

News & Views

Vol. 30 No. 5

August/September 2018

In this Issue...

NSFA Website Gets a Makeover	1
Viewpoint, NSFA Executive Director ..	2
What We've Heard - Frost Damage	3
Want to Impact the Future Direction of the NSFA? ...	3
Biomass Crops.....	4
4-H NS Donation Request.....	4
Blue Green Algae - "Water" You Lookin' At?	5
Federal Online Consultations	5
Agriculture Leaders Meet in Vancouver.....	6
Priority Areas of Canada's Agri- Food Economic Strategy .	6
NS Young Farmers Summer Tour and BBQ.....	7
2018 NSFA Senate Club Tour	7
Upcoming Events	8
Cynthia Campbell NSFA's Sum- mer Student	8



@NSFAFANE

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture Website Gets a Makeover

After months of hard work NSFA launched their redesigned website on August 1st. Redesigning the NSFA site was a suggestion that came from the Member Engagement process conducted by Simeon Roberts in 2016-2017. It was recommended that NSFA revamp/modernize the website and ensure the website was easier to use.

The Federation would like to thank Outside the Box Design for the time and effort put into designing the new site and ensuring that all of our boxes were checked. The refreshed NSFA site features a modern design with a header image on the homepage that will change with the seasons, also featured on the bottom of every page are news and events sections that will automatically update as new content is added to the site. You may notice that the new site mirrors our redesigned News&Views as well – incorporating components of the newsletter in order to ensure consistency across platforms.

In addition, the News section has a blog style format, and you are able to view all of the stories in a continuous stream, the new site is also mobile friendly! As you take a



We are your voice, working to promote a great future for agriculture in Nova Scotia

look through the new site, there will be other design elements that are new – we can't wait for you to check it out. With the redesign you may be wondering where you can find everything, the majority of items are still in the same location as they were on the old site. Some of the items you may be looking for include: links to Environmental Farm Plan and Farm Safety Nova Scotia websites – these can be found under the Resources page. Information about Farm Registration, Courses & Training etc. can be found under the Members page. Links to Meet Your Farmer, Nova Scotia Young Farmers and information about Open Farm Day are all located under the Projects page.

Please keep in mind News & Views now goes out 8 times per year, be sure to check our website and sign up for the enews to stay current on news and events.

Viewpoint

Hot summer weather is upon us with a vengeance. So far, we've been fortunate in comparison to New Brunswick and PEI with their drought and other provinces' extremely dry conditions with numerous forest fires.

The early June frost continues to reverberate through the sector with the consequences still being determined. Blueberry, Apple, Grape and Christmas tree industries have been the hardest hit with some farms having close to a total loss and others less depending on location. We are also aware that crop production has been impacted. Hopefully you've been able to fill out the survey distributed by the Department of Agriculture to all registered farms, if not contact NSFA or your regional office and they can pass on the information.

In a past enews, I mentioned the possibility of triggering the late enrollment to AgriStability. NSDA and AAFC have announced that this is now available. You will need to pay the premium and there is still a 20% reduction in payment as a disincentive for late enrollment. It will depend on the situation of each farm; you should do the calculation and apply if it looks like it will work for you. There is an interim payment mechanism that would give you partial payment as an advance which could help with cash flow. NSDA has sent out the application forms and information - please take the time to review and enroll, initial fee is \$300 with a further adjustment based on your allowable net sales.

Trade continues to be a headline topic with NAFTA negotiations on and off again, a new president in Mexico, and the US threatening new tariffs on trade goods from Canada, the EU and others.

The recent announcement by US Department of Agriculture adds complexity to the situation with \$12 Billion in aid promised. There are no details on the program but from the press release we know there will be direct payments to farmers producing soybeans, sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy and hogs. USDA will also purchase surpluses of effected commodities such as fruit, nuts, rice, legumes, beef, pork and milk for distribution to food banks and other nutrition programs. Farmers in the US are free traders; they have said they want the trade war ended, NAFTA negotiations concluded and for the US to join TPP. It's safe to say we would all wish for the same thing and a return to normalcy!

