

## Opening Remarks – Jess

To the OFPA Community,

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the past year. As I transition from President in 2024 to Past President in 2025, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the honor of serving this exceptional organization. It has been an incredible journey, and I am truly privileged to have held this position.

Leading the OFPA has been a deeply fulfilling experience, filled with challenges, triumphs, and, most importantly, the opportunity to work with passionate professionals dedicated to protecting the safety and integrity of our food supply. Together, we've achieved significant milestones, fostered collaboration, and strengthened our commitment to excellence in food protection.

Throughout my tenure as President, I've been continuously inspired by the dedication of our board of directors, the incredible work of our committees, and the unwavering support from our members, sponsors and partners. This collective effort has elevated OFPA to new heights, and I am confident this momentum will continue under the capable leadership of Marin Pavlic, our incoming President.

As I step down, I am excited for the bright future that lies ahead for OFPA. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your support, dedication, and camaraderie. It has been an honor to serve as your President.

Thank you for your trust, friendship, and steadfast commitment to the values of OFPA.

Sincerely,



2024 President, Ontario Food Protection Association  
Jessica Burke

## Highlights from the OFPA 67th Annual Food Safety Conference

The Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA) hosted its **67th Annual Food Safety Conference** on September 30 – October 1, 2024, bringing together over 160 industry leaders, regulators, students, and food safety professionals for two days of engaging presentations, collaborative discussions, and exciting networking opportunities.

### Day 1: Exploring Food Safety Innovations

The first day of the Food Safety Conference offered an engaging lineup of sessions, providing valuable insights into the latest trends, challenges, and solutions in food safety. Tim Jackson, Senior Science Advisor for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the U.S. FDA, emphasized the importance of company-wide ownership of food safety. He shared strategies for compliance, including learning from failures and near misses, and highlighted tools like root cause analysis and the "go-see, think, do" process to drive improvement.



Dr. Ben Chapman, Professor, Food Safety Specialist, Department Head of Agricultural and Human Sciences at North Carolina State University, discussed modern approaches to food safety communication, presenting studies on consumer behaviors such as thermometer usage and misconceptions about washing raw chicken. He stressed the importance of storytelling and data-driven communication in shaping behaviors and introduced platforms like *Food Safety Talk* and *Risky or Not?* as effective tools for engaging audiences.



A panel discussion on traceability and recall featured Geert Van Kempen, Head of Food & Beverage Strategy at Veeva Systems; Tom Ford, Vice President of Food Safety and Quality Assurance at Compass Group; Florentina Gadau, Food Safety Director at Sysco Canada; and Aaron Aboud, Quality Director at RDJ Bakeries. The panel explored the role of technology in enhancing traceability, the challenges of record-keeping and data standardization, and the necessity of building trust and strong communication. The panelists emphasized that proper training and a robust safety culture are essential for effective traceability systems.



Allison Jorgens, Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs and Incident Management at the Loblaw QFR Centre of Excellence and Jonathan Basha, Senior Manager at the Loblaw QFR Centre of Excellence, shared insights on harnessing data analytics for proactive food safety measures. They

demonstrated how predictive analytics using supplier, product, and store data, along with the integration of AI and machine learning, can help businesses anticipate and mitigate risks, enabling a proactive approach to food safety monitoring.



A panel featuring Heather Gale, Executive Director CanadaGAP; Jacqueline Southee, North American Representative at FSSC; Stefanie Sonneveld, Business Development at SQFI; Jessica Burke, Delivery Partner Program Manager and Americas Lead at BRCGS; and Pius Gasser, North American Representative at IFS, highlighted the value of GFSI certification in enhancing operational performance and food safety culture. They discussed the importance of unannounced audits as a tool for continuous improvement and encouraged businesses to view audits as opportunities for growth rather than punitive measures.



Day 1 set a strong foundation with its focus on actionable strategies, innovative tools, and collaborative approaches, inspiring attendees to drive meaningful change in food safety practices. Attendees enjoyed a lively networking mixer in the evening, complete with live music provided by Nathian Burke, to foster connections in a relaxed setting.

## **Day 2: Addressing Emerging Risks**

Day 2 offered an engaging lineup of sessions that tackled critical topics in food safety and innovation. Pam MacDonald, Executive Director of the CFIA Operations Branch, explored recent outbreaks, including Salmonella and caffeinated energy drink issues, and reviewed food safety controls for raw enoki mushrooms and plant-based milk products. She highlighted updates to the Safe Food for Canadians Act, recall verification procedures, and the need to differentiate between food safety and food quality. MacDonald also emphasized consumer education and industry collaboration as vital components of a robust food safety framework.



