



Annual Report

Fields of Opportunity:
Cultivating Connections in Agriculture



2024

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Special thanks to Dairy Farmers of Ontario for sponsoring our 2024 Annual Report



Message from our Chair

Good information can be hard to find. That's one of the many reasons I am so thrilled to be part of AgScape, an organization dedicated to correcting misinformation through accurate, fact-based resources and information. Most groups working in agriculture understand the challenges presented by building public trust, and I am grateful to the AgScape team for being an industry leader in helping to dispel myths and provide credible information and resources to classrooms in Ontario at all grade levels.

AgScape offers different programs that place a high premium on quality, accuracy, and interactivity, and I know this commitment to excellence and diligence resonates with our partners who want an advocate working on their behalf in classrooms across the province.

At Grain Farmers of Ontario, we see the mutual benefit that a partnership with AgScape brings. We know that educators are interested in Ontario agriculture, and AgScape provides a holistic view of the wonderful work done by Ontario agriculture to keep the province thriving and productive. The disconnect between food and farm is wider than ever, and I can point directly to the work done at AgScape when looking for organizations building those necessary bridges for students and farmers.

Over the past three years, our strategic plan has focused on bringing agriculture and food education to all Ontario classrooms in a way that inspires youth to see their role within the food system that's a vehicle for social, economic, and environmental impact. I am proud to say that our work has followed and built on this vision, and we are in a place where we can confidently look toward the next phase of AgScape's success.

Our work is only possible because of the generous support of our incredible members, partners, and funders, and I look forward to working with everyone to encourage critical thinking and connections to the agriculture and food system.



Victoria Berry
Chair

Our Story

AgScape is a charitable organization focused on providing agriculture and food education programs, resources, and events to Ontario educators and youth. AgScape strives to empower students by encouraging them to explore BIG ideas, ask complex questions, and draw their own conclusions based on accurate, science-based information.

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

Integrity

We are committed to transparency, science, and accurate information.

Excellence

We inspire food literacy through best practices in student learning.

Passion

We are passionate about helping others connect the role of agriculture and food to our economic, environmental, and social wellness.

Leadership

We foster a culture of partnership through collaboration.

Impact

We are driven to make an impact at an individual and community level.

Inclusivity

We ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do.

Safety

We prioritize youth, volunteer, and staff safety above all.

Message from our Executive Director

When reflecting on AgScape's year, the phrase that comes to mind is, "nothing great is achieved alone." I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the many partners with whom we collaborate, all of whom are dedicated to the same important mission: empowering and inspiring a deeper understanding of our agriculture and food systems.

In 2024, we set out ambitious goals for ourselves. We aimed to cultivate new relationships that provide more varied experiences for youth through our Virtual Field Trips and thinkAG Career Competitions, recognizing the power of seeing oneself represented in order to envision one's own place. We have been able to provide opportunities for students to learn from professionals who have unique lived experiences, broadening their perception of the entire industry. We have successfully expanded the accessibility of our programs, not only translating almost every program and resource but also offering unique ones to French schools through collaboration with the French community. We also aimed to enhance our focus on exploring the wide range of careers in the sector through strategic partnerships. In 2024, we launched our project with OMAFA, aiming to engage youth and early job seekers at fairs across the province, encouraging them to take the next steps toward a rewarding career in agriculture and food. We are collaborating with the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies to ensure that all 200+ fairs receive an engaging booth to educate their communities.

I feel confident that we will continue to build on our successes thanks to our incredibly dedicated staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors. This passionate team consistently amazes me with their innovation, leadership, and extraordinary generosity in dedicating their expertise and time. Thank you so much; the work you do has far-reaching effects that we will never truly understand.



Mira Lyonblum
Executive Director

Board of Directors

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



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Ecclesiastical Insurance

Grain Farmers of Ontario District 13
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Denise Edwards
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Sandra Forsyth

National Partner

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

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.

Become a member
Members.AgScape.ca



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Sustainable Canadian
Agricultural Partnership

Shaping the Future of Agriculture and Food

Over the past year, AgScape helped students make meaningful real-world connections while exploring future career opportunities within the agriculture and food sector through our thinkAG Career Competition events. From small events in school gymnasiums to large-scale agricultural showcases featuring live animals, students had the opportunity to engage with agriculture in ways they had never experienced before.