Hopefully you've noticed in the enews and our social media feeds that the website has been updated and has a new look. This follows on the update of the newsletter and changes to the E-News as recommended by surveys and focus group sessions with members. We have also increased our capacity around social media and member engagement.

I notice more and more farms on social media. I think it's important that farms are present on social media - studies through the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity show that people want to know more about farming and trust farmers. Not everyone needs to be active on these platforms, however, for those interested, they do present an opportunity to share your story with an audience that is interested in learning about what you do.

There are unwritten rules that must be followed: be respectful, factual and willing to understand others' points of view. It's important to remember that



Henry Vissers

Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

your posts can be spread to a very wide audience well beyond the borders of Nova Scotia or Canada. If you're not very active on social media, it's still worth following people especially those you may not agree with so you get a sense of their thinking. Check out our feeds: twitter.com/nsfa and facebook.com/nsfafane

Wishing you a safe and abundant harvest season.

Comments?

hvissers@nsfa-fane.ca

Are you familiar with NSFA's Member Benefits Package?

Check the back of your farm registration card for a list of the benefits that you can access. More information on these benefits and how to access them can be found at nsfa-fane.ca/members/benefit-partners

What We've Heard – Frost Damage

Starting in June 2018, NSFA opened a feedback form to understand the extent of the damage caused by the frost and below freezing temperatures in the late spring.

To date we had over 50 replies to the survey from across numerous commodities. Christmas Trees, Wild Blueberries, Apples, Grapes and Horticulture Crops were those that we heard from most. Following a conference call and dialogue with commodity groups, here are some startling facts:

- Each of Wild Blueberries, Apples and Christmas Trees expect at least a 50% crop loss across the industry this year alone.
- Some farms will experience 75-80% in crop loss this year. For example, in the Lunenburg County area, where 60-70% of Nova Scotia's Christmas Trees are grown, producers expect

60-70% crop loss on each farm.

- Some farms will experience a 100% crop loss this year.
- We heard from Wild Blueberry producers who have damaged sprout fields which will impact the 2019 crop.
- Most farms won't know until at least the fall the extent of the damage. For example, Christmas trees farmers won't know more until it is time to shear and Wild Blueberry growers won't know the extent of the damage until harvest.
- Farmers are addressing the challenges through different cost cutting measures including hiring fewer labourers or none at all.
- We have heard from some farmers who said that the crop was looking okay with minimal damage. However,

as the crop matured, signs of damage appeared.

NSFA had lobbied for late enrolment for AgriStability, which has been triggered. Information on late enrolment for AgriStability has been distributed by NSDA; farms are encouraged to do the calculation to ensure that AgriStability will work for them. As more information comes available, it will be communicated through our weekly NSFA enews.

Thank-you to everyone who provided feedback on the troubling frost and freeze damage this Spring. It was the information gathered here that allowed NSFA to articulate the extent of the damage across the province and commodities when lobbying on your behalf. The survey will remain open into the fall for those who wish to report damage as it appears. Survey can be found here: <https://nsfa-fane.ca/frost-damage-report/>

Happy with your provincial farm organization? Want to impact the future direction of the NSFA?

Short term and long term planning is a very important factor in the success of any business and organization. The Council of Leaders and Executive of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture are undergoing some planning of their own by undertaking a strategic planning exercise to set priorities for future efforts of the organization.

The first step of this process is to gather inputs and consult with the many stakeholders. Yvonne Thyssen-Post, P.Ag. of Thyagrissen Consulting Limited has

been awarded the contract to design and facilitate the strategic planning process. Yvonne will secure input from the farming community via focus groups starting in the fall so watch for details on how you can get involved.

In the meantime, some questions that we want you as members to consider for the strategic planning process could include:

1. What are the issues/challenges facing the agricultural industry in NS? Consider the issues in various categories - Political, Economic,

Social and Technological (PEST analysis) or any other issues that affect agriculture's success?

2. What is the role of the NSFA in assisting industry to deal with these challenges?
3. How can NSFA better serve its' members?

