



Council of Leaders Report

The NSFA Council of Leaders met in February with a small crowd in attendance. As Chris van den Heuvel, NSFA President welcomed the group he sent out thoughts and recognition to fellow farmers experiencing damage from our latest wallop of snow and nasty winter weather. The Council members got right to business, in discussion with a need to clarify the rights and rules in regard to turkey processing. The Council asked the Federation to issue documentation that makes the facts known for people raising turkeys for their own use and to identify the regulations around processing turkey on-farm.

During financial report, changes were made to the NSFA expense claim policy with regard to overnight accommodations. The policy now includes a statement that says, “any NSFA meeting the requires the member to commence travel before 8 am and is atleast 100 km one-way travel will meet the requirements for an overnight accommodation.” There was also a breakdown of the NSFA current bursary offerings and a motion for the Executive to review these awards and provide recommendation back to April Council meeting.

A presentation on Bio-Resources: ‘An Opportunity for Nova Scotia Agriculture’ was made by Alex McCann, Nova Scotia Business Inc and Paul Richards, Innovacorp. During their presentation, it was noted that with abundant biomass resources including, forest, agriculture, and marine sources, Canada is well positioned to take advantage of the growing bio-products opportunity. They spoke about emerging opportunities for bio-resource economy; global markets for bio-energy, new feedstock technologies (agriculture waste products) and clean technologies like renewable energy were a few of the examples. The presenters welcomed the opportunity to be in front of the agriculture community to talk about developing value chain partnerships and what a communications strategy with agriculture might look like. Along with approving the meeting dates for the year, 2015 committee list, the Council established a new wetlands committee and will begin work to identify issues and solutions with agriculture wetlands. There were various committee reports given, many of which have been previously reported through this newsletter. An update on the activities of resolutions adopted at the NSFA annual meeting was provided and is also printed in this newsletter on page 3. Other updates that were provided included a progress on the six policy initiatives of the Federation and a demonstration and walk through of the farm succession portal, www.nsfarmsuccession.ca

In other business, it was noted that Bill No 8, Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers is currently under financial review. This bill, if passed, provides a non-refundable tax credit

of 25% of the wholesale value of agricultural products produced by Nova Scotia farmers and donated to Nova Scotia food banks.



Over the lunch break of the full day meeting, members of the Council of Leaders joined Nova Scotia Institute of Agrology (NSIA) for their latest “hot topics” session. The group enjoyed a networking opportunity and a presentation from Jolene MacEachern, the coordinator of the Dal AC sandbox, Cultiv8. The sandbox concept is about innovation and entrepreneurship; Jolene was quick to point out that farmers in Nova Scotia have been innovators and entrepreneurs for years. There are eight objectives to the sandbox. Through idea generation, educational programming and facilitated networking, the Agricultural Sandbox strives to Cultiv8:

- 1) a remarkable student experience
- 2) tomorrow’s industry leaders
- 3) campus entrepreneurial spirit
- 4) strategic relationships
- 5) a culture of innovation
- 6) a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem
- 7) viable business opportunities
- 8) success

Jolene made a call to action for industry to get involved; to share problems and ideas, work with student teams to move the idea forward, be a mentor, get involved by sponsoring an event and explore the internship opportunities that already exist.

The Council of Leaders will meet again on Wednesday, April 15, 2015.



As easy as ABC

Henry Vissers

Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

The Federation is always interested in regulation - both new positive regulation and the removal of unnecessary regulation. The province has done a credible job of reducing regulations over the last few years. Recent changes to some of the environmental regulations come to mind such as the alteration of a water course. Moving towards outcome based regulation is a good thing. The notification process, rather than the more onerous permitting process, seems to remove a lot of unnecessary administration and puts the onus on the farmer, landowner or citizen to do a proper installation based on the rules with the possibility of someone coming to check on the work quality later.

