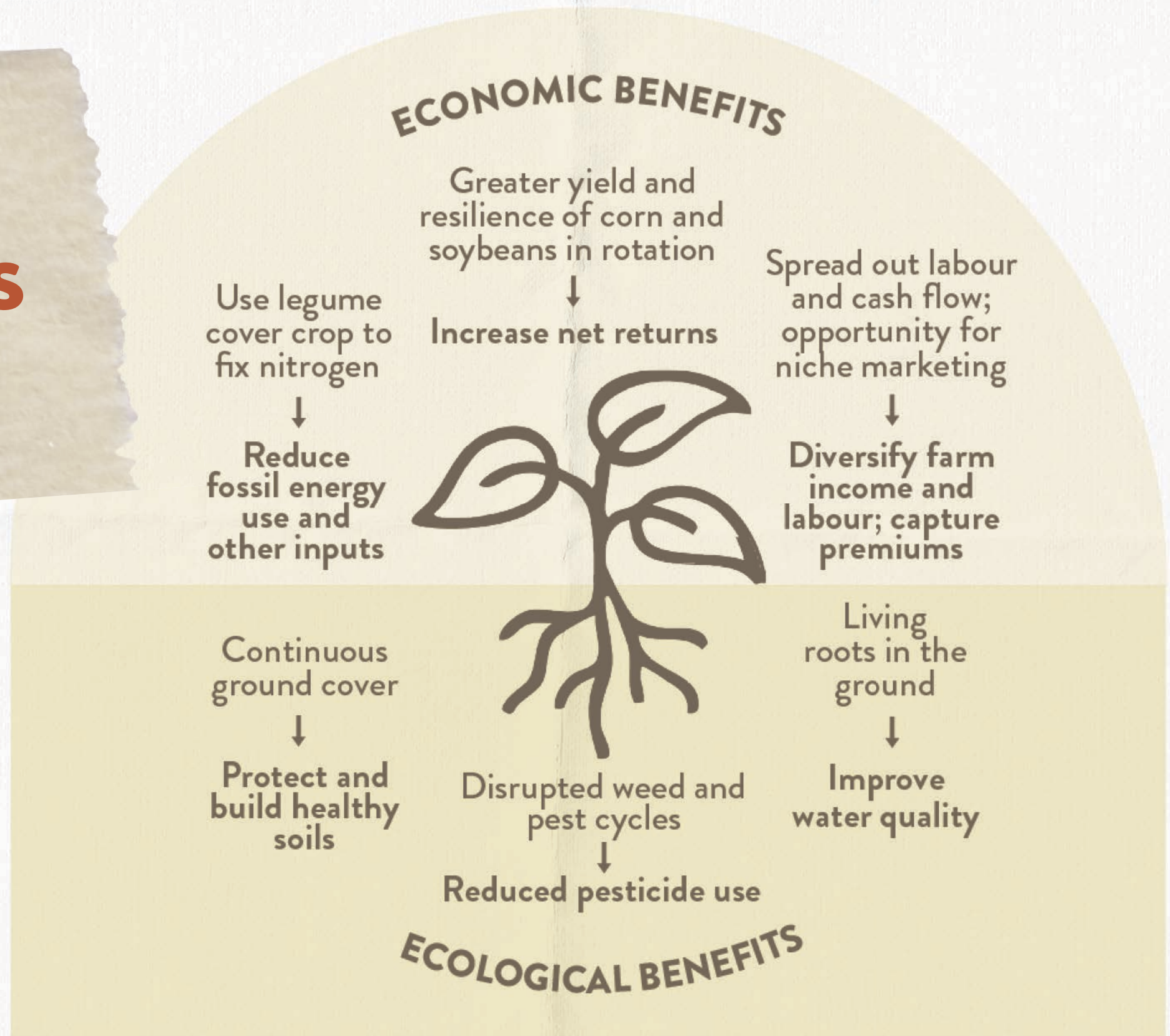


Weston Family
Foundation

"This is a very good program that is well set up and easy to access. Resources are always available for any questions that we may have. Thank you!"



