

2023 Annual Report

Growing Futures:
Youth Exploring Agriculture & Food





Nurturing Tomorrow's Leaders

As we reflect on the past year, I am thrilled to share with you the transformative impact AgScape has had on agricultural and food education in Ontario. Our unwavering commitment to shaping the future of agriculture and food systems has been at the forefront of all our endeavors.

Our efforts have not only inspired young minds but have also contributed to creating experiences that foster a connection to the many opportunities agriculture & food have to offer alongside cultivating critical thinking and the desire to understand the food system.

Our commitment to fostering a deep understanding of the landscape among educators, youth, and their champions remains unwavering. We have focused our energy and effort towards inspiring students and introducing them to the diverse opportunities within agriculture & food. Through strategic partnerships with industry and educational institutions, we have showcased the innovation, diversity, and global significance of agriculture and food careers.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated board members, partners, funding supporters, stakeholders, and staff. All whose unwavering commitment and boundless enthusiasm have propelled AgScape to where it is today. I am proud to be part of AgScape, as together, we stand at the forefront of agriculture & food education, nurturing a future where everyone is empowered to shape a more sustainable world.

I also want to emphasize the importance of collaboration and connecting students to agriculture and food experiences. As Chairperson of AgScape, it has been a very rewarding experience to serve an organization and transition into a more digital era providing educational resources from grade one to twelve. Working alongside our esteemed Board of Directors, we have driven impactful experiences that make a real difference in our industry and education system and curriculum in Ontario.

I want to thank you for your continued financial and overall support and dedication to AgScape's mission. Together, we are providing factual, balanced, curriculum linked agriculture and food literacy programs and resources to Ontario's educators and students, and shaping a brighter future for agriculture and food education.



Kathryn Doan

Kathryn Doan, Chair, AgScape



Special thanks to Dairy
Farmers of Ontario for
sponsoring our 2023
Annual Report

Who We Are

AgScape is a charitable organization focused on providing agriculture and food education programs, resources and events to Ontario educators and youth.

Our Vision

Leading a movement to bring agriculture and food education into all Ontario classrooms. Inspiring youth to see their role within the food system that's a vehicle for social, economic, and environmental impact.

Our Mission

Through experiential and science-based programs, we empower Ontario youth and educators to understand their relationship to the agriculture and food system and ignite interest in related careers.

Our Values



One Million Experiences Achieved

There are few endeavours more hopeful and meaningful than working together to create lasting, positive change for youth. AgScape's work, that change is how we view ourselves in relation to our agriculture and food systems, leading to a more sustainable future for everyone.

Achieving bold goals means operating on multiple levels, collaborating with others as passionate as we are, and establishing a firm footing so that we can securely take exciting risks. This hard work has definitely borne fruit; in 2023, AgScape reached the monumental milestone of **one million educational experiences** for youth in Ontario! By providing immersive learning opportunities across diverse communities, this was a year of sowing seeds of curiosity and seeing them bloom:

- **2,990 schools** across Ontario chose to be part of the AgScape family
- **36** Ontario immersive thinkAG Career Competition sessions powered by **140 volunteers**
- **621** curriculum-linked lessons delivered to classrooms by our amazing Teacher Ambassadors
- **24** live-streamed Virtual Field Trips to **1,855 classrooms** across the province

Nothing great is achieved alone, and I cannot overstate my thanks and admiration to our volunteer board of directors guidance, the talented AgScape team and our incredible supporters with whom we am so proud to cultivate a generation that is engaged to explore agriculture and the food.



M Lyonblum

Mira Lyonblum,
Executive Director

Board of Directors

AgScape is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors, elected from the membership and appointed from the public sector, with a shared interest in bringing objective information about agriculture and food to youth, educators, and communities across Ontario.



Kathryn Doan, Chair
Corporate Director



Victoria Berry, Vice Chair
Corporate Director



Jennifer Peart, Treasurer
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Corporate Director



Emily den Haan
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Community Director



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Catherine Mahler
Board Advisor



Carmela Cupelli
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Executive Director



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Sheri Budhram
Engagement &
Communication Specialist



Shaunna MacQuarrie
Program Coordinator



Aicha Ducharme-LeBlanc
Project Assistant



Madison Lammers
Events Coordinator



Chrissy King
Fund Development
Coordinator

2023 Members, Partners & Donors

Thank you to our incredible community of members, partners, and donors who all share our passion for empowering youth and educators in Ontario to gain a deeper understanding of our agriculture and food system and ignite interest in related careers.