We see lots of potential for further work on the issues in the areas that intersect with the farm community. For example we have two acts that relate to fencing - Fences and Detention of Stray Livestock Act, and Fences and Impounding of Animals Act. NSFA requested quite some time ago that these two acts be modernized and combined into one act. We believe that there is a requirement for an act, after all “good fences make good neighbours”, and we need some structure to deal with neighbour disputes, stray livestock and other issues as they occur.

Another act that clearly needs an update is the Motor Vehicle Act. The review for this act was undertaken a number of years ago and we have been waiting ever since to provide input into the new draft. Input would include the removal of conditions 15 and 21 as outlined in the current act. There have

also been issues around livestock trailers that need to be clarified in regulation.

The NS Tax and Regulatory report that is currently open for comment has been the focus of media attention on proposed changes to tax rules. You can read the report at www.novascotia.ca/finance/docs/tr/Tax_and_Regulatory_Review_Nov_2014.pdf. Missing from the discussion in the media is the regulatory side which takes up 40 pages of the 109 page report. In its election platform, the current government committed to regulatory reform recognizing tax burden’s disproportionate effect on small businesses including farms. NSFA reemphasized this point when we met with the Liberal Caucus in in September 2014. The report estimates that each year, small business in Nova Scotia spend an average of 36 hours complying with regulations for an estimated total cost of \$119 million per year.

NSFA has as a standing policy on the removal of regulatory burden and red tape that states: “It shall be the policy of the Federation to investigate the Better Regulation Initiative and to lobby Nova Scotia Government for reduction of red tape and regulatory burden so farmers can do business in Nova Scotia.”

Our policy (which can be found at nsfane.ca/about-us/nsfa-policy) stems from the Nova Scotia government’s establishment of a “Better Regulation Initiative”, a province-wide process to improve the laws and regulations in Nova Scotia. According to a fact sheet explaining the initiative, Better Regulation is Nova Scotia’s approach to regulatory reform and commitment to continuous improvement; keeping the benefits of regulation and making it easier

ABC continued

to do business in Nova Scotia. Bill No. 51, Red Tape Reduction Act; An Act to Reduce the Regulatory Burden in Nova Scotia was also introduced in April 2012.

So, if you got this far, you're likely wondering about the ABC reference in the title of the article. It refers to the Agencies Boards and Commissions process that the NS government uses to find people to fill roles as diverse as Natural Products Council, Livestock Services Boards and many others outside of agriculture. You may have seen advertisements in our e-news as well as other mediums asking people to apply. Check out www.novascotia.ca/exec_council/abc/ for more information on ABC's.

If you've applied for an open opportunity, I'm here to tell ya - don't hold your breath waiting for a response to your application! This is a slow and onerous process that in some cases has taken more than a year for a response, let alone making an appointment. If regulatory burden has a poster child, this is it. First, you submit your application which is a resume and cover letter. Your application then goes through the vetting and legislative processes and finally an Order in Council. There must be a way to simplify this process - I challenge government to start here.

Comments?

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Update on Resolution Activities

The following is an update on the resolutions that were passed at the 2014 Annual Meeting.

A-14-01, Funding Program to Support the Reclamation of Formerly Productive Agricultural Land – This resolution was discussed with the Minister of Agriculture (13Jan15) with recommendations and details on the NSFA policy initiative to be provided to NSDA. It was also reported that NSDA is engaging in conversations with commodity groups regarding access to agriculture land and access to crown land and that there is work started on creating an inventory of what is available.

A-14-02, Prevention of Sunday Hunting – A letter of support was sent to Minister of DNR. It was also mentioned to the Minister of Agriculture. DNR has also launched a public consultation questionnaire that is open for submission until April 10, 2015. <http://novascotia.ca/natr/hunt/sunday/>

A-14-03, Increased Funding and Technical Assistance to Reduce Deer Crop Damage – A future meeting of Minister of DNR and Agriculture will be scheduled. There was a pilot project for perimeter fencing in the central area. The Wildlife committee awaits an update on results.

