

# News & Views

## In this Issue...

Open Farm Day ..... 1

Viewpoint ..... 2

Producing Prosperity in Canada ..... 3

Title Change for Wanda Hamilton ..... 3

Policy Corner ..... 4

Developing Policy ..... 5

Viewpoint continued ..... 5

New Farm Safety Advisor ..... 6

Mental Health: A Priority for our Farmers ..... 6

Mental Health: A Priority for our Farmers continued... 7

Being Responsible for a Sustainable Water Supply... 8

Sustainable Water Supply continued ..... 9

Summer Field Day ..... 9

Summer BBQ & Tours... 9

AIL Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit... 10

Member Benefit Moment 10

Farm Family Support Line..... 10

Finding the Balance ..... 11

NSFA Open House..... 12

Upcoming Events ..... 12



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## 'Tis the Season...for Open Farm Day!

It's that time of year again! The sun is finally shining, fields are planted, crops are getting cut, you're putting in long hours and may find yourself thinking about what's next. Falling in line with harvest season is Open Farm Day. A chance to educate and excite visitors by showcasing the hard work and dedication it takes to run your operation and produce the food/products that reach their homes across the province.

According to the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity's (CCFI) 2018 Public Trust research, only 36% of Canadians believe that our food system is on the right track. This is down 7% from 2017. Studies show that people trust farmers but not farming – trusting the person not the process – it's time we change that.

There is a push for industry led public trust initiatives, at our Annual Meeting back in November public trust was ranked as the number one issue facing our farmers today. Open Farm Day is one key component of this approach – offering a hands-on experience and the chance to connect with consumers face to face.

Over the last 17 years, you have welcomed the public onto your farming operations,



we hope you will join us for the 18th Annual Open Farm Day on September 15th 2019. Registration forms can be found inserted in this News & Views issue or online at [www.nsfa-fane.ca/openfarmday](http://www.nsfa-fane.ca/openfarmday).

As a participating farm you must offer activities that will provide an opportunity to educate the public on how agriculture impacts their daily lives. For a full list of requirements, see the registration form. To ensure your farm is included in promotional material, please speak with Katherine by **July 18th** at the latest. A signed copy of the registration form with the liability/insurance section completed (front page) must be submitted by **August 2nd**.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to:

Katherine Doyle  
[kdoyle@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:kdoyle@nsfa-fane.ca)  
 (902) 893-2293

# Viewpoint

Trade issues continue to roil the markets, with China blocking the import of canola, as well as some restrictions on pork and other products. Throughout this trade dispute a number of threats have been made, such as the US Mexican tariff rising from 5% to 25% - while this was resolved it does shed light on the possibility of further trade disturbances. A highly unpredictable time for farmer's. CFA recently put out a press release calling for immediate reforms to Canada's BRM suite restoring AgriStability margin coverage to 85% and removing AgriStability's reference margin limit, to ensure Canada's BRM suite provides the credible support farmers need. These reforms must be initiated without delay so farmers are assured that these risks beyond their control have credible and adequate support. In reaction to the Canola trade issue, amendments have been made to the Agricultural Marketing Programs Regulations, permanently increasing loan limits to \$1 million from \$400,000 for all farms based on qualifying production.

Also, in response to the 3 trade deals that have been completed CETA, CPTPP and USMCA, the last federal budget allocated \$3.9 Billion to compensate Supply Management for concessions in these trade deals. Of the \$3.9 billion package announced in this year's budget, the Federal government promised that up to \$2.15 billion would be in direct compensation for egg, dairy and poultry farmers, with \$250 million already dedicated to innovation funding to support dairy farmers. The final \$1.5 billion will be dedicated to a Quota Value Guarantee Program to protect against the reduction in quota value when a quota is sold. Government committed to having the details of the plan by month

end. It was also mentioned that the government will monitor the "potential future impacts" of the new North American trade pact, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement.

