



NSFA Welcomes New Affiliate

In the early months of 2011 the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia initiated the process to become an affiliated commodity group member of the NSFA. A vote was held at the Federation's Council of Leaders meeting held in Debert in April which resulted in the Christmas Tree Council being welcomed as an affiliated member of the NSFA. The NSFA then notified the NS Department of Agriculture of this decision and asked for this group to be recognized as a designated commodity whose members would be eligible for government program funding. On June 30th Minister of Agriculture, John MacDon-

nell, sent a letter to NSFA President, Beth Densmore, indicating that he fully supports the recognition for this commodity group. "My staff has confirmed that Christmas tree growers may register as a farm business under the Farm Registration Act, effective immediately. In addition all provisions will be in place for growers, meeting eligibility criteria, to apply for government program funding in the next fiscal year, April 1, 2012."

We look forward to continued progress and growth in the Christmas tree industry in this province.



Back to School for Farm Businesses

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture is pleased to offer -

Free - 36 - hour training programs in:

- Cash Flow Analysis
- Basic Debit & Credit Entries
- Financial Statement Analysis and other topics designed to help you with your book-keeping tasks

Sign up today as there is a limit of 12 participants per course

The two sessions scheduled to date are:

- 1) West River Fire Hall, Pictou County - to commence on Tuesday, September 27 and run to December 13 from 7 - 10 p.m. each Tuesday evening.
- 2) Stewiacke United Church - to commence on Tuesday, September 27 and run to November 15 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. each Tuesday.

Application deadline is August 31, 2011. If you would like to sign up to take one of these programs please contact the NSFA office at 893-2293 or email info@nsfa-fane.ca and advise of the location which would be best for you.





We Can't Ignore the Public Policy Piece

Henry Vissers

Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

I know... it's a boring topic. Who cares about policy anyway? Well over the years I've certainly come to realize how important it is! Here are a few examples that are close to home.

The recently changed Farm Investment Fund, now known as Home-Grown Success, is based on the policy of the 2 year old NDP government. It is their attempt to put a social democratic spin on provincial agricultural policy. The focus of government is also on the new Jobs Here strategy, it's mentioned a number of times in the NSDA document.

It is not always recognized that these programs are meant to encourage farmers to make changes to their farm that fit with policy goals of the government of the day. Following are some examples:

Best Management Practices (BMP's) and the Environmental Farm Plan encourage farms to make improvements to their farm's environmental stewardship. Other themes within the program encourage farm businesses to do a better job at business planning, with the intent of reducing the dependence on Business Risk Management (BRM) programming. The soil amendment program was a platform promise from the election and is meant to encourage farmers to improve the pH of their soils, by providing freight assistance. We do have a gap in this one in that there is no money for some of the technical work that needs to be done to identify soil types in NS as this is also one of the few programs that is 100% funded with NS Provincial funds. Most of the other programs have at least a portion of federal funds through the Agriculture Canada Growing Forward Program.

This brings us to another policy, much of the program funding for agriculture is a 60/40 share federal provincial funding, and the leveraging of federal money for programs etc. has been an unwritten policy since the year 2000.

A very obvious policy shift this year was the shift back to a cap of \$10,000 on applications for the Home Grown application based programs. This certainly has its roots in the social democratic policy of spreading the funds to the maximum number possible. We have seen this philosophy reflected in a number of other programs rolled out in the recent past.

Federally, we will see a similar shift in policy to reflect the ideals of the new majority government. They are already flexing their muscle in their determination that the wheat board will lose their single desk authority as soon as they can make it happen, with legislation introduced this fall. We will also see the policy lines around Growing Forward 2 start to solidify as we come closer to the end of this federal provincial agreement. If the wheat board's recent experience is any indication, I expect GF2 will eventually be a take or leave it scenario presented to the provinces by the Feds. Ontario has been trying to convince Ottawa to pony up for their share of their new Ontario Risk Management program. Moving to that kind of a program would be a fundamental shift in direction for Ottawa, one to watch with interest; since both Quebec ASRA and Ontario RM put NS Farmers at a cost disadvantage.

