



2020 Annual Report



Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Mission

To influence and affect change for the continual success of agriculture in Nova Scotia.

Vision

A prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers.

Our Commitment

To work in the best interest of the farming community in Nova Scotia; presenting a unified voice to effectively advocate and lobby for the betterment of the industry.

To work collaboratively with industry and key stakeholders to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for our farms.

To support Nova Scotia farmers in managing their business risks through delivery of programs and services.

To connect, engage, and communicate with our members.

To promote a positive image of our industry.

Strategic Priorities

Connect and engage with members

Our members make our organization what it is today – without them we would not exist. Connecting and engaging with our members is the key to the success of our industry and organization.

Effectively influence government to affect change

Ensuring we are able to effectively influence government through advocacy, lobbying and policy development.

To improve operational and governance structure

To better serve our members from both an operational and governance perspective – ensuring that NSFA has strong, sound and sustainable leadership.

Dear Members,

I find it hard to believe that it was a year ago I was talking about the major changes that the NSFA had undergone during the 2018/2019 year – 2020 has certainly thrown us all for a loop. If anything, 2020 has strengthened our ability to adapt and overcome challenges and I am proud of how well you all faced the obstacles that have been put in your way. As an industry we worked together, supported each other and encouraged the success of others – something that I hope will continue after COVID-19.

Since our last Annual Report, NSFA staff and Council have been working on a number of projects and initiatives – from meetings with the PC & NDP caucuses, one-on-ones with MLAs and other government officials, launching campaigns, enhancing the services we offer our members and much more! This Annual Report provides just an overview of all the work NSFA has been doing for the industry.

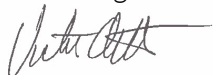
I would like to thank NSFA staff for all of their hard work. They are a passionate and dedicated group of people who put in a lot of time and effort towards advancing our industry. They went above and beyond to support us throughout COVID-19, and for that I thank them.

As you know, our Annual Meeting this year is taking place online – while this isn't the way we thought we would be celebrating the 125th year of the NSFA we hope that you will enjoy the plans we have coming up for you all from November 30 – December 4. We will be hosting webinars on public trust, soil health, farm transition planning, and mental health, as well as a virtual happy hour! In addition to the webinars there will be three business meetings taking place during the week: Nova Scotia Young Farmers on December 2, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture's on December 3 and Farm Safety Nova Scotia's on December 4. We look forward to seeing you all virtually, hopefully we will be able to see you all face-to-face sometime in the near future.

I would like to take this time to thank you all for your support over the last three years. It has been an honour to serve as the President of Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture since 2017, where we have been working hard to influence change to ensure the success of our industry. I have learned a great deal about the industry throughout my years on the Council, the knowledge and friendships I have gained is one of the best takeaways. If you have ever thought about serving Nova Scotia agriculture and are passionate about ensuring a sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers, I encourage you to join NSFA Council. We are always looking for dedicated people with new ideas and fresh perspectives.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

Yours in agriculture,



Victor Oulton

President, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

Agenda for 125th Annual Meeting Celebration

Please note that registration is required for our Annual Meeting. You can register online at nsfa-fane.ca/agm, by completing the registration form in this package, or by calling (902) 893-2293.

Monday, November 30

12:30pm - 2:00pm: Public Trust Webinar: In Food We Trust? with Clinton Monchuk of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

Where are Canadians getting their information about food and farming in 2020? What are you doing to build trust in agriculture? In an age where information and science has become polarized, we can all do our part to ensure consumers understand how their food is grown.

Tuesday, December 1

10:00am - 11:00am: Agri-Environmental Program Webinar: Enhancing Soil Health in Nova Scotia with Dr. David Burton of Dalhousie's Faculty of Agriculture

Enhancing soil health in Nova Scotia is a high priority for NS farmers and the NSFA. Join us as we welcome Dr. David Burton from Dalhousie's Faculty of Agriculture as he shares best management practices to improve soil health and more.

