

## Opening Remarks

To the OFPA Community,

Food safety is ultimately about people, making the right decisions every day to protect consumers and maintain trust. In 2025, our industry faced increasing regulatory expectations, operational pressures, and workforce challenges. In response, OFPA's focus this year was on investing in people, strengthening engagement, and delivering practical training that supports real-world decision-making.

The strongest food safety programs are built not only on procedures but also on confident, well-trained individuals who understand the importance of their roles. Meaningful, practical training helps embed food safety into daily operations and supports a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

As President of OFPA, I am proud of the value our association provides. Membership offers access to a trusted network of peers, current regulatory insight, and practical learning opportunities through conferences, workshops, and webinars. Most importantly, OFPA creates a collaborative community where professionals can share experiences, learn from one another, and collectively raise the standard of food safety across the industry.

Thank you for your continued dedication to food safety and for your ongoing support of OFPA. I look forward to connecting with many of you throughout the year.

Sincerely,

2025 President, Ontario Food Protection Association

Marin Pavlic

# **Highlights from the OFPA 68th Annual Food Safety Conference**

The Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA) hosted its 68th Annual Food Safety Conference on September 30th - October 1st, 2025, bringing together over 150 industry leaders, regulators, students, and food safety professionals for two days of engaging presentations, collaborative discussions, and exciting networking opportunities.

## **Day 1**

### **Keynote: From Insight to Impact - What a Decade of Culture Change Has Taught Us About Safer Food**

The first day of the Food Safety Conference featured an engaging lineup of sessions that provided valuable insights into the latest trends, challenges, and solutions in food safety. Dr. Lone Jespersen of Cultivate SA delivered a keynote on the complexities and possibilities of building a strong food safety culture. She outlined four leading indicators that organisations can use to assess and understand their cultural maturity. Jespersen shared four real-world examples from Cultivate clients that showcased how leadership, technology, data, and HR strategies drive meaningful change. She closed by grounding the work in the deeper “why” behind food safety, emphasising that with committed leadership and consistent effort, culture transformation is achievable.



## **Session title: Strengthening Food Safety Through Strategic Oversight: Regulatory Insights and Emerging Priorities**

Kevin Urbanic, Director General, CFIA, provided an overview of current CFIA regulatory activities, inspection practices, and emerging food safety priorities. The session highlighted findings from recent food safety investigations, recall trends, and the importance of robust preventive systems in regulated industries.



## **Session title: Foreign Material Detection Strategies**

Moderated by Jessica Burke (OFPA Past President), this session brought together industry leaders JP Perrault (Mettler-Toledo X-Ray Recovery), Gwynne Sitsker (Embassy Ingredients), and Kris Middleton (Alchemy) to explore evolving approaches to foreign material control. Speakers emphasized the foundational role of strong risk assessments, frontline employee engagement, and a robust food safety culture in preventing contamination. The discussion highlighted current challenges across facilities of varying sizes, as well as the need for tailored programs, ongoing training, and collaboration with technology partners. Panelists also examined emerging detection technologies, such as targeted X-ray technology, and encouraged industry adoption of modern tools to strengthen product integrity and consumer safety.



## **Session title: Consumer Demand: Greater Clarity and Standardization in Food Labelling**

Michelle Anstey from NSF's North American Regulatory Consulting team presented an overview of current consumer expectations and regulatory trends shaping food labelling. Drawing on a 2024 survey of 1,000 Canadians, her research found that consumers are seeking greater transparency on allergens, processing methods, sustainability, and nutrition than what current labelling standards require. Michelle also noted sharp increases in consumer engagement with labels, especially among younger shoppers, alongside widespread confusion about technical terms and certification claims. She concluded with recommendations for industry, including clearer allergen labeling, standardized terminology, and the use of tools such as QR codes to provide deeper, more accessible product information.



## Session title: Food Safety Analytics: Doing More with Less

Moderated by Marin Pavlic, OFPA President, this panel brought together Rebecca Marshall (Maple Leaf Foods), Bianca Calimlim (Compass Group Canada), and Stephen Vijayakumar (Sobeys) to discuss practical strategies for strengthening food safety culture across diverse operational settings. The speakers shared insights on elevating frontline engagement, improving cross-functional communication, and embedding accountability throughout their organisations. They highlighted the value of leadership visibility, simple and consistent messaging, and data-driven performance tracking in driving behavioural change. The session reinforced that advancing food safety culture requires both organisational commitment and everyday actions that empower employees to make safe decisions.



