



# News & Views

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## EFP Program has new Team Leader

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) has evolved over the last ten years; continually focused on delivering a valued program to the agricultural community. This past year has seen a continuation of this evolution with a comprehensive review of the program, which will assist in the future direction of the program. The EFP program currently has 6 part-time and full-time staff members working to deliver the program. Kathryn Bremner, Paul Brenton, Erica Versteeg, Trevor Davison, Brent Jackson, and Lynda Weatherby all work one-on-one with farm managers through the process of developing an individual farm action plan.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is pleased to announce Kathryn Bremner as the new Team Leader for the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program. In her new role, Kathryn will continue to work with farmers in developing their initial and follow-up EFPs but will also take on a supervisory position, representing EFP at various meetings and sitting on the EFP Working Group, which will provide direction for the EFP program.

To contact Kathryn, please phone (902) 893-7338 or email [kbremner@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:kbremner@nsfa-fane.ca)

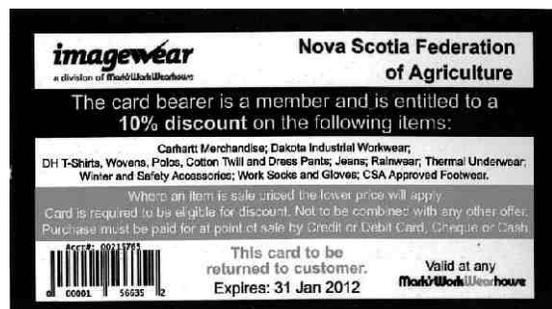


Shown is photo is Kathryn Bremner doing some water sampling.

### With this issue, please find enclosed the following documents

- Discount Card for Mark's Work Wearhouse
- Beef Interest Pay-down Application Form
- NSAC Continuing Education information on courses
- Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust brochure

We are pleased to offer NSFA Membership a discount card for Mark's Work Warehouse. Please find it enclosed with this newsletter.





## Squash from China, a Reason to Buy Local

### Henry Vissers

Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

Buy local seems to be popping up in discussions a lot lately. A farmer called me in November and said that he was in his local Super Store and squash from China was on sale. This seemed odd since there were still local squash for sale and I'm certain Nova Scotia farmers could produce all the squash consumed in Atlantic Canada. The question is one of supply chain and price.

NSFA executive and staff also recently participated in a meeting with our Atlantic counterparts and people from the Quebec buy local branding initiative called Aliments du Quebec. This is described as a unique "Buy Quebec" food program meant to increase the market share of Quebec food products through promotional activities, brand identification, and consumer education. It also has an accreditation program to ensure products meet requirements. A Quebec survey shows that product sales increased by 2.8% for Aliments du Quebec labelled products. They now have over 13,000 local products on the store shelves. This figure includes processed food which must have more than 50% of the ingredients sourced locally and at least 80% of the total direct costs of production must be local.

During the presentation, representatives from Quebec indicated that there are times when all parties do not agree on a product or promotion. In order to deal with these issues they are proposing that a representative from the federation (UPA) and grocers association become the dispute resolution forum.

So what does that mean for Atlantic Canada and Nova Scotia?

Certainly we have a number of differences here, 4 provinces instead of one, a smaller

industry, and provincial branding programs that already exist in all Atlantic provinces as well as regional programs that have been developed by the major chains. Even with all that has been done, a common consumer complaint is that they can't identify local product.

If we are serious about developing an Atlantic brand we'll have to work together and pool funding. It's not possible to fund all of the provincial initiatives and also support a new branding program. A successful program will drive new product lines to the store shelves, encourage more local processing and improve farm profitability by increasing throughput and improve our relationship with retail.

To quote from the food mile report released last August:

*"Based on a survey of household spending conducted by Statistics Canada, about one million Nova Scotians spent about \$2.6 billion on food in 2008. Once spending on food flows to farms, most of it flows back out again to pay for production expenses."*

What does any of this have to do with local squash?

I think a brand initiative could increase the dialogue with retail so we know what the demand is for products we can grow here, such as squash. This could also be supported by coordinating products from multiple farms and selling to retail at a profit (or what's the point?)