Farmers are also fighting a battle a little closer to home. These days social media appears to be driving information faster and faster – with not all of it being true or relevant. To see products like "Beyond Meat" gain such profile, who would have thought? First with the fast food chain A&W and now being distributed by Sobeys and other major retailers. Issues have been raised with the product being labeled as a "plant-based meat", in fact the Quebec Cattle Producer's organization is asking the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to step in against the product's advertisement. While you can fight to change how the product is advertised, as a handful of farm organizations have in the US – my guess is that the product is here to stay as long as there are consumers who want it. The product isn't cheap, if you take a look at the price in stores, it's not going to displace meat when it comes to price. While it's not the first of its kind, this is also a product that is grown, so it does support pulse farmers, beet farmers etc. I think we have a bigger issue to deal with than if our consumers want to try these plant-based products. Lately we've heard about a number of incidents where protesters are coming onto farms. Here in Nova Scotia we've had protests at Atlantic Stockyards, as well as people mis-representing who they were in order to gain access to a farm – these incidents happened a few years ago.

With that being said, anti-agriculture activists have disrupted farms and animal transport in other provinces, mainly Ontario. There is concern



**Henry Vissers**

*Executive Director, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture*

that law enforcement and courts are not taking this matter seriously and haven't been charging trespassers. While illegally trespassing on private property, there are hazards that these activists would be unaware of. Such as being unfamiliar with farm equipment, how to safely handle/be around livestock. As well as being unaware and uneducated on biosecurity, and the impact that their "visit" can have on farmers mental health. It hasn't happened here yet but the advice from those that have experienced it is to restrict access, call, the police and report them. Don't attempt to remove them yourself, inform them that they are trespassing and if they don't leave the property, contact the police. What we do know is that we need to get ahead of this – have more conversations, share our stories, promote our industry; what better way to do this than through Open Farm Day. Let's take the lead on this conversation!

Finally the weather, it's been a difficult spring for everyone with the cool weather and overabundance of rain. As well as the inability to get necessary work completed it is mentally stressful for many, please reach out to neighbours, friends and support

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 5*

# CFA launches its national campaign, Producing Prosperity in Canada.

The Producing Prosperity in Canada (PPiC) campaign launched in early April, marking the beginning of CFA's election campaign that will run throughout the year and beyond. The campaign focuses on three key benefits that Canadian agriculture provides to all of Canada: Economic growth, food security and environmental stewardship.

The launch of the campaign started with a press conference and coincided with CFA's Lobby Day, where CFA's Board of Directors had over 50 productive meetings with elected officials from all parties.

The campaign has seen amazing success, with around 80% of those CFA meets with signing the Producing

Prosperity pledge, stating their support for Canadian agriculture.

The campaign's next major event will be the agriculture leaders debate, to take place before the federal election, tentatively scheduled for September 24th in Ottawa, ON.

CFA urges all of those involved in the agriculture industry to visit [www.producingprosperitycanada.ca](http://www.producingprosperitycanada.ca), where they can find resources, statistics and key messages to help amplify the message of the campaign. Printable handouts, infographics and the Producing Prosperity pledge are all available to be downloaded and printed to help prepare for any meeting you may have with government officials.



(l to r) Tim Marsh, 1st Vice President; Chris van den Heuvel, CFA 2nd Vice President; Minister Colwell and Victor Oulton, President

If agriculture communicates clearly, consistently and with purpose, Canadian agriculture will be recognized as a strategic sector that benefits all of Canada with immense potential for growth.

On June 6th during the Joint Executive meeting between NSFA and NSDA, Chris van den Heuvel presented the Producing Prosperity Campaign to Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Keith Colwell.

Thank you to Minister Colwell for signing the pledge.

## Title Change for Wanda Hamilton



From Financial Services to Communications to Associate Director, Wanda Hamilton has been with the Federation for over 15 years – receiving

her 15-year recognition at our 2018 Annual Meeting.

An integral part of the NSFA team, Wanda led our recent strategic planning process – working closely with Yvonne Thyssen-Post and the Steering Committee to ensure the direction of our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. As you know, NSFA underwent a staff restructure as a result of this Strategic Plan with Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Maxine MacLean and Katherine Doyle assuming new roles. Taking another step in our strategic planning tactics has Wanda assuming a new title, Director of Operations and Government Relations. While her role in the organization and key responsibilities

will not be changing – the title change was recommended in order to mirror our Operations and Outreach structure.