Public policy is not something that happens overnight, but it does affect many aspects of your farms, namely programs, transportation, food safety, etc. It's our job at NSFA to track these issues and changes and make sure the interests of the agriculture community are considered when these decisions are made; we can't afford to ignore it.

viewpoint



Baxter's Work in Farm Safety Appreciated



Farm Safety Nova Scotia (FSNS) was established to provide health and safety services and support to the members of the NS Federation of Agriculture (NSFA). The objective of

FSNS is to promote and assist with the development of a positive farm safety culture using education, training, proactive and preventive safety programming for the farm community of Nova Scotia. Ralph Baxter, NSFA Safety Consultant has been instrumental in the creation of Farm Safety Nova Scotia. Ralph began his work back in November 2009 with the direction to create safety awareness and safety knowledge within the Agricultural Industry. Since then there has been formation of a safety society known today as Farm Safety Nova Scotia as well as lots of networking, connections and communication to build the awareness of farm safety. One of the key components of Ralph's work has been the development of the Farm Health and Safety Manual. This manual is complete with templates, best safety practices, and checklists as tools for farmers to build farm safety plans specifically for their operation. Delivery of this manual will

be held through a series of information workshops scheduled for Fall 2011 and Spring 2012. The manual will also be available online at a new safety website; www.farmsafetyns.ca. The FSNS website will be an online portal of health and safety information on legislation, compliance issues relating to farmers and should be a valuable resource to farmers. Under Ralph's leadership, FSNS has been successful obtaining first aid training and first aid equipment at group discount rates from St. John Ambulance. During Feb. 2011 to May 2011, 124 farmers, farm family members and employees received emergency first aid training and 20 participants received standard first aid training at considerable savings through the FSNS group rate.

Funding to develop and implement this provincial safety organization was provided by Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). The fundamental support of future programming for FSNS is the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

Farm Safety Nova Scotia has been built with a solid foundation and the NSFA Staff and FSNS Board of Directors would like to thank Ralph for his time as consultant on this project. We wish you future success, and continued health and safety in your endeavors!



Know any 4-Hers?

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture hopes to attract the skills and creativity of Nova Scotia's 4-H members to participant in a brand new Video Contest this summer. The Federation, through its meet your farmer campaign, has designed a video contest exclusively for 4-H members to help promote Open Farm Day 2011. Open Farm Day is being held on September 18th across the Atlantic Provinces and Nova Scotia has 61 confirmed farms participating this year. Last year an estimated 15,000 visitors spent some time on one of Nova Scotia's farms; getting an up close look at life

on the farm and learning a bit more about agriculture. We are calling all Nova Scotia 4-H members to create a 30-60 second video promoting open farm day. Be creative, how would you encourage someone to visit a farm on open farm day and showcase some of the interesting things that can be seen on the farm... There is a top club prize of \$500 and prize packages for the members creating the winning video. The contest details can be found at <http://www.meetyourfarmer.ca/videocontest.php>, but the deadline for video submission is August 15th and then let the voting begin!



Committee and Meeting Update

Committee/Meeting Update	Date of last meeting	Actions and Items discussed				
Farm Skills Training	July 13	Workplace Education for farmers	Review of Needs Assessment	Upcoming training workshops	Logistics of training workshops	
Farm Safety	July 8	First Aid training	Promotion of Farm Safety NS	Funding for Farm Safety NS	Safety manuals and workshops	Slow moving vehicle signs
CFA Taxation Working Group	June 29	Alternative minimum tax	Small business deduction	Non-arm's length sale of shares	Loss from farming where main income source is not farm	Lifetime capital gains exemption Taxation forum
Lease Committee	May/June	Cost evaluation	Final Floor Plan	Location		
EFP Advisory Committee	June 21	EFP award	Cross compliance	Water strategy implementation	Water meter project	Database development
Transportation Committee	June 8	Passenger vans for seasonal workers	Input for Motor Vehicle Act review	Transportation Booklet for Farmers	Marine Atlantic livestock transportation policies	Tractor driving course Requirements for 3R license
Commodity Managers and NSFA	June 7	NSAC/Dal merge	National Food Strategy	Homegrown Success	Relationship with government	Trade update Farm Safety
Atlantic Federations of Agriculture	May 31	Election of officers	Atlantic ministers	CFA	Farm Credit Corporation	Open Farm Day
Agricultural Water Fund Committee	May 17	Funding eligible Projects	Determining on-farm water usage	Application process for fund	Growers water committee	Mackay Brook issue
Agricultural Energy Committee	May 5	Efficiency Nova Scotia	Agricultural energy work at the NSAC	Cost of production of biomass	Hybrid willow and Annapolis-Digby digester research projects	Future of agricultural biomass
NMP Steering Committee	April 28	Soil Amendment Program	Biosolids research update	Mink industry issues	Report on research activities	Accuracy of Mellich-3 extract method