Let's build on what's already been done with Agricultural Awareness and provincial branding programs like Select. Our neighbours are not our competition they are our partners.

viewpoint

# Message from Minister MacDonell

Happy New Year and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2011. I look forward to continuing to work with the industry in the coming year as we create a positive and sustainable future for agriculture in Nova Scotia.

On November 23 our government announced JobsHere: Nova Scotia's Plan to Create Good Jobs and Grow the Economy. This is a plan for the entire province and for all sectors of the economy. We will use it to focus on opportunities in high-value sectors to connect Nova Scotia businesses with potential partners abroad and to attract new companies.

As part of the JobsHere Strategy, I officially launched our ten-year plan for developing a sustainable agriculture and agri-product industry for Nova Scotians at the Federations annual meeting in November. Homegrown Success is a plan that outlines a broad, strategic approach to the long-term growth of agriculture in this province. The bottom line is helping farmers generate greater profits from the marketplace.

Our plan is about helping farmers become more profitable in the years ahead and ensuring Nova Scotia agriculture remains viable. We are already ahead of other jurisdictions with our diverse sector and competitive advantages -most significantly the ability to innovate.

We need to figure out other new ways to market and develop our products and focus on how people in other countries consume those products.

One example of something quite new is grass fed beef. As a naturally-healthy food, grass fed beef presents a significant opportunity to rejuvenate the beef industry in this province.

The blueberry industry is another great example. Our blueberries are sold all over the world, with Japan being one of our biggest customers. It's a sustainable, growing market that has a number of opportunities for diversification.

The 10-year plan will guide the business of the Department of Agriculture by ensuring that any programs or initiatives we adopt are based on solid research, best practice and innovation.

As we move forward, a working group is drafting a proposed five-year business plan that will identify actions steps and timing to



achieve the strategic outcomes of Homegrown Success. This business plan will guide programming priorities and resource decisions over the next five years.

We know there are challenges, but I am optimistic that ten years from now our industry will be successful because it is diversified, market-focused and profitable; it is recognized for its adaptable, collaborative business approach; and it has safe, exceptional quality products. The ten-year agriculture plan, Homegrown Success, will help us get where we need to go.

Sincerely,

Hon. John MacDonell  
Minister of Agriculture



# Deadline for Beef Interest Pay-Down Program is March 31st, 2011

**Beef Interest Pay-Down Program:** The \$2.0M Nova Scotia Beef Interest Pay-Down Program will provide assistance to Nova Scotia beef producers to pay down loan interest for 2009, 2010 and 2011.

The interest pay down will support the beef industry in the short term and provide transitional funding to ensure producers remain viable.

Financial Institutions will hold the liability for the loans and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) will facilitate the payment of the interest for those loans.

**Where do I get program information?** The program is delivered through the NSFA. You can visit website for an application <http://www.nsfa-fane.ca> or call 902-893-2293 or visit the office at the address below.

**Who is eligible to apply for the Beef Interest Pay-Down Program?** To be eligible you must meet the following for the duration of the program:

- Loan must support the production of beef;
- Must be a NS registered farm and be a member and levy paying producer with the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers;
- Must be an active beef producer and have been farming at least 6 months and;
- One submission per individual will be accepted per financial institution.

**What types of loans are eligible?** The eligibility of loans will be assessed by the NSFA and will include operating loans, working loans, short term and intermediate loans secured by a financial institution. Loans that are not eligible include mortgages and long term loans (>5 years). Credit cards are not considered to be eligible loans.

**Is the Advance Payment Program (APP) an eligible loan?** The APP is an eligible loan. The Beef Interest Pay-Down loan will only cover any interest amount charged above the \$100,000 amount to the limit of the program.

**What is a financial institution?** A financial institution is any institution that lends money and that is registered as a chartered bank in Canada.

**How do I participate?** To participate, you must fill out and submit the Beef Interest Pay-Down Program application. The application can be received from the NSFA office or website. The application must be returned the NSFA before the deadline.

**What if I have loans from more than one financial institution?** One submission will be accepted per individual per financial institution. If you have loans at more than one financial institution you can fill out additional applications/ claim forms, one for each financial institution.