A-14-04, Plan for Maintaining Rural Infrastructure - There

is currently an industry survey to collect specific information on problem areas. This resolution will be handled through the work of the Infrastructure Deficit Policy.

A-14-05, Better Access to 3 Phase Power - There has been dialogue with Department of Energy regarding this area of concern. This resolution will be handled through the work of the Infrastructure Deficit Policy.

A-14-06, Funding for Season Extension Costs - This resolution was highlighted in the briefing note to the Minister of Agriculture (13Jan15). A follow-up will be made to NSDA Programs. There will also be a meeting of Growing Forward 2 committee for future dialogue and review on programs.

A-14-07, Continuation of the Pollination Enhancement Program - This resolution was highlighted in the briefing note to the Minister of Agriculture (13Jan15) and it was agreed that this program will continue and expected to open early for applications.

A-14-12, Changes to Regulations to Allow Reduction in Wildlife Numbers - A future meeting of Minister of DNR and Agriculture will be scheduled along with the continued work of the Agriculture Wildlife Committee which is scheduled to meet in March 2015.

Policy Initiative Update

Infrastructure Deficit	Regulation and Tax Burden	New Entrants to Agriculture
Collection of rural road maintenance from membership for Maintenance and Operations TIR	Research and information gathering on Better Regulation Initiative	Included importance of new entrants to agriculture in meetings with 3 caucus parties
Meeting with DM Energy - COMFIT and 3 phase power	NSFA met with Laurel Broten, Lead of the NS Tax and Regulatory Review.	Meeting and discussion with Federal Agriculture Critic, MP Mark Eyking - New Entrants was the focus
Meeting opportunity with ERDT on internet and cell service	Recommendations / Report is available online. http://www.novascotia.ca/finance/docs/tr/Tax_and_Regulatory_Review_Nov_2014.pdf	Met with NS Young Farmers Forum to investigate needs of their group and for new entrants
Continued relationship building with Perennia		Federation supporting attendance of delegate at CYFF
Support for Ivany goals built into caucus presentation, briefs to Minister of Agriculture		
Presentation from Don Mills - NSFA AGM breaking down the province at a cross-roads.		

Land Use and Taxation of Land	Agriculture Land banks	Investment Tax Credit
Letter sent to Minister of Agriculture - Feb 2014, requesting an adjustment to zero taxation policy	Discussion at Joint Executives meeting in April 2014	Letter to Minister of Agriculture
Response from Min of Ag that, "It is a priority of this government to address the issues surrounding agricultural land use protection". Bringing land back into production is part of a review on going with NSDA / SNS	Caucus meetings and general support for the concept of a land bank system from government	Response from Min of Ag that they will look at tools available to business community to generate greater economic activity.
Municipal Property Taxation Study in May 2014	Continued support for AVLTS	Background work completed by summer placement student on taxation
Province established a committee to review zero taxation policy. Series of Agriculture Land Tax Meetings 2014/15 have been held and a policy report is forthcoming.	Meeting with Minister of Agriculture in Jan 2015 indicating that growth in the industry requires access to arable land which can be achieved through the promotion of clearing land for agriculture purposes and the use of an agriculture land bank.	Response from NSFA on government announcing tax credits for large businesses
Background work completed by summer placement student on Land Use and agriculture farmland	Action for NSFA to provide recommendation on access to agriculture land, reclaiming former agriculture land	
Various involvement and support of county land use issues		

The excitement about weeds

By Emma Geldart

For most, annoyance, displeasure and frustration will cross the faces of people at the mention of weeds. Excitement is not commonly an emotion that is shown when dealing with the pesky garden invaders. Who could really be excited over something as annoying and persistent as weeds?

Scott White gets excited. His face lights up at the mention of weeds and his enthusiasm increases as he goes into detail about his research.

"I find weeds quite fascinating," he explains. "These plants are here specifically because they have been able to survive everything that Mother Nature has thrown at them up to this point in their evolution. You have to give them a bit of respect for that."