Champion

Beef Farmers of Ontario
Peavey Industries

Patron

AgCareers.com
Agrico Canada
Bayer CropScience
Burnbrae Farms Foundation
Country Guide
Dairy Farmers of Ontario
Farmtario
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Grand River Agricultural Society
Hatwell Mutual Insurance Company
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Syngenta Canada
The Agromart Group
The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
Trillium Mutual Insurance Company

Builder

Ardent Mills
Canadian Mushroom Growers Association
Egg Farmers of Ontario
McMillan Farms
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Ontario Pork
P & H Milling Group
University of Western Ontario – Ivey School of Business

Partner

Government of Canada Summer Student Program
Ontario Mutuals
Procyk Farms
Turkey Farmers of Ontario

Innovator

Chatham-Kent Farm Show
Farm Credit Canada
Gay Lea
Glacier FarmMedia - Canada's Outdoor Farm Show
Ontario Apple Growers
Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers
Parker Hannifin Canada
Synthesis Network
Trouw Nutrition/Shur-Gain
University of Guelph - Ontario Agricultural College

Advocate

Bio Agri Mix
Chary Produce
Christian Farmers Federation of Agriculture
De Lacy Executive Recruitment
Dominion Farm Produce
FoodGrads
Grain Farmers of Ontario District 13
Haldimand Agricultural Awareness Committee
Lambton County Federation of Agriculture
Litherland & Co.
New Life Mills
Ontario Agri Business Association
Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg & Chick Commission
Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association
Ontario Potato Board
Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers
Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Oxford Junior Farmers
Royal Agricultural Winter Fair
Sarah Andrewes
Sheldon Creek Dairy
Veal Farmers of Ontario
Western Fair District
York Region Federation of Agriculture

Supporter

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Binbrook Agricultural Society
Bonnechere Haven Farms
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Middlesex Federation of Agriculture
Mira Lyonblum
Moore Agricultural Society
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Sunderland Agricultural Society
TanenbaumCHAT
Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture
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Vamos Investments
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Woodrill

Life Members

Carolyn Fuerth
Denise Edwards
Lorraine Holding
Sandra Forsyth

National Partner

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada



Registered Charity Number:
132372285RR0001



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.

Fostering Agriculture and Food Literacy

2023 Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Food Education Award

Kylie Cumming, a secondary school teacher from Riverdale Collegiate Institute in Toronto, was the recipient of the 2023 Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Food Education Award, sponsored by Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. Rooted in her rural upbringing on a dairy farm in Glengarry County, Kylie exemplifies a profound dedication and commitment to fostering agriculture and food education, bridging the gap between urban and rural communities. As an enthusiastic History, Careers, Civics, French, and Geography teacher, Kylie uses agriculture and food education to open up new worlds to her students, particularly those from marginalized communities who are underrepresented in Canadian agriculture. Her teaching philosophy strongly emphasizes relational learning, ensuring that each student feels seen, supported, and valued in a safe, inclusive learning environment. By leveraging AgScape's Teacher Ambassador Program, Business of Food platform and educational resources, Kylie seamlessly incorporates agriculture-related lessons, activities and assignments into her curriculum. Through this approach, her students not only gain an understanding of Ontario's agriculture and food system but also discover meaningful careers within the sector.



Bringing Food and Beverage Processing Education to Youth in Ontario



In 2023, AgScape announced a new partnership with FoodGrads, an interactive platform focused on closing the gap between youth, graduates and employers in the food and beverage industry. This collaboration marks a significant step forward in ensuring youth in Ontario have access to educational experiences to learn about Ontario's robust food and beverage processing (FBP) sector.

The FBP sector in Ontario holds the distinction of being the largest in Canada, representing a significant 37% of the industry's revenue in the country. Notably, the sector employs more Ontarians and contributes more to the province's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than other types of manufacturing. Despite its remarkable contributions, the sector faces a labour shortage that has been a growing challenge.