The Director of Operations and Government Relations is responsible for overseeing the Operations team of NSFA, including issues, policy and research management along with building and tenant management. Wanda will continue to provide a support role for governance through Executive and Council of Leaders as well as liaison with commodities, committees and government.

Congratulations Wanda!



# Policy Corner

## Traffic Safety Act

NSFA was approached by TIR Policy Shop to review NSFA's submission to the Traffic Safety Act consultation almost a year ago. You will recall NSFA made recommendations on behalf of the farm community for consideration during this legislative upgrade.

The Meeting was very positive and provided an opportunity for NSFA to rationalize the reasons for the recommendations – which was certainly appreciated since submissions were limited to a 1000-word count!

Highlights from the meeting include:

- Throughout the meeting, NSFA emphasized the importance of linking the farm registration system to elements of the TSA including: farm plates (truck and tractor) and definition of a farmer;
- Discussed the importance of UTVs on farms;
- NSFA also clarified that though legislation is being sought for modern equipment, legislation must not restrict the use of older, yet safe, equipment on roadways; and,
- NSFA explained the current gap in the licenses as it pertains to implements and the meeting collectively explored alternatives to the current system.

## Draft ALIP Comparative Report

The Standing Policy on Agricultural Land has progressed significantly over the past year. With actions on the recommendations from the Agriculture Land Reports, we are gaining momentum on ensuring healthy agriculture land for current and future generations of farmers. One key recommendation was to

understand the change in agriculture land over a 20-year time span. The Agriculture Land Inventory Project, otherwise referred to as ALIP, identified agriculture land in use 20 years ago. An update was completed in 2017 by COGS/AGRG with results recently made available. NSDA presented draft findings from the data which compared the first survey and the recent report. Some highlights from the comparison includes:

- From 1998 to 2018, the amount of agriculture land has declined by over 19,000 hectares (or 9.2%);
- Kings County has seen the largest decline in active farmland area (3,913 ha); and
- Pictou County is the only county with large agricultural holdings that experienced an increase in active farmland.

As you will recall from the Agriculture Land Standing Policy, NSFA recommended that regular studies of agriculture land inventory in Nova Scotia is essential to understanding high risk areas and trends for agriculture land use. The completion of the second ALIP puts this recommendation in a monitoring state while continuing lobby efforts to ensure a similar study is conducted in a reasonable timeframe.



## Municipal Government Act

The Municipal Government Act was updated in September 2018. The Act, as amended, requires each municipality to have a municipal plan. This is particularly important for agriculture since a statement of provincial interest on Agriculture Land requires each municipality with a municipal plan to plan for agriculture and agriculture land.

The ensuing regulations are out for consultation until June 28, 2019; guidance documents to support municipalities with their plans will follow. One set of regulations clarifies what is to be included in municipal planning strategies while the other regulations are requirements on consulting with abutting municipalities. The guidance documents will support municipalities in complying with the regulations.

NSFA's Agriculture Land Policy Committee has been given the opportunity to consult and will provide feedback to Municipal Affairs.

The resolutions below continue to be a priority. Most recent updates can be found in the May 2019 News and Views.

- Year-round trucking assistance for Limestone
- Trucking assistance for gypsum
- Prioritizing local procurement
- Rural high-speed internet and cellular service
- Wildlife controls

For more information about NSFA Policies, Resolutions and associated process please feel free to contact Maxine at [mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca)

# Developing Policy

Have your say - NSFA is developing Standing Policies for 2020!

Each summer, careful consideration goes into developing Standing Policies and associated messaging. An important part of the policy development process is hearing from the people affected by the policies. There are mechanisms in issue management, watching trends, discussion at committee, Executive and Council of Leaders that provide input, however hearing from our members is key. To direct action on a Standing Policy, we must convey the issue and the impact of an issue on farms (or the industry) along with practical solutions when lobbying decision makers.

We invite you to review the themes that the Policy Team have explored as key areas for NSFA Standing Policy 2020:

**Agriculture Land:** The focus has been for quite some time on ensuring healthy, viable agriculture land for current and prospective farmers. Progress is being made under direction from the Agriculture Land Policy Committee, therefore actions for this policy will continue to progress the recommendations in the various land reports from the last ten years and implementing an agriculture land strategy for the province.