Scott has been an assistant professor in the department of environmental sciences at Dalhousie Agricultural Campus since September

2014. A native of Amherst, NS, he completed his undergraduate degree and Master of Science degree at the NSAC (now Dalhousie Agricultural Campus). He then pursued a PhD through the University of Guelph. Having just started the position at Dal AC, Scott's research program is still in the early stages of development. His research focuses on the development of integrated weed management plans for a variety of crops.

"I personally enjoy working with perennial weeds and perennial crops," Scott says. "I'm beginning to work with the wild blueberry industry as I get my program started."

Scott's research was sparked by his love for the agriculture industry in Atlantic Canada. From wild blueberries, cranberries, carrots and other crops, Scott values the diversity among the agricultural industry.

"I grew up here and I want to see the region prosper," Scott explains. "I think I understand the weed problems and feel I can pursue the appropriate solutions to those problems."

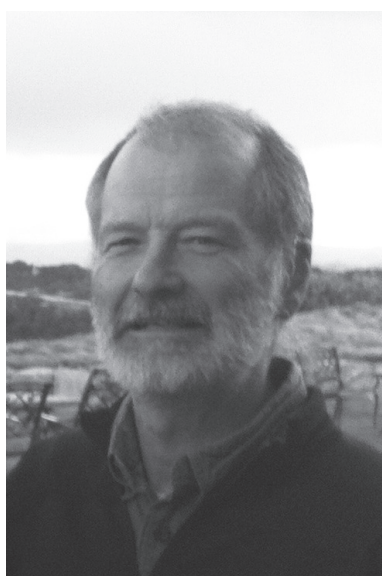
Scott sees weeds as a major yield limiting factor in most cropping systems. As weed floras become more complex and species adapt to traditional management practices, many important crops in Atlantic Canada face significant weed management challenges. Through his research, Scott hopes to provide effective and economical solutions to weed management problems.

Scott's ultimate goal is to focus on weed management in perennial systems and management of perennial weeds, but he stresses that he wants a diverse research program tackling problems in a variety of systems. He wants to integrate knowledge of weed population ecology and reproductive biology into weed management strategies, improve timing and effectiveness of management practices, maximize the effectiveness of currently registered herbicide products, and explore non-chemical approaches to weed control. He is working to establish connections with local industry and commodity groups, such as the Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia, to develop proposals and begin tackling management issues.

"I'd like to talk directly to industry and actually discuss problems with the growers and producers who are dealing with those problems on a regular basis," Scott explains.

It's Scott's passion for helping others solve problems and his love for agriculture in Atlantic Canada that will help manage weeds and allow our local agriculture industry thrive and become more productive. With Scott's research helping to increase the productivity of our agriculture industry, it's hard not to be excited about weeds.

Meet Your Executive - John Quinn



John initially moved to Antigonish County in 1977 to work at St Francis Xavier University. Since his wife Bonnie grew up on a dairy farm in Ontario and he grew up on a corn, soybean, and hog farm in Iowa, they had farming in their blood, and knew they wanted to live in the country. The same year they moved to Nova Scotia, they bought their farm in Antigonish County.

When they bought the farm the pasture fields were growing back to spruce and fir, and, fortunately for them, blueberries were beginning to spread into the open spaces. Neighbours encouraged them to develop the fields by burning, so John lit a match and tossed it to the field. "By the time the fire department arrived, seven acres had burnt, the fire was out, and he and his wife had become blueberry farmers!" John says.

They picked about 2000 pounds off that first season, and have been growing ever since. Over the years, they have used land leveling and drainage to improve their fields, and have purchased a tractor, mowers and a mechanical harvester. By acquiring additional properties they have gradually brought the total acreage of their operation up to about seventy-five,

which they can comfortably handle as part-time farmers.

In recent years they've diversified by building a seventy-foot hoop house to grow tomatoes and plowed up part of a pasture field for sweet corn production. "Bonnie grows the tomatoes and I take care of the corn," he says. They sell all of the produce locally at the Antigonish Farmers' Market and also directly to several restaurants.

