



## Congratulations to Patricia and Josh Atlantic Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers!

Article credited to Wendy Elliott, The Advertiser

The Atlantic region's title for Canada's Outstanding Young Farmer has gone to Patricia Bishop and Josh Oulton of Port Williams (Nova Scotia). The results were announced in Charlottetown Feb. 26.

"We started farming, and continue to farm because we want to provide people with healthy, delicious, excellent food," says Bishop. "We have the skills, patience and determination to do it."

This couple appreciates the challenges farming presents and values the independence they have in their work to make decisions, adapt and grow.

"We also feel strongly that we need to farm. We need to have farms for ourselves, our children and for the health of our communities. We farm because it provides for us a way of life that feels great, and generates enough money to provide for our family.

"We love what we do."

Oulton farms vegetable fields in Canard the couple bought in 2004, while Bishop purchased 23 organic acres in Port Williams in 2007 to pursue her passion for organic farming. In the first year, they knew they needed to get the fertility back up in the soil. "The soils were quite depleted. Josh worked very hard to improve the soil."

Both come from long-time (Annapolis) Valley farm families. Raised at Noggins Corner Farm in Greenwich, Bishop can trace her family back to the original New England Planters; Oulton's Hants County grandparents introduced the Charolais breed of beef cow to Nova Scotia.

As a boy knowing he wanted to be a farmer, Oulton set out to build relationships with farmers so he could learn. Throughout his teenage years, he worked on farms and helped his grandfather.

Last year, the couple launched a successful community shared agriculture (CSA) program, growing 26 varieties of vegetables for members locally and in Halifax. They distribute 52



**Port Williams, Nova Scotia organic vegetable producers Josh Oulton and Patricia Bishop are Atlantic Canada's 2010 Outstanding Young Farmers. They will represent Atlantic Canada at the national OYF event later this year in Victoria, BC. Shown in the photo with the couple are their three children—Izaak, eight; Lily, four; and Frank, two. (Photo: Contributed)**





# Connecting the Dots...

**Richard Melvin,**  
President Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA)

Another planting season is about to roll out. Farmers are by nature optimists; we know that Mother Nature is not always an easy or predictable master and that putting seed in the ground is ultimately an act of faith. Of course, farmers are at the same time realists and proficient business operators who assess risks and benefits making decisions based on probable outcomes. In the case of our plans for 2010 planting season we are weighing many factors from weather and market conditions to overall economic conditions and global trading patterns. The balancing of these variables is more of an art than a science.

Over the past several years of working as an executive member with NSFA I am constantly impressed by farmers' ability to operate and make decisions in the complex environment in which we work. This ability has been refined in some cases thru several generations of family farming and has both the depth of thinking that goes with experience yet still the freshness and energy of someone facing new challenges and opportunities.

Through NSFA we continue to work on numerous issues that will help our farm members operate their farm businesses with the highest degree of probability of being successful. The NSFA maintains a roster of 42 sub-committees which work diligently on a multitude of issues ranging from taxation, labour, transportation, trade, environment, natural resources, federal and provincial agriculture development programs, strategic planning, farm safety and agriculture awareness to name a few. Many of these committees are populated by our members who volunteer countless hours of their time to assist in the development of meaningful and practical regulations in our province. Generally speaking NSFA has a good working relationship with various government departments and can work with staff to find workable solutions to concerns the farm community has.

In my first several years of working on the NSFA executive I must admit it felt a bit like driving at night in a snowstorm. Lots of things coming at you with no real way to see where you are ultimately going. As time moved on I must say certain things have become clear and I would like to share some observations with you.

Over the past year NSFA and NSDA have worked on a joint basis under the CTAG committee. This committee presented its final report to our February council meeting. In essence the report highlighted the importance of having an enhanced motivated extension capacity in our province. This will require re-organization of existing staff and resources to align in a manner that allows for efficient access by farmers to the information and support they need to run their business in a very competitive environment.

At our annual meeting in November, NSFA adopted a policy which puts us on a path towards establishing a "Nova Scotia Food Policy". At the same time Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) has adopted a policy to work towards a "Canadian Food Strategy". It was quite interesting to me that these two initiatives while developed by different people have many common themes and goals. Of course ultimately local, provincial, regional, national and international food strategies must interlock with each other. The goal of ensuring the population of Nova Scotia and ultimately the world has access to an adequate food supply which is produced in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner is one of the ultimate goals humankind must face. It is said that as humankind we must produce as much food in the next 50 years as has been produced in the previous 10,000 years! This probability brings into focus the need for some strategic thinking both locally and globally.