**Labour:** The Labour Standing Policy has focused heavily on skills development, training and addressing the labour gap within the industry. With recent funding from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, NSFA's outreach team will be delivering training and resources to the farm community. The Trade Advisory Committee continues to meet and inform the Farm Technician Apprenticeship Program which is expected to launch in 2020. While

the training and skills gap will be addressed in practice, other challenges with labour have been identified, particularly the regulatory framework. It is suggested that the 2020 policy on labour will focus on how the current regulatory framework is a hindrance in addressing the labour gap.

**Transportation:** The purpose of the Transportation Standing Policy is to focus on the impending regulations under the Traffic Safety Act (TSA). Through NSFA's Transportation Committee, NSFA has developed recommendations to improve moving equipment on the roads, licensing and registration under the new regulations. Consulting and lobbying on the TSA regulations will continue to be a top priority for NSFA.

**Regulatory Alignment:** This policy had different names over the years from Red Tape to Regulatory Burden. The purpose has always remained the same – ensure that legislation and regulations influence a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers. For 2020, it is expected that NSFA will continue to lobby on biosecurity training and procedures for inspection officers as well as reviewing challenges with regards to animal welfare. From a monitoring perspective, NSFA will continue to communicate opportunities to consult on changes as they apply to farm businesses.

**Soil Health:** New for 2020, the Policy Team is introducing a Soil Health Standing Policy. The intentions are to bring the importance of healthy agriculture soils to a top priority for decision makers. NSFA has started work on this area, particularly in the land file. Considerations for this

policy will include the development of a comprehensive soil health improvement program, protection from top soil removal and strategies to mitigate against erosion.

Draft versions of the policies will be available in October, ahead of the November NSFA AGM and will be presented on at County/Regional Federations' AGMs in the fall. In the meantime, for more information or to provide input on Standing Policies, NSFA members are welcomed to contact NSFA Policy and Research Coordinator, Maxine MacLean. (902-893-2293 or [mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca))

## Viewpoint

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

services for help. We are all in this together. At the AGM last November our guest speaker asked the audience how many people would reach out to a neighbor or friend for help. A few hands went up, she then asked how many would be willing to help if asked and almost all hands went up.

While it may seem that I'm leaving you thinking about the challenges we've been facing as an industry, please remember, we're all in this together. Here's hoping for sunny days ahead, be safe.

Comments?

[hvissers@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:hvissers@nsfa-fane.ca)



## Farm Safety Nova Scotia Welcomes New Farm Safety Advisor

Back in April, Farm Safety put out a call for applications for a new position with the organization – a Farm Safety Advisor, who will support farms through training, education and advisory services.

We are excited to introduce to you the newest member of our team – Lori Brookhouse!

Lori comes to Farm Safety with an array of education in her back pocket. Graduating from Nova Scotia Agricultural College with a Biology Technology Diploma, she also has certificates and

diplomas in; Bookkeeping, Supervisory Development and Human Resources management. Lori holds a number of professional designations including CRSP and NCSO.

A curious person who always wants and needs to know more, Lori always had a knack for foreseeing what could possibly happen and wanting to take precautions to prevent any incident or injury.

“When working at the lab at the university I took it upon myself to ensure safety measures, mostly including emergency preparedness at the time, was in place,” she added. “I was approached by a landscaping company in 2007 to help them with their safety program. One referral led to another and here I am today.”


In her spare time, you will likely find Lori camping, wheelin’, riding her Harley, acrylic painting or reading.

Passionate about safety, education and helping others, Lori is looking forward to her new role as Farm Safety Advisor.

“There is so much to look forward to,

using my agricultural background; using my knowledge of legislation and safety program development, training development and deliver skills, as well as my 12 years of experience in safety and human resources. I’m excited to work with peers and employers in the agricultural industry to help them get the tools they need to provide a safe workplace for their workers so everyone can go home in the same condition at the end of the day.”

We can’t wait to see the positive impact she will have on farm safety in Nova Scotia.

Welcome Lori 



## Mental Health: A Priority for our Farmers

On May 28th, the House of Commons released a report from the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food entitled “Mental Health: A Priority for our Farmers”.