As an NSFA Member, this is your organization. It is hoped that you will support the strategic planning exercise and agree to participate and openly share your thoughts. What is learned through the consultation process will become the foundation of the strategic plan, and so every effort will be made to ensure it is all-inclusive. The goal is to better serve our industry and focus the efforts as a result of this exercise. Any questions can be directed to Wanda Hamilton, Associate Director and Project Lead.

Biomass Crops

A Chicken and Egg Story

Submitted by: J. Kevin Vessey, Biology Dept., Saint Mary's University

There have been several attempts to introduce biomass crops into the Province. However, this type of crop has never really taken off in Nova Scotia. There are number of reasons for this, one being a "chicken and egg" problem.

There are several categories of biomass crops. So-called "first generation" biomass crops are basically food crops rich in sugar, starch or oil that can be repurposed for the production of biofuels - e.g. biodiesel and bioethanol, or other bioproducts – everything from particle board to precursors for "renewable plastics." First-generation biomass crops include corn, sugar cane, canola, soybean, and wheat. Although the technology to convert first-generation biomass crops into biofuels is well developed, the capital costs of building a "biorefinery" to produce these biofuels is expensive – in the 10's or 100's of millions of dollars. However, the greatest issue with first-generation biomass crops is the "food versus fuel debate." Namely, should we be using top-quality agricultural land and food-quality crops to make fuel? Some think not - for social, economic and environmental reasons. For example, some studies indicate that producing bioethanol as a transportation fuel from corn does little to nothing to actually decrease greenhouse gas emission compared to making gasoline from petroleum.

Another category of biomass crops is the so-called "second-generation or "advanced" biomass crops. These are fast-growing grass and tree species such as switchgrass, Miscanthus, hybrid-poplar and willow. In the case of the trees, they are grown as short-rotation, coppiced crops - the trees

are grown close together and are cut back to just above the ground in the establishment year. The trees respond to coppicing by producing many small stems which are harvested every 3 years. These crops are not grown for food - they are grown strictly for the grass and woody biomass. An advantage of these crops is that they can grow on relatively poor land (i.e. Class 3 land and lower) with little water, fertilizer and pesticide inputs. Although establishment costs can be high, the grass species only need to be established once every 10-15 years and the tree species every 20-30 years. As perennials, these crops also build soil carbon and health and are much superior to first-generation crops in terms of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

So where does the "chicken and egg" problem come in? As noted above, building a biorefinery to process biomass crops into biofuels and other bioproducts is very expensive. Before making such a large investment, the biorefinery developer wants a guaranteed, long-term supply of biomass feedstock. From an agricultural producer perspective, committing land, effort, and establishment costs for these biomass crops does not make sense unless they know they have someone to buy the biomass. Hence the chicken and egg problem – which comes first: (1) farmers produce biomass crops and hope that they will have a market to sell the biomass, or (2) a biorefiner builds a very expensive processing plant and hopes that an area can produce the volume of biomass that is needed.

Stay tuned for a second article by Professor Vessey where he proposes a solution to this "chicken and egg" biomass crops problem.



Each year, a team of ten 4-H members are selected to travel to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto to represent Nova Scotia at the National Junior Beef Heifer Show.

Members have the opportunity to travel, show and meet with more than 350 4-H members from across Canada.

The Royal Beef committee works diligently to raise the estimated \$15,000 it costs to send the team to the Royal Winter Fair each year. Approximately \$8000 of that budget is raised through the generous support of community and industry members. We are currently seeking donations to fund the 4-H Nova Scotia Royal Beef Team for 2018.

It is an incredible opportunity for 4-H members to represent the 4-H Nova Scotia Beef Program at the Royal Winter Fair.

If you would like to donate to this excellent opportunity to display and promote the 4-H program and showcase the quality of the beef industry in Nova Scotia, please contact the 4-H Nova Scotia office at (902)843-3990.

Blue Green Algae

"Water" You Lookin' At?