Renata McGuire, Global Training Program Manager for Food, NSF's presentation emphasized that training was a critical component of food safety management systems, serving to ensure individual competence and awareness while supporting a strong food safety culture. The session explored the challenges associated with retraining and shared valuable tips and best practices for designing

and delivering effective in-house training programs. These strategies aimed to engage learners and maximize the return on training investments.



In their presentation, Lisa Moody, Senior QA Manager, and Shanja Gnanathurai, QA System Analyst at Maple Lodge Farms, discussed how the company used a non-conformance from a BRCGS audit related to sanitary design to overhaul their entire internal audit program. They highlighted how this process became a key tool for continuous improvement of their food safety systems, demonstrating the value of addressing audit findings to strengthen internal processes and enhance overall compliance.



In her session, Laura Toma, Manager of Learning & Development at Compass Group, emphasized the crucial role of effective communication in food safety, where every detail, action, and decision counts. She highlighted the importance of words in shaping food safety outcomes, whether for influencing internal or external partners or conveying the impact of food safety initiatives. The interactive breakout session provided practical tools and examples, equipping participants with strategies to enhance their communication skills and become more successful in promoting food safety.



Eric Van Der Beek, Sector Specialist Manager for Food and Beverage – North America, Diversey focused on the challenges of sanitary design, underscoring the importance of designing equipment that allows for thorough cleaning and sanitation. He stressed that inaccessible or hidden components pose significant risks, as they cannot be adequately cleaned.



Kim Onett, Senior Manager at Merieux NutriSciences, presented on the essential components of designing effective environmental monitoring programs. She focused on the importance of ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in testing programs. Best practices for zoning, investigative swabbing, and root cause analysis were highlighted, with an emphasis on how to utilize results and data for continuous improvement in food safety systems.



Asli Solmaz-Kaiser, CEO of iComplai, delved into the transformative potential of AI in food safety. She explained the distinctions between machine learning, artificial intelligence, deep learning, and large language models and shared insights into their practical applications, such as supplier monitoring, visual inspections, predictive maintenance, and animal welfare. Solmaz-Kaiser also highlighted the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration to implement AI solutions effectively within time and budget constraints.



Deleo de Leonardis, CEO and Co-Founder of Purity IQ Inc., discussed the critical role of advanced analytical testing in combating food fraud. He explored how cutting-edge techniques enhance mitigation strategies, including improving supply chain transparency and strengthening regulatory frameworks to ensure food integrity and maintain consumer trust. Deleo also highlighted the importance of choosing the right testing methods, as not all approaches are equal, and the selection process can significantly impact the effectiveness of fraud prevention efforts.



In the closing keynote, Spir Marinakis, VP of Food Safety, Quality, Technical Services, and Sanitation at Maple Leaf Foods Inc., took attendees on a journey through the company's response to the 2008 recall. She shared the actions taken following the incident and outlined how Maple Leaf Foods has continued to foster a strong food safety culture in the years since. Spir emphasized the ongoing commitment to food safety and the lessons learned that have shaped the company's current practices.



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LABORATORY SERVICES





## AWARDS

### IAFP 2024

The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) hosted its 2024 Annual Meeting from July 14–17 at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California. This global event brought together over 3,500 food safety professionals from industry, academia, and government, representing six continents.

The conference showcased cutting-edge developments in food safety through a robust program featuring current and emerging challenges, the latest scientific research, and practical solutions. Attendees participated in engaging sessions led by leading experts, explored innovative technologies at the exhibit hall, and networked with peers from diverse sectors.

Pre-meeting workshops offered in-depth training on critical topics, including dry cleaning and sanitization, pathogen reduction in low-moisture foods, genome sequencing analysis, hazard analysis principles, and fostering a strong food safety culture.

The event maintained its reputation for excellence by highlighting industry innovations, honoring outstanding contributions, and providing a platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing to advance food safety worldwide.

The **International Association for Food Protection (IAFP)** recognizes outstanding contributions to food safety through various awards, including the **Certificate of Merit Awards** and **Affiliate Awards**.