Wednesday, December 2

7:00pm - 7:30pm: Nova Scotia Young Farmers AGM

7:30pm - 8:30pm: AgSector & NS Young Farmers: Farm Transition Webinar

To start conversations and help farmers learn from others' experience, we will be hosting a virtual panel discussion. FCC Agriculture Transition Specialist Terry Jones will moderate a panel of three farms who will share their stories with you, followed by a question and answer session.

- La Fleur du Pommier
- Boydsdale Dairy Farms Inc.
- Van Dyk Blueberries

Thursday, December 3

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture Annual Meeting

9:30am	Call to Order Declaration of Quorum President's Address Approval of Agenda Minutes of the last meeting Business arising from the minutes Auditor's Report Appointment of Auditor Presentation of 2020/21 Budget Nominating Committee Report NSFA Strategy and Program Update
11:30am	Government Speakers
12:30pm	LUNCH BREAK
1:30pm	Resolutions Report 2020/21 Resolutions 2020/21 Policy presentation
3:30pm	Election of Council Members
4pm	Adjourn

Friday, December 4

1:00pm - 1:30pm: Mental Health Campaign Launch

1:30pm - 2:30pm: Mental Health Webinar: Mental Fitness 101: Foundational Elements to Building a Mental Fitness Plan

In this presentation we will discuss the foundational elements of mental health and mental illness, and how our daily experience can influence our personal battery charge. This presentation will also cover the key elements of resilience, coping skills and how micro-skills can charge your daily battery.

Farm Safety Nova Scotia AGM begins at 2:30pm

Operational Update

Our Administrative Services Coordinator, **Shelly MacKenzie** continues to provide much needed support to our office, members and stakeholders. Shelly has also taken on the role of recording secretary for Council, PAC and other meetings.

Our Financial Services Coordinator, **Tracey Otterson** along with **Carolyn Van Den Heuvel** are working hard to streamline our financials and implement new processes for the organization - including moving onto the Payworks system.

Strategic Plan

Executive Director, **Henry Vissers** and Director of Outreach and Member Relations, **Carolyn Van Den Heuvel** continue to work through the strategic priorities and commitments that were identified in our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Including increased support and continued engagement with our County Federations and Commodity groups.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic played a significant role in NSFA operations this year. With our staff working from home March until mid-June, we tackled COVID-19 and its impact on the agriculture industry. Providing COVID-19 updates to membership on a daily basis, eventually moving to an as needed basis to keep our membership informed. Together with NSDA and Perennia, a working group was established to support farmers with Temporary Foreign Workers. NSFA staff and Council met with government officials and lobbied for supports to help our industry through the challenging first months of the pandemic

Below you will find our current staff compliment and NSFA Council.

NSFA Staff

Henry Vissers, *Executive Director*
 Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, *Director of Member Relations*
 Shelly MacKenzie, *Administrative Services Coordinator*
 Tracey Otterson, *Financial Services Coordinator*
 Maxine MacLean, *Policy Analyst*
 Katherine Tuttle, *Communications Coordinator*
 Lori Brookhouse, *Farm Safety Advisor*
 Heather Boyd, *AgSector Coordinator*
 Janette McDonald, *Public Trust Coordinator*
 Macy Cameron, *Public Trust Assistant (Term)*
 Trevor Davison, *EFP Coordinator*
 Cory Roberts, *EFP Coordinator*
 Nicole Shanahan, *EFP Assistant (Term)*

NSFA Council

Victor Oulton, *President*
 Tim Marsh, *1st Vice President & CFA Director*
 Chris de Waal, *2nd Vice President*
 Allan Melvin, *Corporate Secretary & Treasurer*
 Chris van den Heuvel, *Past President*
 Lauren Park
 Josh Oulton
 Peter Morine
 Jacob Mullen
 Andy Parker
 Joe Piotti
 Gordon Jackson

Policy Update

The following is a update on NSFA Policy and Resolutions from Policy Analyst, **Maxine Maclean**.