Economic and Ecological Benefits of Small Grains



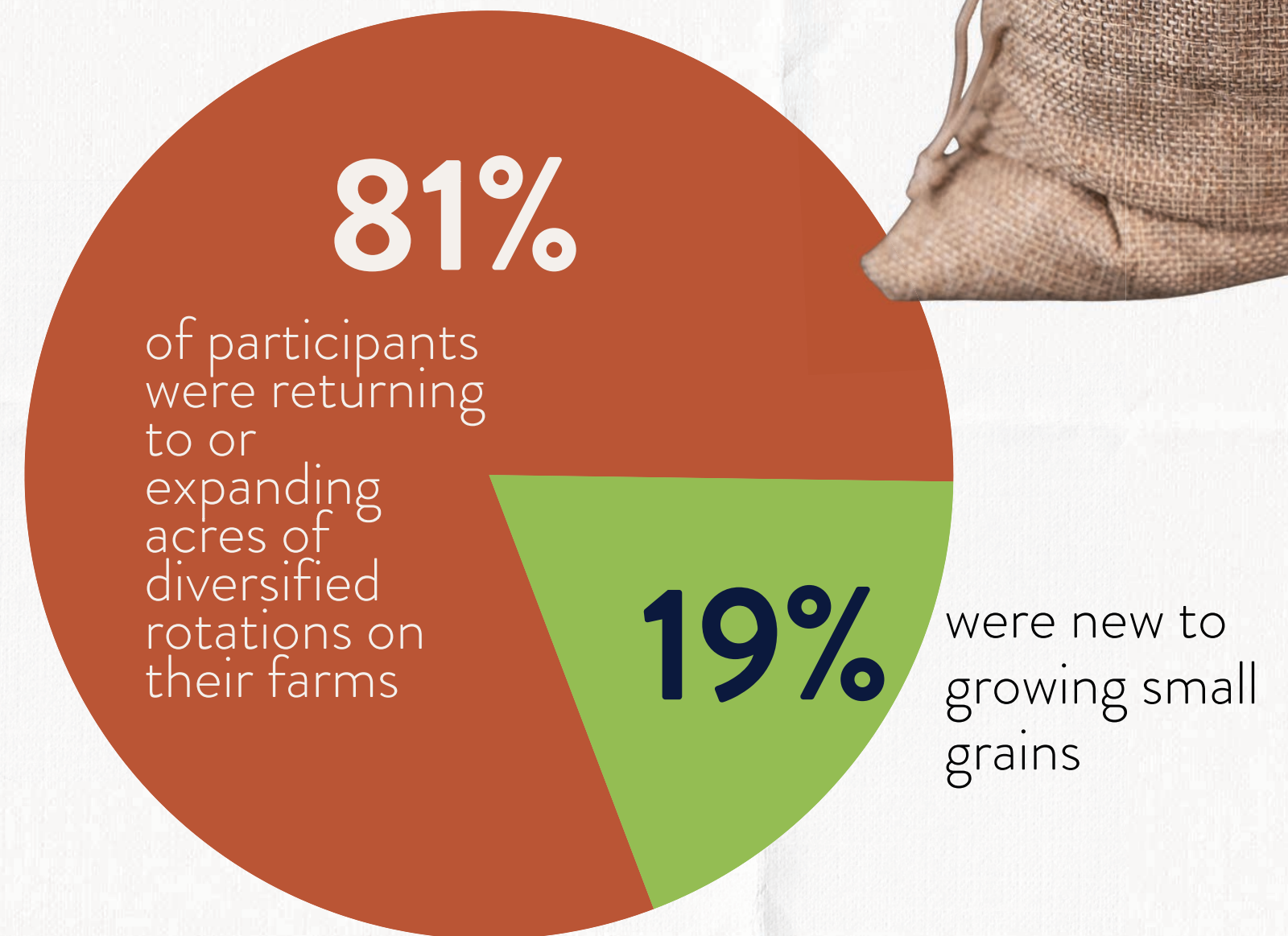
Small Grains Program

By the numbers: In 2025...

63 farmers completed the program

4,254 acres of small grains and cover crops were planted

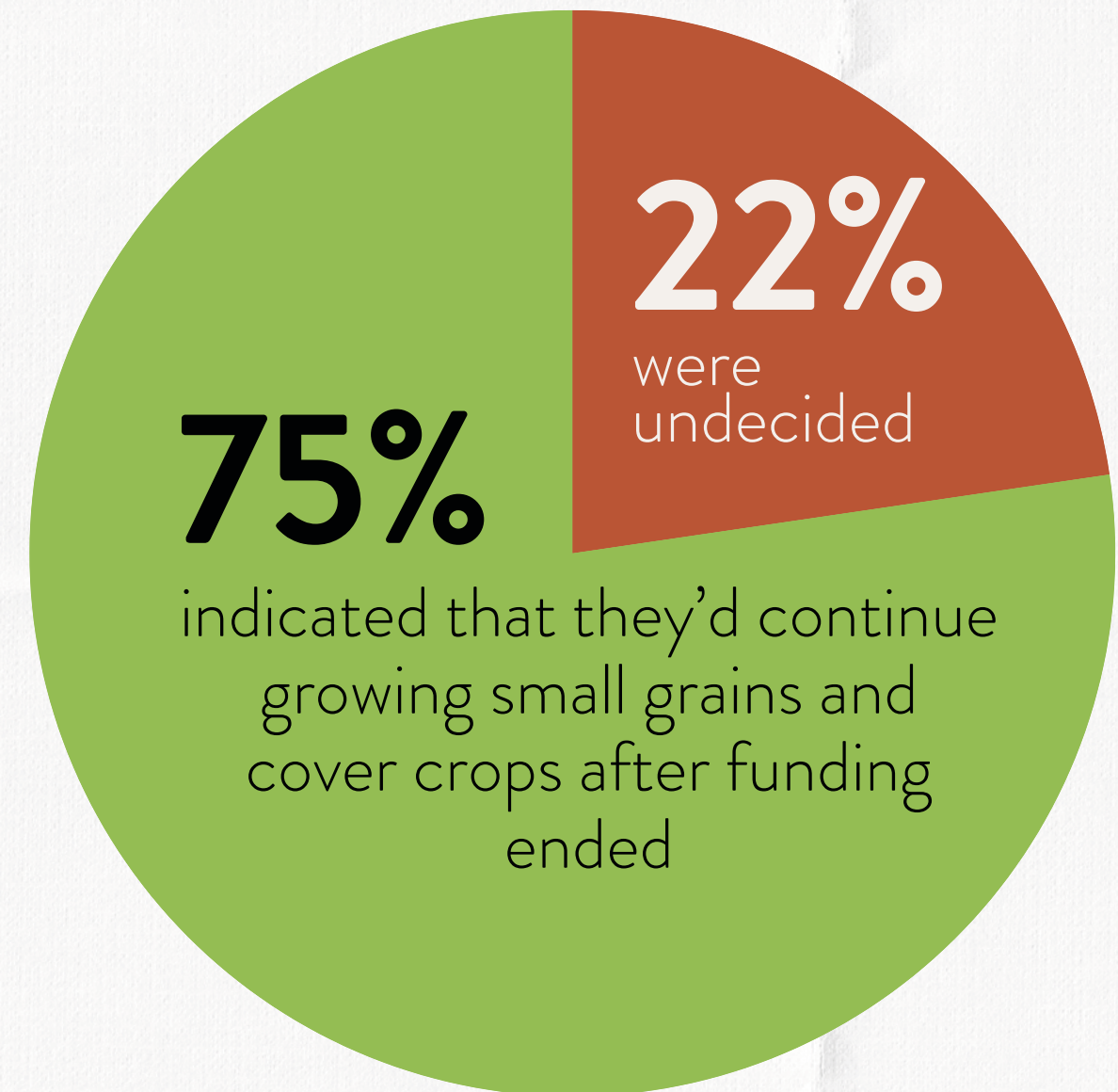
~\$218k in funding was granted to farmers



