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[EFAO Conference Wrap Up](#) [1]

This past weekend, Farms at Work and partners [FarmStart](#) [2], [Everdale](#) [3] and the [Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security](#) [4] gathered in Orillia for the first ever [Ecological Farmers' Association of Ontario Conference](#) [5].

Close to 300 farmers from across the province attended the two day event, and enjoyed over 30 workshops, several informative panel discussions, updates on initiatives from around the sector, networking opportunities with farmers and industry professionals, and some wonderful food and entertainment throughout the weekend.

As a supporting partner, Farms at Work was in charge of the Thursday night open mic and campfire, featuring farm band [The Sandy Pockets](#) [6], as well as the coordination of the Livestock stream of workshops. These included several intermediate- to advanced-level sessions led by experienced Ontario farmers on topics such as: [Taking Your Cheese-Making to the Next Level](#) [7]; [Winter Grazing](#) [8]; [Farrowing Your Own Pigs](#) [9]; and [Managing Worms in Organic Sheep Production](#) [10]. Each 90 minute session featured insightful presentations, and meaningful audience participation. Other informative workshop streams included: Business & Marketing; Diversified Grain Production; Soil and Stewardship & Energy.

Farms at Work is proud to have been a supporting partner in such a wonderful event. We met and were inspired by dozens of amazing farmers from across the province. We hope that the conference will become an annual event.

Watch for photos soon!

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[Nature's Finest Fund](#) [11]



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For thirty years [The Big Carrot](#) [13] has been searching for Nature's Finest to provide our shoppers with delicious, nourishing and sustainable food. In celebration of this commitment The Big Carrot created the Nature's Finest Fund. This annual grant program expands the availability of locally produced food and supports and strengthens the working relationships between local family farms and The Big Carrot.

As founding members of [Carrot Cache](#) [14] (a small foundation that funds local organic food initiatives), we have seen the transformative power of investing in our regional food economy. Inspired by this success, we want to provide a similar opportunity for our own producers.

Five grants were awarded to Ontario farmers in the inaugural year of the Nature's Finest Fund increasing our supply of local beans, pastured chicken, organic vegetables and greens. The grants lent support to some long-standing producers as well as bringing new farmers into our community.

This year The Big Carrot is committing \$15,000 for new grants to eligible Ontario Producers. For more information, visit the [Nature's Finest Fund website](#) [12].

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Links

[1] <http://www.farmsatwork.ca/news/efao-conference-wrap> [2] <http://www.farmstart.ca/> [3] <http://everdale.org/> [4] <http://www.seedsecurity.ca/en/> [5] <http://conference.efao.ca/> [6] <http://www.thesandypockets.com> [7] <http://conference.efao.ca/sessions/taking-your-cheese-making-to-the-next-level/> [8] <http://conference.efao.ca/sessions/winter-grazing/> [9] <http://conference.efao.ca/sessions/farrowing-your-own-pigs/> [10] <http://conference.efao.ca/sessions/managing-worms-in-sheep/> [11] <http://www.farmsatwork.ca/news/natures-finest-fund> [12] <http://thebigcarrot.ca/about-us/natures-finest-fund/> [13] <http://thebigcarrot.ca/home/> [14] <http://carrotcache.com/>