**How are payment made?** Payment will be issued based on the interest paid and that amount identified on the application/ claim form.

**What is the application deadline?** The deadline to submit the 2010 claim form is March 31, 2011.

**When will payment be made?** Payment will be issued to the producer after the application form and/or claim is submitted and verified. Thus payment will be made at the end of each claim period for the interest amount paid for that claim period. Please include all financial institution paperwork with your application.

**What is the Loan limit?** Interest will only be paid on those loans for beef production to the maximum amount of loan to \$600,000 per Individual or \$6.4% whichever is the lesser amount.

Applications will be accepted on a first come first serve basis and payments may be pro-rated if total demand for program funds exceeds available budget allocations.

**Will applications be verified?** Producers will be agreeing to random audit to confirm that the operation is consistent with eligibility requirements.

**Will interest payments affect other programs?** No, if you receive an interest payment it will not affect payment from other programs that we support such as Farm Investment Fund, AgriInvest and AgriStability.

**Will I have to claim the interest payment as income?** Yes, like other programs you have to treat the payment as income. A T4A slip will be sent to you for income tax purposes for each tax year.

## Contact information:

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture  
332 Willow Street  
Suite 201  
Truro, NS  
Phone: 902-893-2293  
Fax: 902-893-7063  
<http://www.nsfa-fane.ca>





## Workshop

# EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

1:00 PM ~ February 9, 2011 Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS

Call **1-877-710-5210** (toll-free)

This is a companion workshop to the 2011 Atlantic Poultry Conference and is open to all livestock, poultry and mink producers, and the general agricultural industry.

1:00 PM	Registration and Refreshments	Edward Empringham, Canadian Animal Health Coalition
1:30 PM	Introduction	
1:45 PM	What are Consumers Thinking? Kelly Daynard, Ontario Farm Animal Coalition	2:45 PM Break
2:15 PM	Existing Health, Welfare and Safety Monitoring Programs	3:00 PM How to Implement a Public Education Program About Animal Agriculture Kelly Daynard
		4:00 PM Workshop Wrap-up

## Continue Your Education at NSAC

### Skills Training Opportunities

NSAC Continuing Education is pleased to partner with the NS Department of Agriculture to offer skills training to farm employees in Nova Scotia. In February, three courses are being offered to farmers and their employees in the subject areas of Livestock Medicines for Milk and Meat Industries and Precision Agriculture-Using GPS and GIS technology on Farm. The need for training in these areas was identified during consultation with NS Young Farmers and by the Competitive Transition Analysis Group (CTAG) Report conducted in 2009 by the Department of Agriculture and the NS Federation of Agriculture.

In the one-day course in Livestock Medicines, participants will learn about the proper handling, storage, and use of livestock medicines. Course materials will coincide with on-farm food safety programs and will lead to improved consumer confidence.

The Precision Agriculture training is divided into two levels. The first course will give participants the opportunity to take an introduction into the technology of data collection using GPS, before taking the advanced course where participants will learn more about how they can use the data for improved record keeping, reduced input application and decision making on the farm.

For more information on these courses, please see the brochure inserted with this newsletter.



### WINTER COURSES 2011

Please visit website at

[www.nsac.ca/cde](http://www.nsac.ca/cde) for more information.

#### Modern Shepherd

Module 3- Health: January 29 & 30, 2011

Module 4- Lambing and Marketing: April 16 & 17, 2011

#### Livestock Medicines-For Meat and Milk Producing Animals

February 10, 2011

#### GPS Training for Farm Employees

Level I- Using GPS and GIS Technology on Farm  
February 22 & 23, 2011

Level II- Technology for Precision Farming  
February 24 & 25, 2011

#### Introduction to Welding

February 25-27, 2011

#### Pesticide Application Technology for Farmers

February 26, 2011

#### Pesticide Application Technology for Landscapers

March 5, 2011

#### Other Spring 2011 Course Offerings

Pesticide Applicator's Certification, Bulk Milk Tank Grader  
NS Tractor Safety Certification



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# Farm Emergencies, something we should think about.

