

## **Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture 121<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting Minutes**

**Glengarry Convention Centre, Truro**

**December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016**

---

### **Call to Order**

The 121<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Kimberly Stokdijk.

### **Invocation**

President, Chris van den Heuvel welcomed members to the meeting noting that in agriculture we represent a close community of farmers, agri-businesses and industry stakeholders and led a moment of silence to reflect on those in our industry who we have lost this past year, those who have been injured or have suffered loss. Following this reflection, Kimberly Stokdijk provided an opening prayer and blessing to have a productive meeting with good fellowship and celebration of our industry.

### **Declaration of Quorum and Business Meeting Commences**

The Chair declared quorum for the meeting. Meeting participants were reminded to approach the floor microphones prior to addressing the group and to ensure their cell phones were on silent. The meeting will be conducted based on one farm one vote with the use of the voting cards provided. Members were also informed that there is an audio recording being compiled of the meeting for internal use at the NSFA office.

### **Approval of Agenda**

On a motion by Lloyd Evans /Dennis Boudreau the agenda was approved. M/C

### **President's Address**

President, Chris van den Heuvel presented his report as printed in the annual meeting book.

### **Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, November 26 & 27, 2015 were printed in AGM booklet on pages 7-17. Motion by Geneve Newcombe/ Peter Morine to approved the minutes. M/C.

**Business Arising from the Minutes** - There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **Auditors Report**

Lisa Poehl, PricewaterhouseCoopers presented the auditor's report. A correction was made to the dates in note 2 on page 25 'Deferred income represents the portion of farm registration dues received at August 31, 2016 for the period of September 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.' A motion by Andy Parker/ Peter Morine to adopt the auditor's report as presented and amended to note 2. M/C

### **Appointment of the Auditor**

Chris van den Heuvel reported that a tender was sent to six Chartered Accountant offices to compete for the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture audit services for the next 3 years starting 2017. Three offices responded with similar pricing including our current audit firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers. It was moved by Chris van den Heuvel and seconded by Carol Tobin that based on past years experiences that we continue with the current auditor which would total \$5,400 plus disbursements and related taxes per year. Their tender quoted fees for the next 3 years would increase only by the rate of inflation. M/C

### **Presentation & Adoption of 2015/16 Budget**

Henry Vissers presented the proposed budget from page 28 of the annual meeting book for 2016/17 fiscal year. Josh Oulton/ Domenic Padula moved to approve the budget as presented. M/C

### **Nomination Report**

Dennis Boudreau presented the nominating report as printed in the book on page 29. The first call for further nominations was made with no response. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president position as a director that is willing to move forward through officer positions.

### **Resolution Committee Report**

Amanda Eisses presented the Resolution committee report as printed in the AGM Book.

### **Introduction to Policy Paper**

Henry Vissers introduced the 2016/2017 policy paper as printed in the Annual Meeting book on page 35.

### **Policy #1 Agriculture Land**

There was discussion and note that the response from government on land, interest in land use and development of agriculture land is slow, but is progressing with good response from caucus groups, establishment of the land trust working group by the Minister along with some national work being done with CFA.

### **Policy #2 Energy**

The previous work on energy was highlighted including; an Energy Chair at Dal AC, energy audits on farm and farm energy specialist, work with COMFIT and wind energy and the importance of continuing the work with regard to energy; conservation, renewable, metering, farm energy auditing and access to 3-phase power.

### **Policy #3 Labour**

Following the review of this policy, it was noted that there are concerns regarding billing policy of the Nova Scotia Health Authority for Seasonal Agriculture Workers (SAWP); it seems they are being billed out of country rates. It was also noted that the Labour committee has been working on concerns with red tape associated with farm transfers within SAWP.

