



Dartmouth Supporter wins iPad!

Erin Ferguson, Dartmouth was the lucky winner of the Apple iPad as a part of the most recent activity in the Meet Your Farmer campaign. Erin is a big supporter of buying local and purchases all her produce from our local markets, Spring to Fall. The web based contest that ran for 3 weeks ended March 5th and has proven to be successful. The intent of the contest was to drive traffic to www.meetyourfarmer.ca, a website designed to reconnect the consumer to where their food comes from – put a face on agriculture.

The campaign consisted of a contest launch at the Seaport market the middle of February, distribution of posters, electronic newsletters and a direct mail drop to over 3000 residences in selected Halifax / Dartmouth neighbourhoods that matched our target demographic. The winning entry was actually a result of the bulk mail drop. We dove deeper into social media advertising and have a very active facebook page (www.facebook.com/NSFAMEETYOURFARMER); twitter feed as well great results with google and facebook advertising.

Online advertising on platforms like “google” or “facebook” work on a pay per click basis. If you are an internet user, you see ads or sponsored links on the side column or bottom of web pages. The Meet Your Farmer campaign is participating in these paid advertising

spaces. During our 3-week campaign our clickable meet your farmer ad (logo) showed up over 1 million times on website pages within Nova Scotia – these are called impressions. The expense or payment for the advertising comes in when a user clicks on the ad– it

takes them to our website; this is called a click through. The results of the campaign showed that 250 users clicked through to our site and cost a total of \$210. Think about the number of impressions mentioned above as a print ad such as newspaper; where else would you get a reach of 1 million people for \$210?

The final results of the 3-week campaign showed web traffic that was 4 times higher than normal and our contact list for the newsletter subscriptions has doubled in size. Given the statistical results of increased web traffic and the

overwhelming positive response from both the target market and those involved from the farm community; this campaign is considered a success for not only the contest winner, but another step forward in ensuring a positive opinion of agriculture in Nova Scotia.

Watch for more to come with meetyourfarmer.ca, follow us on Twitter, like us on facebook and get involved in the success – contact info@meetyourfarmer.ca



Erin Ferguson shown with her new iPad that she won by playing our Meet Your Farmer contest.



Food Price... Smoke and Mirrors

Henry Vissers

Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

There have been lots of headlines over the last month or so about the increase in food prices, eating holes in wallets, prices squeeze food budgets, etc. Dig a little deeper and you soon discover that the rise in prices still has very little to do with the farmer. Most of the rise in price is being attributed to the rise of crude oil prices or in other words freight costs, fertilizer costs, etc. In Canada, it almost seems like an opportunity for the retail grocers to ratchet down the price competition. Sobeys, Loblaw's and Metro (Upper Canada and West) account for 60% of the Canadian grocery market and have been battling it out for consumers and have been in turn driving down prices that they pay to suppliers, affecting farmers either directly or indirectly.

Here is what Sobeys President and CEO Bill McEwen said at the CIBC World Markets conference, "We remain committed to being price competitive in each market we serve. . . We are seeing signs of balanced inflation starting, in which retail prices rise in step with manufacturer prices and the general cost of doing business. There appears to be an appetite for that to happen but we shall see. If we behave like a mature industry, it will happen. If we continue to pursue business that is not there, we will see continued deflation."

Sounds like a man hoping that the price competition recedes and everyone can

put prices up and blame someone else! Check the Sobeys last quarterly report - they are still profitable.

The other misnomer is the food price rise of 7%, these articles say that sugar has gone up by 10.5% and coffee prices have doubled, hardly the essentials of life. Many of the increases are petroleum driven, fresh produce from southern US, etc. But what the public has quickly forgotten is that the average Canadian spent approximately 11.9% of household income for food. We celebrated Food Freedom Day on Feb 12th, which is when the average Canadian earned enough to pay the entire year's grocery bill, and this food came with unprecedented food safety, environmental and animal welfare standards.

The number being used is that of an average household spending \$400 per month on food. The 7% increase then is \$28 per month or less than \$1 per day. If it wasn't being blamed on oil prices and was an increase for farmers it would still be a pretty small change for the average consumer. (A news article said that retail hamburger prices were going from \$7.67 kg to \$8.20 kg)

So, between the price of oil and retails improving margins the squeeze is on and the headlines are written but I don't see a crisis at all, what I see is smoke and mirrors.