## **Session title: Life in the Dry: Food Safety and Risk Management Options Associated with Low-Moisture Foods**

Dr. Keith Warriner from the University of Guelph's Department of Food Science presented a comprehensive look at food safety challenges associated with low-moisture foods (LMFs), a broad category that includes grains, spices, nuts, teas, dried fruits, and more. He explained that although low water activity typically prevents microbial growth, LMFs have been repeatedly linked to foodborne illness outbreaks, including recent *Salmonella* contamination in pistachios. Dr. Warriner outlined how pathogens adapt to survive in dry environments and reviewed the key organisms of concern for industry. He concluded by discussing emerging risk-management approaches, with a particular focus on gas-phase hydroxyl radical treatments that can inactivate pathogens without adding moisture to the product.



## **Samantha Cooke and Ian MacGillivray, Daily Bread Food Bank**

Day One wrapped up with a powerful presentation from Samantha Cooke and Ian MacGillivray of the Daily Bread Food Bank, discussing the rapid rise in food insecurity across Toronto and Canada. They highlighted that food bank usage in Toronto has increased fivefold since pre-COVID, with over 300,000 monthly clients now relying on Daily Bread Food Bank aid, many of whom are working households and individuals with post-secondary education. Sam and Ian shared striking national trends showing that severe food insecurity has doubled since 2019 and

outlined key drivers, including unaffordable housing, inadequate income supports, and precarious employment. They closed with a call to action, emphasizing policy solutions, the importance of reducing food waste, and how a clearer understanding of best-before dates can safely increase donations and support community needs.



## Day 2

### **Session title: Should HACCP Still Be the Backbone of Your Food Safety Program?**

Sam Davidson kicked off day two with a practical, experience-driven overview of HACCP grounded in his 35 years in the food industry, beginning with early lessons on foodborne illness and the origins of HACCP as developed by Pillsbury. He traced the evolution of HACCP into a global standard through Codex and highlighted its ongoing importance in building consumer trust, especially amid growing audit expectations under GFSI. Davidson also discussed the regulatory landscape, including the impacts of FDA, USDA, and FSMA, underscoring the need for strong preventive controls and well-documented HACCP plans. He closed by contrasting older industry practices with modern risk-based approaches, reinforcing the critical role of clear

limits, robust documentation, and continuous improvement in today's food safety programs.



## **Session title: Transitioning from School to Workplace – Practical Advice for Students and Recent Graduates**

Veronica Hislop from Toronto Metropolitan University offered valuable guidance to students and new graduates transitioning into the workforce, focusing on the differences between academic and professional environments and expectations. Veronica emphasized treating school like a job, building strong communication skills, gaining early industry experience, and staying curious about diverse career pathways. Once in a role, new professionals were encouraged to learn the company culture, build meaningful relationships, and approach their development with confidence and enjoyment. The session closed with insights on teamwork, adaptability, and networking, underscoring that long-term success comes from continuous learning and active engagement in the workplace.



## **Session title: Cultivating Food Safety Culture in Your Sanitation Team**

John Boyce, a Vancouver-based independent food safety consultant with 25 years at Trident Seafoods and a unique early career as a commercial crab fisherman, delivered an engaging talk on building a strong food safety culture. He introduced Cultivate SA's food safety culture maturity model, outlining key dimensions such as values, people systems, consistency, risk management, and change leadership. Boyce walked attendees through the stages of cultural maturity and highlighted the essential but often overlooked role of sanitation teams in controlling physical, biological, and chemical hazards. He also explored common risky behaviours and shared tools, such as the ABC (Antecedents–Behaviours–Consequences) model, to help organizations improve frontline decision-making and reduce food safety risks.



## **Session title: Data Analytics Workshop – Learn PowerQuery and PowerBI**

Adriano Gaspari of Maple Leaf Foods expanded on the Day 1 panel discussion with a practical session on how food safety teams can advance their analytics capabilities using minimal resources. He broke down the analytics journey, from data collection and cleaning to analysis, visualization, and communication, showing how even small improvements can reduce errors and uncover meaningful trends. Gaspari demonstrated how automating repetitive tasks can free up time and improve accuracy, emphasizing tools that are already accessible to most teams. A live walkthrough of Excel's Power Query highlighted its value as an easy, low-cost entry point for organizations beginning their food safety analytics journey.



