



PRESS RELEASE

CPMA reports strong growth and global advocacy at its 2026 AGM, announces new Board of Directors

April 9, 2026 (Ottawa, ON) —The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) held its 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) virtually yesterday April 8, bringing members together to reflect on a year marked by strong governance, member engagement, and meaningful advocacy outcomes for Canada’s fresh produce sector.

During the meeting, CPMA leadership outlined key accomplishments delivered over the past year, despite ongoing cost pressures, regulatory complexity, and global trade volatility. The association remained focused on delivering value beyond its flagship Convention and Trade Show through year-round advocacy, industry development, and practical tools that support members’ businesses.

CPMA 2025 Chair, Steve Bamford, shared with members key achievements which included:

- Continued member growth, with CPMA now representing more than 900 companies across the fresh produce supply chain, reinforcing its role as the national voice for the sector.
- Strong convention outcomes, with CPMA’s Montreal Convention & Trade Show marking the association’s largest show to date and donating more than 46,000 pounds of fresh produce to local food banks.
- Major advocacy wins, including the adoption of Bill C-280 (the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*) into law and the removal of select retaliatory tariffs that were adding cost and uncertainty for members.
- Expanded international engagement, with CPMA supporting trade missions, market development initiatives, and buyer outreach across key global markets, while continuing to advocate for predictable, tariff-free trade ahead of the upcoming CUSMA/USMCA review.
- Practical leadership on food safety and sustainability, supported through targeted research, education programs, and guidance designed to align regulatory compliance with commercial realities.

CPMA also reported a strong financial position, underscoring the importance of face-to-face engagement, disciplined governance, and prudent investment in member-driven programs.

President Ron Lemaire shared results from its recent member Pulse Survey, providing timely insight into members’ perspective from 2025 on business conditions and outlook across the fresh produce supply chain for 2026. The survey highlighted three clear and consistent themes:

- Cost pressures are structural, not temporary. Members reported that energy, freight, labour, and input costs continue to place sustained pressure on margins, limiting the sector’s ability to absorb additional shocks without downstream impacts on availability and pricing.
- Trade certainty is now a core business requirement. With the upcoming CUSMA/USMCA review, respondents identified the preservation of tariff-free, predictable trade conditions as the single most important factor influencing investment, contracting, and long-term planning decisions.
- The sector’s adaptive capacity is increasingly policy-dependent. While in 2025 produce businesses have demonstrated resilience and innovation in the face of volatility, members



emphasized that future performance will depend less on operational agility alone and more on stable, science-based, and commercially grounded policy frameworks.

CPMA leadership emphasized that these findings reinforce the association's advocacy focus on trade stability, regulatory predictability, and efficient supply chains as essential components of food affordability and food security for Canadians.

During the AGM, Leadership Committee Chair, Angela Santiago, announced the new Directors to the Association's Board following a transparent and competitive nomination process. The following individuals were elected to the CPMA Board of Directors:

- **Yan Branco**, Sobeys
- **Gary Cabral**, Walmart Canada
- **Michelle Loucks**, Whole Foods Market
- **Justin McGregor**, Save-On-Foods
- **Ezio Bondi**, Bondi Produce & Specialty Foods
- **Kendra Mills**, PEI Potato Board
- **Jennie Coleman**, Equifruit Inc.
- **Jennifer Harris**, Island Growers Cooperative
- **Domenico Procopio**, Courchesne Larose
- **Chris Sarantis**, Canadawide Fruit Wholesalers Inc.
- **Michael Catalano**, POM Wonderful
- **Amanda Knauff**, Taylor Farms
- **Jeff Madu**, Windset Farms

CPMA extends its congratulations to the newly elected Directors and thanks all candidates who put their names forward in support of the association and the industry.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Micken Kokonya

Manager, Communications and Market Research, CPMA

Telephone: 613-769-8742

Email: mkokonya@cpma.ca

About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that has been supporting a diverse membership made up of every segment of the fresh produce supply chain for over 100 years. CPMA represents more than 900 member companies responsible for 90% of the fresh fruits and vegetable sales in Canada and an industry that contributes over \$18 billion to Canada's GDP annually, supports over 187,400 jobs, and improves the health and productivity of Canadians.