Policy Reporting

At our 2019 Annual Meeting, NSFA members adopted a new set of bylaws. Along with other changes, these bylaws created the Policy Advisory Committee, often referred to as PAC. Overcoming the challenges of COVID-19, PAC, like many of our committees met regularly via Zoom. PAC's responsibilities include providing direction for the development of policies and positions, overseeing resolutions and receiving updates on industry trends and issues. PAC is made up of: **Allan Melvin, Andy Parker, Angus Bonnyman, Jean Guy d'Entremont, Lloyd Hogan, Nicolas Roy, Tom Cosman, and Victor Oulton** along with **Henry Vissers** and **Maxine MacLean**.

Regulatory Standing Policy

The Regulatory Standing Policy focuses on lobbying for regulations that reflect the needs of farmers, farm families and farm operations. The Federation will monitor, participate and communicate changes to regulations that impact the agriculture industry. The Standing Policy also focuses on encouraging consistent enforcement across the province.

There was a lot of back end work that went into our COVID-19 efforts. NSFA staff developed countless resources that were used to inform and support our members during these difficult times. Council and staff put a great deal of time and effort into lobbying government and decision makers to address the needs of farmers in the wake of the pandemic. While we were not successful on all of our asks, we did make progress in some areas such as: the labour gap which was exacerbated by COVID-19, food security and financial compensation for farms. In terms of the labour gap, we collaborated on a protocol for Temporary Foreign Workers to come into Nova Scotia. Another win involved the announcement of the COVID-19 Agriculture Response Program and the Emergency On-Farm Support Fund – though the programs did not cover all of the challenge's farmers faced. We know there are still challenges that come out of a global pandemic situation such as: a local labour gap, child care, and processing. NSFA will continue to raise these concerns with decision makers whenever possible.

Other regulatory items NSFA worked on this year included a Wildlife Damage Mitigation and Compensation resource that was created under direction from our Wildlife Committee, with input from biologists at the Department of Lands and Forestry, Wildlife Compensation Program and others. This resource was

designed to support farms on managing wildlife near their farms to reduce or eliminate damage as well as inform on compensation. This resource is available on our website and was communicated through our News and Views, and other communication channels. NSFA's Wildlife Committee consists of: **Victor Oulton, Allan Melvin, Jim Baillie, Henry Vissers, Maxine MacLean, Bob Petrie, Mike Boudreau, Peter MacDonald, Mike O'Brien, Gary Koziel, Bill MacLeod, Peter Burgess,** and **Ian Avery**.

Another common theme around regulatory affairs this year was environment. From a literal perspective, farmers rely on and consider the environment in all decisions on the farm. Wetlands remain an issue that we continue to advocate for, with the adoption of a policy that allows farmers to bring former agricultural land that was altered to a wetland back into production. While we have not made much traction with Department of Environment, we have a communication forum with a staff to staff meeting between Departments of Environment and Agriculture, and the NSFA. In 2020, we brought forward some higher profile issues for farmers that overlap both Department of Environment and NSFA. These issues included pesticide applicators recertification and testing, all types of agriculture inspection from animal welfare to meat inspection, and of course the wetlands policy. Department of Environment has committed to a meeting with NSFA in 2021 to review the work of the Climate Change Division and how it pertains to agriculture; NSFA expects this to include regulations pertaining to offset credits under the Cap and Trade program.

NSFA has been following along with new government bills. Notably, the *Biodiversity Act* as it was passed in second reading has caused concern amongst membership. NSFA is expected to review a rewording of the draft before it goes to the legislature for the third reading. Once the *Biodiversity Act* passes, NSFA will be monitoring and participating in public consultations as opportunities become available. The Federation has also been monitoring the progress of the regulations for the *Coastal Protection Act* and the *Sustainable Development Goals Act*. While NSFA staff can identify red flags in these new pieces of legislations, we will need input from members to understand more. Watch the weekly eNews and News & Views for opportunities to provide your feedback.

Moving forward, any lobby efforts around labour related legislation, transportation, environment and wildlife management will be top priorities under the Regulatory Standing Policy.