Members wanting more information on any of the topics mentioned can contact our office for more details.

NSFA Member Survey Results

In the last issue of this newsletter we asked farmers to fill out a member survey. The purpose of the survey was to gauge how our members value the services provided and so we can improve or change these services. 187 farmers returned completed surveys by the end of June. Here is a highlight of the survey results. In the ratings of NSFA attributes, having "one voice for farmers" was rated the highest by the respondents. On the satisfaction of experience rating, 77% of respondents rated their membership experience 3 or better. We also asked questions about farmer's familiarity with programs such as Meet Your Farmer, Farm Safety, Environmental Farm Plan Program (EFP), etc. Many, but not all, farmers were familiar with these programs with the highest recognition being the new Farm Safety Nova Scotia program and commonly used EFP program. We also asked farmers how they would like us to communicate with them and by a wide margin the most popular choice

was this newsletter! The newsletter was recently increased to ten issues per year and we will continue to build on relevant content and use it as a valuable communication tool. Finally, we asked farmers to provide comments and suggestions; and we received many helpful suggestions that will guide our discussion as we implement improvements to our services. NSFA will now use the survey results to improve our service to members. We are also initiating a revised member benefit program since you told us you were not aware of this program. A brand new NSFA website will be launched very soon that we hope our membership will find easy to navigate and use in their routines. We will also continue to survey members on a regular basis to gauge our progress and improvement in service. Thank you to those that participated in the survey, we look forward to continuing the dialogue.

2011 Call of Expressions of Interest

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) is currently seeking expressions of interest for its Executive Committee. The NSFA's goal is to enable a sustainable future for Agriculture and a high quality of life in rural Nova Scotia. On November 24 & 25, 2011, NSFA will hold its Annual General Meeting and Trade Show. At that meeting the 2011/12 Executive Committee will be elected. In preparation, the nomination committee (enacted at April Council of Leaders) will prepare a slate of candidates for presentation to the AGM. The Executive Committee manages the affairs of the Federation on behalf of the Council of Leaders and makes strategic and operational decisions within the policy framework established by the Council of Leaders. The Executive Committee is a group of at least 7 and not more than 10. It is comprised of President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President and includes Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) Director and Past President as well as members at large. The Executive committee meets 10 times or more each year including 3 quarterly Council of Leaders Meetings, Annual General Meeting and Policy Session. Specific responsibilities of Executive Committee members include, but are not limited to:

- Make decisions on priority issues which need to be taken to government and develop a plan for effective lobbying
- Establish who is responsible for follow-up action on various meeting topics and issues

- Establish guidelines for the conduct of the Annual Meeting
- Initiate projects and studies, determine research needs and oversee funding applications.
- Make decisions with regard to public relations and messages to media.
- Represent the NSFA at national, regional and provincial level meetings and events
- In conjunction with NSFA staff, provide leadership on organizational transition, structure and planning.
- Appoint Executive Director and Corporate Secretary
- Treasurer
- Review and approve annual budget
- Ensure that there is good governance structure of the Federation
- Ensure a competitive and sustainable future for agriculture and a high quality of rural life in Nova Scotia.

The nomination committee will be accepting expressions of interest until Wednesday, August 31, 2011.