Comments? hvissers@nsfa-fane.ca

viewpoint



Farm Safety Nova Scotia launches new logo and new safety manual!



Farming, as we know, is a diverse and often dangerous profession. The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) has been working steadily to create safety awareness and knowledge within our industry.

In 2009, the Nova Scotia Farm Health and Safety Committee and the Federation of Agriculture took the next step to providing our farmers with the knowledge and training to practice health and safety on our farms. Funding provided by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) helped the NSFA establish and implement an Agricultural Safety Association.

In July of last year, the Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia (SFSNS) was incorporated with a vision to establish a culture of safety on our farms, to reduce and eliminate injury and illness to our farmers, farm families and employees. Farm Safety Nova Scotia will build on that vi-

sion through safety awareness, education and training programs. There is currently a website under construction, www.farmsafetyns.ca and in conjunction with Canadian Agriculture Safety Week in March; the society unveiled their new logo and the new Farm Health and Safety Manual. The Farm Health and Safety Manual will outline the steps and protocols our farmers can implement to become compliant with the Act and Regulations. This Manual will provide another tool to assist our farmers in practicing health and safety in their daily routines. The Farm Health and Safety Manual will be available through delivery of a series of workshops as well as be available on the Farm Safety NS website.

For more information contact Farm Safety Nova Scotia by phone (902) 893-2293 or email rbaxter@nsfa-fane.ca

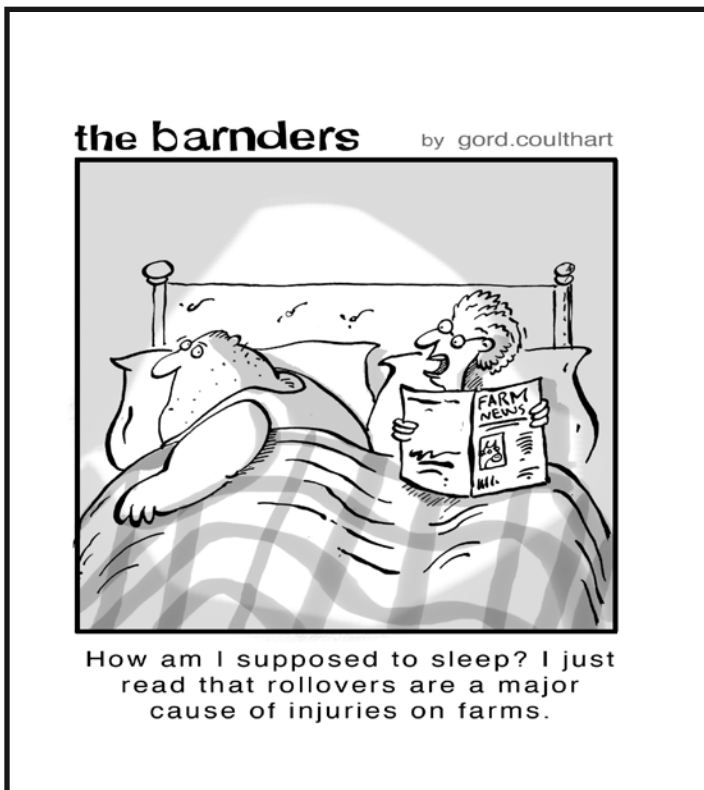


Photo above was taken during the launch of Canadian Agriculture Safety Week on March 11th at NSAC Campus in Truro. Shown here is Minister of Agriculture, John MacDonell (center) presenting the proclamation of safety week to Marcel Hacault (right), Executive Director of the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and Beth Densmore (left), President of Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.



Message from Minister MacDonell



Across Nova Scotia, the snow is melting, the days are getting longer and flashes of green grass can be seen along roads throughout the province. These are sure signs that spring is arriving in Nova Scotia.

Another sure sign of the season is the start of the spring session of the legislature on March 31, where our government will present its budget for 2011-12 in the coming weeks. Our government is committed to ensuring Nova Scotia's traditional industries remain strong and competitive. This year's budget will provide us with direction to get back to balance and give Nova Scotians a fresh start.