In the years ahead as issues such as climate change, population increase, peak oil and peak water will continue to challenge agricultural capacity, I believe we in Nova Scotia will play a meaningful and strategic role in the sustainability of our province both economically and environmentally, but we will need good planning to make that happen.

Communications to the general public will be increasingly important moving forward. Over the past several generations Nova Scotia's population has moved from a position of being one generation removed from farming to the point of now we are largely an urban society. A corresponding lack of understanding in matters related to food production presents both challenges and opportunities. NSFA has

viewpoint



## Connecting the Dots...

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committed enhanced resources to ramp our ability to convey a positive, consistent message regarding agriculture and its importance to the urban population. It is our goal to ultimately build on the existing good will we enjoy as farmers and convert that into opportunities at the “cash register” as well as leverage at the “ballot box”. This ability will in the long run have a major bearing on our ability to operate successful farms in our beautiful and blessed province.

As you work through the busy planting season please take time to work safely. If you have any ideas, questions, or concerns please contact an executive member, staff member, your county federation or commodity group. NSFA is your organization and ultimately its ability to find solutions starts with you. That is the fact that gives hope and faith for a better future.

## Jeannie van Dyk honoured as an outstanding leader and woman in Agriculture

Recently, Farm Credit Canada (FCC) recognized five women for their leadership and commitment to the Canadian agriculture and agri-food industry with the annual Rosemary Davis Award. The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) would like to congratulate Jeannie van Dyk as the 2010 Atlantic winner!

Jeannie is the co-owner with her husband John McLellan of a dairy operation with 90 cows and 415 acres of pasture forage and corn in Noel Shore, Hants County. She's also a partner with her brothers Peter and Charles in van Dyk Blueberry Enterprises, a low bush blueberry operation, which consists of 600 acres of blueberry land and 400 acres of forest located in Caledonia, Queens County.

Jeannie spent five years as a Provincial Swine Specialist with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. She was the first female to work with the livestock branch, conducting extension work.

In 2007, she became the first female chair of the Farmers Cooperative Dairy, an organization of which she is very proud of.

“I believe that success doesn't magically appear. You have to look for it and work towards it. I consider myself fortunate to be involved in agriculture today. It's a complex industry and I wouldn't want to do anything else. As people's ideas about the food they eat and how it's produced continue to evolve, we are faced with new challenges”, she says.

Jeannie also believes in lifetime learning and enjoys working with youth and learning from them, as well as sharing her knowledge in various roles as a 4-H leader, teacher of Agriculture Exploratory to middle school students, teacher of a Swine Production Course at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and guest lecturer at the same college on topics such as rural communities, local agricultural processing and success in agriculture. Jeannie loves working with young people and encouraging them to pursue their dreams in agriculture.



## Congratulations to Patricia and Josh...

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weeks a year to 108 families, and to an additional 100 families during the summer months.

The past-president of the Kings County Federation of Agriculture, Bishop holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and an education degree. Oulton also graduated from NSAC and worked as a herdsman. He has a special interest in micro-organisms.

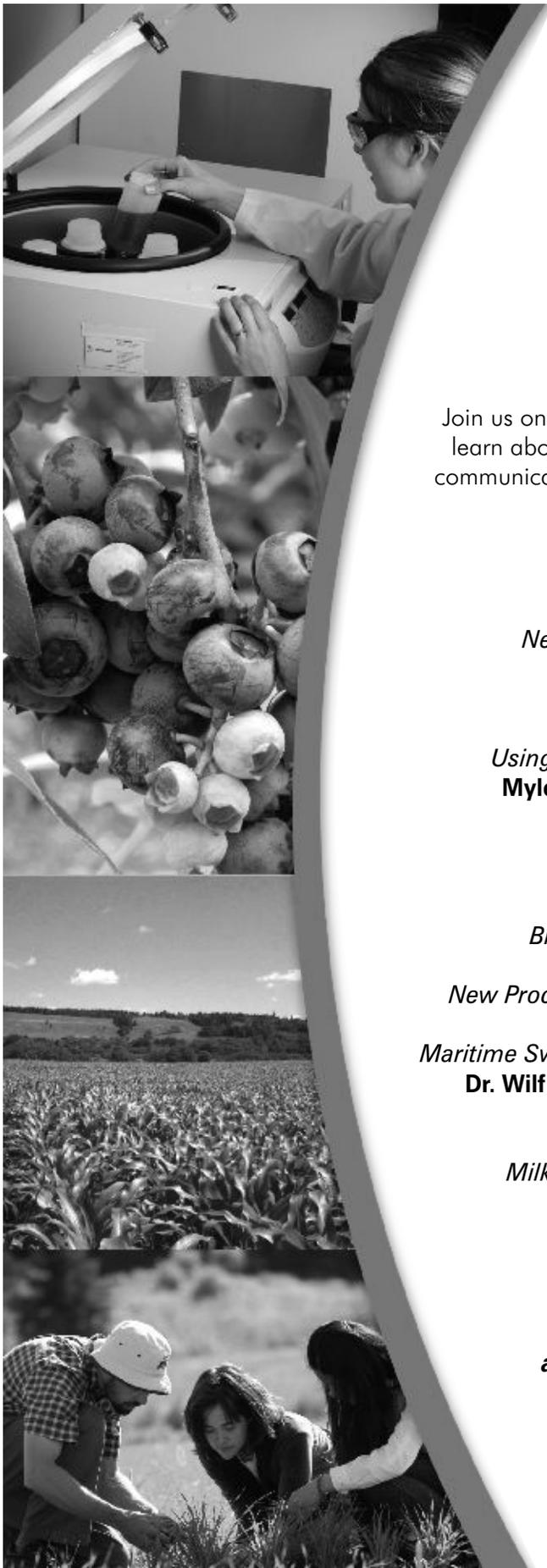


Bishop is also currently serving on the six-member Nova Scotia Agriculture Land Review Committee, looking at issues

surrounding the long-term future of the province's agriculture land base.

Celebrating its 31st year, Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the contribution of agriculture.

Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, making the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada. Two national winners are chosen each year.



# Atlantic Agricultural Forum

connect. innovate. renew.

April 22-23, 2010 Truro, Nova Scotia



***nsac.ca/aaf***

Join us on campus and at the Truro Holiday Inn and Conference Centre to learn about research and new technologies, extension methods, effective communication, the evolution of agriculture, value-added opportunities and new global food safety programs.

## ***Highlighted Speakers:***

**Rory Francis, PEI BioAlliance**

*New Venture: Oilseed Production and Processing in PEI*

**John K. Schueller University of Florida**

*Precision Farming*

**Rob North, CBC Radio**

*Using the Media Effectively/A New 'Story' to Attract Attention*

**Myles Frosst, former CEO, Agricultural Institute of Canada**

*The Changing Face of Agriculture*

**Dr. Marvin Pritts, Cornell University (remotely)**

*Integrating Research, Education and Extension*

**Paul MacLeod, Sobeys**

*Bringing Local Food to Consumers/New Opportunities*

**Dr. Richard Ablett, NSAC**

*New Processing Technology for Better Nutrition and Farm Gate Value*

**Dr. Josee Owen, AAFC (Boutouche)**

*Maritime Sweet Potatoes: Cultivars and Health-Promoting Phytochemicals*

**Dr. Wilf Nicholls, Director, Memorial University, Botanical Garden**

*Do We Realize the Full Potential of Native Plants?*

**David Walker, Milk 2020**

*Milk 2020: New Brunswick's Dairy Innovation Organization*

***April 22 - full day and banquet***

***April 23 - half day***

***For more information on the program, to REGISTER and for special accommodation rates, please visit the website***



**Nova Scotia  
Agricultural  
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# Strive for Five at School!

Apples. Broccoli. Squash. They are just a few of the many fresh and delicious fruits and vegetables grown locally in Nova Scotia.

Students in Nova Scotia's public schools are already enjoying healthy foods and beverages, thanks to the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools. Strive for Five at School! takes it a step further, focusing on promoting and preparing in-season local fruits and vegetables and highlighting the importance of children and youth eating five servings of fruits and vegetables during the school day.

"This is another example of the great work happening in schools to help children and youth eat healthier and be more healthy overall," said Maureen MacDonald, Minister of Health Promotion and Protection. "We know young Nova Scotians are becoming heavier and less fit and this is one of many things we're doing to help improve their health and help them develop good habits that last a lifetime."

The guide includes a calendar showing which fruits and vegetables are available in Nova Scotia, along with 85 large- and small-quantity recipes. Other resources include nutrition tips and fun facts for newsletters, as well as ideas to promote featured fruits and vegetables. There is also a guide for planning workshops for people who prepare food in schools so they can make more nutritious recipes.

Recipes were developed by a professional dietitian and taste-tested by students and staff who prepare food in schools. Most recipes have few ingredients, take relatively little time to prepare, are affordable, and help schools provide food and beverages that meet the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools.



Schools Program which encourages physical activity, good nutrition and a healthy school environment. Through a wide range of programs and initiatives, it encourages students' physical, social, spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being to improve their ability to learn.

The resource was created by the producer supplier committee of the Annapolis Valley Health Promoting Schools Program, the Community Health Boards of the Annapolis Valley, Armstrong Food Service and the departments of Health Promotion and Protection, Education and Agriculture.

Patricia Bishop, owner of Taproot Farms, is co-chair of the Producer-Supplier committee, which includes local producers and suppliers, local and provincial agriculture organizations and school board and government representatives.

"Many partners are working together with the common goals of healthy children and healthy communities," said Ms. Bishop. "These strong partnerships are making it possible to provide our children with delicious and nutritious local choices that they love to eat."

To learn more about Strive for Five at School!, visit [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp).



Strive for Five at School! is an initiative of the Health Promoting

# Notice of Information Sessions Farm Investment Fund 2010-2011

A new Farm Investment Fund Program year will be launched this Spring, 2010. You are invited to attend one of the scheduled information sessions below and receive updates on the program for the coming year. All sessions will take place in the evening starting at 7:00 pm with coffee and tea available at 6:45 pm. We ask that you bring your Farm Investment Fund Guidelines booklet with you if you have received them.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Wolfville	April 12, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Old Orchard Inn 153 Greenwich Road South
Annapolis Royal	April 13, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Annapolis Royal Inn 3924 Highway #1
Yarmouth	April 14, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Rodd Colony Harbour Inn 417 Main Street
Bridgewater	April 15, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Days Inn 50 North Street
Truro	April 19, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Bestwestern Glengarry 150 Willow Street
Amherst	April 20, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Super 8 Hotel 40 Lord Amherst Drive
Baddeck	April 26, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Inverary Inn 368 Shore Road
Antigonish	April 27, 2010	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Greenway Claymore 137 Church Street

A brief overview of AgriInvest and AgriStability will also be presented at these sessions!

## **AgriStability**

Make sure your farm is covered with AgriStability!

Sudden price declines, production losses due to poor weather and other elements beyond your control can cut into your bottom line. Help protect that bottom line by enrolling in AgriStability, a margin-based program that provides income support to farmers experiencing a margin decline of 15 per cent or more.

Current participants will automatically be sent an enrollment notice for 2010. New Participants must request to participate before April 30, 2010. To request a new participant package visit, [www.agr.gc.ca/AgriStability](http://www.agr.gc.ca/AgriStability) or call 1-866-367-8506.

## **AgriInvest**

AgriInvest is a savings account for producers that provide flexible coverage for small income declines and support investments that help mitigate risks and improve market income. Each year, producers can deposit up to 1.5 percent of their Allowable Net Sales (ANS) into an AgriInvest account and receive a matching contribution from federal and provincial governments. Producers can withdraw the funds at any time for risk mitigation or other investments.

To learn more about AgriStability and AgriInvest programs visit [www.agr.gc.ca/brm](http://www.agr.gc.ca/brm) or call 1-866-367-8506. If you wish to speak to someone regarding AgriStability or AgriInvest call Steven Tattie 893-6374 or toll free 1-866-844-4276 to make an appointment.



# Message from the Minister of Agriculture

Spring has officially arrived in Nova Scotia, at least according to the calendar, and some might even think it arrived in mid-March when we experienced a number of warm sunny days. If nothing else, spring is certainly peeking around the corner as we move into April, which gets people thinking about many activities that are part of a new growing season.

As Minister of Agriculture I begin thinking about the new opportunities that spring brings for farmers and the agriculture industry. There are a number of good things happening in the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture that I would like to share here.

A New Entrant Committee has been established to develop and implement a strategy for the department to attract and support new entrants to our agriculture industry. One of the first projects initiated by this committee was a needs assessment which will provide recommendations for the development of programs, services and information for new entrants to Nova Scotia's agriculture industry.