Through this partnership, AgScape and FoodGrads are leveraging combined expertise, resources and networks to increase awareness of the FBP sector among youth in Ontario and inspire them to pursue meaningful careers within the sector. The collaboration is executed in a multi-faceted approach through AgScape's Teacher Ambassador Program, thinkAG Career Competitions and Virtual Field Trips.

Our Educational Programs & Resources

Teacher Ambassador Program



AgScape's flagship program places skilled educators into classrooms to teach youth about agriculture and food.

Virtual Field Trips



Livestreamed tours allow educators and youth to explore Ontario's agriculture and food system.

thinkAG Career Competitions



Helps youth to make real-world connections and learn about agriculture and food careers.

Camp AgScape



An online discovery of food and farming through an interactive, gamified experience.

Digital Resource Library



A robust collection of curriculum-linked resources and activities related to agriculture and food.

AgScape is a Proud Member of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

We are proud to be the Ontario member of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C), a collective formed by organizations engaged in similar meaningful work across Canada that has become a registered non-profit. Together, we share resources and ideas, distribute funding for national initiatives, and cultivate meaningful connections to agriculture and food for youth and educators nationwide.

Celebrating over two million educational experiences annually across Canada, AITC-C attributes its success to the passion and commitment of its member organizations.



AgScape plays a key role in building strong, meaningful connections with students, educators and industry professionals as our boots on the ground in Ontario. We're very proud of what the AITC collective has achieved nationwide, thanks to the dedication and passion of our member organizations. By working together, we're stronger, reaching more people and making a bigger impact across the country.

- Mathieu Rouleau, Executive Director of AITC-C



2023 Impacts: A Snapshot



1,036,091

↑30% increase from 2022

Over 1 million agriculture and food educational experiences provided to youth across Ontario through AgScope's programs and resources



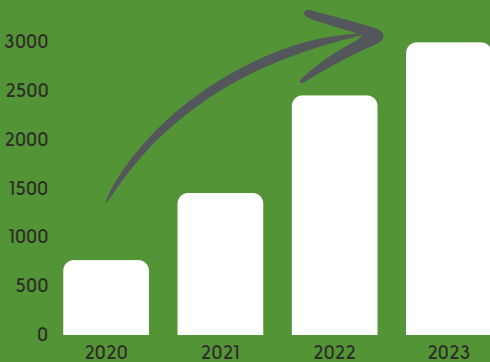
10,379

educators in

2,990 

Ontario schools engaged in our programs and resources

Schools Reached Year Over Year



Agriculture and Food Literacy Resource Distribution

60,328

curriculum-linked resources and activities accessed by educators



17,130

educators accessed our curriculum-linked resources and activities

Camp AgScope



2,420

educational experiences through Camp AgScope

Career Exploration Events



36

thinkAG Career Competitions held

34,250

educational experiences through career exploration events

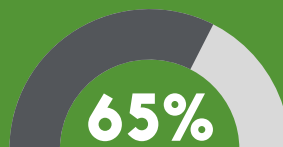


It was nice to work with students to teach them about different career paths related to agriculture. The students were highly engaged and asked thoughtful questions, and overall, the day was a lot of fun!

- Agriculture industry volunteer following a thinkAG Career Competition

140

industry volunteers



of youth can see how their skills and interests can be applied to a career in the agriculture and food industry following a thinkAG Career Competition

Teacher Ambassador Program (TAP)



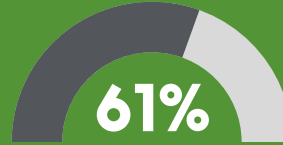
621 TAP lessons delivered

256 schools reached through TAP lessons

15,222 educational experiences through TAP lessons

41 TAP lessons delivered in northern communities

199 educational experiences through TAP lessons in northern communities



61% of youth are interested in learning more about agriculture and food following a TAP lesson

It was a great lesson! The students and I learned a lot of new information, which was beneficial in starting many inspirational and thoughtful conversations in our classroom.

- Grade 10 teacher following a TAP lesson

This lesson was very interactive, and everyone got to share their ideas. I learned that having access to safe, healthy food and having the money to buy it is not easy for all Canadians.