Thanks to our various hosting partners, we held thinkAG Career Competitions in eight locations across Ontario, including North York, Markham, St. Catharines, Niagara, Listowel, Toronto, Elora, and Caledonia. The 29 volunteer organizations that partnered with us were instrumental in engaging students and bringing agriculture to life. The interactions between students, teachers, and industry professionals went beyond learning facts; they became a shared experience of discovery and inspiration.

At a larger two-day event in Elora, when the students stepped off the bus and took in the unmistakable scent of a barn for the first time, it was truly a moment of discovery. As they navigated through the event, they observed and interacted with animals up close, asked questions, and learned about topics ranging from livestock care to food production. For many, this was their first connection to the world of agriculture.

“

AgScape is amazing. In my over 20 years of teaching, I have never had such an engaging and interactive event at the school. The students were all actively participating in the event. Even the students that are hard to motivate in the classroom were deeply involved in the learning. I am so grateful for the introduction to Agscape and for their visit. This event fit in well with the curriculum (grade 9 science and grade 11 biology) as well as the SHSM program at the school. The setup was professional, and all presenters were knowledgeable and full of energy. I can't believe this event was free as well!

— Teacher from York Region District School Board

During smaller school events, students from nearby classrooms eagerly joined us, excited to explore and compete with their peers. One school fostered a fierce yet friendly competition between classes, motivating students to immerse themselves in the material. The enthusiasm was contagious, evidenced by a student learning English as a second language who eagerly raised her hand ahead of her classmates to answer a question at the Egg Farmers booth, demonstrating how food and agriculture can serve as universal points of connection.



Exploring Ontario's Agriculture and Food System and Beyond

In 2024, AgScape took K-12 students on an exciting journey through the world of agriculture, beginning in Ontario and extending to international destinations. Our interactive Virtual Field Trips allowed students to see how food, fibre, and other important products are grown, produced, and delivered to us every day.

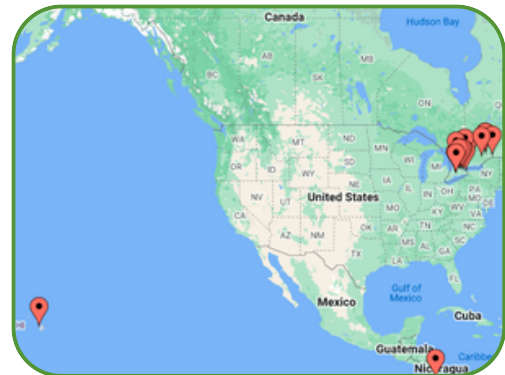
Throughout the year, we hosted 19 engaging Virtual Field Trips, exploring 16 locations across Ontario and two international sites. We celebrated special events, including Canada's Agriculture Day, Pollinator Week, Compost Awareness Week, and more. A major highlight was the Composting with Worms Virtual Field Trip, which engaged over 30,000 students in learning about sustainable farming.

Our fantastic volunteers, experts in various fields of agriculture and food, helped bring these trips to life, making learning exciting and connecting with subjects like science, geography, and the environment. We are also grateful for the support of teachers, who played a crucial role in guiding their students through these experiences and integrating them meaningfully into the curriculum.

In addition to our English sessions, we were excited to offer French Virtual Field Trips, including Bravo les Abeilles (Honeybees), Micro-boulangerie (Micro-Bakery), and Tant d'agriculteurs et de cultures à découvrir (French Storytime), allowing French-speaking students to enjoy the learning experience in their language.

Where we visited in 2024

Virtual Field Trip	Location
Dairy Museum	Aylmer, ON
Coffee Farm	Big Island, Hawaii
Maple Syrup Production	McDonalds Corners, ON
Micro-Bakery	Williamstown, ON
Composting with Worms	Kitchener, ON
Onion and Herb Farm	Freelton, ON
Sheep Farm	Chesley, ON
Feed Mill	Wallenstein, ON
Cheese Curd Production	Hamilton, ON
Honeybees at the Hive	Thorold, ON
Bravo les Abeilles	Ottawa, ON
Apple Farm	Severn, ON
Dairy Farm	Cambridge, ON
French Storytime	Ottawa, ON
Fall Harvest	London, ON
Great Canadian Farm Tour	Ajax, ON
Cocoa to Chocolate Tour	Arenal, Costa Rica
Christmas Tree Farm	Hillsburgh, ON
Hand-Crafted Candy Canes	Guelph, ON



Our Virtual Field Trips help bridge the gaps for students who may not have the opportunity to participate in traditional field trips due to high logistic costs, remote locations, or accessibility challenges. Teachers value how these experiences engage their students with agriculture in a meaningful way, enhancing their understanding and making learning more interactive.