The Significance of Small Grains

"[Small grains are helpful in] breaking away from a continuous corn/ soybean rotation ... We need to break that cycle to improve yields, break the disease pressure, improve organic matter & soil microbial health."

- Craig Oldham, program participant

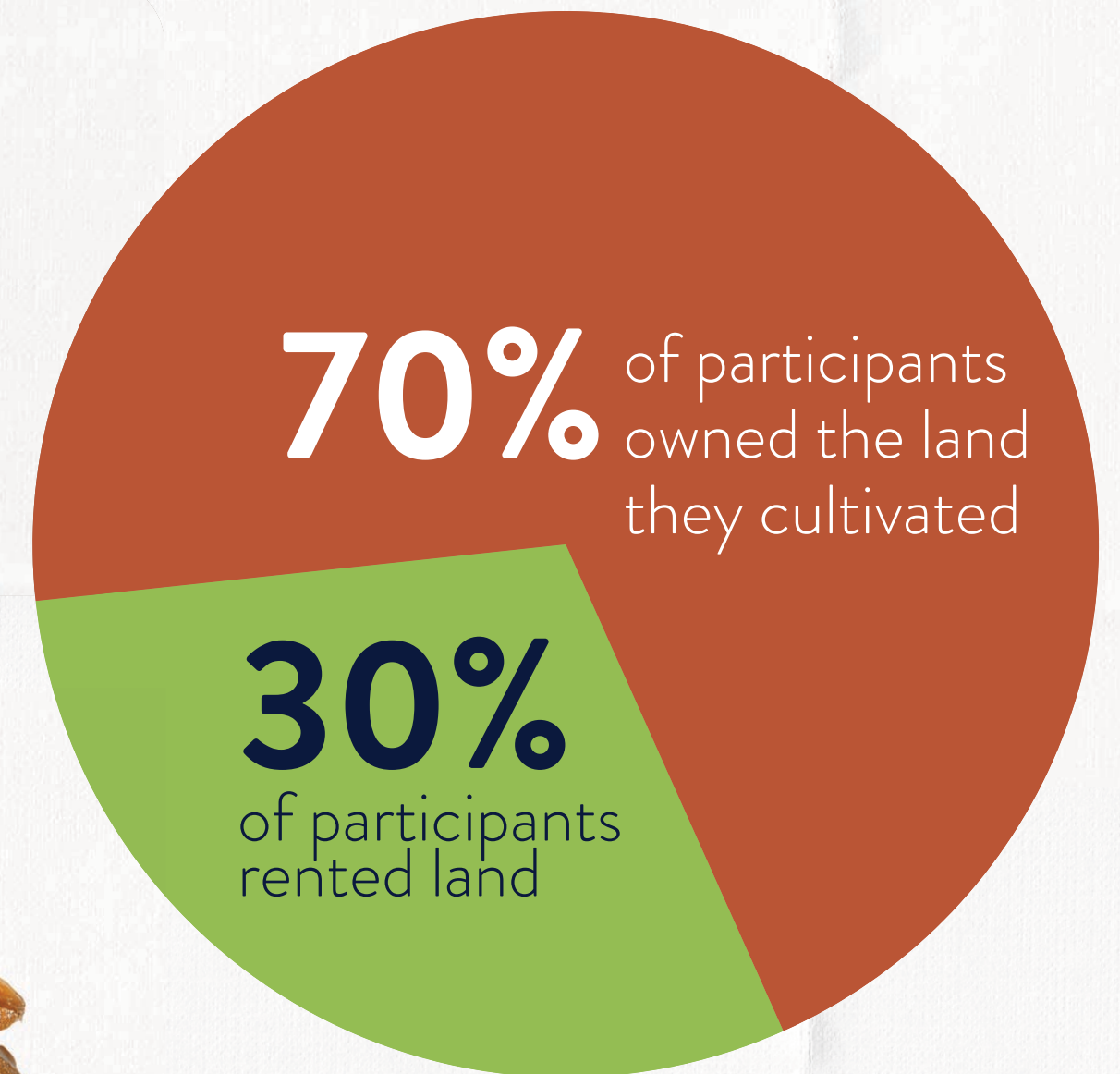


Small Grains Program Land Use

By the numbers...