- Grade 7 student following a TAP lesson

Virtual Field Trips



24 live-streamed events

1,855 classrooms reached through Virtual Field Trips

34 industry volunteers

74,008 educational experiences through Virtual Field Trips



87% of educators indicated that Virtual Field Trips increased their students' knowledge of our food system

My students enjoy all the AgScope Virtual Field Trips that we attend, and it is convenient to experience these opportunities virtually. Seeing inside the different facilities helps them better understand our agriculture and food system.

- Grade 4 teacher following a Virtual Field Trip

French Programs and Resources



38 TAP lessons delivered



2 Virtual Field Trips live-streamed events



13,081 curriculum-linked resources and activities accessed by educators

Professional Development for Educators



8 opportunities

970 educators

Exploring Agriculture and Food Through Experiential Learning Experiences

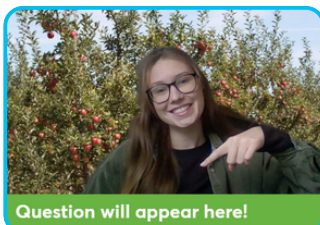
Teacher Ambassador Program

The Teacher Ambassador Program (TAP) continues to inspire youth and educators across the province. We have seen an increased interest from experiential learning lead educators from the Ministry of Education's Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program. This specialized program enables youth to gain credits toward their Ontario Secondary School Diploma and helps them focus their learning on specific economic sectors. While an agriculture SHSM option is available, it is offered at a school, depending on the availability of a qualified educator. The versatility of TAP enables SHSM courses to utilize our workshops in a wide variety of sector-focused courses: arts and culture, business, environment, food processing, hospitality and tourism, information and communications technology, manufacturing, non-profit and transportation. Using TAP to bring agriculture and food education into these courses has been a fantastic way to integrate agriculture and food career options into every school subject and educational pathway.



Virtual Field Trips

Over the past year, we have elevated the overall experience of our Virtual Field Trip program, making it more personal and engaging for participants. One key enhancement has been introducing activity kits, including lesson plans, science experiments, arts and crafts projects, language activities, and more. We aim to cater to diverse learning styles and interests by providing these comprehensive resources. In 2023, we organized a record number of Virtual Field Trips, demonstrating their growing relevance in the education sector. These experiences allow us to reach communities across Ontario, ensuring that youth from various backgrounds have access to these educational opportunities, including those who may not be able to access the farms or organizations we visit. As we look ahead, we are committed to further enhancing the Virtual Field Trip experience and finding hosts representing diversity in the agriculture and agri-food sector. Through these efforts, we strive to make learning even more interactive, enriching, and inclusive for youth in Ontario and beyond.



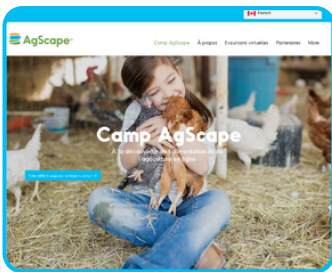


thinkAG Career Competitions

The thinkAG Career Competitions program has been growing steadily, offering youth unique opportunities for career exploration in the agriculture and agri-food sector. These in-person events, where youth interact with various stations run by industry professionals, provide valuable insights into future career pathways in agriculture and food. Seeing the high demand for this program in more schools and its extended geographical reach from Sarnia to Cornwall is inspiring. This growth has broadened our impact and fostered new relationships with various agriculture industries across Ontario, leading us to deliver large-scale events outside of schools with various livestock and state-of-the-art equipment, adding more excitement and engagement from youth. We are eager to continue expanding our reach and partnering with new industries, farms, and organizations to provide more enriching experiences to youth across the province.

Camp AgScope

AgScope saw a longstanding project come to fruition as we launched a bilingual Camp AgScope. This project was an enormous undertaking, as over 200 digital activities were recreated and translated into French. This tremendous journey will empower more youth in Ontario to have the opportunity to learn about food, develop an understanding of where their food comes from, discover a wide range of careers that are available to them, and explore how they can become actively involved in their food decisions. We are proud to take this essential step towards accessibility and inclusion for Ontario's French-speaking youth, educators, families, and those learning French.