For many of us, spring conjures up notions of fresh starts and new beginnings—fresh planting and growing, and new ideas and ways of doing things.

At the Department of Agriculture, we've been helping Nova Scotia farmers and producers come up with fresh ways of doing business—by helping add value to what they're already producing.

Using Homegrown Success, our 10-year plan for agriculture to guide us, the department is looking at ways to help create a more innovative, research-intensive and diversified agriculture sector.

I'm sure you've heard the term "value add" a lot. It means different things to different people, but it boils down to having our farm business owners developing products that compete on value, not price.

There are many ways to increase the value of the agriculture and agri-food products we produce in Nova Scotia: think packaging, labeling, providing a service or unique innovative products. Our agriculture industry is extremely well-positioned to take advantage of these kinds of business opportunities with many local and regional producers and processors already successfully adding value—think blueberry juice, lavender and artisan cheese.

Value-added products can generate a greater return on investment and are an excellent platform for research and collaboration. These opportunities lead to economic growth and a greater diversity of products we can offer consumers.

Like any business venture, there is some risk involved. Successful value adding requires input from many experts, including marketing, production, food science and regulations.

Staff in the department's Product and Quality Development (PQD) division offer guidance with the kind of strategic considerations needed to take advantage of new opportunities. We recognize how important it is to support these key areas of growth throughout the value chain. It also requires solid management, a well-developed business plan and financial commitment.

Our experts know about consumer and market trends, product innovation, and where to find the expertise you need to make good decisions about value adding.

Some of the initiatives our experts are working on include a Nova Scotia food processor's guide, an entrepreneurs' forum for agri-food and sea-food commercialization, workshops and an inventory of available processing capacities so we can match availability with those who need it.

There are many growing and emerging trends that present opportunities to those who are willing to do things differently. Nova Scotia agriculture is well positioned to take advantage of value-adding opportunities.

I encourage you to contact staff in the PQD division and learn more about value-added products and the financial and business planning involved. Value adding ensures we're getting the maximum value from our agricultural resources—and those benefits stay in Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,
Honorable John MacDonell
Minister of Agriculture



I want to come home... all in one piece

by Theresa Whalen
CFA Farm Safety Consultant

“Farm safety is important to me because I want to come home every night, and I want my employees to go home every night – all in one piece,” says Nova Scotia farmer Peter Morine. “To me it is that simple.”

Peter Morine is a safety guy. He’s a full-time farmer now but for 30 years, he worked at Michelin Tire and was an active member of the company’s safety committee. In fact, he says, he used his off-farm job experience to create a farm safety plan for his dairy farm.

“Michelin’s mantra is, ‘There is no job so important that it can’t be done safely,’” recites Peter. “And I agree. When it comes to safety, it doesn’t really matter what business you’re in – it is basically all the same.”

During his years at Michelin, Peter had maintained a small beef operation. When his son Andrew decided to get into dairy farming, Peter was ready for the career change and now the father-son team milk 60 cows and raise another 50 or so replacements, and still keep about 15 head of beef. They work roughly 300 acres growing their own feed of grass, forage and corn on the south shore of Nova Scotia, near Newcombville.

The farm safety plan that Peter developed for the dairy farm outlines best practices, check lists and procedures. Some of his materials were sourced from Michelin templates and adapted to his farm applications. Peter says that sometime he has to go back and redevelop parts of it, but that kind of tweaking just makes it better.

Peter is no stranger to developing safety plans. In 1997, he wrote a welding procedure at Michelin that is now used throughout the entire company.

“From my point of view, safety is an every day sort of thing. Life has lots of unexpected things that you have to watch for and good safety practices will help protect

you from these unexpected incidents,” says Mr. Morine.

Peter estimates that the initial farm safety plan took probably a week to write, but he did it an hour or two here and there – not all at once. “It got easier because many of the things you do for one piece of equipment, you do for others, so you can re-use many parts of the written plan,” he explains.

The plan is kept in the milk house for everyone to review.



Peter Morine, shown here on his dairy farm.