14 - 3,500 acres of cultivated land,
was the range of farm sizes

500 acres was the average farm size



Farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing is at the heart of the small grains network!

By the numbers:

304 farmers attended Small Grains events

5 webinars with a total of **50** attendees

4 Field Days with a total of **96** attendees

4 conference sessions with **109** attendees



Small Grains Program Research

EFAO partners with Dr. Tongzhe Li at the University of Guelph to study reverse auctions as an incentive funding mechanism. The research shows that guided bids (e.g., drop-down options) lead to lower average bids and more efficient auctions.

In 2025, we introduced application questions on farmer costs, expected returns, and ecological benefits. **When asked just before bidding, these prompts reduced bids and improved efficiency compared to placing them at the end.**

This suggests that considering returns and non-economic benefits encourages lower bids. Ongoing research will also examine how farm size and land tenure affect bidding behaviour.



Small Grains Challenges

Marketing small grains is the most commonly cited challenge of Small Grains Program participants. Commodity markets undervalue these crops, and there has been a trend of small processors (e.g. feed and flour mills) in Ontario closing in recent years.

In 2025, EFAO contracted Dr. Aaron De Laporte, an agriculture economist from the University of Guelph to conduct a Value Chain Analysis of small grains in Ontario to better understand how we might support market development.

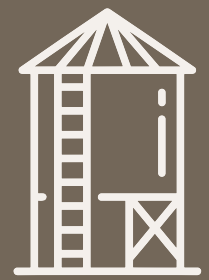
Stay tuned for results!



"I could definitely benefit from marketing advice."
- program participant

Small Grain Challenges: Marketing

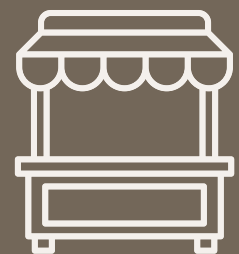
By the numbers: Of participants in the Small Grains program,



51% sold grain at elevators into commodity markets



32% used the grain to feed livestock on their own farm



10% sold some or all of their grain directly to processors or retailers

17%

selected 'Other' – e.g. stored grain for future marketing, baled the grain for forage or hay, or left the grain in the field for improved soil health

5% sold some of their grain to another farmer for livestock feed or bedding (this wasn't the only marketing option for any farmers)

On the Ground

Fat Chance Farmstead

Josh Suppan, Small Grains Program participant, owns and operates Fat Chance Farmstead in Harrowsmith Ontario. Josh grows CSA veggies, strawberries, and small grains organically, to mill into flour.

Aspiring and current farmers attended a field day at Fat Chance Farmstead in August of 2025, where he candidly shared about needing to find a higher-value market for his grain — because commodity prices were too low to cover production costs.

Josh mills his grain into flour which is sold through his website, at local retailers, and at a summer farmers market.



BIPOC FARMERS NETWORK



BIPOC Farmers Network

The Farmers Network for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour brings growers together to share knowledge and support one another through shared challenges and opportunities. In person and online, it creates a trusted space for problem-solving, mutual support, and exchanging seeds and culturally important crops, while fostering relationships across regions that strengthen skills and sustain long-term success in farming.

By the numbers...

187 Members

9 Meet-Ups



What members had to say about the Network

"Being a farmer in Canada on the fringe of mainstream agriculture, I count being a part of the EFAO a blessing that has supported my venture and growth in this space. Attending conferences is always refreshing and motivating not to mention the connections I get to other local farmers. The BIPOC group has been extremely supportive, freely sharing expertise and resources too."

"I feel heard and connected after joining the BIPOC Network and attending webinars and meetups. I even got African garden eggs (eggplant) seeds from 2 BIPOC members!"
- Dr. Bolatito R. Aleji



Wellness Micro-Grants

- The grants revealed strong demand for essential health services not covered by public systems (e.g., dental, vision, mental health, physiotherapy), and basic work gear to prevent injury, alongside rest, recovery, and culturally grounded or community-based care.
- Many new and small-scale farmers operate without access to benefits, preventative care, or adequate safety nets. While all farmers face challenges, these conditions are often compounded for BIPOC farmers.

By the numbers...

20 Micro-grants distributed

\$8k total

\$400 each



INDIGENOUS OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT



Indigenous Outreach & Engagement

EFAO is proud to work in collaboration with First Nation communities, Indigenous groups and individuals on knowledge-sharing and community-building events, mentorship connections, and soil testing to support Indigenous food sovereignty and food security.



