



OTTAWA VALLEY FOOD CO-OPERATIVE

Annual Report For 2020



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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This has been a very different year for the OVFC, as it was for everyone. Demand for local food increased substantially, allowing us to increase our order volumes and gain new members. We moved our central distribution centre when our previous facilities were shut down. We changed our processes and worked hard to keep our volunteers and members safe on delivery day. We began work on converting to a new sales platform to better meet the needs of all users. We couldn't have managed without our amazing volunteers.

We remain convinced that growing the capacity for local producers to meet the needs of local consumers, while using farming methods that are sustainable, is critical to our future.

The increase in numbers of customers and sales during Covid, is proof that there is significant support for a local food system. We are grateful to the founding directors who recognized the importance of improving access to local food long before there was a crisis.

We look forward to meeting the growth of the local food market in the years to come!

Marshall Buchanan
President, Board of Directors, OVFC

OUR MISSION

Connecting local producers and consumers through a marketing network in the Ottawa Valley for locally grown or processed foods and other locally made products.

We create farm-to-neighborhood access to local food and products, benefiting the local economy and sustainable agricultural practices.



OUR VISION

We inspire healthier, economically viable communities by connecting people to real food and products.

2020 AT A GLANCE



166%

Increased order volume

78

New Members

7

New Producers

55

Volunteers participated in our order sorting and delivery
(while adhering to COVID-19 guidelines and regulations)

1987

Followers on Facebook

PROGRAM UPDATES

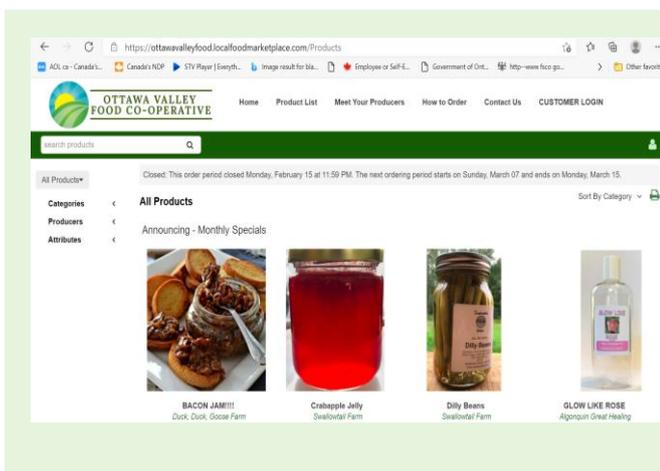
The past year has presented both huge challenges and opportunities in continuing to provide local food and products to our members. We had a huge increase in orders while dealing with a new sorting depot, new Covid-19 related protocols and procedures including electronic payments.

With the help of our dedicated volunteers and drivers, we were able to continue to meet the needs of both our producer and consumer members.



A new sorting centre

When Covid-19 forced the closure of our sorting centre at the Rankin Community Centre, a group of dedicated volunteers led by Lynne Epps, jumped in to find a new location and set up the new facilities. Our new location has challenges, but we now have new processes in a place and a permanent set up.