The **Affiliate Member Education Award** recognizes an Affiliate that excels in educating its members through technical meetings, conferences, webinars, or workshops focused on food protection and safety. In 2024, the **Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA)** earned this prestigious award for its outstanding contributions to member education, receiving a mounted certificate to honor this achievement.



International Association for  
Food Protection<sup>®</sup>

2900 100th Street, Suite 309  
Des Moines, Iowa USA 50322-3855

April 23, 2024

Jessica Burke  
BRCGS  
15 Martin Street  
Suite 202  
Milton, Ontario  
Canada

Dear Jess,

On behalf of the Executive Board and Membership of IAFP, we congratulate the Ontario Food Protection Association on being selected to receive the 2024 Affiliate Member Education Award! Through its organization of 12 webinars during 2023; a monthly E-blast newsletter including food safety information; an annual and two technical meetings; and networking social meetings with high attendance, OFPA was able to continue to educate its attendees in current relevant matters in food safety. The award consists of a mounted certificate.

This year, the Affiliate Council Meeting will take place on Sunday, July 14, 2024 at 7:30 a.m. (Eastern Time US) during IAFP 2024 in Long Beach, California. We invite an individual from your Affiliate to attend this meeting to formally accept this award.

It gives us great pleasure to recognize the accomplishments of IAFP Affiliates. Thank you for your efforts and for your relationship with IAFP.

Sincerely,

Tim Jackson  
President, IAFP

Lisa K. Hovey, CAE  
Executive Director, IAFP

cc: Fabiana Guglielmone, 2024 Affiliate Council Chair

Our mission is: To provide food safety professionals worldwide with a forum to exchange information on protecting the food supply

Publisher of the *Journal of Food Protection*<sup>®</sup> and *Food Protection Trends*

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International Association for  
Food Protection

# *Certificate of Recognition*

*Presented to the*

**Ontario Food Protection Association**

*for Accomplishment in the area of*

**AFFILIATE MEMBER EDUCATION AWARD**

Presented July 14, 2024

*John Doe*  
President

*John Doe*  
President

*John Doe*  
President

**Certificate of Merit Awards** are presented to IAFP members who have demonstrated active participation in both their local Affiliate and the International Association, upholding the organization's ideals and objectives. Nominations are submitted by the Affiliate's Executive Board and approved by the IAFP Affiliate Council Board. The IAFP Affiliate Council Board can also nominate recipients. Recipients are acknowledged at the IAFP Affiliate Council Meeting and their respective local Affiliate meetings. We are proud and happy to announce that Ontario Food Protection Association Jessica Burke (2024 President), Ellen Gravi (2024 Director at Large) and Nadia Narine (2023 President) were proud recipients of this award for devotion to the ideas and objectives of the International Association for Food Protection and the Ontario Food Protection Association



#### **OFPA Awards: 2024 Award Winners Announcement**

The Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA) is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2024 awards, recognizing outstanding achievements in food safety and commitment to advancing the industry. These individuals exemplify excellence and dedication in promoting food safety and protecting public health.

### Food Safety Professional of the Year Award

This prestigious award goes to an individual who has demonstrated exemplary leadership, innovation, and dedication in the field of food safety. **Jennefer Griffith, Executive Director, Food Processing Skills Canada**, is the proud recipient of this award for the follow contributions

- Over 20 Years of Leadership: Jennefer has been a pivotal figure in skills development and training within the Canadian food and beverage manufacturing sector for more than two decades.
- Innovative Initiatives: As Executive Director of Food Processing Skills Canada, she led the creation of groundbreaking programs such as the Canadian Food Processors Institute™, FoodSkills Library™, and FoodCert™.
- Advancing Education: These initiatives have been instrumental in supporting education, career development, and workforce pathways for both businesses and individuals in the industry.
- Pioneering Industry Standards: Jennefer and her team recently completed Canada's first Learning Recognition Framework for the food industry and are working on a national labour market analysis and an accreditation process for educational institutions.
- Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion: She is dedicated to helping underrepresented groups—including new Canadians, Indigenous People, women, and youth—find rewarding careers in the food and beverage sector.

### Award of Merit

The Award of Merit is presented to **Arlene Larson** and **Brett Dooley** in recognition of their substantial contributions to Ontario Food Protection Association. Their work has impacted OFPA significantly. The awards were presented live at the OFPA Annual General Meeting on October 1, 2024. Profiles of the award recipients will soon be available on the OFPA website, highlighting their valuable contributions. We look forward to celebrating their achievements and continuing to foster a community committed to excellence in food protection.