This detailed report included statements from farmers across the country including Chris van den Heuvel, Andrew Campbell, Lesley Kelly, and many more, as well as industry stakeholders and government officials. Research from Farm Credit Canada and findings from Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton highlighted issues being faced by farmers across the country such as the many factors

outside of their control; unpredictable weather, government regulations and market volatility – which are often major stressors.

Dr. Jones-Bitton presented on her research findings at our 2018 Annual Meeting and has been a major advocate for mental health in agriculture.

The report also included stats from Statistics Canada who conducted a Community Health Survey. When looking at the stats specific to our province they found that 9.2% of respondents in Nova Scotia perceive their mental health as fair or poor.

For Nova Scotian farmers seeking support, Farm Safety Nova Scotia funds the Farm Family Support Line. A confidential, short-term counselling

and advisory service – to help farmers manage and reduce the stresses in life, including mental health, legal, financial and more.

The line is open 24 hours a day, and at no cost for up to 3 hours per issue.

**1-844-880-9142**

### Recommendations Summary

This report brought forward 10 recommendations to address mental health in the agriculture industry.

**Recommendation 1:** The Government of Canada examine the process of audits and labour reviews in order to 1) ensure the least amount of stress and disruption to the agricultural producer and those dependent on them for work since extremely negative impact on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

# Mental Health: A Priority for our Farmers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

mental well-being of the producers and those around them can result from poorly managed audits and labour reviews, and 2) whenever possible, give consideration to practical experience when filling positions of auditors as they best understand the processes that the producers go through.

**Recommendation 2:** The Government of Canada and pertinent departments, when considering and implementing regulatory change, take into account the impact any changes may have on agricultural producers and related industry persons and mitigate potential stressors by 1) giving ample time for consultation, 2) ensuring that all persons affected by the changes are kept informed from beginning to end and 3) give full consideration to withdrawing said changes or amending them if the impact is found to be of great negative impact on the Canadian agricultural sector.

**Recommendation 3:** Given the prevalence of government initiatives, studies, and programs to combat cyber bullying and other forms of intimidation and coercion targeted at students and vulnerable Canadians, the Government should engage with farmers and agricultural stakeholder groups to develop public awareness campaigns and strategies to combat the growing incidence of cyber bullying, intimidation, and threats targeted at Canada's agricultural workers which results in a significant increase in stress. In addition, the Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider including any form of intimidation or cyberbullying targeted at any group of Canadians based on their occupation or place of residence as a Criminal Code offense.

**Recommendation 4:** The Government of Canada accelerate the deployment of high-speed Internet infrastructure in Canada's rural and remote regions.

**Recommendation 5:** The Government of Canada work with the recognized and accredited organizations to better tailor mental health care and insurance coverage to farmers' specific needs.

**Recommendation 6:** The Government of Canada invest in educating business partners and other stakeholders who work with farmers to detect the signs of psychological disorders and distress in order to refer them to resources that can help them.

**Recommendation 7:** The Government of Canada contribute to building capacity in mental health awareness and prevention so that future farmers are informed of the challenges they may face.

**Recommendation 8:** The Government of Canada, in cooperation with its provincial and territorial counterparts, fund the activities of recognized and accredited organizations that provide mental health assistance to farmers and their families.

**Recommendation 9:** The Government of Canada oversee the national coordination of various research and prevention activities targeting the mental health of farmers.

**Recommendation 10:** The Government of Canada facilitate, coordinate and promote telephone help lines and e-mental health services for farmers and Canadians living in rural areas.

It's encouraging to see such an important topic being brought in front of the House of Commons. Our hope is that the work doesn't stop with this report. That the recommendations will be followed through and acted upon.

Having auditors, inspectors, officers

etc. with practical experience and knowledge of the agriculture industry is beneficial to the process. Ensuring that those who will be impacted by changes are adequately consulted with and are kept informed from start to finish is vital. Taking a national approach to mental health would be ideal – a united effort across Canada, bringing together provinces with the same goal can create real results. This also prevents provinces from reinventing the wheel and developing programs that already exist.

Adequate internet and cell coverage are key to communications for farmers and an important part of doing business. Poor internet and a lack of cellular coverage can impact farmers in numerous ways, from not being able to get in touch with peers, to being unable to complete business transactions or other important tasks on the farm. NSFA has a resolution to lobby the provincial government to address this issue in Nova Scotia.