Please forward your name, description of your farm organization experience, contact information including your farm name, commodity and regional location, in confidence, via email info@nsfa-fane.ca or by mail at NSFA, 332 Willow Street, Suite 201, Truro, N.S. B2N 5A5, Attention: Nomination Committee.



Healthy Riparian Zones - More than just trees and shrubs!



What do you think of when you envision a riparian zone? What do your riparian zones look like? Is there dense vegetation growing from the edge of the water and beyond, a strip of grass with a few trees between your corn field and the water, or a place for cattle to access drinking water?

Riparian zones typically contain very complex networks of plants that are located adjacent to a watercourse. Many of us know it is important to leave areas next to watercourses undisturbed, allowing them to grow up in natural vegetation, but it is actually the function of these areas that is so significant. A healthy riparian zone performs many functions that are of benefit to the environment and the landowner: improved water quality, water absorption and storage, flood control, recharged groundwater reserves, protecting stream banks from erosion, and habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

There are many things to think about when considering function of a riparian zone. Firstly, how wide should the riparian zone be? A broad recommendation is that a riparian zone should be a minimum of 5 m (15 feet) in width. Although this may be a good starting point, every situation is unique. There are many factors to consider; crop rotation, cover crops, steepness and length of slope, tillage practices, soil type, and erosion control methods are just some of the factors that

play a role in determining appropriate riparian zone width.

There are also many Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) that can help increase the effectiveness of riparian zone function. Fencing livestock from riparian zones will reduce impacts on vegetation and increase stream bank stability allowing the riparian zone to regenerate and provide increased function. Installing grassed waterways, growing cover crops, strip cropping, and reducing tillage are all ways to reduce the load being placed on the riparian zone from adjacent agricultural land. Reducing the load on the riparian zone will increase its ability to function effectively.

Considering the unique factors on your farm will allow you to better understand the function of the riparian zones found on your property. Introducing BMPs, determining adequate riparian zone width, and watching your riparian zones function will increase your knowledge of the effectiveness of your riparian zones. Get out and take a look, are you getting the most out of your riparian zone?

More information on BMPs and riparian zone health is available at <http://www.nr.gov.nl.ca/nr/publications/agrifoods/beneficial.pdf>

Brent Jackson, EFP Program Coordinator
(902)893-6561, bjackson@nsfa-fane.ca

Transporting Farm Animals by Ferry

The Federation's Transportation Committee was made aware of complaints being voiced by livestock truckers about changes made to Marine Atlantic's policy in regard to the shipping of live farm animals on its ferries. At one time Marine Atlantic had a policy of giving the loads of live animals priority in getting them on the next sailing and placing the trucks hauling animals in a spot with the best ventilation possible. In response to the truckers' complaints the Federation contacted Marine Atlantic and expressed our concerns and asked if they could provide us with their current policy.

Following is a copy of their response:

"Marine Atlantic still gives farm (livestock) animals priority for travel it is just accomplished a bit differently. We are

now offering any company transporting livestock the opportunity to book (get a reservation) on a set day and time of crossing. This process happens through our Hazmat Clerk. That clerk can be contacted directly at 902-794-5786 (hours of operation are 10-6 Monday thru Friday) or through our [toll free line] 1-800-341-7981 and pick the option for the Hazmat Clerk. The Hazmat clerk makes arrangements for the unit carrying livestock to be placed on the open deck of the vessel. If you have any future questions or concerns please feel free to contact us at the above phone numbers."

Livestock truckers are advised to contact the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture office (902-893-2293) if there are still issues with Marine Atlantic's handling of the loads of livestock.

Message from Minister MacDonell



It's the time of year when many Nova Scotia families are turning their attentions to vacations, picnics and BBQs on sunny afternoons. It's also time to think about the many agricultural events and activities going on during the summer months.

From now until September, community fairs and agricultural exhibitions are taking

place in corners around the province. Summertime exhibitions are a celebration of agriculture. They bring communities and people together for fun and entertainment. Exhibitions are the perfect opportunity for people to meet face-to-face and see the best from farms, gardens and home crafts while eating lots of great food.