Indigenous Leadership

EFAO's Indigenous Outreach work is led by the Indigenous Outreach & Engagement Steering Committee:



Becky Big Canoe



Annette Peltier-Flamand



Kara Tremblay



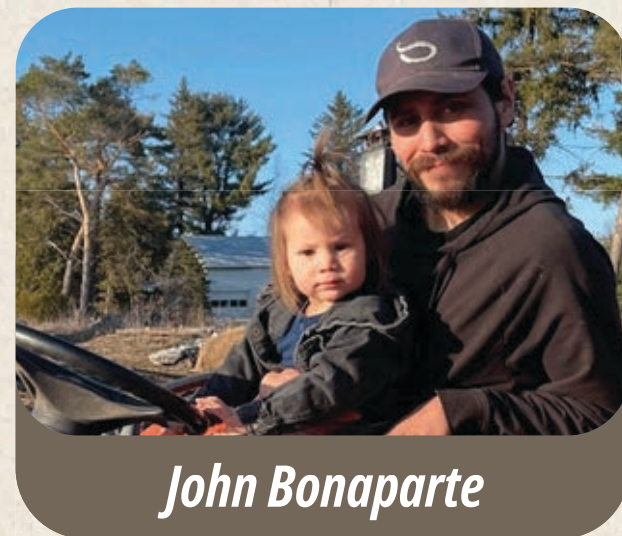
Celeste Smith



Denise Miller



Janice Brant



John Bonaparte



EFAO's Indigenous Outreach & Engagement Steering Committee guides the delivery of EFAO's Indigenous outreach work. The goal of the Committee is to facilitate concrete beneficial outcomes for Indigenous food sovereignty, Indigenous-led agriculture and seed stewardship, and to ensure that this work is Indigenous-led.

Knowledge-Sharing Events led by and for Indigenous Growers

In 2025, 18 knowledge-sharing events were held in collaboration with Indigenous growers:

By the numbers...

7 Webinars on topics such as reviving ancestral seeds, beekeeping, greenhouses, and soil health

7 in-person gatherings, tours, celebrations, and workshops

4 EFAO-supported events held by our partners on seed sovereignty, healing plants, garden closing skill-sharing



Indigenous Outreach and Engagement

By the numbers...

230 EFAO event participants were Indigenous (+35%)

13% of all EFAO event speakers were Indigenous

\$97,675 of project funding went directly to Indigenous growers and communities



2025 Earth & Sky Gathering

At the 12th Annual EFAO Conference

2 Keynotes

Seed Rematriation Journey:
Returning seeds to their homeland
Denise Miller and Nathan Martin

Advocacy for Land, Water, and
Food Sovereignty

Ramon Kataquapit, John Enosse
Trudeau, and Ben Kwarec



5 Sessions

On topics such as restoration
of wild rice (Manoomin), food
forests, and treaty land sharing



11 Indigenous
presenters

2025 Earth & Sky Gathering

At the 12th Annual EFAO Conference

62 Indigenous participants (+44%)

162 participants (+74%)



And more!

Opening and Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address with Luke Nicholas, Oneida Nation of the Thames; an Indigenous Artisans' Market; drumming, singing and dancing with the Little Creek Singers.

2025 Earth & Sky Gathering

At the 12th Annual EFAO Conference



"Such beautiful, inspiring, and holistic topics. I loved every talk I attended!"

Indigenous Mentorship

15 mentorship arrangements for Indigenous Growers took place in 2025, including:

- A year-long mentorship on beekeeping;
- A consultation and compost-building exchange to build soil health using locally available composting ingredients, including fish waste and wood chips;
- Mentorship around tractor maintenance and garden planning;
- A consultation on greenhouse installation;
- A seed rematriation visit.



Soil Testing for Indigenous Communities

In 2025, seven Indigenous groups and communities were supported with soil testing for soil organic matter, nutrients and minerals, and heavy metal analysis:

- Pikangikum First Nation
- Bearskin Lake First Nation
- Fort Severn First Nation
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Home Garden in Neebing
- Eabametoong First Nation / Fort Hope
- First Nations Child and Family Services garden

