



# Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

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*Media Release*

## **Nova Scotia government is standing in the way of renewable energy.**

A renewable energy resource that is inexpensive to produce. You would think Nova Scotia Power and the Nova Scotia government would embrace such an idea and accept applications from farmers for COMFIT projects.

Major hold ups that are restricting farmers from installing a COMFIT come from Nova Scotia's Department of Energy. Department of Energy staff have been giving the runaround and indicating that applications will be moved up the chain, and actually aren't. In doing this, the applications missed a critical deadline and now have to wait until mid-January for consideration by Nova Scotia Power for the COMFIT program. This in turn and with winter months approaching, will delay any construction until spring of 2015. Minister Younger has not made a formal request to the energy monopoly to accept these applications, either. Off the record, he has said that he doesn't believe that farmers should be in the energy business. Why not? Farmers use a significant amount of energy to run their farms, and have by-products that they can turn into energy. It's a win-win all the way around, except for Nova Scotia Power.

Department of Energy will only allow one 500kw COMFIT per site. Considering the extensive costs passed on to farmers to meet the requirements presented by Nova Scotia Power, it isn't feasible for most, if not all farmers to have only one 500kw COMFIT on site. When the issue of the number of COMFITs per site was presented to Minister Younger, there was no reply, and no reason given.

It is not just Department of Energy that is keeping doors closed to this energy source. Nova Scotia Power makes farmers who are interested in installing a COMFIT foot the bill for either a new communications tower or rent space from an existing tower. Building a new tower could cost in excess of \$250,000, plus the ongoing maintenance and space could add thousands per month from an existing tower for the life of the biogas project. This is on top of the already \$2.5 million for a single digester and before required upgrades to Nova Scotia Power's outdated power lines, which, depending on the length of the line that needs to be upgraded can be in excess of \$450,000.

Bio-digesters have many benefits that extend beyond the farm. "We are trying to create a sustainable and environmentally friendly future for rural Nova Scotia," Says Chris van den Heuvel, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, and dairy farmer interested in installing a COMFIT biomass digester. "Nova Scotia Power and Department of Energy are putting up road blocks to keep jobs from being created, money spent and a chance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions all in rural Nova Scotia."

Why won't our government make the ask to Nova Scotia Power to accept the applications and break regulatory barriers to allow for a sustainable future and energy for rural Nova Scotia? A second COMFIT on site to help offset the upgrades and communication towers supposedly required by Nova Scotia Power would be a start to cutting red tape for small scale energy production.

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