Labour Standing Policy

The Labour Standing Policy is focused on addressing the labour gap and identifying the red tape that is impacting farms. In previous years, NSFA focused on securing funding through the Sector Council Funding Program from the

Department of Labour and Advanced Education for a sector type initiative and the establishment of a Farm Technician Apprenticeship designation. Both have been successful in the past year and specific updates can be found in the AgSector Program section on page 12.

From a legislative perspective, 2020 brought unique challenges. Before lock down, NSFA was notified that minimum wage was going to increase to a higher amount than what was initially communicated by Labour and Advanced Education. This was done without consultation of the business and farming community. At the same time, changes were made to the partial hours rule. Without getting into detail, the partial hours rule required rounding up and employees being paid to the nearest 15 minute or half hour depending on when they clocked out. NSFA and many businesses lobbied for the removal of this rule since new time tracking technology became more widely used over the decades since the regulation was written. The Nova Scotia Government granted our request, but not without expense.

As mentioned under the Regulatory Burden Section of this report, NSFA has focused heavily on labour throughout COVID-19. This year, NSFA reviewed the Labour Standards Code and Minimum Wage Order with the intention to identify resources for farmers and rules that aren't practical for farms. The plan is to continue reviewing additional legislation and regulation pertaining to labour to identify further resources and needed lobbying efforts.

With successful funding for the AgSector Program and the establishment of the Farm Technician Apprenticeship Program, the bulk of the Labour Standing Policy has come to fruition and is actively worked on by dedicated NSFA staff. **Going forward the draft policies for 2021 have identified that the continued work of labour legislation review will be captured and reported on under the Regulatory Standing Policy.**

Transportation Standing Policy

The Transportation Standing Policy provided a platform for NSFA to offer input on the draft regulations under the *Traffic Safety Act*. The regulations began rolling out for consultation on staggered timelines throughout the fall and NSFA continues to be actively engaged in writing submissions and providing constructive feedback on behalf of farm road users. When these regulations will come into effect is yet to be determined. NSFA has once again been actively lobbying for changes to the current regulations under the *Motor Vehicle Act*. We continue to hear about inconsistencies of enforcement throughout the province and are working with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to address some of the challenges around safely hauling more than one implement with a tractor. Road conditions play an important factor in safe road use. Many of you will recall a survey in 2016 that NSFA had available for members to describe rural road repairs that were required in their area. NSFA provided this feedback to TIR and we have since received reports that much of the work was completed.

NSFA has reissued this survey and will once again be using the content to make a submission to TIR on road repairs throughout the province. The intention for this submission is to inform road maintenance that can be done within the Rural Impact Mitigation budget line.

The *Traffic Safety Act* regulation consultations are expected to be completed this fall – although the implementation of this Act will take a number of years – and will fulfill the main purpose of the Transportation Standing Policy. NSFA's Agriculture Transportation Committee met regularly throughout the fall to inform the submission to TIR. **Going forward, progress and reporting on issues arising out the existing legislation will be done under the Regulatory Standing Policy.**

The Transportation Standing Policy is supported by NSFA's Agriculture Transportation Committee which consists of: **Peter Morine, Rob Foster, Paul Taylor, Doug Bacon, Bob Wilson, Phil Barron, Laurie Hurley, Kevin Mitchell, Jeff Wentzell, Jos VanOostrum, David Newcombe, Henry Vissers and Maxine MacLean.**

Soil Health

To address the Soil Health Standing Policy, NSFA developed a primer document to start the conversation around soil health. This primer brings forward the purpose behind the development of a Soil Health Policy by identifying the issues and potential solutions brought forward in recent years through resolutions and committee discussions.

A fall session to identify gaps and prioritize issues occurred on November 10th. The conversation will steer the direction for lobby efforts, resource development and other supports that will improve soil health throughout Nova Scotia.