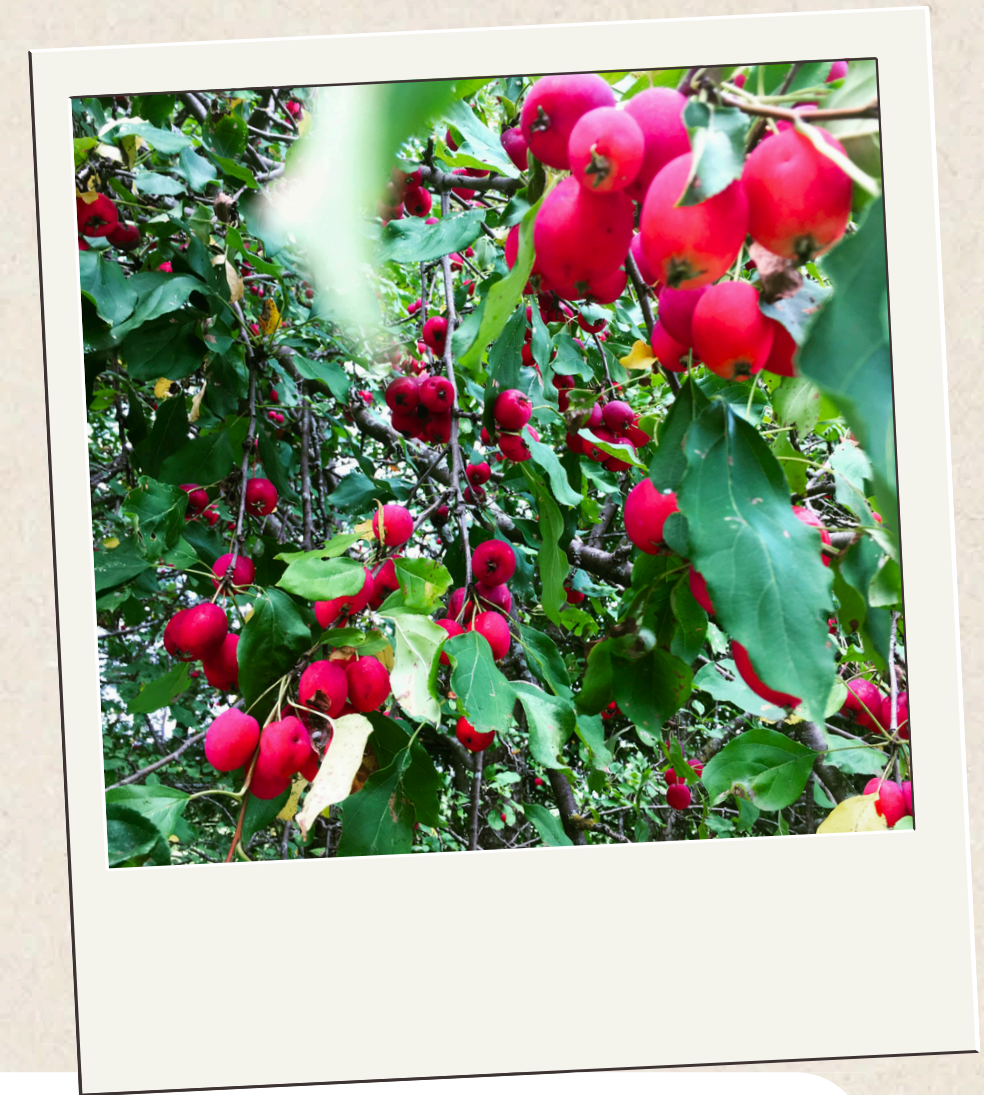


Each



Indigenous Food Forest Program

In 2025, EFAO launched the Indigenous Food Forest Program to support Indigenous farmers, growers, and communities across Ontario with funding, mentorship, and knowledge to build resilient food forests that advance ecological health, food sovereignty, and cultural continuity.



From January 2026 to December 2027

\$1.58 million in grants will support

26 Indigenous food forest projects across Ontario

The Indigenous Food Forest Program is funded in part by the Governments of Canada and Ontario under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a five-year, federal-provincial-territorial initiative





POLICY

New Farmer Policy

Almost half of EFAO's members identify as new and beginning farmers who face barriers in accessing land and capital.

This year EFAO began to collaborate with Young Agrarians and other organizations to advocate for new farmer programs in the next Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), which will launch in 2028. The annual conference included an inspiring keynote on farmer-led advocacy, and a session on the APF that invited participant feedback on current government programs in agriculture.

Stay tuned for EFAO's new farmer policy recommendations and ways to engage in this work moving forward!



Land Access Coalition

The Land Access Coalition was founded by EFAO in 2021 to bring together organizations across agriculture, food systems, farmland conservation, and social finance to address barriers to farmland access. A central focus is supporting equitable, long-term land access for new and next-generation farmers, including equity-deserving communities.

The Coalition provides a space for cross-sector collaboration, practical insight-sharing, and the development of aligned policy directions grounded in on-the-ground experience.



Jointly led with NFU-O since 2023, the Coalition includes 47 members representing 23 organizations and meets quarterly.

A group of people is gathered in a field of tall grass and wildflowers. A large, white, torn-edge paper overlay is positioned in the center of the image, covering most of the background. The text 'COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH' is printed in a bold, brown, sans-serif font on the white paper. The scene is set outdoors under a clear blue sky, with trees visible in the background.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

E-Newsletters

Did you know EFAO has three?

Sign up at efao.ca



Small Grains

16.3% increase in 2025

442 subscribers



General

25% increase in 2025

4362 subscribers



Seed

6.3% increase in 2025

679 subscribers

Member Networks

Only accessible by EFAO members



News & Opportunities

296 members | 10 topics



BIPOC Farmers

187 members

Log in to your
member account



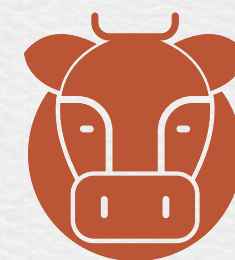
Horticulture

268 members | 27 topics



Field Crops

163 members | 16 topics



Livestock

96 members | 10 topics

Other Media

*EFAO has a new handle!
Follow @efaontario*



Social Media

Facebook: 5800 (+7%)
Instagram: 5149 (+19%)
Linkedin: 483 (+30%)