## **Session title: Creating Engaging Training for Operations**

Nicole Tucker of Skjodt-Barrett Foods delivered a practical session on designing engaging, effective training for food manufacturing operators. She highlighted strategies to make training relevant to daily production activities, emphasizing clear communication and hands-on learning. Tucker also explored ways to make sessions more interactive so employees can easily apply concepts on the floor. Her presentation reinforced the importance of strong, well-designed training for building and sustaining a robust food safety culture.



## **Session title: Internal Audits and External Audits – The Goal of Always Being Audit-Ready**

Craig Stewart, Food Safety Systems Specialist at Sofina Foods, delivered an informative session on leveraging audits within food safety management systems. He explained the purpose and value of audits, emphasizing their role in identifying gaps, driving continuous improvement, and ensuring compliance. Stewart highlighted key auditor skills and outlined practical auditing techniques. He concluded by reinforcing the importance of organization-wide audit readiness, stressing cross-functional involvement, consistent communication, and strong senior leadership engagement to maintain a robust and compliant food safety system.



## **Keynote: Rethinking Risk - How Misinterpreting Data Threatens Food Safety**

Mark Carter, Senior Product Manager at Virginia Tech and former IAFP President, provided an in-depth update on global IAFP initiatives, member benefits, and plans for the upcoming annual meeting. He highlighted efforts to make membership more accessible worldwide, expand professional engagement opportunities, and strengthen the value of IAFP Connect as a hub for networking and knowledge sharing. Carter also discussed emerging global food safety challenges, the importance of accurately interpreting microbiological data, and how advances such as PCR and Bayesian thinking are reshaping risk assessment. His presentation emphasized the need for transparent data practices, representative sampling, and critical thinking to improve the reliability of food safety decisions.



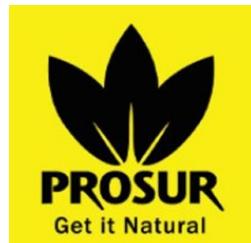
## **Session title: Leveraging modern technology for food safety surveillance**

Dr Lawrence Goodridge from the University of Guelph highlighted the limitations of traditional, passive foodborne illness surveillance systems and the significant delays that hinder effective outbreak detection and response. He introduced the concept of precision food safety, drawing parallels with precision medicine and emphasizing the use of emerging technologies such as whole-genome sequencing, enhanced environmental monitoring, and internet-based surveillance tools. Goodridge explored how data streams from social media to platforms can offer earlier signals of illness trends, while cautioning about their reliability and risks. His session underscored the need for proactive, technology-enabled monitoring approaches to better identify contamination sources, reduce outbreak duration, and protect public health.



## With Gratitude to Our Sponsors & Exhibitors

We extend our sincere thanks to all our sponsors and exhibitors for their generous support, which made this year's conference possible. Your commitment to food safety, innovation, and industry excellence plays a vital role in advancing our shared mission and strengthening Ontario's food protection community.





NAVIGATE  
FOOD SAFETY SOLUTIONS

ISO<sup>9001</sup> LOCITY  
BRCGS

LABPLAS  
SAMPLING | SPECIALIST

AFCO<sup>®</sup>

eurofins | Experchem

AIB  
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ChemStation

intertek  
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## Awards

### IAFP 2025

The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) hosted its 2025 Annual Meeting from July 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the Huntington Convention Center in Cleveland, Ohio. The meeting was attended by more than 3,000 of the top industry, academic, and governmental food safety professionals from six continents. This renowned event owes its reputation and success to the quantity, quality, and diversity of each year's program; the quality and relevance of exhibits showcasing the latest available technologies; leading experts speaking on a variety of timely topics; and special recognition of outstanding professionals and students for their contributions in the food safety field.

The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) Affiliate Communication Materials Award recognizes an IAFP Affiliate that consistently produces high-quality communication materials for its general membership. Recipients are evaluated on how regularly they distribute informative, engaging content, such as newsletters, email updates, website posts, or other

communication tools, with a focus on clarity, relevance, and attractive design. This award highlights excellence in keeping members informed and connected through outstanding communication efforts. OFPA was very proud to accept the 2025 Affiliate Communication Materials Award.