Land Standing Policy

In November 2019, NSFA's Land Committee met to review the actions of the committee and identify priorities. In doing this, support for County Federations to lobby and advocate for agricultural land protection was identified as an immediate priority. Another priority is the development of a strategy for a land bank in Nova Scotia. In addition, NSFA submitted a resolution to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture during their Annual Meeting requesting they support our lobby efforts for the establishment of a tax credit for the removal of development rights on active farm land. The resolution was passed, though CFA reported that minimal work was done as priorities were shifted to focus on COVID-19.

NSFA's efforts to protect agricultural land will continue as we build on the progress of recent years.

The Land Standing Policy is supported by NSFA's Land Use Policy Committee which consists of: **Victor Oulton, Chris van den Heuvel, John vandeReit, Tom Cosman, Dawn Lawrence, Melanie Cameron, Brian Newcombe, Gordon Smith, Juanita Spencer, Jonathan Wort, Henry Vissers and Maxine MacLean.**

Resolutions Update

Code	Resolution	Actions and Feedback
The following resolutions have the same actions and feedback, therefore they have been placed together to avoid duplication. Following this section the resolutions will be listed in order.		
A-2019-01	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to assist farmers in the biology testing of soils in the same manner as it assists with the cost of soil testing for chemical makeup.	The following resolutions pertain to funding programs under the Federal/Provincial/Territorial programs and/or Soil Health. The resolutions were put forward by NSFA to the Minister of Agriculture and NSDA, however, were met with resistance and limited traction. NSFA is in the midst of membership round tables on broad topics that encompass these resolutions. A Soil Health Round Table occurred on November 10 and the Agriculture Framework Round Table will roll out this winter.
A-2019-03	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to reinstate funding for the Nutrient Management Plans.	
A-2019-05	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture will request and lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to implement support at 70% funding for organic certification fees (to a maximum of \$750 annually) for organic farms or farms converting to organic certification.	
A-2019-07	Therefore, be it resolved, that Kings County Federation of Agriculture request the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to lobby for 50 percent cost sharing for on farm generators to be included in the CAP program.	
A-2019-09	Therefore, be it resolved, that Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby for a subsidy on the purchase of lime.	
A-2019-12	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Agriculture Minister to reduce the threshold for application from \$30,000 to \$10,000 for agriculture support programs in cases where the Small Farm Accelerator Program is not suitable.	
A-18-01	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Federation lobby the Department of Agriculture to modify the Limestone Transportation Program so producers can access it at any time of the year without the existing rigid application and claiming deadlines.	
A-18-02	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Minister of Agriculture and NSDA Programs to include assistance for trucking Gypsum under the Provincial subsidy program similar to that of trucking assistance of lime.	

