



## News Release

### *Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers elect new Chair, Vice Chair*

For immediate release

Niagara Falls ON 22 February 2023 – Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers have a new Chair and Vice Chair leading their organization. Vegetable grower Shawn Brenn was elected as the new Chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) after serving one year in the Vice Chair position. He takes over the position from apple and blueberry grower Charles Stevens. Mike Chromczak, an asparagus grower from the Tillsonburg area, is the new OFVGA Vice Chair.

"I'm very proud of the professional team we have at OFVGA and of the work that this organization does on behalf of growers," says Brenn. "When I look at the chairs who have led the OFVGA before me, I know that I have big shoes to fill but it's a challenge that I look forward to."

Brenn and his brother are co-owners of their fourth-generation family farm located in a rural area of the city of Hamilton where they grow potatoes and onions, fresh cilantro and dill, and corn, soybeans and wheat as rotation crops on approximately 2,300 owned and rented acres. Brenn is also currently chair of the Ontario Potato Board and is the Vice Chair of the Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS) advisory committee for agriculture and horticulture, as well as serving on the WSPS executive advisory committee.

Brenn represents the potato sector on the OFVGA board and has participated in both the crop protection and labour sections at OFVGA.

"Food inflation will certainly be a key issue for the year ahead, as will our governance review and building out our communications strategy," Brenn adds. "We're also going to keep the momentum going with the More than a Migrant Worker initiative – it's one that is particularly near and dear to my heart as we have 40 international workers on our farm that really are an integral part of our family business."

Tracy Gubbels has joined the board as the director representing Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers, taking over from Ron Van Damme.

The OFVGA's management committee includes Brenn and Chromczak, as well as directors Fred Meyers (tender fruit), Morris Gervais (small fruit/berries), and Matthias Oppenlaender (grapes). Other directors on the board are Jan VanderHout (greenhouse), George Gilvesy (greenhouse), Glen Gilvesy (ginseng), Joanne Chechalk (fresh vegetable – other), Quinton Woods (fresh vegetable – muck), and Charles Stevens (apples).

Chromczak also chairs the safety nets section, and VanderHout heads the environment and conservation section. Other section chairs include Bill George (labour), Brian Rideout (crop protection) and Brian Gilroy (property, infrastructure, energy, and food safety).

The [Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association](#) is the voice of Ontario's fruit and vegetable producers on issues affecting the horticulture sector.

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