Emergencies, while they may not occur every day, can strike your farm at any time and cause serious disruption to family life and farm operations. Planning ahead and providing for the needs of your family, your employees and your farm can make the difference in how you cope and recover from a farm emergency. The key to surviving any emergency or disaster is to be prepared and to be informed.

Emergency planning is one of the last things that we want to think about. However, waiting until we face an emergency is the worst possible time to come up with a plan of action.

Understanding the nature of emergencies can help to minimize their impact on farming operations. The Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture are providing an opportunity for farm families and farm employees to increase awareness of emergency planning and preparedness.

Learn how to best protect your family, employees, farm and livelihood, plan to attend;

**Farm Community Emergency Workshop**  
**Sat. Feb. 19th, 2011, 10 am - 3pm.**  
**Agridome - NS Provincial Exhibition Grounds**  
**Registration Fee - TBD**  
**Light lunch will be available**

Workshop topics include Tractor Safety, Fire Emergency Preparedness, Occupational Health and Safety, Farm First Aid, Emergency Measures - 911 and Food Safety.

**Please Register by: Feb. 12, 2011**  
**Contact: Rick Hoeg, P.Ag.**  
**902-893-7495**  
**hoegr1@gov.ns.ca**

## Preserving Agricultural Land – A Cost to be Shared by All

There has been a lot of talk lately in the media about the need to preserve agricultural land. In some areas, it has been a hot topic of debate that has pitted landowners against other residents in the surrounding areas. I think that most people agree that our best agricultural land must be preserved. The government has just received an agricultural land review document that came out of public meetings held across the province on this issue that states just that fact.

One main question that needs to be answered is who should pay the cost of protecting and preserving the farmland? If the public of Nova Scotia thinks that the agricultural land needs preserving then the cost of doing this should be shared by the public and not just by the land owners themselves.

There are several vehicles that would allow the public to be involved with this protection of farmland. Two that are used in many areas of North America with success are land trusts and agricultural land easements. Both help to protect farmland for future generations to farm.

At the annual meeting of the NSFA I made a presentation on the Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust that has been set up over the past two years. We are just now getting our feet under us but our purpose is to try and protect as much of the good farm land as possible for future generations. At present, we can accept donations of land and will purchase land when funds are available. Once the government puts legislation in place to allow us to use easements as a way of giving landowners value for their land while keeping it in agriculture, then the public will have a way to invest in this farm land protection.

Although we are limiting our trust activities to the Annapolis Valley to start with, we would encourage other areas to get involved. At some point down the road we hope there will be a Nova Scotia Farmland Trust.

Agricultural land protection: If not us, then who? And if not now, then when?

Submitted by Charles Keddy, Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust



# Federation Executive welcomes Charles MacDonald to the committee

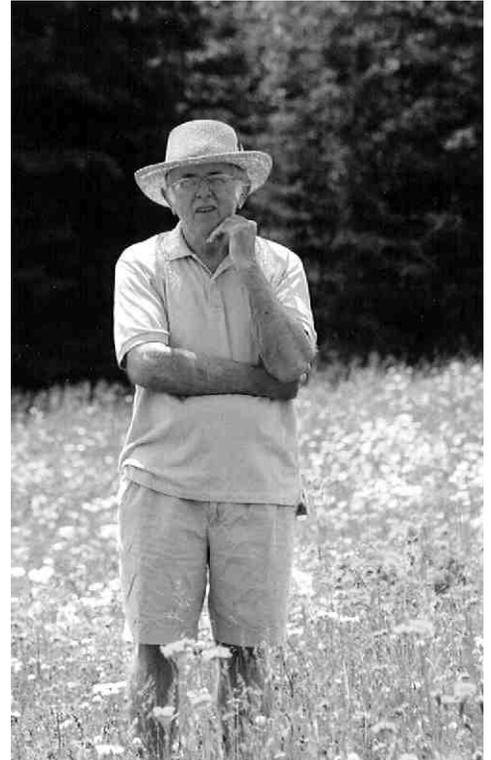
Charles MacDonald is the newest member of the NSFA Executive. He has been involved with farming since 1973; having at various times had a wide range of farm creatures from donkeys to ducks. Mainly he has raised beef cattle, concentrating since 1994 on Highland cattle. Over the last few years he has been downsizing the herd, which now numbers about 30 head.