Submitted by: Laura Jollymore, EFP Summer Student

With the heat and humidity continuing, this summer is on course to become one of the hottest on record for us in Atlantic Canada. Along with this warm weather we are seeing higher concentrations of blue green algae in our waterways. Blue green algae is a bacteria (cyanobacteria) that is present in almost all lakes in Canada, growing the most rapidly in areas rich with nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen. While not all strains of blue green algae are harmful, there are certain strains that can release toxins when cells break or die.

Algae are an indicator of what is present in the ecosystem, often indicating high nutrient levels and possibly the presence of total coliform and E.coli, depending on the source of the nutrients. What can you do to prevent algal blooms in your ponds and watercourses? Experts say the best course of action is to mitigate external nutrients from entering the watercourse. Reducing and or avoiding runoff from fertilizer application, manure storage and manure application, fencing livestock from waterways and establishing vegetative buffers by watercourses are all recommended approaches by Nova Scotia's Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program. By limiting livestock access to waterways you can help to maintain water quality during the grazing period, and while there are no water quality standards for livestock consumption, research has indicated that good quality water provides a higher weight gain and less health problems.



Irrigation from a pond

Exposure to toxins can occur if an individual consumes contaminated drinking water but also if one consumes food crops irrigated with contaminated water. Therefore, it is also important to consider the water used for irrigation. Several factors contribute to the concentration of toxins that accumulate on a crop, including the growth stage of the plant during exposure, concentration of cyanobacteria in the water, and length of exposure to the contaminated water. Typically water should be tested at least once during the irrigation season and the results for total coliform and E. coli should be within the Canadian Water Quality Guidelines for the Protection of Agricultural Water Uses (1000 CFU/100 mL for total coliform and 100 CFU/100 mL for E. coli). The Canadian Water Quality Guidelines focus on physical and chemical parameters for irrigation water quality and information related to toxins is limited. Industry recommends that if it looks bad and smells bad- don't use it. If you have any concerns regarding a possible issue with blue green algae in your water source, contact your local food safety specialist for more information.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and preventing algal blooms by employing best manage-

ment practices is no exception. For more information on this and other topics, visit <https://www.nsfa-fane.ca/efp/> and browse our many factsheets and resources. If you would like to sign up for an EFP or if you have any questions about your plan or the program please call the NS Federation of Agriculture at (902) 893-2293.

FEDERAL ONLINE CONSULTATIONS

The licensing costs to comply with the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations are open for consultation until September 7, 2018. The consultation is around the introduction of the 2-year licensing regime for applicable activities. In the July 2018 News and Views, you can find information on the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations and who is required to comply. In general terms, if you produce food that crosses provincial or national borders and your farm grosses over \$100,000, you are most likely required to comply with the SFCA. Information on the licensing cost consultation can be found by visiting www.inspection.gc.ca/safefood under the "More Information" menu.

Watch for more consultations as they open in our weekly enews.

Agriculture Leaders Meet in Vancouver

CFA Director, Chris van den Heuvel and 1st Vice, Tim Marsh represented NSFA at FPT and CFA Meetings

Agriculture industry leaders highlighted several options for economic strategy in their meeting with federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) agriculture ministers. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture's (CFA) annual industry-government FPT Roundtable took place in Vancouver, BC, where farm leaders from each province sat side-by-side with their provincial agriculture ministers to talk about how local and regional aspects connect with the national plans to grow the sector.

"The growth potential for Canadian agriculture reflects the sector's vibrancy and diversity. However, this also reflects the range of complexities we must clarify if we are to prosper to the fullest extent possible," said Ron Bonnett, CFA President. "That's why CFA members stressed to Canada's agriculture ministers that we must remember the interconnected nature of our agricultural policies, such as those involving labour, trade, and rural infrastructure."

"The FPT Ministerial meeting was very engaging. The presentation by Murad Al-Katib on the Agri-Food Economic Strategy was well received and the general consensus by all in the room - including Minister Colwell - was that we need to embrace the recommendations to move the industry forward," said Chris van den Heuvel, NSFA CFA Director following the meeting.

CFA presented the ministers with a discussion document titled "Canada's Agri-Food Economic Strategy Table: A Roadmap to Growth". As an overview of CFA's views on progress made to date by the National Agri-Food Strategy Roundtable, this document set the stage for a productive dialogue, one that will continue over the coming year, between industry and government officials.