### 3 Minute Thesis – Clive Kingsbury Competition

Participants:

1. Timothy Odoh, The Role of Technology in Reducing the Impact of Food Bioterrorism, University of Guelph.
2. Claudia Laiza, A Global Perspective on Fusarium Contamination: Climate-Induced Mycotoxin Risks in Cereal Crops, University of Guelph.
3. Yakini Howell, Youkie Stagg, Evidence on the Effectiveness of UV-C Technology to Reduce Pathogens on Seaweed, Centennial College.
4. Harleen Kaur, Ibukun Oniyinde, The Effect of Sample Matrix on early detection of spiked *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in Oats Using PCR and SPC, Centennial College.
5. Sonal Saini, How changes in temperature influence the rate and extent of biofilm formation of *Pseudomonas licheniformis* in milk, Centennial College.



## **Recap of Monthly Webinars 2024**

**Past Webinars are available to members.**

January: Enhancing Guidance for Food Allergen Management in Canada

Presenters: Beatrice Povoio, Silvia Dominguez, Samuel Godefroy, Sharon Mohammed

Content: Overview of new Allergen Management Guidelines for Canadian food manufacturers. Discussed the application of precautionary allergen labeling and effective allergen control plans to meet the needs of Canadians managing food allergies.

February: The Common Principles of QA & Product Safety Between Food and Edibles

Presenter: Parviz Yousefian

Content: Explored shared principles of QA and product safety in food and edibles industries, emphasizing ingredient sourcing, quality control, and regulatory standards. Also included strategies to prepare food program students for industry challenges.

March: Food Recall Strategies: Challenges and Solutions

Presenter: Prit Hora

Content: Addressed hazard identification, recall prevention strategies, root cause analysis, and corrective actions to strengthen recall management and product safety.

April: Effectively Managing Supplier Risks and Ingredient Hazards

Moderator: Birendra N Rajapreyar

Presenters: Olawumi Yusuff, Asli Solmaz-Kaiser

Content: Insights into proactive risk management and the role of technology in safeguarding product quality and brand integrity. Discussed emerging food safety risks and technological applications.

May: Genomics 101: Applications in the Food Industry

Presenter: Dr. Larry Goodridge

Content: Explored the role of genomics in food safety, including whole genome sequencing, pathogen surveillance, outbreak investigations, and bioinformatics tools.

June: Practical Considerations in Food Safety Digitization

Moderator: Birendra N Rajapreyar

Presenters: Jennifer Williams, Birendra N Rajapreyar

Content: Discussed strategies for digitizing food safety processes, cross-functional collaboration, and measuring the success of digitization initiatives.

July: Cleaning and Sanitation Validation: Prospects and Bottlenecks

Presenter: Dr. Basit Muhammad

Content: Covered the complexities of sanitation validation, including microbial resistance, allergen cleaning tactics, and regulatory compliance under GFSI and FSMA standards.

August: Cyber Resilience for Food Safety

Moderator: Kajam Kunarajasingam

Presenters: Peter Daher, Jatinder Mann

Content: Simulated a cyber-attack to demonstrate its impact on the food supply chain. Highlighted strategies for securing critical infrastructure and enhancing compliance measures.

September: Navigating Government Grants and Funding Complexities

Moderator: Brett Dooley

Presenters: Paul Valder, Declan Barber

Content: Tackled challenges in securing grants and funding, offering strategies for combining opportunities, overcoming hurdles, and maximizing eligibility.

October: Empowering Foodservice: Meeting Consumer Needs through Food Allergy Solutions

Presenters: Kate Reid, Lennie Ouimette

Content: Focused on resources for food allergy management in foodservice, featuring practical applications and insights from Kawartha Dairy.

November: AMA with Siarl Dixon

Moderator: Ellen Gravi

Presenter: Siarl Dixon

Content: Open Q&A on food safety auditing, including BRCGS, SQF, and SMETA standards, auditor career paths, and best practices for preparing audits.

December: Best Practices for Manufacturing Gluten-Free Products

Moderator: Dharamdeo Singh

Presenter: Barry Meikle

Content: Detailed steps for gluten-free product manufacturing, including HACCP, training, sampling, testing, and making gluten-free claims.

Thank you to our 2024 SCM (Sustaining Corporate Members)

Become a SCM here: <https://ofpa.on.ca/join/sustaining-corporate-member/>

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## Sustaining Corporate Members

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS, & DIRECTORS AT LARGE



**Marin Pavlic**  
*President*



**Arlene Larson**  
*Vice-President*



**Kajam (KJ) Kunarajasingam**  
*Treasurer*



**Jessica Burke**  
*Director*



**Birendra Rajapreya**  
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*Director*





**Darshan Gautre**  
*Director*



**Dharamdeo Singh**  
*Student Director*

## Financial summary –

REVENUE	2023 Achieved	2024 Proposed
Membership fees	\$ 11,717.70	\$ 12,186.41
Fall Meeting	\$ 28,436.64	\$ 29,574.11
Spring Meeting	\$ 22,911.50	\$ 23,827.96
Social Night	\$ 8,191.59	\$ 8,519.25
Webinar and other	\$ 5,843.19	\$ 6,076.92
Government Assistance - Ontario Small Business Support Grant	\$ -	\$ -
Interest income	\$ 209.79	\$ 218.18
	<b>\$ 77,310.41</b>	<b>\$ 80,402.83</b>
EXPENSES	2023 Achieved	2024 Proposed
Administration	\$ -	\$ -
Scholarships and Awards	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 2,288.00
Advertising and Promotion	\$ -	\$ -
Insurance	\$ 1,401.97	\$ 1,458.05
Fall Meeting	\$ 12,712.77	\$ 13,221.28
Spring Meeting	\$ 10,782.04	\$ 11,213.32
Social Night	\$ 2,927.27	\$ 3,044.36
Office and General; Board Meeting	\$ 4,179.84	\$ 4,347.03
Professional Fees		\$ -
Memberships and conference	\$ 1,891.63	\$ 1,967.30
Bank charges, interest and merchant fees	\$ 2,385.75	\$ 2,481.18
Consulting	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,560.00
Website	\$ 23,617.67	\$ 24,562.38
Accounting	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,560.00
	<b>\$ 65,098.94</b>	<b>\$ 67,702.90</b>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDETURES	\$ 12,211.47	\$ 12,699.93
Net ASSETS, end of 2023		\$ 51,520.00
Forcasted ASSETS,end of 2024		\$ 54,096.00

	1 Forecasted	2 Actual (end August 2024)	3 Estimate after Fall Event
 Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 12700	\$ 54195	\$ 8722
 Assets, end of 2024	\$ 54096	\$ 98245	\$ 52772



## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

**Connect** with food safety professionals, exchange ideas, experiences, and share information through our social events, technical seminars and monthly webinars.



**Learn** new ideas, strategies, and best practices for safe, hygienic food production from industry, government & academic professionals.

**Participate** in workshops, industry discussions & panels



Members have access to **discounts** at OFPA & other industry events

The association **recognizes** companies and individuals for their outstanding work in food safety. We issue annual scholarships to students who have demonstrated excellence in food safety.



Join now at [www.ofpa.on.ca/join/our-members](http://www.ofpa.on.ca/join/our-members)

# Membership Options

THE ONTARIO FOOD PROTECTION ASSOCIATION IS YOUR LINK TO THE FOOD SAFETY INDUSTRY.  
BECOMING A MEMBER OF OFPA PUTS A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES AT YOUR  
FINGERTIPS, CONNECTING YOU WITH PEERS WHO WILL HELP GROW YOUR TALENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES.



## PROFESSIONAL MEMBER

Open to all food safety professionals in the food industry. This includes food inspection, food safety, quality assurance, laboratory analysis, administration, research, education, supervision, or practical application of hygiene, sanitation, and related fields in the food production chain from farm to fork.



## RETIRED

Open to retired OFPA members who are no longer receiving compensation for work relating to the objectives of OFPA and who have been regular or sustaining members for at least 10 years.



## STUDENT

Must be enrolled full or part-time in a course directed towards a career in the fields of food safety, public health, environmental management or similar sciences. (Include copy of valid student ID card or letter from a professor with application).contribution to the mission and objectives of the association.



## SUSTAINING CORPORATE MEMBER

Open to companies, corporations, other organizations or associations interested in the promotion of food safety and support the objectives of the OFPA. You will be able to register up to 10 of your staff at OFPA events by registering as a SCM. you have all the benefits of one professional membership for one person and your company logo will be displayed and linked on the homepage of our website.

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