When Peter first heard of the development of the Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia (SFSNS), he thought he had something to offer. So he joined in the collaboration of farm organizations, government and the Workplace Compensation Board (WCB) to help create the organization and also its foundation resource, a farm safety manual. The manual offers farmers a complete toolbox of templates, check lists, and other resources to enable each farmer to create their own farm safety plan that has been adapted to the unique needs of their farm.

For more information about the Nova Scotia farm safety manual, contact Ralph Baxter, Farm Safety Nova Scotia at 893-2293 or rbaxter@nsfa-fane.ca.

“It doesn’t matter how much more time it takes to do things safely – it will pay for itself down the road. You can’t put a cost on safety because

I want to come home... all in one piece

continued from page 5

the cost of not being safe is immeasurable," says Mr. Morine. "Safety more than pays for itself."

"Plan • Farm • Safety" is the theme of the three-year Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign. The 2010 campaign promoted "Plan", with safety walkabouts and an emphasis on planning for safety. For 2011, the focus will be on "Farm", with highlights on implementation, documentation and training. This campaign will launch during Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), March 13 to 19. Next year's campaign will emphasise "Safety", including the assessment, improvement and further development of safety systems.

For more information on how to "Plan • Farm • Safety" go to www.planfarmsafety.ca.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Canadian Agricultural Safety Association deliver CASW in partnership with long-time sponsors Farm Credit Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.



PLAN. FARM. SAFETY.

Manage the risk. Control the hazard.

www.planfarmsafety.ca

Celebrating Opportunities in Agriculture

Nova Scotia Young Farmers Forum AGM

When: April 9th, 2011

Where: Nappan Research Station in Amherst

- ✓ Young Farmer producer panel
- ✓ Farm tours including Maritime Pride Egg Facility
- ✓ Socializing and Networking opportunity

To register email: youngfarmers@nsfa-fane.ca



2011 Census of Agriculture gives farmers a chance to tell their story



During the first two weeks in May every farm in Canada will receive a Census of Agriculture questionnaire. On May 10, farmers across the country will help create an up-to-date picture of agriculture in Canada by completing and returning their census questionnaire.

The farmer of the 21st century works in an industry that is becoming more and more complex. Farmers wear many hats to operate a successful business: accountant, mechanic, carpenter, heavy equipment operator, and environmentalist. In addition to farming, an operator may also work off the farm. In short, farmers are busy people working in a dynamic and challenging industry.

The profile of Canada's farmers is different than the general working population. Census information from 2006 tells us that farm operators have a higher median age than the comparable labour force population of self-employed workers — 52 and 44 respectively. Moreover, the group of farmers under 35 years old poised to move the industry into the future is a smaller one, representing only 9% of all farmers. Nearly 20% of the self-employed workers in the general labour force were under 35. Among all workers in the general labour force, 40% of all workers were less than 35 years old.

Then there's technology: Advances in irrigation systems, breeding, biotechnology, disease control and soil conservation have made the farm more productive and efficient than ever before. Yet farmers in Canada are always looking for new opportunities because prices for most traditional farm commodities are in a long-term decline and, as analysis of census data indicates, many farms' receipts don't cover their operating expenses. New crops or new uses for existing crops may offer interesting new markets for many farmers. The biotechnology industry is just one of the exciting areas that is seeing many interesting developments for agriculture — corn to make into ethanol for gasoline and canola to make diesel fuel more engine-friendly, are just two examples.

Agriculture is continually changing. The Census of Agriculture provides information on the many sides of this vital industry — from crop area to manure management to access to high speed internet. The data "snapshot" captured by the Census of Agriculture every five years highlights trends and new developments in agriculture. Although farms have been decreasing in number overall, down 7% between 2001 and 2006, farms have been getting bigger. The average farm in 2006 was 728 acres, compared with 676 acres in 2001. Those with gross receipts of \$250,000 or more accounted for 17.0% of all farms in 2006, compared with 13.8% in 2001 (at 2005 prices). The 2011 Census of Agriculture will give us more information on how, or if, this is changing.

The farm industry, as a whole, benefits from census data in many ways. For example, agricultural producer groups are guided by data from the census when informing their membership about industry trends and developments; putting operators' viewpoints before legislators and the Canadian public; and defending their interests in international trade negotiations. Governments use census data to make decisions about crop insurance, agricultural credit policies, transportation, market services and international trade. Census information also helps other businesses market their products and services to farm operators and is a valuable tool when making production and investment decisions.