Roundtable participants heard presentations from Murad Al-Katib, chair of the National Agri-Food Strategy Roundtable, as well as CFA directors Andy Kuyvenhoven, a horticultural producer from Ontario, and Lynda Atkinson, a BC-based cattle producer.

Trade, risk management, and consumer trust top CFA board agenda.

CFA's summer board meeting preceded the roundtable, providing a timely opportunity to look at concerns during the lead-up to FPT discussions.

Topics at the board session included international trade, federal budget consultations, public trust in Canada's food system, labour shortages and preparations for next federal election.

Canada's leading agriculture negotiators, Steve Verheul of Global Affairs Canada and Frédéric Seppey of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, provided an update on NAFTA negotiations and other trade agreements. CFA directors were pleased to share their views on trade challenges and opportunities, particularly in light of an increasing protectionism in certain parts of the world.

Business Risk Management (BRM) programs also emerged as a primary focus as farmers rely on these important tools to mitigate against periods of instability. CFA and other organizations that form part of the AgGrowth Coalition have advocated for an extension of the BRM program review and increased producer engagement in the consultation process.

Looking ahead, CFA remains committed to working in partnership with all orders of government as farm organizations build on their vision for a modern, expansive agriculture sector, with inclusive growth opportunities that will benefit all Canadians.

PRIORITY AREAS OF CANADA'S AGRI-FOOD ECONOMIC STRATEGY INCLUDE:

- Modernizing infrastructure and regulations;
- Increasing innovation and seizing value-added opportunities;
- Adopting technology and advancing digitization;
- Increasing market access and growing exports; and
- Dealing with labour shortages and being prepared for the future.

Nova Scotia Young Farmers Summer Tour and BBQ

On Saturday, July 21st 2018, young farmers from different parts of Nova Scotia came together for the annual Summer Tour and BBQ. The first farm visited was Snowy River Farm in Cooks Brook. The farm grew vegetables, raised sheep, hogs and poultry. They are all about meeting customer preferences, selling their products locally, and additionally sell CSA boxes. They are in the process of introducing beef to their operation and also have plans underway for the building of a butcher shop on site.

The BBQ lunch was at Vermeulen Farm, in Milford. A big thanks to the NS Cattle Producers for sponsoring the food for a 3rd summer, and Eden Valley Farm who graciously donated the chicken breasts. Agropur also kindly donated ice cream. Salad and drinks were enjoyed as well.



The Nova Scotia Young Farmers tour Snowy River Farm in Cooks Brook

Prizes were awarded throughout the day. Prizes included a free trip and delegation to the 2019 Canadian Young Farmers Annual Conference; an aerial drone video/photos of a farm done by Veronica Smit; and various hats, jackets, thermoses and other items from multiple sponsors including Central Equipment, Green Diamond Equipment and Truro Agromart.

The last farm visited was Bokma Farms Limited. This was a large, newly renovated dairy farm in Shubenacadie. The farm milked a large number of dairy cows, had seven milking robots, and other innovative technology in their barn such as an

automatic feed pusher. The farm also had sand bedding, an impressive fan system and alley cleaners, all of which kept the barn very clean and comfortable!

It was a wonderful day that would not have happened without the farms who warmly welcomed us to their operations and the many generous sponsors. All those who attended certainly learned something new and had the opportunity to connect with other young farmers in Nova Scotia. Stay tuned for upcoming NSYF events!

2018 NSFA Senate Club Tour

**submitted by Honourary Senator
Leslie Burrows, Secretary/Treasurer**

On Saturday, August 11, 2018, eleven Senators, five Honourary Senators and 16 guests gathered at the Port Williams home of Senator Greg Coldwell and his wife Claudia for beverages and munchies before starting our tour of the area.

With Senators Earl Kidston and Peter Clark leading the way, we drove through one of Senator Kidston's highbush blueberry fields on our way to the apple orchards of David and Mary Lou Power in Pereaux.