**Presentation of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness** – Fred Crooks, Chief Regulatory Officer made a presentation on the work of the provincial department which looks to find workable ways to manage the red tape in the administration of government; reduce the complexity and improve the confusion that sometimes happens with varying levels of government or out-dated regulations. In March 2015 the process began to reduce regulatory burden of the Atlantic Provinces; tackling the issues on a regional basis focusing on the costs for business and unintended consequences with regulations. It was reported that through a study by Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), Atlantic Canada is over governed and over regulated. Interprovincial trade is more important to Atlantic Canada at 59% of GDP; then to 39% GDP nationally and supports 1 in 6 jobs. APEC found that Atlantic Canada has more to gain from removing trade barriers than all of Canada. Highlights of progress were also noted. The three Maritime Provinces have signed on to follow the ‘Principles for Regulations’ as well as passed a Regulatory Reporting Act which asks regulations to be measured and reported. Progress is incremental, standardizing the content, aligning procurement documents, improving service, and making compliance easier. During

discussion, members posed questions around vetting regulations with neighbouring provinces, and standardizing interprovincial regulations for transportation and travel.

**Presentation Energy on Nova Scotia Farms** - Julie Bailey, PhD Candidate with Dalhousie presented work on 'Incorporating Sustainable Energy Decisions in Agriculture'. Julie provided background on her thesis; energy savings, energy upgrades on farms as well as some sector specific information in dairy, beef, poultry, fruit and vegetable. The project based on interviews and surveys also provided information on the decision making process for energy technologies being implemented. Moving forward, Julie will work on more detailed information by farm type as well as develop an energy sustainability framework.

**Recess for lunch** – NSFA Council of Leaders members attended the Agri-Futures Nova Scotia Annual Meeting.

*Meeting resumed at 1:25 p.m.*

**Presentation of Canadian Public Trust Research** – David Smith, Canadian Center for Food Integrity from Farm and Food Care joined the meeting and presented Nova Scotia and Canadian findings of the 2016 Public Trust Research. The context of public trust, increased expectation of accountability and transparency, and that perception is all too often reality opened the presentation. Overall concerns and perceptions of the consumers surveyed were identified. Canadians (and Nova Scotian consumers) are most concerned over rising food costs and keeping healthy food affordable. There was a 64% positive impression of Canadian farming by Nova Scotians, 93% know nothing or very little about farming and 68% want to know more. There was great discussion of the key influencers; heightened concerns about other issues like food safety, environmental sustainability, humane treatment of animals and nutrition. The presentation also highlighted implications for farmers and creating messaging and approaches to build trust through confidence and proactive leadership. Transparency is no longer an option; it is an effective mechanism to build trust and shared values.

**Greetings and Comments by NDP Agriculture Critic** - Lenore Zann, MLA Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River brought greetings from the Nova Scotia NDP Party. Greetings included appreciation for farmers, their hard work and homegrown food products as well as acknowledgement for the amount of research in the industry. There was encouragement to keep on keeping on; there is a need for farmers and excitement to be built in agriculture. Any issues or concerns that agriculture would like raised with the NDP party was also encouraged.

**Greetings and Comments by Agriculture Critic** - John Lohr, MLA Kings North brought greetings from the PC Party of Nova Scotia. Mr. Lohr began the greetings by noting the PC party's commitment to supply management. It was also noted that the PC Party has requested government review interprovincial distortions in trade and leveling the playing field across the country. The PC party wants agriculture to be profitable and encourages continued investment with the opportunities to grow agriculture. During questions, concern was raised for the infrastructure deficit for rural roads and advocating for better ditch maintenance keeping in mind that this maintenance does not impact on the bees / pollinators.

**Presentation from the new Department Plant, Food and Environmental Sciences** - Dr. Raj Lada addressed the group noting re-structuring with four merged departments; Plant, Food and Environmental Sciences, Aquaculture and Animal Science, Business and Social Sciences, and Engineering. Dr. Lada highlighted the importance of working with the industry and building bridges to make a pathway for the future by working regionally, nationally and globally. A team of 26 under the Plant, Food, and Environmental Science Department work together for sustainable managed ecosystem, environment, landscapes, soil, and water

resources. These academic clusters all come together for knowledge, training, research, innovation, outreach to build long standing collaboration and partnerships.

