



## *Media Release*

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### **Land for farming or land for sale?**

**Truro** – The issue of agricultural land being restricted for farm production or permitted for real estate development is a growing concern on the radar of many Nova Scotians recently. Sources report that “Nova Scotia has a limited amount of agricultural land remaining. According to the 2006 census, there are approximately 181,915 hectares of active farmland in Nova Scotia.”<sup>1</sup> Of this the prime agricultural areas of the eastern Annapolis Valley and the Truro-Halifax corridor are under considerable pressure for real estate development.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture takes a balanced approach to the concerns of land use issues; in the preservation of productive, finite farmland and in support of an adequate compensation program to ensure a fair return for a farmer’s investment.

Richard Melvin, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture says that, “As an industry we have a responsibility to ensure governments recognize that there are ways to plan and protect our agricultural land resource while at the same time ensuring the financial well being of the future of agriculture.”

The Federation’s formal policy on the issue reflects that responsibility. The policy reads:

*Support the establishment of a provincially operated compensation program to ensure that farm owners receive adequate compensation for land where land values are adversely affected by agricultural land use policies/restrictions; and, encourage the provincial government to take a leadership role in establishing standard land use policies related to agriculture and permitted uses of prime agricultural lands.*

The Federation’s policy regarding the protection of agricultural land suggests that government intervention must go well beyond simply placing restrictions on the use of agricultural land. Melvin says, “Farmland protection programs can take many forms, varying from the use of zoning to regulate land held by the farming community to programs such as land trusts that offer incentives to encourage farmers to utilize their land farming.” “In this province we need to begin to explore all of these options and take meaningful and timely steps towards their implementation.”

Mr. Melvin adds that, “Last year, the provincial government formed a committee to review the future of Nova Scotia’s agricultural land.” “We expect over the next several months there will be some workable suggestions from the work of the [Agricultural Land Review] committee and look forward to working with all Nova Scotians on the important issue of protecting agricultural land.”

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#### **For further information contact**

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*The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture represents the interests of over 2500 farm families in Nova Scotia. Founded in 1895 to provide Nova Scotia’s farm community with a single voice, the NSFA is the province’s only general farm organization.*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Discussion Paper by Agricultural Land Review Committee, January 2010