To enhance the learning experience, we created engaging activity kits tailored to different age groups, which teachers can download and use before and after each virtual field trip. These kits provided fun and educational activities that deepened students' understanding, making an unforgettable learning experience even more impactful.



2024 By The Numbers



589,651

Agriculture and food educational experiences provided to youth



13,642
educators



2,580

Ontario schools engaged in our programs and resources

That's approximately 50% of schools in Ontario



French Programs and Resources



25 TAP workshops delivered



2

Virtual Field Trips lived-streamed events



1,304

curriculum-linked resources and activities accessed by educators



Virtual Field Trips

A 2.8x increase from 2023

209,158

educational experiences through Virtual Field Trips

19

live-streamed events

5,160

classrooms reached through Virtual Field Trips

Following a Virtual Field Trip

78%

of teachers indicated that Virtual Field Trips increased their students' knowledge of our food system

“

It is a great way for students to see Ontario farms. Students can make connections from food sources they see at groceries to the distribution channels and the farms that grow these foods. The program provides an opportunity for learning jobs and agriculture in Ontario, which meets the curriculum expectations.

— Elementary teacher following a Virtual Field Trip



Agriculture and Food Literacy Resource Distribution

33,703

educational resources accessed by educators

7,520

classrooms reached through resources



Camp AgScape

3,705

educational experiences through Camp AgScape



Teacher Ambassador Program (TAP)

12,680 educational experiences through TAP workshops

528 TAP workshops delivered

159 schools reached through TAP workshops

32 TAP lessons delivered in northern communities

884 educational experiences through TAP lessons in northern communities

Following a TAP workshop,

88%

of teachers are interested in receiving additional TAP workshops

“

This was a very informative workshop and really made me think about what food I eat and where it comes from.

- Grade 10 student following a TAP workshop

Workshops deliver methods

In-Person
43%



Virtual
57%

AgScape added much value to our classroom. Our Teacher Ambassador gave insight and knowledge to my students with real-life examples, making the workshop very engaging. I highly recommend utilizing AgScape and all that the organization offers.

- Grade 10 teacher following a TAP workshop

“



Career Exploration

6,370 educational experiences through career exploration events

21 thinkAG Career Competitions sessions

5 career fairs

Following a thinkAG Career Competition,

79%

of students agree there are a wide variety of careers in the agriculture and food system

“

Our community is at the forefront of Canadian agriculture, yet many students remain unaware of the incredible scope of the career opportunities that are available in the sector. The thinkAg Career Competition's innovative approach was very engaging, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and teachers from a wide range of subject areas. It was relevant and inspiring and gave a big positive boost to our effort to raise the profile of agriculture at our school. Every school should consider partnering with AgScape!

- High school teacher following a thinkAG Career Competition



Agriculture & Food Careers Initiative

43,600 educational experiences through Agriculture & Food Careers Initiative

12 career events

4 agricultural fairs

“

It was a pleasure working with the AgScape team involved with delivering the booth. It was interactive and engaging for fairgoers of many ages.

- Kim Empringham, Chairman, Agricultural Exhibit Committee from Markham Fair

Professional Development



420 professional development experiences provided to adults

16 professional development workshops provided to adults

Promoting Agriculture & Food Careers

Supporting Agricultural Societies

AgScape's career initiative launched in September 2024, highlighting diverse careers in agriculture and food at four agricultural fairs across the Greater Toronto Area. We attended the Brampton Fall Fair, Milton Fall Fair, Markham Fair, and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, where we made meaningful connections with nearly 25,000 people from the local communities.

During these events, we shared important career insights with students, parents, and teachers using our career resources and educational materials, including our newly developed Cultivate Your Career magazine.