Charles has been involved in Cape Breton farming organizations over the years. In the mid-seventies he teamed up with a group of part-time farmers on the Mira River to establish the Mira Community Pasture Cooperative, which operates a pasture of some 200 acres. He currently serves as Secretary on the Board of the Cape Breton Federation of Agriculture. He is on the Board and is a vendor of the Cape Breton Farmers' Market Cooperative in Sydney.

Charles was a Cape Breton representative on the Agricultural Land Review Committee which submitted its final report to the Provincial Government in June of last year.

Charles is retired from Cape Breton University, where he taught Religious Studies. He was a long-time board member and Chair of New Dawn Enterprises, and managed BCA Investment Co-operative, an early Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF) and for a time the largest in the province.

Charles lives with his wife Sharon and son Rick at their farm on the North West Arm, between Sydney and North Sydney in Cape Breton.



## ALOHA – An Exciting Marketing and Agri-Tourism Opportunity

Well... this isn't a trip to Hawaii, but rather bringing Hawaii to Atlantic Canada! Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture is hosting a full-day workshop this February featuring Lani and Pomai Weigert, Ali'i Kula Lavender, Kula, Hawaii.

Lani Medina Weigert is an independent marketing and customer service consultant who also co-owns Ali'i Kula Lavender, Hawaii's premier lavender farm. Lani has 30 years of experience in tour and hospitality marketing as Director of Sales & Operation for one of Hawaii's largest tour wholesalers, Pleasant Holidays. Lani understands how to market and evoke connection with her customers through marketing a "lifestyle" rather than a single product. She is the president of the statewide nonprofit Hawaii AgriTourism Association, which focuses on guiding farmers to supplement their incomes through value-added products and agri-tourism activities. The organization also provides training on customer service to ensure a positive guest experience for farm visitors.

delivers the web site and social media aspects of this workshop.

The workshop has 3 stops in Atlantic Canada and will be in Nova Scotia on Wednesday, February 23rd at the Holiday Inn, Truro. There is a \$30 per person pre-registration required, but it promises to be an informative lineup of topics.

To register or for more information, please contact, Claire Hanlon Smith, NS Department of Agriculture, 902-893-4491 or [hanlonca@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hanlonca@gov.ns.ca)



Pomai is the marketing and community relations coordinator for the business, and

## Minister MacDonell hangs onto Agriculture portfolio

The cabinet shuffle announced in mid January indicated that John MacDonell was the new Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The only mention of Agriculture is in the context of trade policy under the Department of Rural and Economic Development and Tourism. Agriculture still maintains a department within government and Minister MacDonell will continue to serve as Minister along with Paul LaFleche as Deputy Minister.

The Federation looks forward to a unique partnership with the 2 portfolios of our current Minister. You may read the full release or download video and audio clips on the government's website.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/>

## Federation proudly supporting 4-H



The NSFA was please to support the 2010 Market Steer, Lamb and Turkey Show & Sale last fall at the Nova Scotia 4-H Show in Truro. Henry Vissers (left), Executive Director of the NSFA had a successful bid totaling \$375.00 to purchase this "proud" market turkey from Alannah Sharpe (right) from Eureka, N.S. The market turkey was donated back and re-auctioned with the proceeds going to the Nova Scotia 4-H Council.

## NSAC Career Fair

Jean Lynds, welcomes students to the NSAC Farm booth at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College Career Fair held in January. Although the pending weather of the day affected a few of the participants, it was a well attended day. Students congregated to the Langille Athletic Centre looking for job opportunities and to chat with Agri-Businesses. The Federation of Agriculture also attended with Meet Your Farmer promotions and collected a list of students looking for on farm jobs, many of which are interested in summer or seasonal work for April – September. If you have employment opportunities on your farm, contact Wanda at the Federation office for a list of potential students (902) 893-2293 or [whamilton@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:whamilton@nsfa-fane.ca)



## News & Views

**NSFA News & Views** is the Newsletter of the N.S. 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 & concerns from our members, please direct them to Executive Members or the Office Staff.

### 2011 Executive Members:

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

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