



OTTAWA VALLEY FOOD CO-OPERATIVE

Annual Report For 2021



Contents

- 1 Message from the Board of Directors
- 2 Our Mission
- 3 2021 at a Glance
- 4 Program Updates
- 5 Financial Highlights
- 6 The Faces Behind the OVFC
- 7 What's Ahead
- 8 Next Steps
- 9 Thank You!

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This has been another challenging year for the OVFC, as it was for everyone. Demand for local food continues to grow, allowing us to increase our order volumes and gain new members.

We are grateful to the founding directors who recognized the importance of improving access to local food long before there was a crisis and to the producers who helped us to meet consumer needs this year.

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.

We are hopeful that the OVFC will be able to retain the majority of the customers that shopped on our platform during the peak of the Covid crisis. To do this we will need to maintain excellent customer service and broaden the range of grocery items shoppers can put in their basket. The OVFC will also strive to build its community network and deepen its customer connections.

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

To connect 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, building food security and sustainable agricultural practices.

The Ottawa Valley Food Co-operative has a unique position among food organizations in the Ottawa Valley because it facilitates the connection between farmers and customers. There is no other “not-for profit” organization in the Ottawa Valley that has a membership list of people dedicated to local food & artisanal products while also supporting member producers to find these customers.



OUR VISION

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

2021 AT A GLANCE



5%

Increased order volume

50

New Members

9

New Producers

45

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

2193

Followers on Facebook

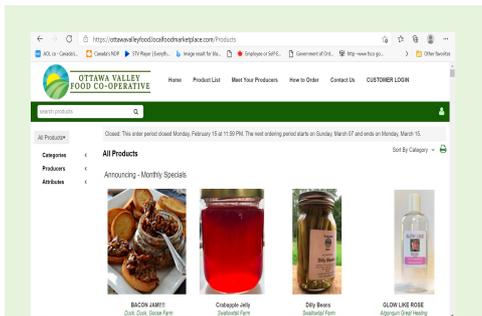
2 Community Outreach Events

2 Nutrition Workshops to youth in Pembroke and Renfrew schools

- Delivered to students to address community mental health needs

PROGRAM UPDATES

The past year has presented both challenges and opportunities in continuing to provide local food and products to our members. We had a large increase in orders while dealing with a new sorting depot, ongoing Covid-19 protocols and a new order system. With the help of our dedicated volunteers and drivers, we continued to meet the needs of both our producer and consumer members.



New order system

The OVFC launched its new on-line Local Food Marketplace sales platform in January 2021, just in time to help us deal with the surge in orders as Covid disrupted the supply chain of major grocery stores.

Food for Thought
News about fresh,
healthy food and
products

Monthly newsletter

We relaunched our newsletter to help with OVFC communications. Producer and member profiles, OVFC news and up-coming products are some of the articles to keep you up to date.



Summer Student

We hired a summer student under the Canada Summer Hobs grant to the Board implement projects, build community networks and plan events for 2022.

