



**CERTIFIED  
CROP ADVISER**

**Certified Crop Advisor Association  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

**CCA Conference and Annual Meeting**

**January 14 and 15, 2025**

**Best Western Lamplighter Inn  
London, ON**



**Chair's Report  
Aaron Breimer**

CCAs,

It is great to be back in London with you for the next one and a half days that I am confident will be full of new knowledge and many networking opportunities. It is always a pleasure to share space with each of you during our Annual General Meeting and Conference.

Sitting down and putting together my Chair's Report has given me the opportunity to reflect on the year that was while also thinking about what the year that is coming might look like. It is an interesting experience, and I encourage each of you to reflect on your own journey to date and what your future might look like.

2024 was my 23<sup>rd</sup> year as a professional in the agricultural industry and my 21<sup>st</sup> as a CCA. Each one of those years has been unique with an ever-changing combination of challenges and opportunities ... this year continued that trend. Our spring saw many of us experience challenging planting conditions after an extremely mild winter. As an average, I usually get to experience two or three new situations in fields but 2024 punched well above its weight in this category. I had over a dozen unique situations that I had not experienced before by the middle of July. Spring saw too wet, too dry, too cold and just plain too challenging for a lot of us and the farmers we work with. I doubt many of us expected the very impressive yields that we have heard reported across all crops.

If you think of the many challenges that continued to occur throughout the year including Tar Spot appearing in many areas earlier than we have seen before, it is somewhat surprising that we did have such impressive yields. I believe the success that Ontario farmers experienced reflects the significant pool of knowledge and expertise that they can rely on. You are each part of that pool and so I thank each of you for the success that was enjoyed by Ontario farmers this year.

The commitment each of you have made to provide best in class advice and recommendations to your farmer contacts fills me with hope that the future challenges that the industry will face in 2025 and beyond will be met with solutions that are effective, socially responsible and ethically delivered.

I also want to encourage all of you to find time for yourselves and those that support you daily. Success is a team achievement – acknowledge and thank your team. In addition to my personal support team, I'd like to thank Susan Fitzgerald, Erin Burton and Daina McMurray for making 2024 a successful year for the Ontario CCA organization. As well, I need to thank all the board members who contributed to the success of the organization PLUS the many CCAs who volunteer their time even when they are not board members by participating in various organizations as our voice. Thank you. You all rock!!

This will be my second and therefore my last year as your chair and I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to our organization in this role. I am confident that our new incoming chair – Nicole Weber will continue to steer the organization forward just as the boards and chairs before my time did.

One of the roles as your Board Chair is to be your representative on the International CCA (ICCA) board which includes three virtual meetings and one in person meeting. This year's in person meeting occurred in Gainesville, Florida during the same time period that Hurricane Helene (a category 4 storm) also decided to swing by the area. I can honestly say that being your Chair has given me a unique life experience.

My time interacting with the ICCA board over the last two years gave me additional insight into how lucky our local board is with a diverse and impressive membership that are all willing to help the

organization grow and the support that we receive from Susan Fitzgerald and her staff. Not all local boards are as lucky as we are.

I do believe the staff at ICCA also want the program to succeed but to a certain extent they are removed from the grass roots people that make up the membership. It was my experiences as your board chair, combined with my belief that the ICCA board can be strengthened by listening to the grassroots, that influenced my decision to seek a successful nomination for the ICCA board executive for a three-year term including time as Vice-Chair, Chair and Past-Chair which began on January 2, 2025.

Along with the rest of you, I am eager to see what 2025 has in store for us and the industry we serve. Until the dust flies, let us all enjoy the slightly slower winter months that are full of many educational opportunities including the next day and a half.

Regards,  
Aaron Breimer

P.S. Maybe 2025 will be the year that a Canadian team brings home the Stanley Cup.