The closing statement of the report spoke to us.

"Canada cannot expect its agricultural sector to grow and expand if it does not invest in farmers' foundational well-being."

This couldn't be more accurate, without investing in the wellbeing of our farmers, the ones providing Canadians with safe and quality food/products – how can we expect the industry to grow? If you don't feed, water and nurture your crops, do you expect them to grow and prosper? This is the same concept.

Not only is it important for industry to keep the conversation on mental health going – it is important for you to do the same. Talk to your family, check up on your friends, ask your neighbour how they are doing. Reaching out for help can seem daunting, but there is always someone to talk to, someone willing to listen and someone who wants to help.



# Being Responsible for a Sustainable Water Supply

submitted by Trevor Davison, EFP Coordinator

Agricultural activity in Nova Scotia has benefited from a relative abundance of freshwater available from rivers, storage ponds and groundwater sources. Annual precipitation consistently exceeds 1,000 mm/year, providing reliable recharge to aquifers and associated baseflow to rivers. The unrelenting rain this spring probably hasn't brought water needs to the forefront of people's minds, yet variable weather patterns and increasing demands by farms, municipal utilities and industry will place increasing pressure on surface and groundwater supplies in the future.

## Water withdrawals

Responsible water use is an important consideration for the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia. The horticulture and vegetable industry rely on various water sources for irrigation purposes. Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) requires that farmers obtain approval to withdraw water volumes greater than 23,000 L/day from a single water source. As an example, an inch of water applied to an acre of land using an overhead system amounts to 102,789 L (22,610 gal) of water; over 4 times the daily withdrawal limit. Currently, there are no fees for agricultural approvals; however, in some cases, a qualified professional may be needed to complete a withdrawal approval application. NSE has prepared guides for both ground water and surface water supplies (see links in Related Resources below).

A withdrawal approval is needed for regulatory compliance in order for NSE to properly manage water use in

*As part of the management process, an approval gives the holder the "first rights" to that water source.*

the province to ensure a sustainable water supply for all Nova Scotians. As part of this management process, an approval gives the approval holder the "first rights" to that water source. If you are an approved user, your water needs take priority over new interests in a given area. If you are a large volume user, but do not have an approval, your use is not properly documented and would not be included as a part of any future watershed assessments. As new withdrawal approvals are granted, if there is ever a shortage of water, i.e. due to a dry summer, you would have no recourse and your needs would not be a priority as compared to users with existing withdrawal approvals.

## Water monitoring

A water flow meter is an effective means to document water use and



track changes to water management practices. Flow meters are recommended for withdrawal approvals,

although pump specifications and logging hours of use can be used as an alternative in some circumstances. There are a variety of flow meters available in the marketplace, although it is important to ensure it is properly suited for the situation, e.g. vertical, horizontal or oblique installation and compatible with water quality, e.g. impurities in water.

## Irrigation management

Proper irrigation management ensures that the irrigation system is operated to match the crop, soil and climate conditions present. Irrigation should be scheduled to replace moisture losses in a manner that does not exceed the crop's ability to utilize the water, or the soil's capacity to store the water applied. Appropriate irrigation equipment selection and design, as well as good management and scheduling, will conserve water supplies while supporting crop growth.

A farmer's observations and experience are often relied upon during the growing season; however, soil moisture sensors can help improve irrigation management. Depending on the crop, even mild plant stress can impact yield. Soil moisture sensors are useful tools to help irrigators to understand what is happening in the root zone of a crop. There are two basic groups of sensors for soil moisture monitoring:

**1. Water Potential Sensors:** such as tensiometers and granular matrix sensors, (e.g. gypsum block and watermark sensors). These sensors measure how hard it is to remove water from the soil. This information coupled

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



# Being Responsible for a Sustainable Water Supply

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

with an understanding of your soil texture (e.g. sandy, loamy, silty etc.) can be used to determine the amount of water in the soil that is available to plants.

**2. Soil Moisture Sensors:** that give a percentage or relative content of soil moisture. These sensors measure the water content of a soil using the time or frequency of a pulse travelling between or returning to electrodes. The most common types are capacitance and time or frequency domain. Most sensors are accurate within 2–3% of the actual soil moisture.