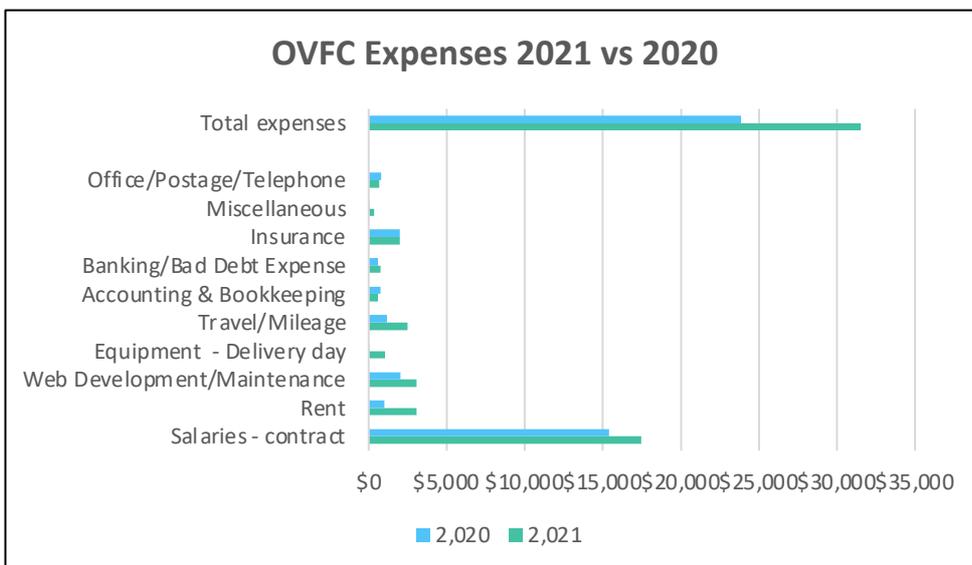
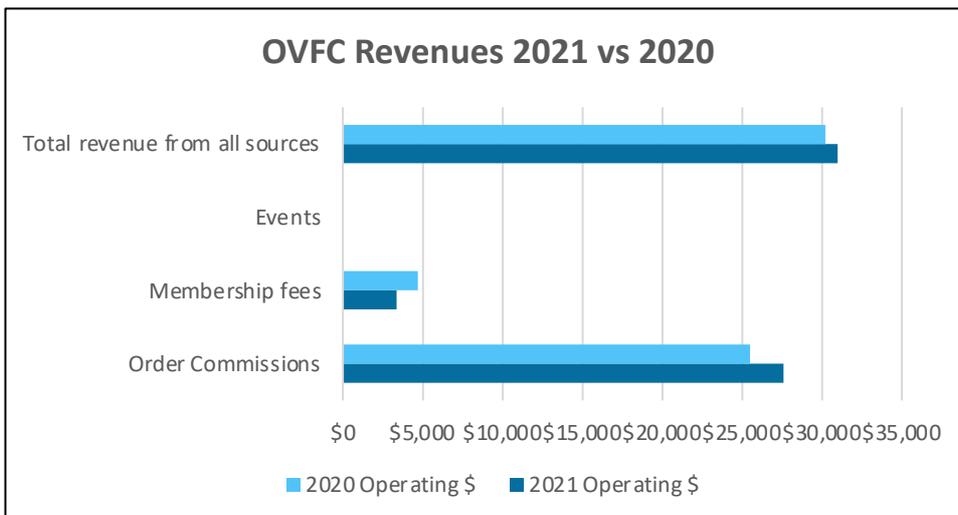
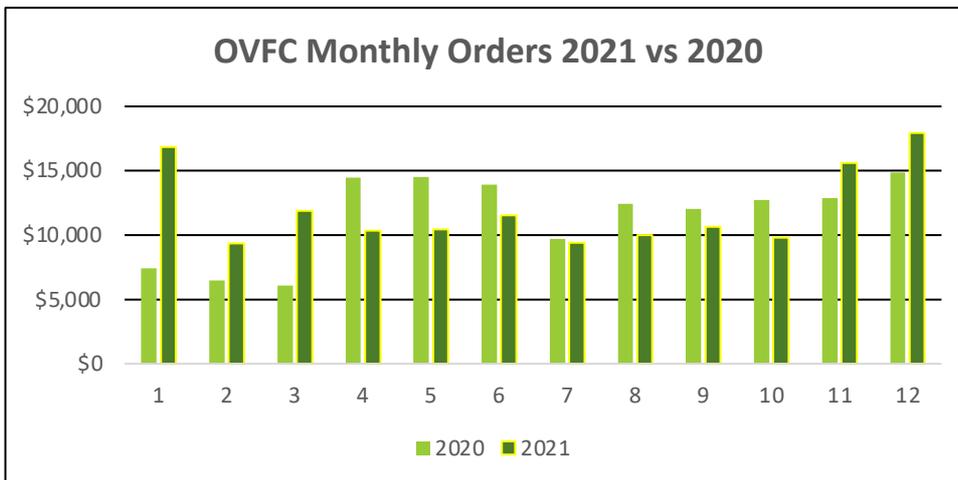


Updated Policy

Customer service suffers when producers do not supply the product they promised. It also creates extra work to refund accounts and contact customers. We developed a policy to deal with producers who continually miss orders or under deliver.

OUR FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

We finished the year with a small loss. While our orders and memberships increased this year, so did our cost of rent, banking fees, website improvement and coordinator fees. We had a few one-time expenses for furnishing the new sorting centre and setting up the new website. Without these costs, we would have finished with a surplus and we are in good shape for 2022



THE FACES BEHIND THE OTTAWA VALLEY FOOD CO-OPERATIVE

For 14 years the Ottawa Valley Food Co-op (OVFC) has been a noteworthy participant in the local food system across Renfrew County. From the co-op's inception in 2007, the co-op has strived to provide Renfrew County residents with the benefits of healthy, sustainably grown and raised food; where the environmental, economic and community building benefits of a local food system would be shared by producers and consumers alike. Included among those passionate people were Cheryl Keetch, Christina Anderman, Lynne Epps, Claire Lepine, Dwight Mick and Bob Dobson, who have remained actively involved with the co-op throughout the years. Of utmost importance to all, we are eating well, and helping the local economy by supporting local farmers!



2007 Founding Members

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) our newsletter editor (Connie Matthews-Cull) and our delivery day volunteer coordinators (Lynne Epps and Ashleigh Cluff) all contribute to keeping us up and running.

WHAT'S AHEAD



While we are still impacted by COVID-19 in 2022, we expect to continue to grow and support the local food movement in the Ottawa Valley. Our sales platform is enabling us to better serve members and we continue to look for opportunities to partner and grow within our community.

Local Food Centre

A significant sign that the local food movement is gaining traction comes from the news that the Township of North Algoma Wilberforce is purchasing a property in Eganville to create a local food centre with an inspected commercial kitchen space and as a site for local eating education. Partners will include Pikwakanagan First Nation, Algonquin College and others. The OVFC is looking for opportunities/synergies that will lead to a stronger local food marketplace.

Agri-Food Career Fair – Addressing Labour Challenges in Renfrew County

We are partnering with North Algoma Wilberforce Township on an event to promote Agri-based careers to high school students. This event will include workshops and farm visits and is supported by a grant from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

2022 Open Farm Day – Ottawa Valley Agri-tourism

The purpose of this event is to bring more value to OVFC members, promote local food, improve education about agriculture and artisanal foods and to take advantage of the desire for urban people to have “Earth Day” on a farm. A formal plan is in development. Strong support has been offered from the County of Renfrew Economic Development Office, Ottawa Valley Tourism Association, the National Farmers Union, and others.

Community Outreach

Building relationships with community wellness partners will help the OVFC be more socially engaged and gain credibility as an organization that is an integral part of a local food system. These relationships and community partnerships will help the OVFC succeed and are an important key to a winning grant application.

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 continuing to meet the needs of both our consumer and producer members in 2022!



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