Commencement of the remaining resolutions

A-2019-02	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Provincial Government to improve conditions in rural Nova Scotia to attract and keep Agricultural Infrastructure spread throughout the province.	<p>An Internet Initiative was announced for Nova Scotia. As our members are well aware, internet and cellular services are almost non-existent throughout rural Nova Scotia. Develop Nova Scotia announced plans to reach high speed internet services to 97% of Nova Scotia by Summer of 2022. The announcement released on September 1st highlights the areas expected to be covered by the projects. 97% isn't the full 100% that NSFA has been lobbying for, however, we are pleased to see the gap is finally narrowing. NSFA will continue to monitor progress on internet services throughout Nova Scotia.</p> <p>The announcement and more details can be found: https://internet.developns.ca/.</p> <p>Monitoring is an important part of this resolution. First of all, monitor to make sure projects are up and running by deadline and at the expected speeds, but also determine if there are gaps in service for our members as the plan details. In the long term, NSFA will monitor for suitable speed capacity throughout the province and fair plan rates.</p>
A-2019-04	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture look into the allocation of Agricultural Extension Services from the Provincial Government and private sources as they relate to farmgate sales throughout the province.	Government office locations (NSDA, AAFC, Perennia) were compared against farm gate receipts in the counties and surrounding counties. It was found that the office locations were located in regions with higher farm gate receipts with the exception of Cumberland and Cape Breton. Points were made that Cumberland neighbours Colchester County which has an abundance of agriculture resources and services. In regards to Cape Breton, most of the agriculture activity is in the counties Cape Breton or Inverness. It is unfortunate that government agriculture services aren't centrally located between the two agriculture regions.
A-2019-06	Therefore, be it resolved, that Kings County Federation of Agriculture requests that Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture raise the issue of road and ditch maintenance with upper management and Minister of the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and request access to existing road maintenance protocols and what the future plans are for regular maintenance of rural roads in Nova Scotia; and, Be it further resolved, that Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture assess with assistance of 3rd party experts if the existing maintenance plans and protocols are acceptable to ensure roads are kept in good repair and furthermore, that these plans and protocols are being followed.	NSFA staff met with Executive Director of Maintenance at Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to discuss roadway repairs and maintenance. NSFA asked for progress on issues identified in a member survey from 2016. TIR submitted feedback on each of the issues. NSFA intends to release a new survey for recommendations spending the Rural Infrastructure Maintenance funds which is open until December 31, 2020.
A-2019-08	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture formulate a process or create a committee that provides necessary expertise to County Federations to assist with land use planning issues arising between Municipalities and local Federations.	Meeting to take place before NSFA Annual Meeting.
A-2019-10	Therefore, be it resolved, that Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry for a Spring Bear Hunt.	NSFA and Department of Lands and Forestry staff met to review the potential for a Spring Bear hunt. While the idea for a spring bear hunt doesn't have much traction, it was identified that there is anecdotal evidence to support an increase in bear populations in regions of Nova Scotia as well as increase in human wildlife conflict. More data is required to increase bear harvesting in Nova Scotia. NSFA and LaF staff are collaborating on an information session for farmers around wildlife management.

A-2019-11	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture investigate other provincial legislation regarding on farm protesting via trespassing and lobby appropriate provincial departments to strengthen legislation as required, in order to protect the farm/industry.	NSFA has submitted a letter to the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Mark Furey, requesting either changes to current legislation or implementing new legislation to protect farmers from trespassers. NSFA is working to gather speakers and host an information session for farmers.
A-2019-13	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby and request the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to do the necessary repair work on this dyke system so farmers can continue to farm these productive marshlands.	NSFA occasionally receives updates on dykeland repairs and maintenance at a high level at our regular meetings with the Minister of Agriculture and senior staff. Other departments have written plans (eg: NSTIRs road maintenance plan). Along with efforts to request NSDA do the necessary repair work on the dyke system, NSFA is also requesting that NSDA implement a plan regarding dyke maintenance.
A-17-06	Therefore, be it resolved that, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture work with commodity groups and the Department to explore the possibility of incorporating the Premises Identification Application with the Farm Registration Application.	Though Premise IDs weren't added to the Farm Registration form, it was generally felt that there was good uptake on the program. This resolution will be deleted as three years have lapsed since introduced.
A-17-07	Therefore, be it resolved that, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Department of Agriculture to maintain the positions of two Field Crop Specialists in the province.	This resolution will be deleted as three years have lapsed since introduced.
A-17-05	Therefore, be it resolved that, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia government to allow for an application process for non-traditional farm vehicles to be registered as farm vehicles.	This is a position under efforts for changes to the Traffic Safety Legislation. This resolution will be deleted as three years have lapsed since introduced.
A-17-04	Therefore, be it resolved that, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, in partnership with Horticulture Nova Scotia and any other applicable commodity groups, lobby the Province of Nova Scotia to provide translation and adaptation support services for Spanish speaking Agricultural Workers that can be accessed by farmers to assist with health care, provincial services, and occupational health and safety support and training.	This is now part of project work at the NSFA. This resolution will be deleted as three years have lapsed since introduced.
A-18-05	Therefore, be it resolved that, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier of Nova Scotia and the appropriate federal, provincial, municipal departments involved in business development and communications along with the CRTC to request their involvement in resolving this lack of services that are essential to businesses in this province.	An Internet Initiative was announced for Nova Scotia. As our members are well aware, internet and cellular services are almost non-existent throughout rural Nova Scotia. Develop Nova Scotia announced plans to reach high speed internet services to 97% of Nova Scotia by Summer of 2022. The announcement released on September 1st highlights the areas expected to be covered by the projects. 97% isn't the full 100% that NSFA has been lobbying for, however, we are pleased to see the gap is finally narrowing. NSFA will continue to monitor progress on internet services throughout Nova Scotia. The announcement and more details can be found: https://internet.developns.ca/ . Monitoring is an important part of this resolution. First of all, monitor to make sure projects are up and running by deadline and at the expected speeds, but also determine if there are gaps in service for our members as the plan details. In the long term, NSFA will monitor for suitable speed capacity throughout the province and fair plan rates.
A-18-06	Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the provincial government to primarily procure locally available Nova Scotia products and ensure minimum procurement from their third-party providers in all government institutions by 2025.	The Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) is working on Food Action Plan with the Halifax Regional Municipality. As a member of the HFPA Steering Committee, NSFA will be leading an engagement session open to members on procurement and other opportunities to access markets under the Food Action Plan.