## OFPA Awards:

The Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA) is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2025 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

The Food Safety Professional of the Year Award may be presented to a food safety professional or company deemed to have contributed outstanding service to the Food Industry in Ontario, e.g., demonstrated expertise on sanitation procedures, improved food safety culture at a company, conducted research that made an applied contribution to food safety, or provided excellent educational or training activities to food companies. Gwynne Sitsker, Director of Food Safety and Quality at Embassy Ingredients, is the proud recipient of this award for 2025.

Through her leadership, this professional has made a significant impact on both food safety culture and operational efficiency. By integrating food safety practices with lean initiatives and empowering employees to take ownership of safety, she has created a dynamic and engaged workforce that prioritizes both safety and continuous improvement. Her ability to collaborate with operations and drive lean initiatives has set a new standard for seamlessly incorporating food safety into the daily operations of the business, making her a deserving candidate for the Food Safety Professional of the Year award. OFPA extends warm congratulations to Gwynne and wishes her all the best for her future!

## FOOD SAFETY PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD



*Congratulation*



**GWYNNE SITSKER**  
Director of Food Safety & Quality at  
Embassy Ingredients

## **Young Food Safety Professional of the Year Award**

This brand-new award may be presented to a food safety professional, that finished their post-secondary education within the last 5 years. They are recognized as an outstanding emerging professional who, within five years of completing their formal education, has demonstrated exceptional promise and meaningful contributions to the Food Industry in Ontario. This may include showing leadership and initiative in sanitation practices, positively shaping food safety culture within an organization, advancing applied research with practical food safety outcomes, or delivering impactful education and training that supports and elevates food companies. The inaugural recipient of this award is Darshan Gautre from FGF Brands, sponsored by Ellen Gravi (Gravi Food Safety owner and OFPA's BOD).

In recognition of Darshan's exceptional contributions, leadership, and commitment to advancing food safety at an early stage in his career. He has demonstrated rapid professional growth, and his impact extends well beyond the workplace. Darshan created a platform for students to showcase their talents, gain visibility, and access mentorship and networking opportunities. Through this initiative and his personal efforts, he has referred and guided many students in securing their first co-op and job opportunities. He is also committed to broad knowledge-sharing. He creates regulatory and educational content on LinkedIn. He is currently developing a website to provide training and education to food safety professionals, further highlighting his dedication to building future talent. OFPA extends warm congratulations to Darshan and wishes him all the best for his future!

# YOUNG FOOD SAFETY PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD



*Congratulation*

**DARSHAN GAUTRE**  
Auditor at  
FGF Brands

## **3 Minute Thesis – Clive Kingsbury Competition**

### **Participants:**

1. Stefan Lopez, Ferry Chlabra, Timothy Odoh, Improving organizational food safety culture with artificial intelligence, University of Guelph.
2. Laura Warriner, When Fungi Fight Back: The Hidden Thread to our Foods, University of Guelph.
3. Anxin Zhao, Flushing out foodborne outbreaks, University of Guelph.
4. Shreya Patel, Isolation and Screening of Exopolysaccharide producing bacteria from marine habitat and its application, Lambton College.
5. Farah Al Qudsi, Mushroom Magic: How Reishi shapes cows gut health and its promise for human well-being, University of Guelph.

Congratulations to Farah Al Qudsi from the University of Guelph, winner of the OFPA 2025 Clive Kingsbury Competition. Farah's presentation of Mushroom Magic: How Reishi shapes cows' gut health, and its promise for human well-being was novel and showed

### **Mushroom Magic: How Reishi shapes cows gut health and its promise for human well-being.**



## **Recap of Monthly Webinars 2025**

Past Webinars are available to members.

### **February: Paper to Digital: Streamlining Food Safety Management**

Presenter: Tanguy Etoga

Content: This webinar is designed to empower food safety professionals to embrace digital transformation and overcome the inefficiencies of traditional paper-based systems.

### **March: Allergen Management**

Presenter: Brandon Wong

Content: Informative webinar focused on allergen management in the food industry. This session will cover essential topics for understanding and mitigating food allergen risks, with a specific focus on Canada's regulatory landscape and practical solutions for food safety.

### **April: Environmental Monitoring in the Food Industry: Advancing Hygiene with Innovative ATP Testing**

Presenters: Peter Beers

Content: Explore the importance of environmental monitoring programs in the food industry, with a particular focus on advanced sanitation methods. Attendees will gain insights into the science of environmental monitoring, the role of ATP testing in hygiene verification, and how new technologies can enhance sanitation practices to meet food safety demands.