After a term as president of the Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia, John became involved with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. "That was a real learning experience as I had not previously been aware of the tremendous diversity of agriculture in Nova Scotia," John says.

Over the years John has belonged to the NSFA, the Federation has changed both the programs it lobbies the government for, and the role it has in delivering those programs. The Environmental Farm Plan and the Farm Nutrient Management programs are two excellent examples, which have benefitted John's farm directly.

"It is an honour to now serve on the Executive of the NSFA and I hope that my farming and professional experience will allow me to make a positive contribution," John says. "I am particularly interested in improving risk management programs, including AgriStability and Crop Insurance." As a mathematician, he's also eager to use numerical and statistical data to show the many ways in which agriculture has been a driving force for the economy of Nova Scotia.

Public Input Opportunities

Two Departments in the Nova Scotia Government have opportunities for public input on upcoming changes to regulations and programs.

Department of Natural Resources is holding an online questionnaire to gather public input on Sunday Hunting. Lifting the ban would mean that anyone with a license could hunt on Sundays. The consultation will inform the department in ensuring the best approach around Sunday hunting in Nova Scotia. To provide your input in this consultation, you can access the questionnaire at novascotia.ca/natr/hunt/Sunday.

The second consultation stemmed from the Nova Scotia Electricity System Review. In the fall months of 2014, the Department of Energy held public sessions, workshops and an opin-

ion survey to gather feedback on key topics such as energy sources, investing in renewables, investing in new technologies and innovating and taking risks. You can read the review and find out how to provide input at energy.novascotia.ca/electricity/electricity-system-review.

Both of these consultations provide an opportunity for NSFA members to give input on topics affecting the Agriculture Industry in Nova Scotia. Both Sunday Hunting and Energy were hot topics at NSFA's Annual Meeting this past November with resolutions and policy positions being passed for both concerns.

The links listed above can also be found in our weekly eNews and posted on NSFA's Facebook page.

“Getting Your Message Across”

In celebration of Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, Farm Safety Nova Scotia and the Canadian Farmers with Disabilities Registry are partnering to offer a one-day workshop “Getting Your Message Across” – a Train-the-Trainer Workshop on Safe Agricultural Practices at no cost. This training is geared toward anyone involved in the agricultural industry that is required to communicate safe farm practices to youth, agricultural workers, volunteers, and the general public. The workshop will provide training on best practices to communicate the message of agricultural safety, focusing on how people learn and what motivates them, and will provide an overview of the basics of safety.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) is held every year during the third week of March. With a 2015 theme of “Be the Difference”, CASW takes place March 15th – 21st. CASW is a time to reflect on the importance of farm safety and empower farmers and their families with the information and resources they need to make farms a safer place to work and live. For more information on CASW visit www.agsafetyweek.ca.

“Getting Your Message Across”

Train-the-Trainer Workshop on Safe Agricultural Practices

Wednesday, March 18th
Best Western Glengarry, Truro
9am – 4pm
Lunch provided. No cost.

RSVP required by March 13th

For more information or to RSVP:
www.farmsafetyns.ca or (902)893-2293

This training is being delivered by the Canadian Farmers with Disability Registry with the support of the FCC Ag Safety Fund administered by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association with funding from Farm Credit Canada.

OEA NS lobby efforts against OHS regulations successful

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) was on its second phase of a three phase regulatory review of the occupational health and safety regulations when Deputy Minister Duff Montgomerie announced the review process was stopped.

The three phase regulatory review was established to amend regulations and consolidate all occupational health and safety regulations into one document, the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations (WSHRs). Phase one of the WSHRs was introduced as law in June 2013.

In the early fall 2014, LAE released the second phase of proposed regulations for public consultation. With the release of the draft, which included 175 pages of regulations and approximately 29 updated technical CSA Standards, the business community in Nova Scotia was extremely dissatisfied with the process and content of the regulatory review.