Nutrition Break

**Resolution #1 – Industrial Burn Permit**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Shannon Jones to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Labour Market Information Nova Scotia Results** – Debra Hauer, Project Manager with Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council (CAHRC) presented the labour market forecast to 2025 as well as the workforce needs in Nova Scotia. It was reported that the agriculture labour gap is 59,000 workers and it will grow to 114,000 workers 10 years from now. In Nova Scotia, the labour gap is 600 with 500 unfilled vacancies in the labour demand. These unfilled vacancies cost the agriculture industry in Nova Scotia \$15 million in sales in 2014 and 15% of employers delayed or canceled expansion plans as a result of not being able to fill vacancies. Looking ahead to the forecast of 2025, 29% of Nova Scotia’s workforce will be retiring and the number of young people entering the workforce will shrink more in Nova Scotia than in any other province. This will heavily affect our labour supply and lead to a labour gap of nearly 3500 workers.

**Update on Communications/Member Benefit** - Maxine MacLean, NSFA Communications and Research Coordinator provided an update on communication activities and media updates, member benefits program and agricultural awareness. NSFA enews has over 1600 subscribers with a 40% open rate, the publication is sent each Friday afternoon. It was also reported that through a random selection survey in 2016, the hard copy newsletter, NSFA News and Views was opened within 3 days of receipt and read by up to three people. There are currently 817 followers on Facebook and in the past year there were 35,000 engagements and reactions on the page. New member benefits include Coast Tire offering a 10% discount on agriculture tires for NSFA members and Stitchin Fever in Windsor with a 10% discount on repairs to heavy fabrics. The other member benefits were highlighted with most partners participating in the Trade Show. A report was provided on the Agricultural Awareness activities such as Meet your Farmer at the Mall, National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, ‘Kids Do Lunch’ event at Maritime Fall Fair, AgZone, and Agriculture Literacy Month. It was also reported that there were 40 participating farms for Open Farm Day 2016.

**Presentation on AgroClimate Impact Reporter (AIR) Tool** - Madeline Bemrose, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provided a presentation on the online tool for collecting and reporting of agroclimate impacts resulting from weather events. This application is now available in Nova Scotia to monitor the impacts of weather on water supply, soil degradation, and agriculture production. AIR is not a forecasting tool, it is based on a network of volunteer reports or surveys. Having this online application map will offer decision making detail related to climate or major weather related events like droughts and floods.

**Resolution #2 AgriStability**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Jim Baillie to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #3 – Visibility on Roadways**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Blair Battist to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Presentation by Nova Scotia Minister of Agriculture** - Honourable Keith Colwell, Minister of Agriculture was welcomed to the group and highlighted the work and support of the provincial government. The following notes were captured:

- Looking at Asian markets and ways to get our products into their markets.
- Looking at farm technology program, tractor operation, herbicides, etc. Department of Labour and Advanced Education is interested in looking forward.
- Wine Industry has had \$500,000 in support for the Acadia University wine lab. Nova Scotia wines were highlighted as award winners all over the world.
- As of today, Homegrown Success is open for application. However there will not be any road show this year.
- There will be a Sustainable Water Policy with 25-50% funding assistance to get long term stability and water supply on your farm when you need it.
- Low Bush Blueberry development program and an aggressive marketing campaign for blueberries.
- Apple orchard program has been successful with 213,000 new trees. Honey crisp apple is one of the great success stories for agriculture.
- There has been \$2.69 million to the fire blight problem.
- One million dollars to support the maple industry.
- There has been a MOU with Agriculture fairs and exhibitions across the province; each fair gets set amount of money; \$250,000 in total for infrastructure improvements.

During questions, farmers raised concern on the vacancies with Agencies, Boards and Commissions, how carbon tax will affect agriculture, importance of dykes and aboiteaux, as well as importation of bees and the successful expansion of the bee industry.