These agricultural events attracted a diverse range of participants, from individuals in the agricultural sector to those learning about it for the first time. Whether we were sharing new information with existing agricultural communities, linking newcomers to Canada with Ontario-specific career resources, making connections with educators across all schooling systems, or introducing agriculture to families, everyone who visited the AgScape booth, left knowing that there is a place for them within the growing agriculture and food sector.



Linking Agriculture and Skilled Trades

In fall 2024, AgScape partnered with LevelUP! Skilled Trades Ontario Career Fairs at province-wide events that transformed how students, newcomers, and adults explore careers in the trades. Through our interactive booth and educational activities at fairs held in 12 cities across Ontario, we highlighted the connections between skilled trades and the agriculture and food sector to nearly 19,000 attendees.

During daytime events, middle and high school students across Ontario discovered how careers in the culinary arts, mechanics, biotechnology, and even niche trades, such as saddle making, all play vital roles in agriculture and food. For many students and teachers, it was an eye-opening experience to learn about the wide variety of careers in the agriculture and food sector.

In the evenings, LevelUp opened their doors to the public with open house events that welcomed community members, including newcomers to Canada starting a new chapter, adults pivoting careers, and families discovering their children's futures.

By partnering with LevelUp!, AgScape reinforced the message that agriculture is a dynamic sector with countless opportunities for everyone. Thanks to this collaboration, attendees left the events inspired to "level up" and explore what's possible in agriculture and food.



Cultivating Connections in Agriculture

Enhancing the Classroom Learning Experience



In 2024, the Teacher Ambassador Program (TAP) introduced two new junior-level workshops for grades 4-6, bringing the total to five. Following a comprehensive review of TAP Junior, AgScape's educational team developed an ambitious plan to not only integrate these two new workshops but also to enhance the overall five-workshop offering.

The goal was to maximize value for educators and promote all five workshops as a cohesive bundle that addresses various elements of the curriculum. The new workshops, Footprints of Food Waste and Biodiversity on the Farm, feature an updated format that will be applied to all future revisions for grades 4-12 and include an Educator Toolkit. By utilizing the Educator Toolkit alongside a TAP workshop, teachers can provide their students with an enhanced learning experience while more effectively achieving their curriculum objectives. Preliminary feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are progressing with updates to the original three TAP Junior workshops along with their supplemental Educator Toolkits.

Expanding Access to Agriculture and Food Literacy



AgScape has been working hard to expand our Digital Resource Library for educators in Ontario. 2024 was a record year for French language resource translation, with over 30 resources translated.

During a teacher conference in fall 2024, we distributed copies of both the English and the newly translated French versions of our resource, "An Exploration of Genomics in Agriculture & Food," to more than 30 secondary science teachers from across the province. Additionally, we hosted a workshop that featured a genomics-based activity and guided educators through a learning experience and discussion on the innovative ways genomic science addresses crucial food security and environmental challenges in the agriculture and food sector.

“

I'm surprised by how cross-curricular this resource is! In high school, teachers tend to stay in their own lanes out of habit, but this resource makes it easy to work together which could save us a lot of time!

- Science teacher from Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario following science teacher workshop

The feedback regarding the availability of more French-language resources has been overwhelmingly positive. We are delighted that resources like "An Exploration of Genomics in Agriculture & Food" are successfully uniting teachers and their students, fostering new and exciting methods for learning about agriculture and food.

“

From the beginning of our relationship with AgScape, we've had the goal of getting these genomics education resources into the hands of as many teachers across Ontario as possible. By providing this vital information in both English and French, we are ensuring that all Ontario students understand the power genomics has to transform our food systems for the better.

- Dr. Mike Dorrington, Manager of Strategic Partnerships
Ontario Genomics

Fostering Agriculture & Food Literacy

2024 Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Food Education Award

Pam Woodhouse, an elementary school teacher from St. John Catholic School in Arthur, Ontario, was the recipient of the 2024 Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Food Education Award, sponsored by Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. AgScape's annual Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Food Education Award honours an Ontario educator who showcases outstanding dedication to incorporating agriculture and food topics into the curriculum. The recipient is awarded \$1,500 in cash and a certificate acknowledging their significant impact on agriculture and food education in the classroom.

Pam, a passionate farmer, agriculture enthusiast, and experienced educator, has been devoted to integrating agriculture and food themes into her students' learning experiences. Her innovative approach includes organizing large-scale field trips, such as the International Plowing Match, which connects students to real-world agricultural practices and history. She also leads her school's Green Legacy program, where students plant, grow, and care for acorn seedlings throughout the school year. As part of this program, students participate in an annual field trip to Northern Nursery in Damascus to learn about the importance of trees and environmental stewardship. Additionally, Pam engages her students in the 'Pizza Perfect' project at the Grand River Raceway, where they take part in hands-on activities and live demonstrations related to agriculture, such as cow milking, pig farming, food processing, and more. In her classroom, Pam leverages various AgScape programs and resources, incorporating curriculum-linked lesson plans, Virtual Field Trips, and activities into her curriculum to enhance her students' agriculture and food literacy.



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 working in partnership with ten provincial members dedicated to providing agriculture and food education across the nation. AITC-C develops national initiatives that are delivered at the provincial level, amplifies the voice of agriculture and food education nationally, and enhances its members' efficiency through shared platforms and services. Together, we strengthen our collective impact to empower and inspire youth with accurate, balanced, and up-to-date information about agriculture and food.



A Deep-Rooted Collaborative Partnership

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (RAWF) has been a long-time supporter of AgScape, playing an instrumental role in AgScape's growth and achievements. For more than 30 years, RAWF has been a valued member of AgScape and has actively participated as a long-standing member of our Board of Directors. Over the years, AgScape has worked collaboratively with RAWF to enhance the educational experience for students and teachers attending their annual agricultural fair in Toronto by developing educational resources for teachers, providing interactive activities for students, leading various educator workshops, and much more.

In November 2024, we had the pleasure of connecting with numerous students and teachers across Ontario through our engaging educational programs and interactive booth at the fair.

During our thinkAG Career Competition, over 200 students explored a variety of career paths in agriculture and food through hands-on activities at different booths, competing for points and prizes along the way. This dynamic experience sparked their interest in the industry and offered invaluable insights into shaping their future careers. A heartfelt thank you goes out to our dedicated volunteers from 4-H Ontario, Beef Farmers of Ontario, Chicken Farmers of Ontario, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Farm & Food Care Ontario, Garden Ontario, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians, Ontario Beekeepers' Association, Ontario Pork, and Worm Wrangler for their participation and incredible support!

Our Local Food Workshops were equally inspiring! Over two days, students discovered how Ontario's local food systems impact their health, communities, and the environment. Through hands-on activities and expert guidance from our Teacher Ambassadors, they learned more about local food and how to make healthy food choices.

At our interactive booth, attendees explored exciting career opportunities in agriculture and food while discovering our educational programs and resources. It was delightful to engage with so many enthusiastic students, teachers, and families throughout the fair. We also had the privilege of connecting with our amazing partners and supporters who visited our booth and reinforced their commitment to advancing agriculture and food education in Ontario!

We are incredibly grateful to have partners like RAWF to help in the delivery of agriculture and food education, and we will continue to work together to unite agriculture, education, and community in the years to come.

“

Working with the AgScape team was a pleasure. Delivering high-quality curriculum connected programming for school groups, they were an engaging presence at The Royal in 2024.

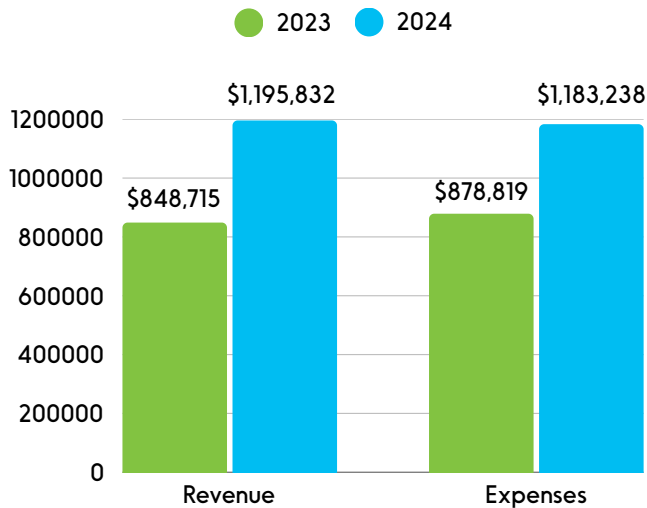
— Paige Mawson, Features and Education Manager
at The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair



Financial Report

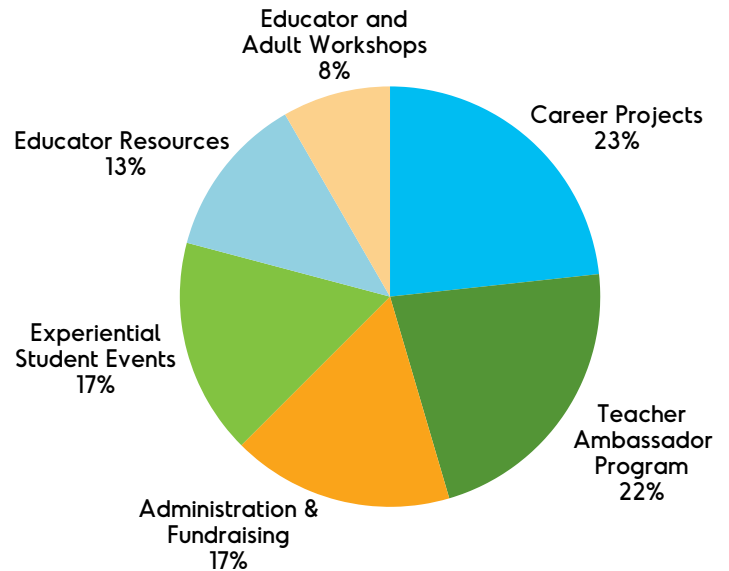
AgScape ended the 2024 fiscal year in a positive financial position. Operating revenues were \$1,195,832 and expenses were \$1,183,238, resulting in an operational net of \$12,594. 2024 also had unrealized gains in our investments of \$77,667.

Operational Revenue & Expenses



As shown in the chart of revenue and expenses, AgScape did see an increase in our operating budget year over year due in large part to two agriculture career outreach projects done in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. These projects started partway through the fiscal year and had a combined and offsetting impact of just over \$275,000. These projects will carry forward into 2025 with an end date of March 2026.

AgScape continues to strive towards organizational efficiencies so our programs can have a greater impact on students across the province. As can be seen in our expense breakout, our largest areas of expenditures were for the new career projects and the Teacher Ambassador Program. An area of program investment we made this fiscal year was to our student events due to the ongoing demand. In 2024 this program expenses line increased by just over \$28,000.



Another strategic decision in 2024 was an increase in our line of credit, which was used throughout the fiscal year. Several of our grants required investment up front with reimbursement upon successful completion. As a result of the grant reimbursement timing, there was a substantial accounts receivable at the fiscal year end of \$313,270. These funds were all received in early 2025.

Thank you to OMAFA for their ongoing foundational support of all our educational programs, and thank you to all our donors, members, and stakeholders for their investment in agriculture education, food literacy, and career information.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim McMillan, Treasurer

Looking Ahead to 2025 and Beyond

2024 has marked a significant year of growth for AgScape, as we expanded our efforts to promote careers in agriculture while actively engaging students and educators within the food system.

The momentum continues, as we are dedicated to partnering with industry leaders, community organizations, and educators to enhance collective efforts aimed at achieving excellence in agriculture and food education.

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, we aim to address the needs of our diverse stakeholders by focusing on:

- Revamping the AgScape website to create a more user-friendly experience, ensuring all our various audiences can navigate it easily.
- Developing our strategic plan for 2026-2029 to clearly define our organizational goals and outline the exciting journey ahead to meet the needs of our educators, students, and supporters.
- Supporting the educational outreach of Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies members by providing interactive "Booth in a Box" resources to showcase meaningful career opportunities in agriculture and food at community fairs and educational events.
- Enhancing the Teacher Ambassador Program (TAP) workshops by offering Educator Toolkits, serving as valuable resources to help achieve curriculum goals and provide students with an enriched learning experience.

We are immensely grateful to our partners, members, supporters, volunteers, board, and staff who have dedicated significant time and resources to ensure AgScape continues to lead the movement to bring agriculture and food education into all Ontario classrooms. Through that support, we will continue inspiring youth to see their role within the food system that's a vehicle for social, economic, and environmental impact.



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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