Information gathered by the census is so important, Statistics Canada is legally required to conduct a census. By the same law, Statistics Canada is required to protect the information provided on Census of Agriculture forms — privacy is a fundamental component of the census.

On May 10, 2011, tell your story by counting yourself in as part of Canada's farm community! Fill out your questionnaire on paper and mail it back in the prepaid envelope or take advantage of the internet application which automatically adds totals and skips you through the parts of the questionnaire that you indicate don't apply to your operation.

For more information on the 2011 Census of Agriculture visit the website at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2011/index-eng.htm> or contact Erik Dorff by telephone at 613-951-2818 or by e-mail at Erik.Dorff@statcan.gc.ca.



Why should your farm business care about social responsibility?



By: Lynda Weatherby,
EFP Information Coordinator

Social responsibility is a voluntary commitment to act to benefit society at large.

Social responsibility can be practiced by forming positive interactions with your community, with your industry and with the natural environment. These actions can also have benefits to your business, such as:

- reduce conflicts with neighbours,
- develop respect for your business,
- help build a cooperative community and possibly grow a local market or marketing niche.

So what can be done to cultivate good farm, neighbour and community relations?

Comply with provincial and federal legislation. Ensure that you stay informed about changing legislation.

Implement responsible farm management practices. Periodically review your Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) to ensure best management practices (BMPs) are being implemented on your farm. Environmental stewardship, using practices that protect soil, water and air quality, protects natural resources and reduces potential risks of pollution.

Form a relationship with neighbours. Strive to develop a good relationship with neighbours by being active within your community. Volunteering where needed and one-on-one conversations can prevent misunderstandings and conflicts.

Separation. Isolate buildings, livestock and manure storage as far from neighbours as possible. Trees, shrubs and other landscape features reduce odour and noise. The aesthetics of a farm can increase the level of acceptance.

Timing. Contact all neighbours a few days in advance of events such as manure spreading or pesticide application so that they can plan around these activities. Communication shows the farmer is concerned and considerate, and reduces feelings of helplessness on the part of neighbours.

Be a goodwill ambassador for agriculture. While adopting best management practices is important, they often do not appease neighbours who do not understand or appreciate the efforts and investment you are making in environmental quality or agriculture's contribution to the economy in general. Taking part in organizing a local farm tour (Open Farm Day), an agricultural fair or other non-farm community events gives a farmer a chance to put a face to an industry by answering questions, explaining farm practices and building relationships.

Farmers are responsible for protecting the farm's natural resources, and are partners in helping to protect public interests including property, watersheds and wildlife habitats. Their implementation of the EFP and NMP and adoption of BMPs on farms have identified and reduced potential environmental risks. Through the EFP program, farmers identify and assess environmental risk on their property. It enables farmers to incorporate environmental considerations into their everyday business decisions.

For information on Open Farm Day, contact the Federation office at (902) 893-2293.

News & Views

NSFA News & Views is the Newsletter of the NS Federation of Agriculture, the United, Strong & Caring Farm Organization representing the best interest of Nova Scotia's Agricultural Industry.

News & Views is provided free of charge to its members. We value comments and concerns from our members, please direct them to Executive members or the Office Staff.

2011 Executive Members:

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| President: | Beth Densmore | Phone: 369-2876 |
| 1st Vice President: | Mary McCarron | Phone: 863-4026 |
| 2nd Vice President: | Richard Melvin | Phone: 582-7939 |
| CFA Director: | Dennis Boudreau | Phone: 769-3501 |
| At Large: | Edna Foster | Phone: 661-4366 |
| At Large: | David Young | Phone: 543-8748 |
| At Large: | Charles MacDonald | Phone: 564-2080 |

Staff: Executive Director: Henry Vissers; Operations Manager: Donna Langille; Financial Services Officer: Krista Vroegh; Administrative Officer: Shelly MacKenzie; Communications Officer: Wanda Hamilton; Farm Safety Consultant: Ralph Baxter

332 Willow Street., Truro, N.S.

Ph: 893-2293 Fax: 893-7063

Email: info@nsfa-fane.ca

Website: www.nsfa-fane.ca

