Facts about Ontario’s apple sector:
✓ 215: number of commercial apple growers in Ontario
✓ 16,000: acres of apples grown in Ontario
✓ 15: number of commercial apple varieties grown in Ontario

Apple farmers’ environmental commitment:
✓ Apple farmers follow high production standards ensuring there is an emphasis on quality, freshness and flavour.
✓ The majority of apple farmers use practices such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – controlling disease and pest levels with nature
✓ Apple farmers monitor fields/orchards for pest thresholds before spraying
✓ Farmers use “beneficial” insects and fungi before chemicals
✓ The majority of farmers complete Environmental Farm Plans to evaluate their operations and set goals for ongoing improvements

What factors can harm Ontario’s apple crop?
✓ Weather
✓ Pests such as codling moth, oriental fruit moth, apple maggot, dogwood borers, leafhoppers, mites, aphids and others
✓ Plant disease such as fire blight, scab, blister spot, rust, powdery mildew, canker, and others
✓ Globalization - some pests are native to Canada, while other invasive plants and animals have spread from other regions of the world

What does organic mean?
✓ To be labeled and marketed as certified organic, food must be produced by farmers who are certified every year.
✓ Requirements can include grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified organisms, growth hormones or medications.
✓ All food, regardless of how it is grown, must meet the same inspection and food safety standards set by government.

Pesticide use on Ontario apple farms
✓ If pests are not controlled properly, they can destroy crops and make some fresh foods such as apples less available.
✓ Farmers are trained and certified in safe pesticide use.
✓ Farmers follow pesticide label directions, because they provide instructions for the safe and proper use of pesticides.
✓ Independent research, applicator safety, and residue monitoring/control keep our food safe.
The apple industry’s commitment to food safety

✓ Food safety is a shared priority between farmers, industry, provinces, and federal organizations.
✓ Farmers use good agricultural and pest management practices.

Pesticide residues on apples

✓ Minute amounts of pesticide residues may stay in or on our food after it is applied. If a human health risk is found, a public recall notice would be issued.
✓ Before a pesticide is registered for use in Canada, Health Canada establishes a maximum residue level (MRL) for the product — to ensure that exposure to the pesticide residue presents no concerns for human health.
✓ Each MRL is set for a specific pesticide and food type combination.
✓ In the few cases where chemical residues were detected, Health Canada determined they would not pose a health risk to consumers.
✓ Canadians are also reminded to wash raw fruits and vegetables with clean, running water before you prepare and eat them.

How are pesticide residues regulated?

✓ The Canadian Food inspection Agency monitors and enforces residue limits in domestic and imported foods.
✓ If tested food products contain residues that exceed pre-set limits, the food may be removed from stores, stock can be seized, and imports may be rejected and offenders prosecuted.
✓ The CFIA reports that over the last 10 years, residue data shows that the compliance rate is consistently very high for fresh fruits and vegetables such as apples.
  • A 2009-2010 study on pesticide residues in fresh fruit and vegetables found that 100% of apple products tested complied with Health Canada standards
  • 99.6% of fresh fruit and vegetables overall met Health Canada standards for pesticide residues.
  • This study was funded under the Government of Canada Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan announced in 2007.