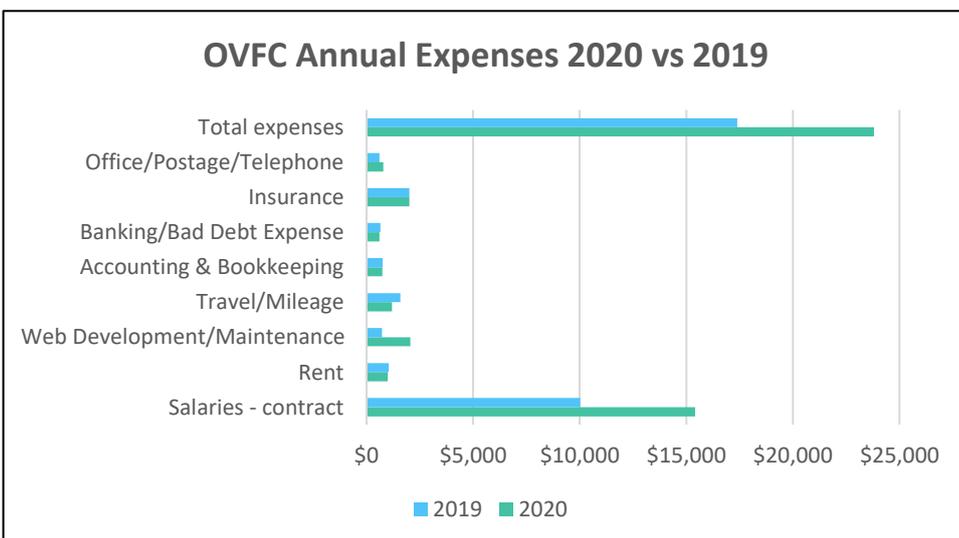
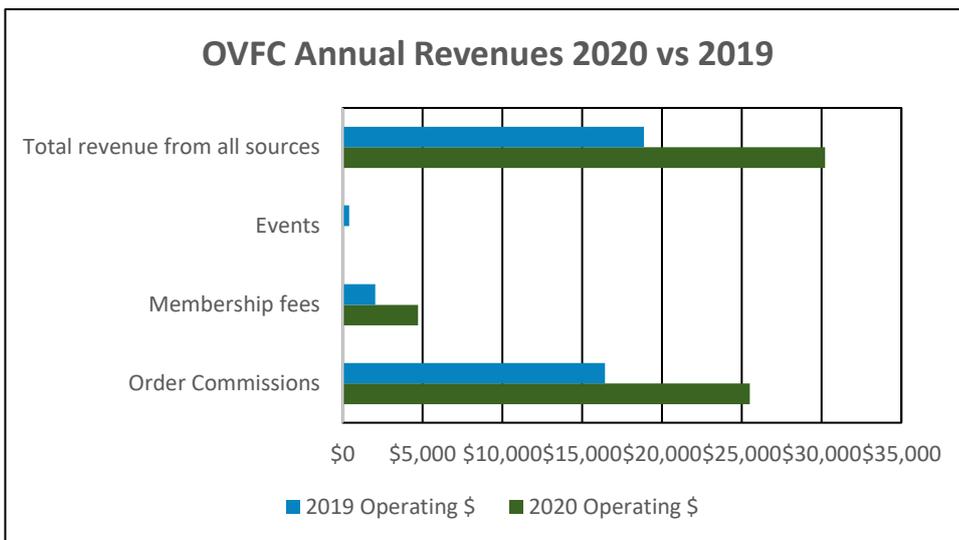
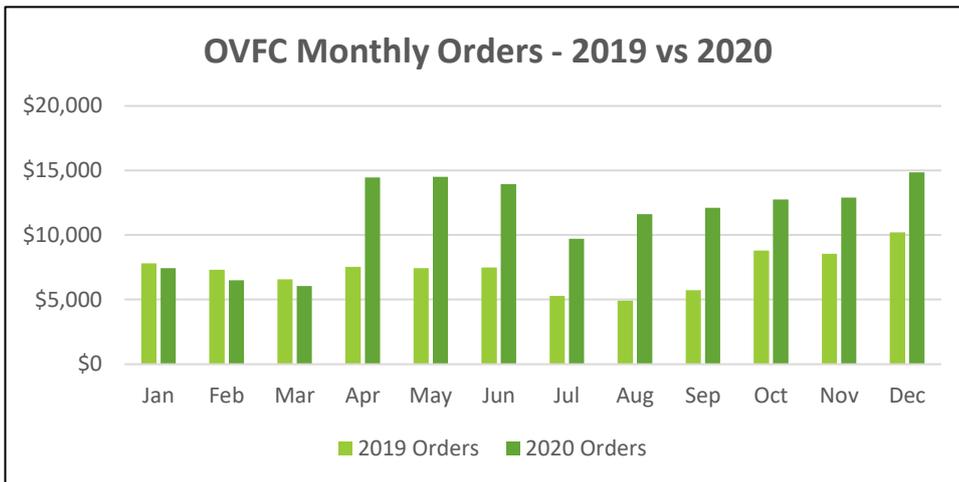


A new order system

In late October, with the help of a grant from the Province of Ontario Agri-food Open for E-business program, we were able to begin conversion of our 2007 software to a modern state of the art system to improve efficiency and functionality that will serve us well in the years ahead.

OUR FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

We finished the year in the black despite many of challenges this year. While our orders and new memberships increased this year, so did our cost of rent, banking fees, website improvement and coordinator fees. (We recovered some of the costs related to the new sales platform via a \$5000.00 provincial grant, putting us in a very good position as we start the new year.)



THE FACES BEHIND THE OTTAWA VALLEY FOOD CO-OPERATIVE

The OVFC could not survive without the many volunteers who support us as board members, drivers, delivery day order sorters and on other projects. In addition, our Coordinator (Cheryl Keetch), our webmaster (Bernadine Roslyn), our marketing expert (Nathalie Robinson) and our delivery day managers (Lynne Epps and Ashleigh Cluff) all contribute to keeping us up and running.



“ I just love the down to earthiness of all the people and the food here! This is an honest to goodness revolution, and it’s happening in our pantries and in our browsers... a must for the socially conscious gourmet or those who just plain love to eat!

— Janie M



WHAT'S AHEAD



While we are all still impacted by COVID-19 in 2021, we expect to continue to grow and support the local food movement in the Ottawa Valley. Our new sales platform is enabling us to better serve our members and we continue to look for opportunities to partner and grow within our community.

The pandemic revealed shortcomings in food systems related to the treatment of essential workers, long distribution chains, a lack of local food processing capacity, and the environmental impacts of industrial farming - just to name a few. Another disruption to our food system is the way people shop. On-line ordering, home delivery and farm markets are increasingly popular.

The OVFC needs to be aware of trends to take advantage of opportunities and remain competitive in the food marketplace. We need to identify our core strengths and develop partnerships to boost the relevance of the OVFC in the years ahead.

Despite increased numbers of people placing orders and higher monthly sales, we face higher operating costs, primarily due to higher rent, a new e-commerce platform and contractor costs. Therefore, it is important that producers take advantage of the opportunity to provide consumers with a well-stocked supply of high quality and unique locally made products. The board is working hard to find opportunities to increase revenue and efficiencies, but for 2021 a small deficit is forecast. Higher monthly sales is one of the easiest fundraising activities we can do!

NEXT STEPS

Other options that we continue to work on:

Explore expansion of delivery area and delivery methods



Hire a summer student to help improve our marketing and social media presence



Continue to expand our product line

Look for ongoing partnerships and grants

We look forward to meeting the needs of both our consumer and producer members in 2021!



THANK YOU!

We couldn't have done it without your help.

Thank you for being part of the OVFC community.

Thank you for believing in our mission.

We are forever grateful.

The Ottawa Valley Food Co-operative Board