Communications & Member Relations

Over the last 365 days NSFA has continued to enhance our communications and member relations efforts. This year we created the “Friends of the NSFA” program for those who are no longer actively farming but want to stay up to date on industry happenings. Our Communications Coordinator, **Katherine Tuttle** has been attending industry events and meetings (prior to COVID-19) with fellow NSFA staff, enhancing our media tracking, analytics reporting and social media presence. In addition, NSFA has been continuing on with strategic planning priorities and the organization re-brand will be complete following the revamp of all websites that is currently underway.

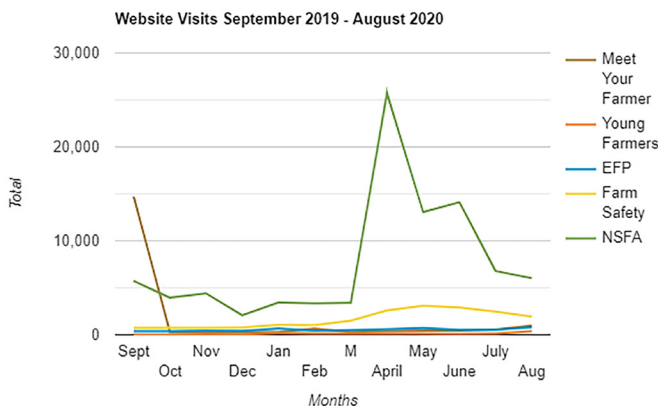
Media Requests

Over the last 12 months, NSFA has received **50** media requests from both provincial and national media outlets. Topics of discussion ranged from: government funding announcements, COVID-19, hurricanes, dry weather conditions/impacts and our own campaigns/initiatives.

Analytics

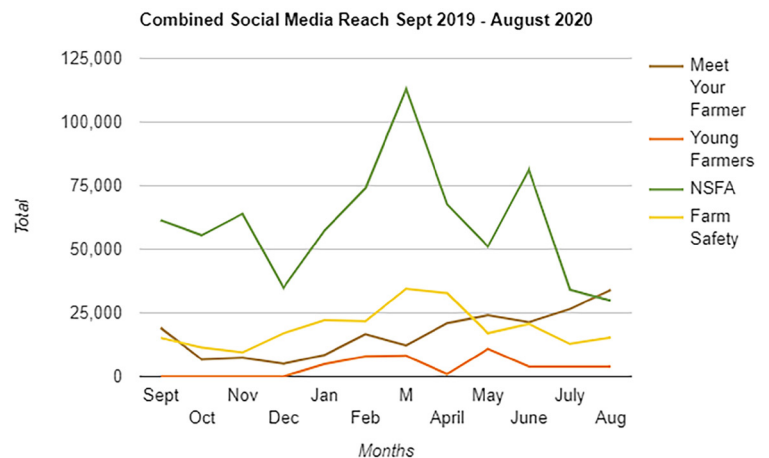
We have been working on enhancing our analytics reporting to Council and have now moved into graphing three areas in our monthly reports. Below you will find the yearly summaries for these areas: website visits, social media reach and social media followers.