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## **Executive Director’s Report Susan Fitzgerald**

When I sat down to write this report, I reviewed what I wrote last year. My concluding paragraph stated that membership organizations only thrive if they maintain a focus on serving and delivering value to their members. This is especially true of associations in which membership is voluntary, like the CCA program.

Many CCA boards are experiencing declining membership. This may be partly due to consolidation within the sector and demographics, i.e., retirements. However, most vacancies left by retirees are eventually filled so are the new agronomists not pursuing their CCA certification? In certain states, the local boards indicate employers will not pay the cost of their employees acquiring and maintaining the designation and going so far as to require employees to use vacation days in order to attend CEU events.

Fortunately, in Ontario many employers prefer or require CCA certification when hiring agronomists. Holding a CCA certification signals to employers, clients, and peers that you have met rigorous standards of knowledge and professionalism in agronomy. It demonstrates your dedication to the field and your ability to provide science-based advice to clients. The CCA program requires ongoing education to help ensure CCAs stay current with the latest research, technologies, and best practices in the field.

Our Ontario CCA numbers have remained fairly stable since 2019, floating between 650 to 660 members. The Prairie Board has grown over that same period, from 1,090 to 1,387. The Atlantic Provinces have 63 CCAs; in 2019 they had 52. Canada represents 17% of the CCAs in North America and our boards are strong. Two of the larger US CCA



## *Ontario CCA Annual Report – 2024 Activities*

states have shown significant declines. Iowa had 1,228 CCAs in 2019 and now have 1,048. Illinois went from 1,200 CCAs in 2019 to 964 in 2024. Those boards have very dedicated staff but are still finding it difficult to retain membership.

Overall, the CCA certification is a valuable asset that enhances your professional standing, supports continuous learning, and connects you with a network of experts in the field. I encourage you to think of ways the Ontario CCA Program could provide added value to you and your growers. Don't hesitate to call or e-mail your suggestions to the Ontario CCA office whether it is a marketing idea, a suggestion for a new speaker, or a topic to cover in the newsletter. Feedback, both positive and negative, is welcome.

Looking ahead, our focus will remain on the 10 strategic goals outlined in our 2021 Strategic Plan:

1. Enhance the profile of CCAs and the association with external stakeholder groups.
2. Increase the involvement of CCAs and the association in setting and directing Ontario agronomic research.
3. Increase the leadership capacity within the CCA membership.
4. Provide CCAs with an opportunity to learn and network with other CCAs.
5. Prioritize and formalize the marketing goals and activities of the Ontario CCA Association.
6. Enhance the profile and awareness of CCAs and the certification program with growers.
7. Raise awareness of the CCA certification program with potential new CCAs.
8. Improve the effectiveness of the CCA website as a source of information to CCAs, growers and potential new CCAs.
9. Support CCAs to maintain their certification and remain in the crop input industry.
10. Increase the number and value of learning opportunities especially for unique or non-traditional topics.

Erin Burton joined my office in 2023 as the CCA Program Administrator. She is currently on maternity leave until August 2025. In the interim, her position is being filled by Daina McMurray. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and confident in our ability to make meaningful strides in enhancing member services, expanding our reach with CCAs and other agriculture stakeholders, and advocating on key issues.

Daina, Erin, and I are immensely grateful for the unwavering support of the Ontario CCA Board, committee volunteers, and, most importantly, you, the CCA members. Your dedication and engagement are the cornerstones of our success. Together, we will continue to advance the CCA designation in Ontario and create a lasting impact.

**Ontario CCA Exam Committee Report  
Christine Brown, Committee Chair**

International, local board, and specialty exams are offered quarterly (four times a year). You can take the International and Ontario exams in one window, or you can split them between different windows. Upcoming exam registration and writing dates are listed below.