*Meeting recessed (5:15 p.m.)*

### **NSFA Dinner and Banquet**

The evening program began at 6:30 pm with a reception, followed by a dinner sponsored by Turkey Farmers of Nova Scotia. Kristine Spidle, Annapolis County and winner of the Nova Scotia Young Speakers for Agriculture Competition presented her speech, "Old MacDonald had a farm, but what about Mrs. MacDonald." Also during the evening, Kathryn Bremner, Environmental Farm Plan Coordinator gave a presentation of the three finalists named in the 2016 Environmental Farm Stewardship Award; being Elmwoods Winery, Hillsdale Fur Farm and Cornwallis Farms. The winner was the Mullen Family, Hillsdale Fur Farm, they received a painting of their farm and cash prize. During the evening special recognitions was given to Peter Morine as outgoing board member of Farm Safety Nova Scotia and to John Quinn and Lloyd Dyck as retiring directors of the Executive Committee for NSFA. This was followed by door prizes and President's reception.

### **Friday, December 2, 2016**

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was re-convened at 8.30 a.m. by 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Kimberly Stokdijk. The early bird draw for door prizes took place. The second call for nominations to the Federation's Executive was held. Danny Bruce, Organic Council of Nova Scotia, nominated Sylvestre Dion as an additional Member at Large to the NSFA Executive Committee.

**Update from Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture** - Kim MacNeil, Deputy Minister provided a presentation on the current situation of agriculture in Nova Scotia as well as government priorities, programs and organizational structure changes. Highlights included information on the early release of

programs for application on December 1<sup>st</sup> pending budget approval in April 2018. In discussion on organizational change, it was announced that Frank Dunn will be the Deputy Minister for Agriculture in 2017. During questions, the lab costing analysis was discussed and that the department feels there needs to be improvements. A letter was presented to the Deputy Minister regarding premise identification of farms in the province and the maximum capability of livestock on farm; the Deputy Minister agreed to read the letter and respond directly to Doug Bacon. Kim MacNeil was thanked for his presentation and wished well in his retirement.

**Presentation, ‘How to increase profits without increasing farm size’**– Kevin Hursh, Hursh Consulting and Communications opened the presentation highlighting Farm Credit Canada’s Farmland Values Report followed by the 5% rule. 5% more production 5% better pricing, and 5% lower costs has a huge impact on net income. It was noted that you can’t cut back on inputs and make money, it’s the cut back on fixed costs; noting that the small things we can do can make a big difference in our net returns. The small farm challenges were identified as expansion in smaller chunks; less likely to have volume discounts on purchases, and new technology is hard to justify. The small farm advantages were noted as being hands on, not as throughput oriented, more open to new opportunities, and savings from land that’s contiguous. The presentation continued to highlight making the choices that work for your farm operations e.g. trucking and custom work. Mr. Hursh also provided an overview of Hursh Farms and their struggles with weather, disease, getting things right, trying new crops, and opportunities applying the principles. The advice provided in the presentation was to know where you are going, have written goals and objectives with business partners all on the same page and a clear succession plan.

**Update from Farm Credit Canada** – Peter Nelson, Business Development Manager provided an Agriculture Outlook which included a look at the trends with oil price, interest rates and the value of the Canadian dollar. It was reported that farm debt continues to climb and farm assets have also climbed according to 2015 Statistics Canada. Following a financial look at various sectors, the importance of sharing the real story of Canadian Agriculture was highlighted as FCC’s Ag More Than Ever Campaign. Through social media truths, the campaign is aimed to target the consumers who are not connected to agriculture.