The Office of Employer Advisor of Nova Scotia (OEA NS), a not-for-profit society representing Nova Scotia employers, took on a strong leadership role to advocate against the proposed regulations. OEA NS established the Coalition of Nova Scotia Business Leaders, inviting employers and associations from all industries across the province to participate.

OEA NS sent several letters to the office of Min-

ister Regan requesting a meeting to discuss the regulatory review. OEA NS followed up with many phone calls and emails when no response was received from the Minister. A letter from OEA NS was sent to Minister Regan in December urging that the Minister meet with OEA NS to discuss the concerns of Nova Scotia employers and was accompanied by over 90 endorsement letters from employers and industry associations across the province.

The hard work of the OEA NS paid off when a letter from Deputy Minister Duff Montgomerie dated February 5 was released announcing that the Department of Labour and Advanced Education agreed to completely re-think required regulatory changes and committed to work alongside stakeholders to determine how safety regulations are designed and implemented.

OEA NS will be taking the lead on the regulatory review, representing the voice of the Coalition. OEA NS is committed to hosting regular meetings with the Coalition to ensure all industries will have their voice heard during future collaborations on the regulatory review. Representatives from both the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and Farm Safety Nova Scotia are part of the Coalition and will continue to ensure the voice of the agriculture community is heard during deliberations.

Colchester County Silage Plastic Recycling Project

Disposing of silage plastic is a big challenge for the Agricultural Industry. Burning silage plastic is illegal, emits toxic smoke and leaves toxic residues in the soil. Roadside garbage pickup can be an option, however, farms are commercial, and collection is handled differently from one municipality to another; contact your municipality for details. Tipping fees for disposal vary by county but are generally upwards of \$100 / tonne. There are currently no regular recycling programs that accept silage plastic in the province.

The Municipality of the County of Colchester is hoping to change that. They are interested in exploring the possibility of regularly accepting silage plastic as a recyclable material, and are launching a pilot project for the months of March and April. During March and April, farms located within Colchester County will be able to take clean, bulk, used silage plastic to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Kempton without paying the regular disposal fee. This limited pilot project will give the Colchester MRF the opportunity to characterize the state of the incoming material and explore methods for handling it for recycling.

For more information contact MRF Manager Jann McFarlane:
Ph: (902) 897-0450 ext. 101 email: jmcfarlane@colchester.ca

Where:

Colchester Materials
Recovery Facility
Kempton Balefill

When:

March 1 to April 30
Monday to Friday
8 am to 4 pm

No tipping fee!

Make sure you tell the
scale attendant you
are participating in the
“*Silage Plastic
Recycling Pilot Project*”

- No straps or twine
- Remove as much soil and waste feed as possible
- No rocks



NOVA SCOTIA
Young Farmers

is pleased to have
Cedric MacLeod from MacLeod Agronomics
deliver

Strategic Farm Business Management & Planning for Future Success

This workshop is designed to give you the tools to take a strategic look at what you are trying to achieve as a farm business, and how these goals mesh (or diverge) from your personal or family goals.

The workshop will be held
March 14, 2015 from 10-3pm
Best Western Glengarry, Truro, NS

If you want to attend, RSVP to Krista no later than Monday March 9 at info@nsyoungfarmers.ca or call 902-893-2293

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.

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2nd Vice President:	Lloyd Dyck	Phone: 538-3083
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At Large:	John Quinn	Phone: 783-2834
At Large:	Amanda Eisses	Phone: 662-3811
At Large:	Jim Baillie	Phone: 657-2256
At Large:	Victor Oulton	Phone: 798-4440
Past President:	Dennis Boudreau	Phone: 769-3501

Staff: Executive Director: Henry Vissers; Associate Director: Wanda Hamilton; Financial Services Coordinator: Krista Vroegh; Administrative Services Coordinator: Shelly MacKenzie; Communication & Research Coordinator: Maxine MacLean; Farm Safety Coordinator, Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, EFP Staff, Kathryn Bremner, Paul Brenton, Trevor Davison, Jillian Saulnier and Cory Roberts

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