**Registration Dates**

January 2 - January 27, 2025  
February 26 - March 24, 2025  
July 2 - July 28, 2025  
October 1 - October 27, 2025

**Exam Dates**

February 5 - 19, 2025  
April 2 - 16, 2025  
August 6 - 20, 2025  
November 5 - 19, 2025

**NOTE:** Exam registration is only available during the dates listed above, and only for the next available exam date. For example, if you want to take your exam in the February 5 - 19, 2025 exam period, you would register in the January 2 - January 27, 2025 period.

Exams are also now available to be taken by section. The International and Ontario exams are organized into sections, Crop Management, Nutrient Management, Soil and Water Management and Pest Management. Section testing allows candidates to take each of the four sections separately, rather than all at once. They can choose to complete the sections in any order and at their own pace within a five-year timeframe. However, this is more expensive as a proctor fee is paid for each exam sitting.

**2024 Exam Statistics to Date**

The International exam consists of 150 questions and the Ontario exam 100 questions.

<b>Exam</b>	<b>Total or Part.</b>	<b># Pass</b>	<b>% Pass</b>	<b># Fail</b>	<b>% Fail</b>
<b>Ontario – entire exam</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Ontario NM</b>	3	1	33%	2	67%
<b>Ontario SW</b>	3	1	33%	2	67%
<b>Ontario PM</b>	3	1	33%	2	67%
<b>Ontario CM</b>	3	0	0%	3	100%
<b>International - Ontario examinees</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>International – entire group</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>RMS Ontario</b>	1	0	0%	1	100%
<b>4R Ontario</b>	5	2	40%	3	60%

The CCA Pre-Exam Workshop has been a virtual format since 2021. Recordings are available for purchase through the CCA website. In 2024, 36 pre-recorded workshops were purchased. There were three virtual 4R NMS Workshops recordings sold. In the past year, there were 65 Ontario study guides purchased, three 4R and two RMS.

Exam Committee  
Christine Brown – Chair  
Albert Tenuta  
Anita Gilmer  
Anne Verhallen

Dale Cowan  
Dale McComb  
Keith Reid  
Mike Cowbrough

**Mentorship Committee**  
**Nicole Weber, Committee Chair**

The CCA Mentorship Committee was formed in 2017 to encourage CCAs to become actively involved within the CCA program. Designed for newer CCAs, they are encouraged to take on a leadership role within the association by completing a CCA program-related project. This could include topics such as: marketing/promoting the CCA designation to potential CCAs or growers, developing additional resources or information for the CCA membership, enhancing communications to CCAs or growers, etc. The project topic must be presented to and approved by the Mentorship Committee. The mentee works closely with the CCA staff, the relevant CCA committee, or an assigned Board director/mentor on the project as applicable.

This past year, there was one Board mentee, Olivia Noorenberghe. Olivia will present her project at the banquet on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Olivia started a study group for prospective CCAs to help them study for their CCA exams. Her study group attracted 36 interested participants.

If you are interested in being part of the mentorship program or know of an individual within your company who would benefit from this program, have them contact the CCA office. Applications are open until February 28, 2025, and the successful applicants will attend their first Board meeting in March.

Committee Members:  
Nicole Weber (Chair)  
Christine Brown

Leigh Hudson-Templeton  
Jeff Jacques

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**Continuing Education Committee Report**  
**Jason Van Mannen, Committee Chair**

In 2024, there were 142 meetings reviewed. There were four CEU applications that were denied because there was not enough information provided. They were later resubmitted. There were two CEU applications that were denied because they did not fit the criteria for CEUs. The Ontario CCA website was updated with tips for filling out your CEU application, to make sure that the content that was being submitted was in-depth and represented what the CCA would take away from the meeting.

We received one CEU appeal this year from a CCA who was short CEUs over their two-year cycle. Due to the circumstances that were presented, the Committee felt that the appeal should be granted. In those cases, the CCA is usually required to make up the deficit CEUs in their next two-year cycle in addition to the regular 40.