French Expansion

AgScope made great strides over the past year in expanding our program offerings and reach into French-language schools and French immersion programs. Beyond the achievement of a bilingual Camp AgScope, we delivered our first two Virtual Field Trips in French, reaching over 900 youth and demonstrating an interest in educational experiences in French across Ontario. We launched new translated partnered resources and continue translating current resources and lesson plans from the Digital Resource Library. In addition, the Teacher Ambassador Program is seeing an increased delivery of lessons in French. We are continuing to make ongoing progress with French-language offerings, increasing our outreach efforts and delivery capacity to meet the growing demand.

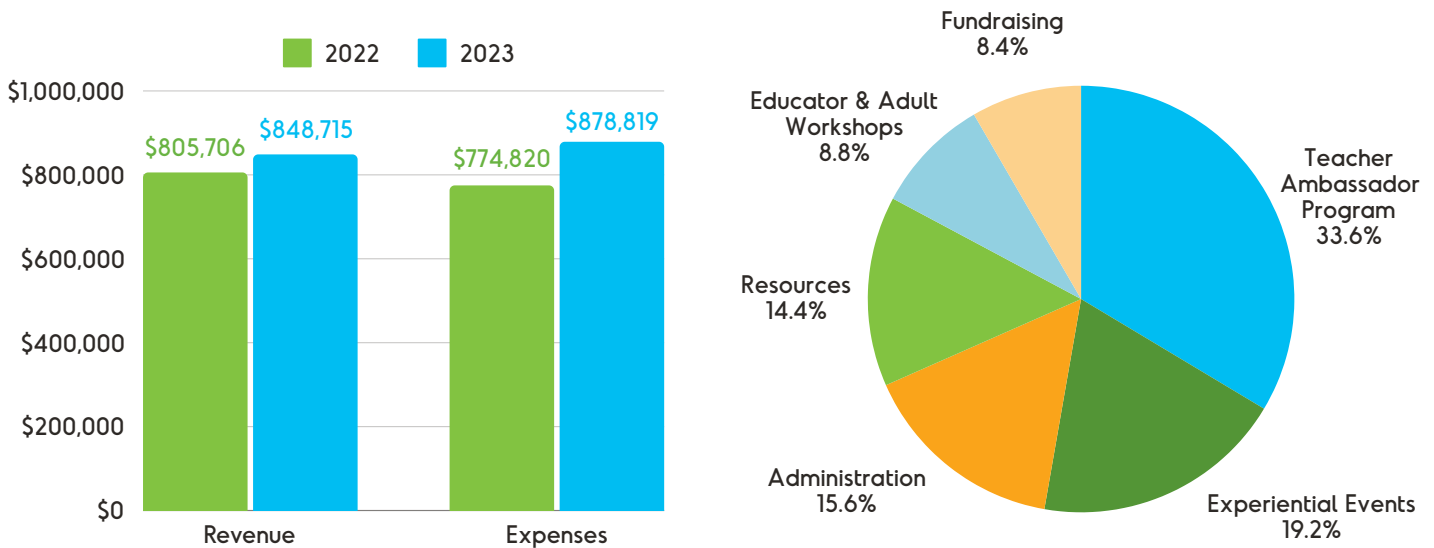
Financial Report

2023 marked a year of growth for AgScape as we continue to see a strong demand for our programs. To provide the foundation for this program growth, we budgeted for an operational deficit of \$40,000 for the 2023 fiscal year. AgScape invested in its programs and, in 2023, reached a new milestone of providing over 1 million educational experiences in a year. We also successfully capped the predicted deficit and finished the year with a deficit of \$30,104.

We were able to achieve this growth with the amazing support of our donors, members and stakeholders. Thank you, in particular, to the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs for their ongoing foundational support of our educational programs.

AgScape did have to strategically use its line of credit throughout 2023 as several of our grants required investment upfront with reimbursement upon successful completion. Due to this, we did have substantial accounts receivable at the fiscal year end of almost \$195,000. These funds were all received in early 2024.