The wide variety of tools and sensors available for assessing soil moisture can accommodate a range of farm needs regardless of farm size. With

advances in technology, farmers can now access real-time soil tension sensor data with a mobile platform that allow growers to anticipate the water needs of the crop and schedule irrigation accordingly, e.g. <https://hortau.com>.

Water is a critical input into all farming operations. Unlike many regions of the world, we are fortunate to live and farm in an area where we have an abundance of high-quality water. The summer of 2016 was an example that highlighted that we are not immune from water scarcity in the province. Moving into an unpredictable future, it is in our best interest to understand the limits of the water resources we have and to manage those resources responsibly.

## Resources:

- Ground Water Withdrawal Guide <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/guideToGroundwaterWithdrawalApprovals.pdf>
- Surface Water Withdrawal Guide <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/guideToSurfaceWaterWithdrawalApprovals.pdf>
- Trickle Irrigation: How long do I trickle?
- Soil Moisture Monitoring (ATTRA)
- Monitoring Soil Moisture to Improve Irrigation Decisions – OMA-FRA



## MEMBER BENEFIT MOMENT

Morneau Shepell has partnered with NSFA and other agricultural groups for more than 10 years and we understand your unique needs.

As a member of NSFA you are entitled to receive preferred rates through our volume purchasing power. Get the most comprehensive benefits for all of your needs, all in one place.

Get affordable, flexible, and convenient benefits:

- Life Insurance
- Extended Health
- Dental
- Vision Care
- Critical Illness
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment

We've got you covered

Thanks to your association's strength in numbers, we can deliver a much more all-encompassing and inexpensive alternative to individual insurance products. Start with the core basics and add the optional benefits you need. Cover yourself and your family.

When you join NSFA's group benefit program from Morneau Shepell, you will:

- Save with special discount rates, through volume purchasing by NSFA
- Choose your benefits (Life, Medical and Dental, Critical Illness) and amount of insurance you need
- Offer the savings, choice, and convenience to any staff you hire

# AIL Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit

As a part of your member benefit package with the NSFA, you have a \$4,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit through American Income Life Insurance Company. This insurance benefit is offered to our members at no cost to you!

A bit about the benefit:

- All members of the NSFA and their employees are covered under this policy, regardless of submitting the reply card.
- By completing and returning the reply card it simplifies the process should your family ever need to collect this insurance benefit as you will designate a beneficiary.
- If you do not designate your beneficiary, your \$4,000.00 would be paid to your estate, which may be taxable.
- If you return the reply card an AIL

representative will contact you to deliver your \$4,000.00 AD&D certificate of coverage and your Family Eye-care discount card. At this time, the AIL representative will also offer you additional insurance. You are under no requirement to take further insurance.

This benefit has proven to be very beneficial in unfortunate circumstances over the years; however, we have been hearing from members about some challenges with AIL representatives contacting them frequently, missing appointments, etc. We are currently working with our AIL representative to find solutions to these challenges in an effort to maintain this valuable benefit to our members. If you have any comments or questions about this benefit, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

### For Nova Scotia farmers seeking support - FARM FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

A confidential, short-term counselling and advisory service - to help farmers manage and reduce the stresses in life, including mental health, legal, financial and more.

**NO COST FOR UP TO 3 HOURS OF SERVICE PER ISSUE**

If you require more specialized or longer-term support, professionals will help you find an appropriate specialist or community service that can provide continued assistance.

**LINE IS OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY**

Available to farmers or their immediate family members

1-884-880-9142  
TTY: 1-877-338-0275



Farm Family Support Line is managed by Morneau Shepell as a Member Assistance Program funded by Farm Safety Nova Scotia

# Finding the Balance

submitted by Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

Dr. Nandika Bandara attributes his academic success to finding the perfect balance. With numerous degrees and research work with various universities, he admits that he wasn't always as interested in academia as one might think.

"When I was in my undergrad, I played for couple of sports on university teams and involved with several extra curricular activities including student unions, debating, announcing," Nandika explains. "My focus wasn't always on the academics."