Exhibitions have been a tradition in Nova Scotia for more than 200 years. I encourage you and your family to take in your local exhibition or community fair this summer. I look forward to meeting new faces and seeing familiar ones between now and September.

Earlier in the month, we hosted the second annual Celebration of Small-scale Farming at the Northville Farm Heritage Centre in Kings Co. This event was a valuable opportunity for those looking to get involved in small-scale agriculture to enhance their skills. Farming and agri-businesses are vital to growing our economy and contribute to the success of many rural communities.

Farmers led a variety of workshops and demonstrations of modern small-scale farming practices, technology, farm business management and marketing. They shared their experiences and knowledge of increasing the value of products, keeping costs low and doing business with the environment in mind. There's no better teacher than experience.

The theme of this year's event was Deep Roots/New Branches. The spotlight was on modern small-scale farmers, their foundation of traditional agriculture knowledge and practices, and how they incorporate the best of modern technology, farm business management methods and marketing models.

My thanks to the many farmers who led panels and workshops and were keen to share their knowledge and love of agriculture. The event was organized and sponsored by the Department of Agriculture's THINKFARM initiative, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, AgraPoint, Municipality of the County of Kings, Rural Delivery and the province.

When this government passed the Fur Industry Act last year, I promised we would draft regulations in a timely manner and then consult with the fur farming industry, interested community groups and individuals who expressed an interest in being part of the process.

The draft regulations that will improve our fur industry are now ready.

I understand there are concerns associated with mink ranching, we are committed to the sustainable development of this sector. The fur industry adds \$100 million in export sales to our economy each year. We know we need to help the industry grow while ensuring good environmental stewardship.

Department staff have conducted extensive research about the structures and physical land features of typical fur farms, as well as the waste produced and how it is handled. Legislative and regulatory frameworks from other jurisdictions, such as Denmark, were also examined.

We're now gathering public comments on the draft regulations. The draft regulations and other information is available at gov.ns.ca/agri. Nova Scotians are invited to provide input by e-mail to minkregs@gov.ns.ca or by regular mail to the Department of Agriculture. We hope to hear from you by August 19.

We'll look at all the comments provided to us and changes will be made to strengthen the regulations and we will begin moving the regulations through the Registry of Regulations.

Have a great summer.

Sincerely,
John MacDonell
Minister of Agriculture



Nova Scotia Young Farmers, Come for some Valley Fun!

August 27, 2011

- * *Networking opportunity*
- * *Guest speaker Dean Manning*
- * *Farm Tours (Kings County area)*
- * *BBQ*

For more information, contact Krista at 893-2293
Email: youngfarmers@nsfa-fane.ca



Cape John Community Pasture Field Day

The Cape John Community Pasture field day was held on June 10th which was a cool drizzly morning but that didn't dampen the interest and spirits of all who attended. Nearly 100 beef producers and agricultural professionals met on a 127 acre subdivided section of the pasture to discuss strategies to get the most out of their grass. Producers from New Brunswick to Cape Breton and everywhere in between spent the morning in the field discussing tools and indicators that could be used to help manage and assess pasture productivity. The morning session touched on everything from soil management, to pasture assessment to observations of cattle on pasture. Although some new tools were presented to help determine the status of the pasture including a soil penetrometer which tested soil compaction and the North Carolina Score Card for Pasture Condition which helped assess pasture health, perhaps the most powerful tool that was demonstrated during the morning was simply frequent thoughtful observations made by the producer. The sun finally came out just as the morning session concluded and the group headed to the River John Fire Hall for lunch featuring grass finished beef on a bun. After a delicious meal the day continued with a session on cut forage quality and things wrapped up with a well received producer panel where beef producers spoke about their experiences and successes managing their forage for beef cattle. Farmers left with many take home points including opti-

mum stocking densities, the importance of legumes in pasture, timing of forage harvest to maximize quality among many other tips to manage and capitalize on good forage. As the project continues expect to see more information sessions and field days centering around our grass advantage.

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 Visser; 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