EFAO Magazine

Print copies mailed: 2312
Digital copies viewed: 477



Video

101 videos on Vimeo
1223 views in 2025
472 unique viewers



FINANCIAL REPORT

2025 Audited Financial Statements: Revenue and Expenses

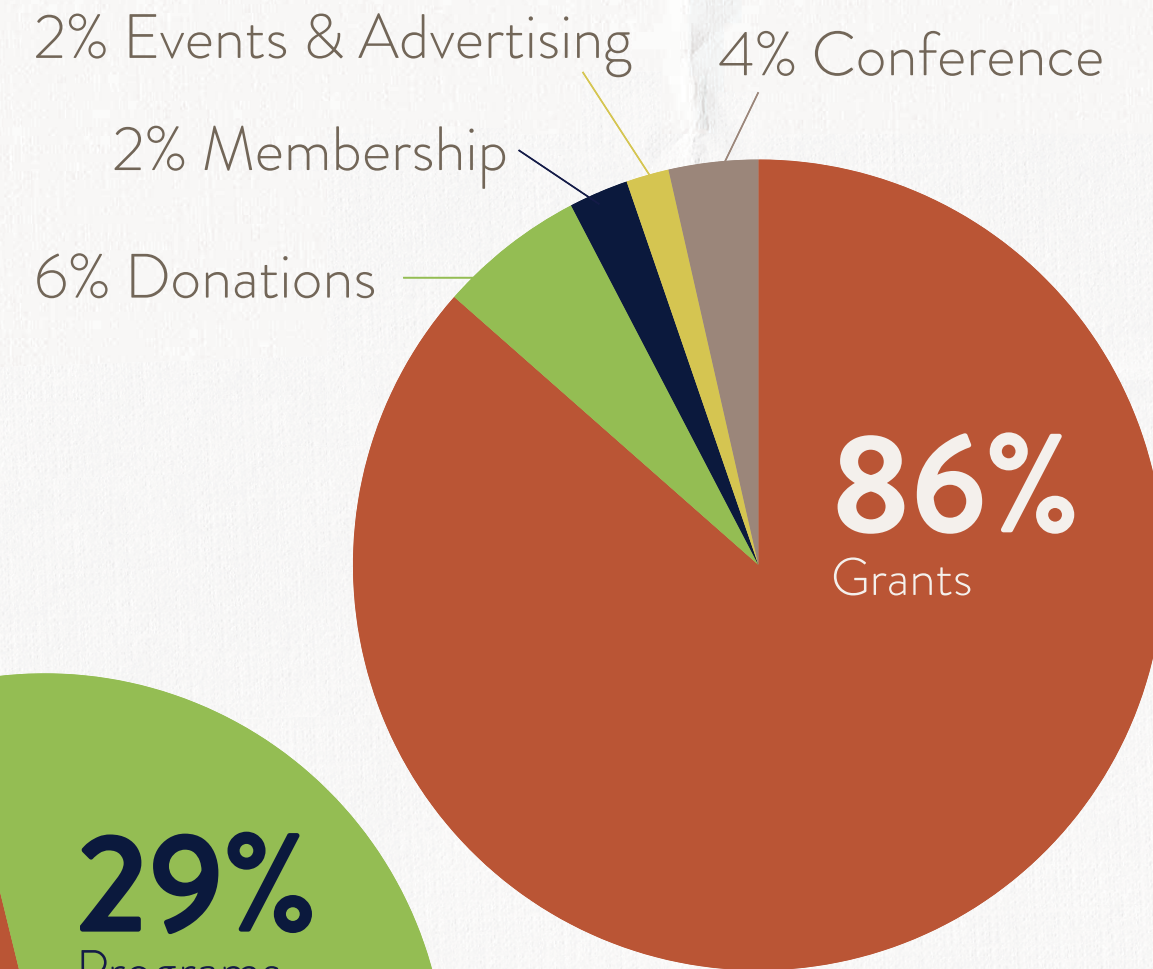
By the numbers...