Committee Members:  
Jason VanMannen (Chair)  
Leanne Freitag  
Paul Hermans  
Janice Janiec  
Geoff Smith

Les Nichols  
Christine Brown  
Jennifer Kilbourne  
Katja Rochacewich  
Anita Speers

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**Standards & Ethics Committee Report  
Phil Emmott, Committee Chair**

The committee members reviewed 18 credential packages in 2024. The committee approved 14 individuals for full CCA status, and four applicants were given CCA candidate status.

There have been 12 requests for retired status, all of which were approved.

There were no code of ethics violations this year. Every CCA has signed the Code of Ethics, indicating that they have accepted the individual responsibility to abide by it. This responsibility also extends to holding your peers to ethical conduct, which includes reporting any breaches in this conduct. The Standards and Ethics Committee has a duty to investigate unethical conduct, and to censure the individual(s) if it is merited. We cannot, however, initiate any such investigation on our own, but only in response to a signed complaint. If you have first-hand knowledge of unethical conduct by any CCA, you should be prepared to submit such a complaint to the Standards and Ethics committee.

Committee Members:

Phil Emmott (Chair)

Aaron Breimer

Meagan Ioi

Keith Reid

Murray van Zeggelaar

Jonathan Zettler

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**Research and Innovation Committee Report  
Jonathan Zettler, Committee Chair**

The Ontario CCA Association has CCA representatives participating in 13 external committees. Last year, the Research and Innovation Committee was restructured to provide a forum for discussion around the activities of the external committees and to provide feedback to those agronomic committees regarding items under their consideration.

The first CCA Innovation Award, sponsored by Honeyland Ag Services, was presented at the Conference in January 2024. This Award is designed to recognize an individual, group or organization who has demonstrated significant innovation or research within the crop advising field. We are defining “innovation” as a novel advancement or practice that has had significant adoption or impact in Ontario crop production. A nomination can be initiated by a customer, employer, peer, or other associate. There were two nominees last year, and the prize was awarded to Rob Miller. Unfortunately, there were no nominations this year.

The Research and Innovation Committee also conducted the Research Priorities survey throughout January 2024. There were 117 responses, which represents 18% of Ontario CCAs. A summary of the results was sent to all Ontario CCAs.

At our August Committee meeting, we heard a presentation on the concept of using current CCAs as “conservation agronomists”. Many corporations have sustainability programs and are looking for some type of assurance or benchmark that commodities they are purchasing are being grown according to their procurement requirements. The concept of a conservation specialty is being investigated by the ICCA Board.



Research and Innovation Committee members:

Jonathan Zettler (Chair)  
Aaron Breimer  
Paul Cornwell  
Leanne Freitag  
Dave Hooker  
Nicole Weber  
Leigh Hudson-Templeton  
Dale Cowan

Steve McQueen  
Danny Jefferies  
Don McLean  
Tarlok Singh Sahota  
Aaron Stevanus  
Jason Van Maanen  
Paul Sullivan

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**Marketing Committee Report**  
**Meagan Ioi, Committee Chair**

Our focus for 2025 is to continue to drive grower awareness and education about the CCA designation and program. A Marketing and Communications plan was developed back in 2020 which we continue to update each year with new action items and goals.

The Committee launched a couple new initiatives in 2024 to raise awareness and promote the designation. We placed an ad in the Ontario Agri Business Association directory thanking employers for supporting CCAs and the CCA program. We also produced CCA tabletop signs that state “A CCA Works Here” with a QR code that directs to the CCA Ontario website. Signs were handed out to CCAs and CCA employers at the Outdoor Farm Show to display at their booths. We received positive comments from those who took the signs.

The Marketing Committee has been making connections at universities and colleges as part of the Pizza Program to promote the CCA program. The Pizza Program involves CCAs giving a brief presentation to a student class or club regarding the value of the CCA designation. Pizza and refreshments are provided as an added incentive for students to attend. Presentations this year included a class at Ridgetown College, the University of Guelph Soil and Crop Club, and Trent University. We have also made inquiries about giving presentations at Algonquin and Lambton Colleges.