Originally from Sri Lanka, Nandika studied at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, specializing in food science and technology. Following the completion of his undergrad, he worked in the industry for a number of years before moving to Canada to pursue graduate studies in the Department of Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science at the University of Alberta.

After completing his Master's degree, Nandika again continued with his academics to pursue a PhD in food science and bio-resource technology at the University of Alberta. Following that, he conducted his postdoctoral research at University of Alberta until early 2018. It was then that he made the move east to the Department of Food Science at the University of Guelph after receiving a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) postdoctoral research scholarship. In September 2018, Nandika joined the Department of Plant, Food and Environmental Sciences as an Assistant Professor in food bioscience.

"When I came to Canada, I didn't have so many extra-curricular activities to be involved with, also as I left my job back in Sri Lanka, I have to find a new career path" Nandika explains. "So I had no

choice but to study!"

From a young age, Nandika knew he wanted to be involved in agriculture. When he was a student in high school, Nandika had a relative who stayed with his family and attended the Faculty of Agriculture in Sri Lanka.

After attending an agriculture exhibition with his cousin, Nandika realized his passion for agriculture.

"In high schools in Sri Lanka, you must choose your specialty subject which you are planning to do higher studies," Nandika explains. "To go to university, you must pass a competitive exam and you must have the highest grade. I selected agriculture to study in high school, then wrote the exam to attend the Faculty of Agriculture. I was accepted on my first try."

Nandika is a food and material scientist with a wide range of research experience. His research is focused around food and macromolecular chemistry, a type of chemistry that looks at large food molecules like proteins, carbohydrates and lipids. He also studies nanotechnology, or the manipulation of matter at a nanoscale and supramolecular scale. Finally, he specializes in studying biomimetics and renewable polymer applications or the study of natural and living systems to mimic their functions for the purpose of solving complex human problems.

"I currently have few key areas of research," Nandika explains. "The first is the integration of nanotechnology and material science for improving therapeutic efficacy and bioavailability of bioactive/drug molecules. I am also interested in the value addition to agriculture and food industry by-products and waste materials; especially to use them as biobased polymers and advanced functional



*Dr. Nandika Bandara*

materials. Understanding the effect of novel food processing methods on structural and functional properties of food macromolecules using advanced analytical methods."

He recently received a prestigious grant valued at \$250,000. The New Frontiers in Research Fund – Exploration from Tri-Council Institutional Program Secretariat (TIPS) is a highly competitive award with less than nine per cent success rate.

To date, Nandika is the only successful applicant from Dal AC. He was also recently awarded the Vice-President Research and Innovation International Seed Fund (valued at \$5,000). This is an internal Dalhousie competition and that he received for a collaborative project with University of Melbourne. Funding grants will allow Nandika to accept students studying a Master's degree to work alongside him. It also allows him to further his research and collaborate with other universities.

"I have already accepted three MSc students currently and my target for September 2019 is to have another PhD student and a Postdoctoral fellow," Nandika explains. "I also have collaborations within Canada and with universities in United States, India and Australia. I'd like to send my students to these collaborative research groups to get their training in interdisciplinary areas. I had that opportunity myself and it was an incredible learning opportunity for me. I want my students to have the same opportunities to help them learn and grow."



# Upcoming Events

## JULY 18 BIBLE HILL

Dal AC Community Day

## JULY 20 TRURO

NSYF Summer BBQ & Farm Tours

## AUGUST 6 EAST MOUNTAIN

NSFA Open House

## AUGUST 7 NAPPAN

Forage Day

## AUGUST 10 DURHAM

Summer Field Day

## SEPTEMBER 15 NOVA SCOTIA

Open Farm Day

## OCTOBER 27, 28 & 29 NIAGRA FALLS

Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference

## NOVEMBER 14 & 15 TRURO

WPANS Annual Meeting

## NOVEMBER 28 & 29 TRURO

NSFA Annual General Meeting

## NOVEMBER 29 TRURO

Farm Safety NS 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.

**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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# NSFA OPEN HOUSE, BBQ & SOCIAL

6 August 2019 • 3pm-7pm

7 ATLANTIC CENTRAL DRIVE  
EAST MOUNTAIN, NS

Please RSVP so we have enough food!  
[info@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:info@nsfa-fane.ca) or 902-893-2293

For more information visit:  
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