\$1,704,045 Total revenue

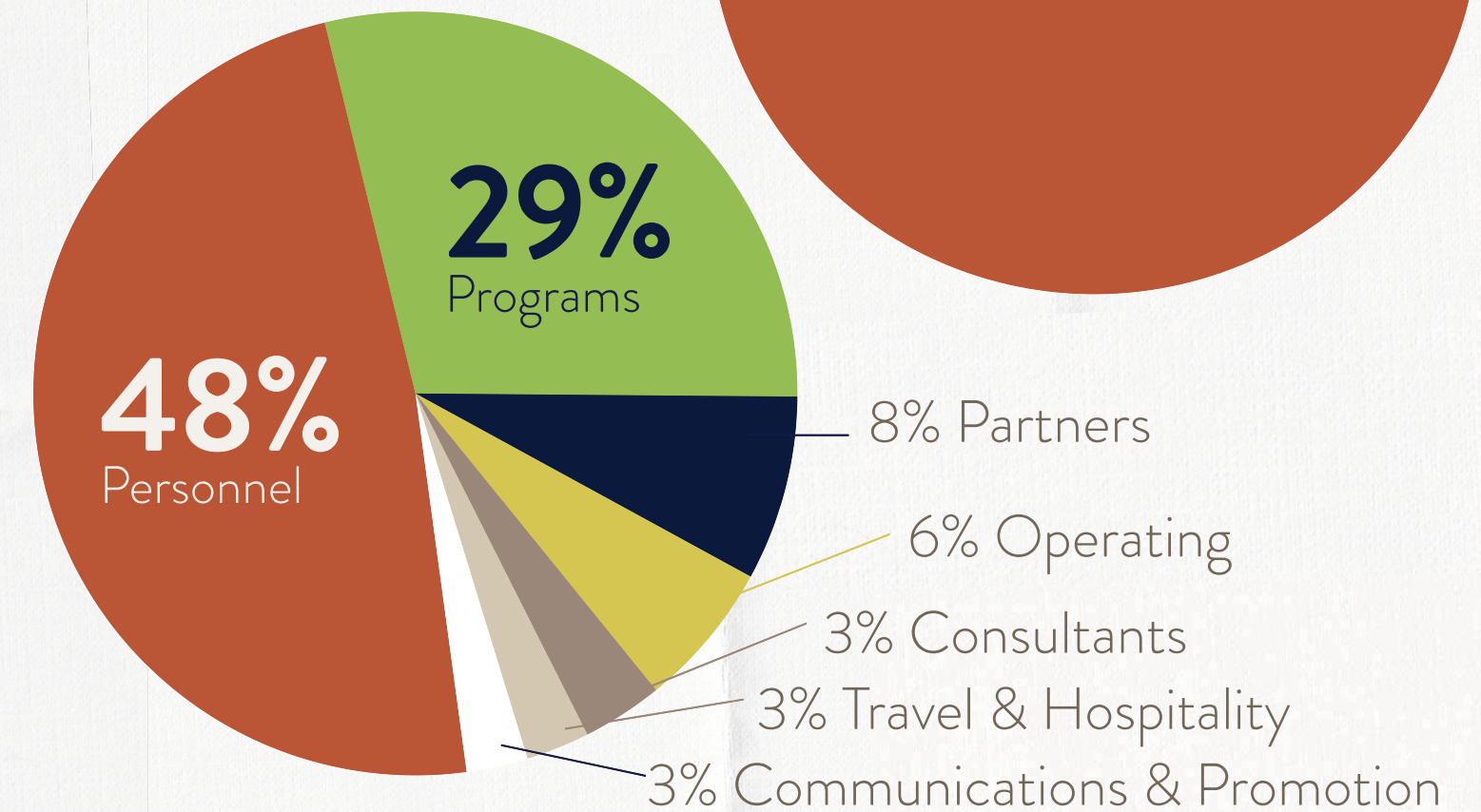
\$1,637,525 Total expenses

\$66,520 Net revenue

Revenue



Expenses



2025 Audited Financial Statements: Payments to Farmers

By the numbers...

\$224,537 for small grains + cover crop payments

\$61,522 for speaker fees and committees

\$32,866 for farmer-led research fees and expenses

\$5,400 for other grants

\$324,525 Total Payments to Farmers in 2025

An aerial photograph of a farm with various green crops in rows. A white, torn-edge paper overlay is centered on the image, containing the text 'PARTNERS, GRANTS & DONORS' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. In the background, a road with a white van and a blue car is visible, along with a line of trees and a small white building.

**PARTNERS,
GRANTS &
DONORS**

Our Partners

Apitipi Anicinapek Nation Leading Cloud Gardens
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network
Carrot Cache
County of Wellington
Erin Common Ground
Farmers for Climate Solutions
Grain Farmers of Ontario
Glengarry Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Ignatius Farm
Lakehead University Agricultural Research Station
Miinikaan Innovation and Design
National Farmers Union – Ontario

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Ontario Soil Network
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
Organic Council of Ontario
SeedChange
Seeds of Diversity
Territorial Agrifood Association
The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security
Trent University
University of Guelph
Wilfred Laurier University
Young Agrarians

Thank you for your collaboration and support of EFAO's work in 2025. Our impact is stronger because of you.

Grants & Donors

Thank you for your generous and ongoing support. We could not do this work without you.



Weston Family Foundation



Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs



Fondation **McConnell** Foundation

Robert and Moira Sansom Ideas Foundation

A fund within the



LONDON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



CATHERINE DONNELLY FOUNDATION

Zita and Mark Bernstein Family Foundation



Grand River Agricultural Society



Brian + Joannah Lawson Family Foundation

SeedChange



the McLean Foundation

Britton Smith Foundation



FARMERS FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Emerald Foundation

mccall macbain FOUNDATION



Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black t-shirt, stands in a grassy field with her back to the camera, gesturing towards a large white backdrop. The backdrop is held up by several people, and the text "GET INVOLVED" is printed on it in large, bold, brown letters. The audience, seen from behind, includes several people wearing straw hats and a man in a grey baseball cap. The background consists of tall grass and some purple flowers under bright sunlight.

GET INVOLVED

Get Involved!



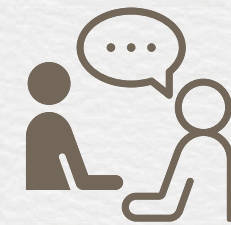
Join or Renew
Your Membership



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Network



Donate



Thank you...

For all the ways you contribute to EFAO - through membership, attending and presenting at events, conducting research trials, connecting with the community, contributing to magazine articles, donating, and collaborating - the ecological farming community is stronger because of you.