In 2023, the Marketing Committee created the Emerging Leader Award to recognize the immense amount of talent and dedication of its members who have only recently attained their Ontario CCA designation. The inaugural winner was Saveetha Kandasamy who we acknowledged at the 2024 conference.

Committee members:

Meagan Ioi (Chair)  
Brian Coutts  
Liam Bracken  
Lauren Benoit  
Steph Berlett

Laurier Ferrier  
Patrick Lynch  
Anita Speers  
Rob Miller

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**Nominating Report 2024  
Nicole Weber**

As of December 31, 2024, there were four elected terms ending. In addition, Lauren Benoit resigned from the Board with one year remaining in her term due to work commitments.

Aaron Breimer's term automatically renewed to allow him to complete his Executive position. The Board elected Meagan Ioi as the incoming Vice Chair so her term also automatically renewed.

Jason Van Maanen was completing the final year in Ashley Knapton's term (she resigned last year). The Board appointed Jason to complete the one year remaining in Lauren's term to give him two years on the Board before standing for re-election.

Jeff Jacques completed his Past Chair role and has also served the maximum number of terms so has rotated off the Board. Thank you, Jeff, for your years of dedication.

These changes resulted in two three-year terms up for election. We received four nominations: Dennis Frey, Janice Janiec, Chad Mangan and Greg Stopps. The elected directors are Dennis Frey and Greg Stopps. Thank you, Janice and Chad, for letting your names stand for election.

**Term ends December 31, 2025**

Elected CCA (Jason Van Maanen)  
Elected CCA (Stephanie Berlett)  
Elected CCA (Aaron Stevanus)  
University of Guelph (Dave Hooker)

**Term ends December 31, 2026**

Elected CCA (Nicole Weber)  
Elected CCA (Anita Speers)  
Elected CCA (Phil Emmott)  
Elected CCA (Jonathan Zettler)  
OSCIA (Brady Jones)

**Term ends December 31, 2027**

Elected CCA (Aaron Breimer)  
Elected CCA (Meagan Ioi)  
Elected CCA (Dennis Frey)  
Elected CCA (Greg Stopps)  
Grain Farmers of Ontario (Marty Vermey)

Non-voting liaison members of the Board are:

Pam Joosse, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Christine Brown, Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs  
Tatianna Lozier, Conservation Ontario

**CCA Executive for 2025:**

Chair – Nicole Weber                      Vice-Chair – Meagan Ioi  
Past-Chair – Aaron Breimer              Secretary-Treasurer – Susan Fitzgerald

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**American Society of Agronomy  
CCA Board Program - Ontario Provinces  
For the Ten Months Ending 10/31/2024**

	Month-To-Date Actual	Year-To-Date Actual	2024 Board Approved Budget
<b>Beginning Balance</b>		8,054.50	
<b>Board Revenue</b>			
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	0.00	2,500
Board Exam Fees	1,060.00	5,270.00	3,500
Board Exam Fees - 4R NMS	0.00	80.00	0
Board Exam Fees - IMPS	0.00	20.00	0
Retake Exam Fees	0.00	0.00	800
Board Renewal Income	0.83	8.33	0
Interest Income	0.00	0.00	15
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,060.83</b>	<b>5,378.33</b>	<b>6,815</b>
<b>Board Expenses</b>			
Supplies & Services	0.00	(300.00)	(250)
Computer Programming/Web Development	0.00	(460.00)	0
Marketing & Promotion	0.00	912.62	0
Exam Scoring/Statistics	0.00	0.00	(1,200)
Miscellaneous	0.00	(2,795.50)	(5,500)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>(2,642.88)</b>	<b>(6,950)</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,060.83</b>	<b>2,735.45</b>	<b>(135)</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>		<b>10,789.95</b>	

Note: The above statement is in U.S. dollars.