Nutrition Break

**Greetings** – Mr. Bill Casey, MP Cumberland Colchester stopped by the meeting and brought greetings to the group.

**Completion of Election Process** – As per the process for nominations from the floor, Sylvestre Dion presented his membership and rationale for becoming an NSFA Executive Committee Member at Large. **It was moved and seconded to add Sylvestre Dion to the NSFA Executive Committee. (Carol Tobin / Domenic Padula) M/C. An additional motion clarified that this is an additional, 8<sup>th</sup> member of the Executive Committee (Carol Tobin / Andy Parker) M/C** The third call for nominations was made with no response. **On a motion of Andy Parker, seconded by Avarad Bentley the Nominating Committee report was accepted as amended and the election process compete. (M/C)**

**Update from Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA)** – Ron Bonnett, President of CFA provided an overview of current issues and projects for 2016. Ron highlighted the work of CFA with regard to presentations and input into policies at the House of Commons and Senate Committees. There has been extensive work on the Next Policy Framework and ensuring Canadian Agriculture is positioned for success. Other work of CFA was noted through the journey for public trust, national engagement on Climate Change, International Trade, and promoting solutions to strengthen youth and new entrants to farming. There was

also discussion on the National Food Policy and that it be evidence based, not deviating from sound science. It was noted that this also ties back to public trust. During questions, concern was raised on the disadvantage of Nova Scotia's farm diversity in the Agri-Stability program.

NSFA AGM recessed for the Farm Safety Nova Scotia Annual Meeting which was followed by lunch.

Meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m.

**Agriculture Land Use Planning and Farmland Protection** – The following panel of guests provided a presentation on agriculture land use planning and agriculture land protection from a regional, provincial and national perspective.

- Keith Irving, MLA Kings South - Agricultural Land Protection Policy in Nova Scotia
- Dr. Greg Cameron - Case Studies on land planning for Kings and Antigonish counties
- Dr. David Connell - National Project in Farmland Planning

Following the presentations which are available for distribution, there was a Q&A. There was concern over right to farm and ensuring fair market value for agriculture land. There was discussion on land banks and how we protect farmland and ensure food security and food sovereignty. There were some mixed views on whether land planning is a top down approach from federal government or that land use planning can't be a top down process because it is delegated to provinces and then to local municipalities. There was also a question on zero taxation of agriculture land and although it wasn't a focus in the national project, it was noted that the province is still working on this file. Further to this discussion was the Statement of Provincial Interest for agriculture and the need for it to be amended.

**Resolution #4 - Increase Season Extension funding.**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Chris van den Heuvel to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #5 - Return of Funding for generators.**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Chris van den Heuvel to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #6 - Increase Farm Loan Board Lending Limit**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Karson Lewis to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #7 – Access to multiple year funding**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Carol Tobin to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #8 – NSDA Programs open for 12 month program**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Allan Melvin to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #9 – Cell Phone and High Speed internet**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by David Newcombe to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #10 – Abattoir Development**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Blair Battist to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #11 – Effective Agricultural Regulations**

Motion was defeated

**Resolution #12 - Removal of accredited food safety plans**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Shannon Jones to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #13 – Consequences of Brain Worm Infestation**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Blair Battist to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Resolution #14 - Sharpening of Fence Posts**

Motion was defeated

**Resolution #15 – Funding of Windbreak Solutions**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Danny Bruce to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed. There was a friendly amendment to add buffer zone to appropriate natural windbreak as a solution for agricultural lands.

**Resolution #16 – Genetically Engineered (GE) Alfalfa**

**This resolution was tabled for review and report by the Executive Committee covering consumer acceptance, science and research, and industry need for forages and to be reported back to the 2017 NSFA Annual General Meeting. (Carol Tobin/ Cameron Taylor) M/C**

**Resolution #17 – Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) recognized as a farm vehicle**

Motion by Amanda Eisses and seconded by Cameron Taylor to adopt the resolution. Motion was carried and resolution passed.

**Policy #4 - Local Awareness** was presented.

**Policy #5 - Regulatory Burden** was presented.

**The Standing Policies for Agriculture Land, Energy, Labour, Local Awareness and Regulatory Burden were adopted. (Geneve Newcombe / Carol Tobin) M/C**



**New Business**

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to look into a member's only section of the NSFA website so that members can be more informed on issues and other communications. It was noted that there is a distribution list available for any meeting minutes should there be a request by members. In discussion on the reporting structure of actions and move forward progress it was noted that these are provided through Council of Leaders, NSFA Newsletter, and the Annual report.

**Adjournment** – On a motion of David Newcombe, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm