

**Alberta Conservation Association
2022/23 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: Harvest Your Own

Information, Education and Communications Program Manager: Don Myhre

Project Leader: Todd Zimmerling

Primary ACA staff on project: Charmaine Brunes, Budd Erickson, Colin Eyo, Tara Holmwood, Don Myhre, Cassandra Hewitt, and Ariana Tourneur

Partnerships

Not applicable

Key Findings

- 491 new audience members across all platforms
- 4 paid advertising campaigns
- 4 contests
- Harvest Your Own provides new or aspiring hunters in Alberta with timely and relevant resources and content so they can work toward success in the field and in the kitchen.
- The target audience skews younger (under 45), including Alberta men and women who are new to or interested in hunting. The secondary audience is existing hunters looking to expand and share their knowledge and experience with other Alberta hunters.

Abstract

Harvest Your Own is a multi-platform media property. In 2022/23, we continued to expand our digital audiences by redesigning the website, increasing post frequency in social media and increasing the number of podcast episodes.

Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions in North American seeing a growth in the number of hunters. This increase is often attributed to an interest in organic and local food, and hunting as an empowering way to actively and ethically source your own protein. The gap is that new

hunters, in particular men, women, and youth from urban areas, may not have a network of family and friends to help them learn to hunt. Harvest Your Own aims to provide new hunters with timely and relevant content that will help them get started and have success in the field and kitchen.

In 2022/23, Harvest Your Own increased its social media audience to 3,623 (+162) Facebook followers, 1,451 (+216) Instagram followers, 128 YouTube subscribers, and 68 TikTok followers (Twitter is no longer an active platform for Harvest Your Own). In this timeframe, we have also seen growth in the Harvest Your Own podcast hosted by Brad Fenson, which currently has all-time downloads of 14,631.

Introduction

Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions in North American seeing a growth in the number of hunters. This increase is often attributed to an interest in organic and local food, and hunting as an empowering way to actively and ethically source your own protein. But the gap is that new hunters, in particular men, women, and youth from urban areas, may not have a network of family and friends to help them learn to hunt. Harvest Your Own aims to provide new hunters with timely and relevant content that will help them get started and have success in the field and kitchen. This ultimately will help make harvesting, preparing, and enjoying wild game more socially acceptable amongst Albertans—particularly in the urban population under the age of 45—and contribute to a steady increase of the number of hunters in our province.

Methods

Harvest Your Own is managed and delivered by the Information, Education and Communications Program. Project staff develop content for multiple platforms, and subject matter experts and writers are contracted to contribute content. Content is guided by a high-level content calendar that identifies seasonal subject areas and general timing of content by month and week (e.g., article, video, contest, experience). The content calendar is used to create the web and social media schedule, which outlines weekly and daily posts for Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as a monthly schedule for the podcast.

Results

Harvest Your Own increased its online and social media presence and audience in 2022/23 as follows:

- 34,565 website visits in Q4 2021
- 3,623 Facebook followers (162 followers gained)
- 1,451 Instagram followers (216 followers gained)
- 68 TikTok followers (68 followers gained, new account)
- 128 YouTube subscribers (45 subscribers gained)
- 14,631 podcast downloads (7,604 more downloads)
- 2,035 e-newsletter subscribers

The increase in overall audience is gradual and sustainable year by year. We are pleased to see engagement and inquiring messages from new hunters, and comments from experienced hunters sharing their expertise. In Q4 2023, the processes and goals were reviewed and the approach “rebooted.” Moving forward, more resources will be spent on capturing and sharing video content (cooking, how-to, female focus and youth) for advertising performance and website attraction purposes, the website will be improved for user experience, and contests will continue to expand by way of product partnerships and increased prize value.

Top Performing Posts

We developed several notable posts that interested our audience:

- Fill The Freezer Contest (Paid Campaign)
 - Content: “Back again is our Fill The Freezer Contest! 🍷 We’ve partnered up with some special brands and businesses to offer THREE amazing prize packages, valued over \$3,000 in total! ...”
 - Total statistics: 22,648 people reached, 1,380 engagements, 559 link clicks, and 1,821 entries.

- Fill The Freezer Contest
 - Content: “***** CONTEST ***** Are you looking for an amazing experience to tell your friends? Then you’ll want to enter our Fill The Freezer Contest! ...”
 - Total statistics: 5,149 people reached, 164 engagements, and 63 link clicks.
- Episode 43: Fish & Wildlife Officers
 - Content: “Episode 43: Fish & Wildlife Officers Hunting and fishing regulations don't need to be complicated. In this episode, Brad Fenson is joined by Alberta Fish & Wildlife officer Dana Kopp, who has 5 and a half years’ experience....”
 - Total statistics: 4,222 people reached, 418 engagements, 42 link clicks, and 279 lifetime downloads.