Ontario CCA Annual Report – 2024 Activities

Financial Statement April 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

REVENUE	December 20, 2023, Comparable	April 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024	2024-2025 budget
Soil & Water grant	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00
Soil & Water registrations	\$6,240.00	\$6,480.00	\$6,500.00
Ontario exams	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Pre-Exam Workshop registrations	\$1,275.00	\$1,500.00	\$2,000.00
4R Workshop	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$150.00
Renewals	\$64,545.00	\$63,490.00	\$113,925.00
Specialty renewals	\$5,425.00	\$5,580.00	\$9,750.00
Less International renewal transfer	-\$44,354.98	-\$60,512.81	-\$60,400.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$38,630.02</b>	<b>\$22,187.19</b>	<b>\$82,425.00</b>
Conference registrations	\$34,200.00	\$34,855.00	\$45,000.00
Conference sponsorships	\$22,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$25,000.00
Innovation Award sponsorship	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Award of Excellence sponsorships	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$59,200.00</b>	<b>\$66,855.00</b>	<b>\$155,425.00</b>
Study Guide sales	\$4,400.00	\$3,440.00	\$6,000.00
4R Guide sales	\$150.00	\$100.00	\$150.00
RMS Guide Sales	\$35.00	\$105.00	\$0.00
Job postings	\$3,850.00	\$2,250.00	\$4,000.00
Newsletter advertising	\$6,025.00	\$1,690.00	\$1,500.00
CCA mugs, decals and t-shirts	\$34.00	\$42.00	\$50.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$112,324.02</b>	<b>\$96,669.19</b>	<b>\$249,550.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
General admin and office overhead	\$44,811.25	\$49,490.00	\$63,500.00
Conference administration	\$4,000.00	\$5,500.00	\$10,200.00
Conference venue	\$0.00	\$3,539.82	\$40,000.00
Conference expenses (Zoom, printing, mileage)	\$678.00	\$1,541.96	\$5,000.00
Conference speaker costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,000.00
Speaker Gifts	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Innovation Award costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Award of Excellence costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,100.00
Ontario Study Guide revisions	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ontario Study Guide printing	\$3,075.28	\$0.00	\$0.00
Study Guide postage	\$725.97	\$590.91	\$1,000.00
Soil & Water expenses	\$2,148.76	\$3,518.12	\$2,500.00
Travel - mileage, airfare for ICCA	\$3,350.50	\$4,384.54	\$3,500.00
Marketing Committee activities	\$0.00	\$254.24	\$1,000.00
Marketing Committee Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Leadership Development	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Newsletter expenses	\$5,372.25	\$5,768.05	\$7,000.00
Office supplies	\$803.22	\$0.00	\$250.00
Postage	\$717.94	\$843.18	\$750.00
Website hosting/updates	\$3,605.00	\$718.60	\$500.00
Accounting firm - financial review	\$2,100.00	\$2,200.00	\$2,100.00
Meeting expenses - food, conf. call	\$1,462.00	\$728.00	\$1,000.00
Directors and Officers insurance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,100.00
Refunds	\$700.23	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bank charges and credit card fees	\$2,699.67	\$4,504.78	\$6,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$76,250.07</b>	<b>\$83,582.20</b>	<b>\$162,000.00</b>
<b>PROFIT/LOSS</b>	<b>\$36,073.95</b>	<b>\$13,086.99</b>	<b>\$87,550.00</b>
<b>Current bank balance</b>		<b>\$125,261.93</b>	

180 Day at 3.55% GIC matures Jan 16, 2025 at \$26,489.31      3 year at 4.05% GIC matures April 28, 2026 at \$28,162.18  
 1 year at 4.55% GIC matures April 28, 2025 at \$27,183.00      4 year at 3.8% GIC matures April 28, 2027 at \$29,022.14  
 1 year at 3.25% GIC matures November 24, 2025 at \$27,796.48  
 2 year at 4.2% GIC matures April 28, 2025 at \$27,144.10