The department hired a New Entrant Coordinator to develop information materials and to improve communication to new entrants. An identifying brand has been developed for use on all new entrant products and website materials will provide a one-stop location of information for new entrants.

Although winter is a busy time for the 4-H program, throughout the spring members are actively working on projects to present at fairs and exhibitions throughout the summer and preparing for club and county public speaking competitions.

At this time of year there are also leadership development programs offered for 4-H members and adult volunteers. The second rural leaders conference was held in early March, bringing together community leaders from across the province to discover areas of common interest and opportunities to work together.



The second annual Kevin Grant Memorial Tour was held in mid-March for 10 4-H members 14 to 16 years of age. This three-day event teaches members about the importance and uniqueness of Nova Scotia and the many industries that support the province. I had an opportunity to meet and talk to the members who attended this event and learn more about their activities and interests.

It was evident from this event that our 4-H program is helping our youth develop important skills they can use throughout their lives and careers. Our future looks to be in good hands

All the best for a productive growing season in 2010.

Sincerely, John MacDonell



The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA) is pleased to announce the Think Farm Working Group Initiative. The Think Farm Working Group's mandate is to attract and support beginning and transitioning farmers in Nova Scotia. During the past year, the Working Group reviewed the services the NSDA currently offers to beginning farmers and commissioned a needs assessment report in order to improve the support it offers to these farmers. A work plan for the next year is currently being developed. In addition, a Resource Coordinator was hired to revise and expand the information kits sent to beginning farmers by the Regional Offices.

For more information, visit the Think Farm website: [www.gov.ns.ca/thinkfarm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/thinkfarm)

# Keep Farm Safety Top of Mind

When it comes to safety, you can change your equipment and the materials you use. You can change your processes and how you do things. And you can easily change your safety rules and not take short cuts. But you can't change the devastating consequences of an accident after it happens...

Working safely and protecting the health and well being of your employees and families needs to be an important part of everyday best management practices on the farm. Common sense and taking your time can reduce the risks of accident and injury. However, a shocking result in a 2009 survey, found that over 40% of farmers responding indicated that they do not know what their obligations for health and safety were. Overall, other than having first aid kits on hand, there was a general lack of health and safety preparedness on the respondents' farms.

As continued support for improved awareness and education around farm safety, the NSFA has been actively developing a business model for the Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia, a formal safety organization that will be implemented later in 2010.

Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia will increase farmers' awareness of their responsibilities to the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act and to support farmers in their compliance with the Act and other government regulations.

Funding through the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) has made it possible to develop a business model for this safety society and to dedicate resources to its implementation.

Ralph Baxter, NSFA Safety Officer is pleased to be working on such an important endeavor, he says, "this project will provide training opportunities for farmers and their employees, but most importantly provide the missing educational component to develop long term strategies for Nova Scotia Farm Health and Safety."

Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia will enhance the safety practices of the agricultural workforce by means of providing members with opportunities and services related to safety. This would include developing an online resource, training programs, on farm reviews, and raising awareness of OHS regulations, along with ensuring compliance with government regulations.

With the week in March designated as Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) past, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture encourages farmers to continue to keep farm safety top of mind. As you move into a very busy spring season full of planting, fencing, and manure spreading; remember to include farm safety in your day, it will save you time in the long run!

Stay tuned for more on the Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia and Plan to Farm Safely Every Day.

**NSFA AGM....**  
***Mark your calendars!***  
**NSFA Annual General Meeting is scheduled for November 25 & 26th, 2010.**

## 2010 Farm Environmental Stewardship Award is now open for applications!

This annual award has been designed to showcase the outstanding stewardship efforts of farms and elevate public awareness of sustainable farming practices across the province. The award is worth up to \$2,000 (no cash value) for activities that further enhance the farm operation. Projects listed in Farm Investment Fund Guidelines will be supported. Please see the enclosed brochure, visit the NSFA website ([www.nsfa-fane/EFP](http://www.nsfa-fane/EFP)) or call (902) 893-2293 for more information on the award and to access an application form.

## 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.

### 2010 Executive Members:

President:	<b>Richard Melvin</b>	- Phone: 582-7939
1st. Vice President:	<b>Beth Densmore</b>	- Phone: 369-2876
2nd. Vice President:	<b>Mary McCarron</b>	- Phone: 863-4026
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>Danny Davison</b>	- Phone: 798-0283

**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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