David gave a very interesting talk on the apple industry in Nova Scotia and the changes that he has seen over the past

number of years. We learned about the different varieties that are planted and what goes into determining which apples are chosen.

We then visited an innovated strawberry growing facility owned by the Kidston family. They are experimenting with growing strawberry plants inside a greenhouse that is computer controlled for temperature – curtains and beams with plants are raised and lowered to give optimum growth temperatures.

After tasting the strawberries, our next stop was at the Northville Heritage Farm Centre where we enjoyed the lunches we brought with us followed by a time of strolling through the museum's many buildings. Senator Charlie Keddy, on behalf of the Senate Club, presented the museum with a donation as a thanks for allowing us the opportunity to see their work preserving our agricultural past.

A walk among the grapes followed with John Warner giving us an overview of

grape growing in Nova Scotia. Warner Vineyards is the province's largest indie grape grower. Planning happened hand in hand with the wineries to whom they sell their grapes.

The late frost that happened in June has certainly had a big impact on the apple orchards and vineyards in the province as well as blueberries and other crops.

Onward to Lakeview and the Charles Keddy farm where son Philip talked about growing sweet potatoes in our climate. We also saw one of the strawberry plant fields.

The sweet potato storage facility was home to our evening meal where we enjoy a tender hip of beef with salads and a lovely strawberry shortcake for supper before taking the trails back to our homes.

It is always a good time when the Senate Club meets – much laughter, chatter and friendly "insults" ensue!

Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER 9 - 12 HALIFAX

Canadian Biosolids & Residuals Conference

SEPTEMBER 11 TRURO

NSFA Council of Leaders Meeting

SEPTEMBER 16 ACROSS NS

Open Farm Day

SEPTEMBER 30 ACROSS NS

FSNS Video Contest Deadline

SEPTEMBER 30 ACROSS NS

FSNS Calendar Drawing Contest Deadline

NOVEMBER 5 - 16 ACROSS NS

Obsolete Pesticide Collection

OCT 15 & 16 NIAGARA FALLS

Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference

NOV 16 & 17 TRURO

WBPANS Annual Meeting

NOV 29 & 30 TRURO

NSFA Annual Meeting

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.

2018 EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

Victor Oulton	President	902-798-4440
Tim Marsh	1 st Vice President	902-798-7924
Chris deWaal	2 nd Vice President	902-582-7756
Chris van den Heuvel	CFA Director	902-631-1884
Kimberly Stokdijk	Director at Large	902-895-4817
Amanda Eisses	Director at Large	902-662-3811
Sylvestre Dion	Director at Large	902-664-6781
Lauren Park	Director at Large	902-292-5160
Past President:	Chris van den Heuvel	902-631-1884

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.

STAFF: Executive Director: Henry Vissers; Associate Director: Wanda Hamilton; Financial Services Coordinator: Krista Vroegh; Administrative Services Coordinator: Shelly MacKenzie; Communication & Research Coordinator: Maxine MacLean; Member Engagement Coordinator: Kathrine Doyle; Farm Safety Manager, Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, EFP Staff, Paul Brenton, Trevor Davison, Jay Woodworth and Cory Roberts



60 Research Dr, Perennia Innovation Park, Bible Hill, NS
Ph: 893-2293 Fax: 893-7063
Email: info@nsfa-fane.ca
Website: www.nsfa-fane.ca Facebook: [@nsfafane](https://www.facebook.com/nsfafane)

NSFA would like to introduce Cynthia Campbell NSFA summer student!

Cynthia is going into her fourth year at Dal AC in the Animal Sciences Program. She grew up on Brookvilla farm in Cape Breton and is actively involved in the planning of the National Holstein Convention taking place in 2019. As Student Marketing Coordinator, Cynthia helped NSFA with positive promotion of Nova Scotia's Agriculture Industry. We were excited to have her join us!

Cynthia has dedicated her summer with NSFA on a successful Meet Your Farmer at the Mall event. Cynthia also supported other public trust files including distributing materials for exhibitions and Open Farm Day tasks.

All the best to Cynthia as she continues her studies at Dal AC!