### **May: Smart Compliance for Food Companies: Lean Data Management & Proportional Quality Systems**

Presenter: Chris Budd

Content: Food Manufacturing, maintaining compliance isn't just a requirement—it's a responsibility. But as regulations grow more complex, so does the risk of bloated systems, data overload, and inefficient processes. Join Isolocity for a focused seminar on how lean data management and proportionality can help food companies streamline their quality systems without compromising compliance.

### **June: Building the Foundation: Achieving Traceability and Transparency in the Food Supply Chain**

Presenters: Lucelena Angarita, Rishi Banerjee

Content: As expectations for transparency and precision in food delivery increase, food safety teams must collaborate closely with IT, operations, and procurement to ensure data integrity and seamless traceability from source to shelf.

### **October: Webinar: Gemba 101 – From Boots to Brilliance: Leading Food Safety on the Factory Floor**

Presenters: Dr. Heidi Gough, Dr. Lone Jespersen & John Boyce

Content: This webinar, presented by three members of the Cultivate Core Team, explores how Gemba walks can reinforce leadership credibility, foster employee engagement, and drive continuous improvement in food manufacturing settings.

### **November: Procurement as the First Line of Defense Against Food Fraud**

Presenter: Deleo de Leonardis, Co-Founder & CEO, Purity-IQ

Content: Food fraud isn't just a regulatory or quality concern — it often begins at the sourcing stage. Procurement teams make critical decisions around cost, suppliers, and raw materials, creating touchpoints where adulteration or misrepresentation can silently enter the supply chain.

### **December: Leveraging AI Agents for Accuracy and Automation in Food Quality, Safety, and Compliance**

Presenter: Jeff Hetherington

Content: How Visual AI solutions and specialized AI Agents are revolutionizing Quality Assurance and compliance. This technology provides objective, consistent, and continuous verification for Food Quality, Safety, and Security.

## **Thank you to our 2025 SCM (Sustaining Corporate Members)**

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

## Sustaining Corporate Members

			
		FoodSafetyMarket marché de la sécurité alimentaire	
			
			
			
			

## 2025 Board of Directors:



## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jessica Burke  
*Past-President*



Marin Pavlic  
*President*



Kajam (KI) Kunarajasingam  
*Treasurer*



Ellen Gravi  
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Dharamdeo Singh  
*Student Director*



Birendra Rajapreyar  
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Hanna Sharifi  
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Tanya Waraich  
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Hayley Pfeifer  
*Director*



Stephen Vijayakumar  
*Director*



Jinky Austria  
*Director*



Nicole Tucker  
*Director*



Wendy Dillon  
*Director*

### Financial summary:

	1 Actual (end Sept 2025)	2 Estimate after Fall Event
	Excess of revenue over expenditures \$ 65,465.48	\$ 22,173.03
	Assets, end of 2025 \$ 115,319.64	\$ 72,027.19

### Membership – How to become a member

## 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



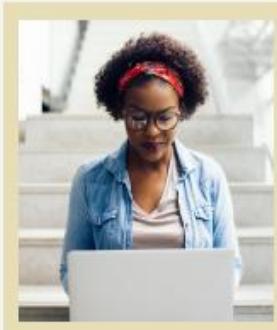
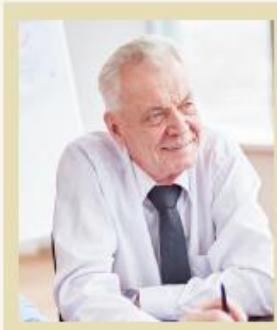
The association **recognizes** companies and individuals for their outstanding work in food safety. We issue annual scholarships to students who have demonstrated excellence in food safety.

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.

**\$80/Year**

**\$35/Year**

**\$20/Year**

**\$250/Year**

## Sponsor Spotlight: X-ray Reclaim



X-ray Reclaim is a trusted leader in advanced x-ray inspection and production rework services for the food and beverage industry across North America. Based in Bolton, Ontario, the company supports processors with fast, accurate, and reliable contaminant detection using industry-leading Eagle PI x-ray technology.