Operational Revenue & Expenses



Through the year, AgScape, like many other organizations, experienced market volatility with our investments. At year end, we did have unrealized capital losses during 2023. AgScape has a very active finance committee that regularly reviews its overall budget and investments (overseen by a certified investment planner) to ensure that diligence is being applied to the management of our reserve funds and our operational budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Peart, Treasurer

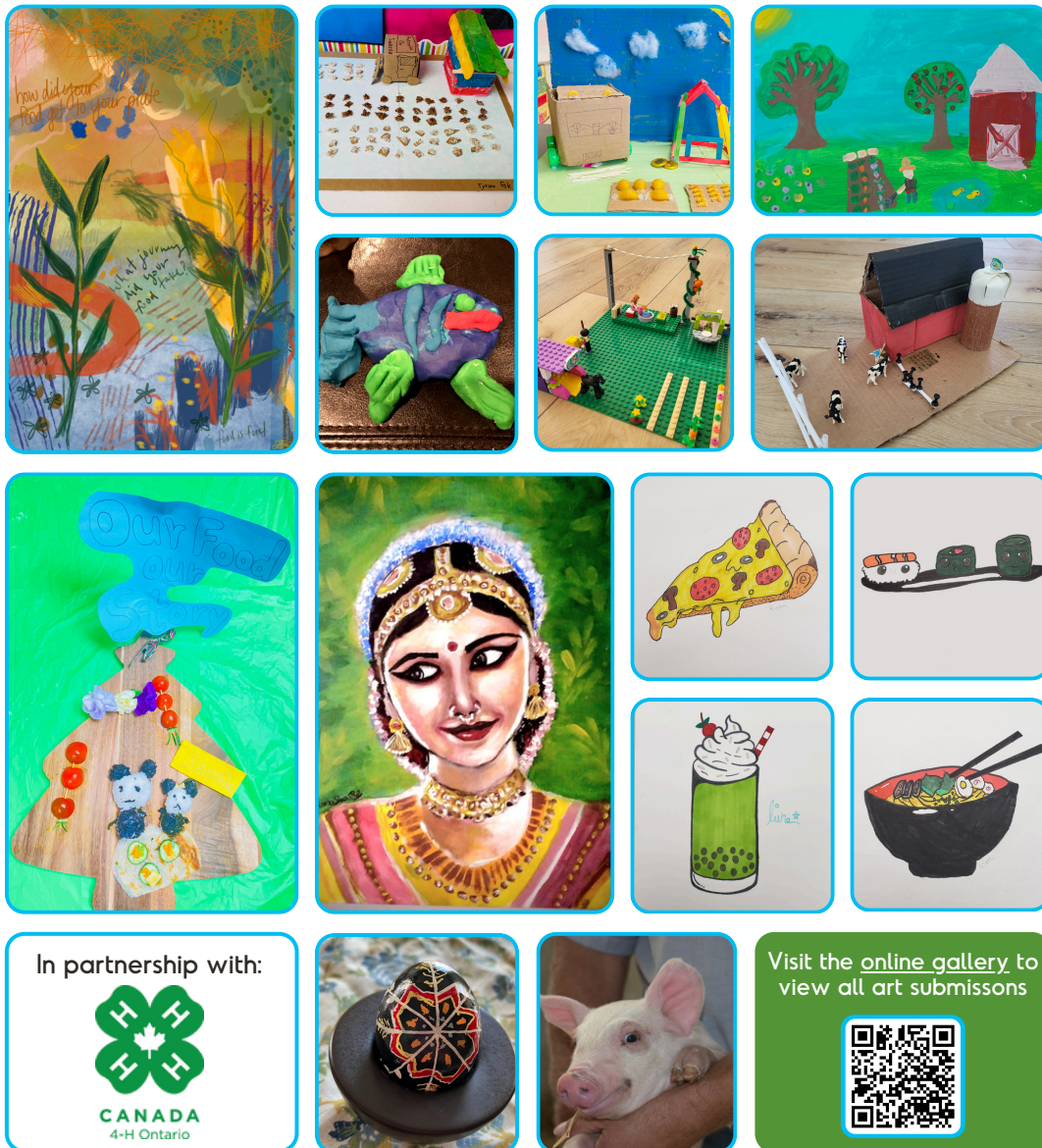
Full audited statements are available at www.AgScape.ca

Our Food Our Story

During the month of March, Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month (CALM), an initiative created by Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C) to enhance awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Canada's remarkable agriculture and agri-food sector, is celebrated nationwide.