Contests

- April – Smoker:
 - 668 entries
 - 37,494 people reached
 - 1,151 engagements
 - 514 link clicks
- May – Mother’s Day Contest:
 - 369 entries
 - 28,950 people reached
 - 886 engagements
 - 380 link clicks
- June – Father’s Day Contest:
 - 181 entries
 - 28,039 people reached
 - 856 engagements
 - 788 link clicks
- August – Wild for Waterfowl:
 - 874 entries
 - 1,547 people reached

- 139 engagements
 - 87 link clicks
- November – Fill the Freezer:
 - 1,821 entries
 - 68,156 people reached
 - 4,258 engagements
 - 3,039 link clicks

Conclusions

In 2022/23, We saw the largest follower increase ever on Instagram with over 200 new followers. We also saw the most submissions ever with our Fill The Freezer 2022 contest at 1,821 submissions, compared to 2021, which had 514 submissions. To date, the 2022 Fill The Freezer contest was our largest contest. Proactive advertising and consistent messaging are key to increasing Harvest Your Own brand recognition, promoting hunting as part of contemporary and healthy lifestyle, and supporting member groups and stakeholders in a province with growing and shifting demographics.

Communications

- We reached new hunters and “hunting adjacent” users with unique contests on Facebook and Instagram.
- We reached new audiences with print and digital ads in culinary magazines.
- We sent the Harvest Your Own e-newsletter to subscribers every 4 – 6 weeks.
- We reached out to multiple outdoor retailers and manufacturers to support Harvest Your Own with contest donations and advertising opportunities.
- We have been planning improvements for the user experience by introducing more female voices and content driven towards women, new hunters, and families.
- We have launched and continue to grow our subscriber list and downloads to the Harvest Your Own Podcast.

Literature Cited

Not applicable

Photos



HUNT | HARVEST | COOK
harvestyourown.ca

Photo 1. Harvest Your Own logo. Photo: ACA

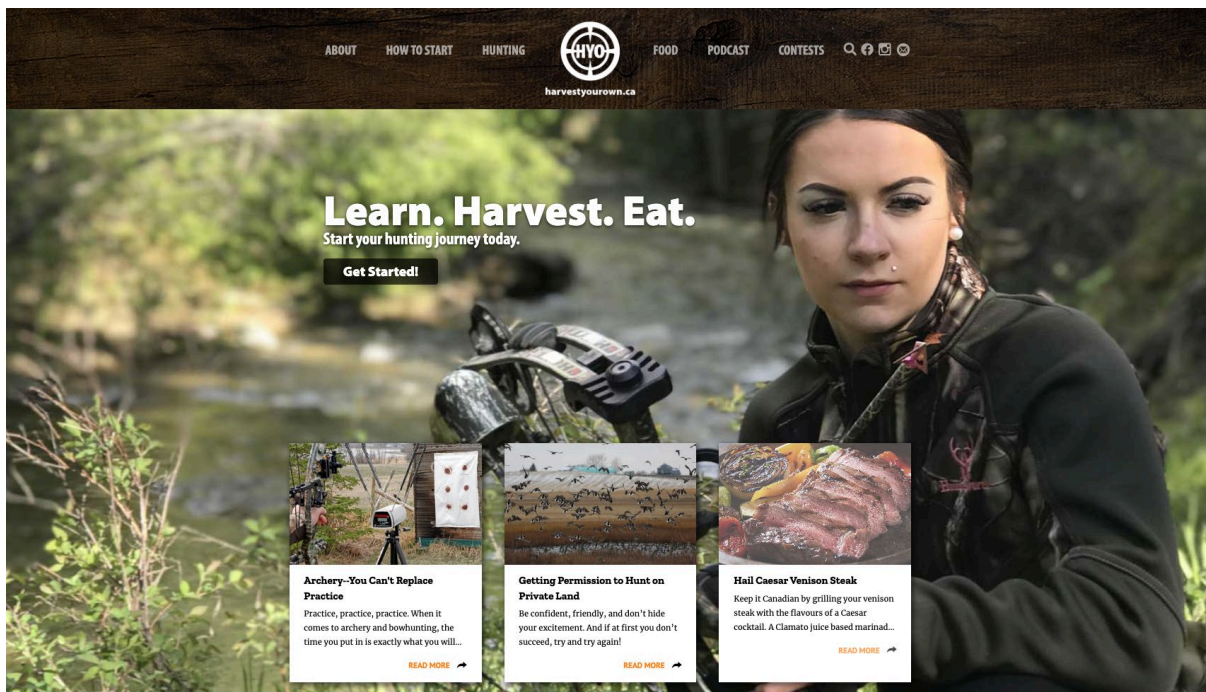


Photo 2. New Website Design. Photo: ACA