Their state-of-the-art systems are capable of detecting a wide range of foreign materials, including metal fragments, glass shards, stones, plastic pieces, rubber particles, and bone fragments from beef, pork, and poultry (including young commodity birds), as small as 0.2 mm. This exceptional level of sensitivity helps food manufacturers protect brand integrity, meet regulatory requirements, and most importantly, ensure consumer safety.

What sets X-ray Reclaim apart is their ability to provide external inspection and production rework services, allowing facilities to quickly recover from contamination events without costly product loss or extended downtime. Their services offer processors peace of mind, operational efficiency, and a dependable solution when quality issues arise.

The Ontario Food Protection Association is proud to recognize X-Ray Reclaim as this year's newsletter sponsor and to partner with an organization so deeply committed to advancing food safety across the industry.

For more information or support, contact X-Ray Reclaim at 1-877-813-7287 or visit [www.xrayreclaim.com](http://www.xrayreclaim.com).

## **Committee Updates:**

### **Social media committee**

The Social Media Committee has remained highly active, driving ongoing engagement across platforms, especially LinkedIn, to reinforce OFPA's visual identity and promote awareness of its wide range of offerings.

### **Membership committee:**

OFPA experienced a 23% increase in Professional Membership for 2025. To drive engagement and promote memberships, the committee has discounted events, developed themed membership discount initiatives, free webinars, perks such as service to members (Lumar), training discounts (NSF) and partnerships (BRCGS, AQIA, CIFST, BCFPA).

### **Website committee:**

The Website Committee has been actively working to ensure our website remains current, informative, and easy to navigate. The site continues to serve as a central hub for important information, including details about the organisation, our annual event, and upcoming webinars.

In addition to ongoing maintenance and routine updates, the Website Committee has delivered several key improvements this year:

- **Events Page Enhancements:** We introduced a new menu bar to improve navigation and access to event resources.
- **Webinar Page Updates:** We added an option to sponsor a webinar when one has not yet been sponsored.
- **Backend Redesign:** The website backend was revamped to improve internal manageability and efficiency.

### **Finance committee**

The Finance Committee reviewed and streamlined key operational expenses, delivering meaningful cost savings and efficiency gains. By transitioning hosting services and Board email accounts to Google for Nonprofits, OFPA eliminated hosting fees and strengthened internal communication. These initiatives demonstrate OFPA's ongoing commitment to financial responsibility and a strong, efficient digital infrastructure.

## **Sponsorship committee**

The Sponsorship Committee developed two new sponsorship offerings:

Opportunity to sponsor academic scholarships and awards to support eligible University of Guelph and Conestoga College students. Sponsorship includes acknowledgement of the donor during the award presentation.

Premiere Partner Package to get the most value all year round - includes:

- Event exhibitor package
- Host a breakout session at the annual event
- 1 webinar or podcast
- 1/2-page Newsletter ad
- 2 e-blast ads

## **Partnership Committee**

The partnership committee established the following partnerships in 2025:

### **BRCGS Professionals:**

- 20% off Membership (which includes access to webinars, discount prices for events and all perks of being a member) – CEU.

### **OFPA Members:**

- 10% discount on BRCGS online training programs;
- Discount on BRCGS Connect Events.

### **Partnership with AQIA (Association Québécoise pour l'Innocuité Alimentaire) and BCFPA (British Columbia Food Protection Association):**

- Joint webinars/events, exchange of experiences and communication.

### **CIFST (Canadian Institute of Food Science & Technology):**

- Free webinars
- Discount to events.

## **Educational Outreach committee**

The educational outreach committee rolled out a new monthly e-blast format that includes:

- Monthly updates from OFPA and the community.
- News, food safety riddle, regulatory updates.

## **Awards Committee**

The committee is advancing initiatives to modernize OFPA's awards program by reviewing and benchmarking award categories and eligibility, developing a structured nomination strategy to increase participation, and incorporating success metrics to improve visibility and engagement. In collaboration with the Sponsorship Committee, efforts are also underway to secure award sponsorships, strengthening financial sustainability and industry involvement in support of OFPA's 2025 strategic objectives.

## **Student Engagement Committee**

The committee is developing multiple student-focused initiatives, including a recognition program, targeted committee recruitment, industry site visits, and student-led events to enhance engagement, practical learning, and professional development. Collectively, these initiatives strengthen industry connections, optimize committee support, and elevate the value and visibility of student involvement in alignment with OFPA's 2025 strategic objectives.