In Ontario, AgScape celebrated CALM by offering youth and educators various free programs, resources and events, including organizing an art show in partnership with 4-H Ontario. The theme "Our Food Our Story" encouraged youth to creatively showcase their food story through paintings, drawings, photography, crafts or sculptures.

We were pleased to receive nearly 80 imaginative submissions from youth across Ontario, which were featured in an online gallery.



Expanding Career Exploration Opportunities for Youth Through Enhanced Partnerships

In 2023, AgScape experienced unprecedented success with our career exploration events, notably hosting 37 thinkAG Career Competition sessions with the generous support of numerous donors, partners, and volunteers.

On November 23, AgScape joined forces with the Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) and the Upper Grand District School Board to organize a day-long thinkAG Career Competition, engaging over 600 youth from the City of Guelph, County of Wellington, and County of Dufferin.

This expansive event saw youth rotating among 12 stations, interacting with industry professionals, and delving into Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sector, gaining valuable insights into its diverse career opportunities. Divided into groups, youth spent 10-12 minutes at each station, participating in activities designed to cultivate teamwork, communication, critical thinking skills, and a deeper understanding of agriculture and food production. Furthermore, the event featured various livestock and a state-of-the-art tractor, providing youth with hands-on learning experiences.

Engaged volunteers from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), 4-H Ontario, Beef Farmers of Ontario, Conestoga Meats, County Line Equipment, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Halwell Mutual, Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians, Ontario Broiler Chicken Hatching Egg Producers Association, Ontario Pork, and TLC Alpaca ran the interactive stations, facilitating meaningful connections for youth.

We were delighted to partner with the Grand River Agricultural Society and Upper Grand District School Board to provide an exciting way for students to learn about Ontario's innovative agriculture and agri-food sector. We love working with partners who share our values, in order to inspire each other to engage in these important conversations now and look toward diverse and rewarding career opportunities.

- Mira Lyonblum,
Executive Director of AgScape

GRAS was very excited to co-host the AgScape thinkAG Career Competition in our very own Grand River Raceway paddock. Our organizational values align well with AgScape. We are so proud to continue supporting youth as they explore the wide variety of agricultural career opportunities available in our community.

- Garth Green,
President of the Board of Directors for GRAS

GRAS, a not-for-profit society operating under the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies Act of Ontario and governed by a volunteer board of directors accountable to OMAFRA, is dedicated to fostering innovation, education, economic growth, and community development to nurture the agriculture and environment sectors.

GRAS generously provided the venue, volunteer lunches, and snacks for participating youth, significantly contributing to the event's success. We eagerly anticipate further collaboration with committed partners like GRAS to meet the growing demand for such impactful career exploration youth events.

I really enjoyed this experience. It was much more enjoyable than I thought it would be! I really loved how the stations had interactive parts, like finding the products that have pork in them or petting the alpacas! Thank you for this enjoyable experience!

- Grade 8 Student,
following a thinkAG Career Competition



Looking Ahead: A Future Rooted in Agriculture and Food Education

As we embark on the journey ahead, AgScape remains committed to collaborating with educators, industry leaders, and community partners. In the face of evolving challenges, we recognize the urgency of equipping future generations with the knowledge and skills to navigate an increasingly complex agricultural landscape. We amplify the collective efforts towards a more sustainable, resilient future by fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange. Together, we advocate to prioritize agriculture and food education, ensuring that all youth have access to the transformative power of agriculture and food learning.

To meet the needs of educators and youth, our focus for 2024 and beyond includes the following:

- Cultivating new relationships with community partners and agriculture and agri-food industry leaders to collaborate on resource development and provide diverse representation within our Virtual Field Trip and thinkAG Career Competition programs
- Supporting Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies members' educational outreach by providing hands-on learning opportunities and resources to foster agriculture and food literacy at their community fairs and educational events
- Expanding accessibility and inclusion of our programs and resources, enabling access to French-speaking communities and French immersion programs
- Enhanced focus on inspiring youth to explore the wide range of rewarding careers available to them in the agriculture and food sector through strategic partnership collaboration

Thank you



Make an impact on agriculture and food education by donating today!



AgScape.ca/Donate



Leading Agriculture and Food Education in Ontario

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