This chart depicts website visits for our programs that currently have websites. You will see a significant spike in April/May for NSFA, which correlates with the launch of AgSector’s job bank.

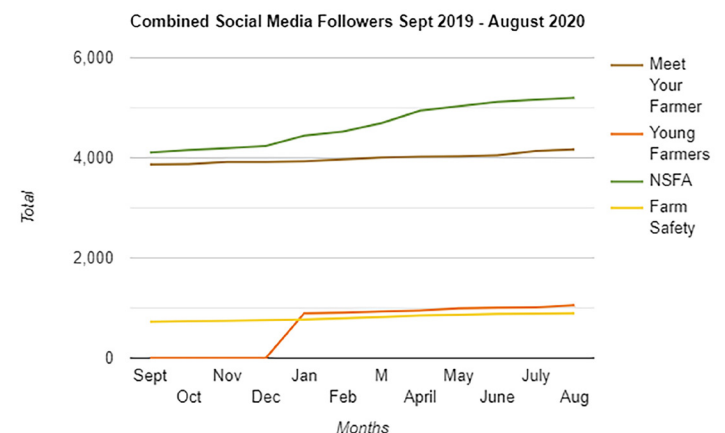


Our next chart shows the combined social media reach for our programs that have social media accounts. The combined total takes into account the reach totals for each platform that each program has. For example, NSFA has Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and their monthly combined totals is pulled together from each platforms analytics.

You will see a few significant spikes across programs throughout the year, notable rises are related to our celebration of International Women’s Day, the launch of the Job Bank, the launch of the Your Farmers, Your Nova Scotia campaign, Canadian Agricultural Safety Week and the #HowNSAgs photo contest.



Our follower counts on all social media platforms continue to rise for all of our programs. It is encouraging to see that our content is reaching and engaging with new users every month.





Program Reports

MEET YOUR FARMER

While the work and importance of Public Trust is not new, Public Trust is a new program to NSFA during fiscal year ending August 31, 2020. And, what year it was!

A new coordinator was hired to lead the work of Public Trust in November of 2019. **Janette McDonald**, a familiar face to NSFA, joined the team to focus on a specific work plan dedicated to Public Trust. Key activities were centered around strategy development, forums, campaigns, training delivery, resource development, and events.

Strategy Development

A new program needs a strong foundation. NSFA contracted Loft32 to lead the development of a strategy for food and farming in Nova Scotia. Crystal Mackay travelled to Nova Scotia in February of 2020 to guide a facilitated session with stakeholders from all across the food system. This, combined with multiple online surveys and interviews from organizations across the country, formed the basis for the public trust strategy. This is a piece of work we need to get right, so we have taken the time to work on this to ensure it fits with what's happening in and will be successful for Nova Scotia. Part of the strategy work included attending the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Public Trust Summit in Saskatoon in November of 2019. **Carolyn Van Den Heuvel** attended.

Forum work was centered around the establishment of the Public Trust Committee. **Andrew Nielsen, Amy VanderHeide, Veronica Vermeulen, and Lauren Park** form the committee with support from **Terri Green** from AAFC, **Rebecca Sooksom** from NSDA and **Carolyn Van Den Heuvel and Janette McDonald** from NSFA. The committee has been a sounding board for the work taking place, but have been focused mainly on strategy development.

Campaigns

Campaigns are all about communication. meetyourfarmer.ca was revamped in the spring of 2020 with a launch with a new campaign called "Your Farmers, Your Nova Scotia." This campaign was created to better connect the people across our province with the farmers in their communities. It features farm family profiles, recipes, food safety resources, events, and where to buy local.



Meet Your Farmer joined Instagram to add to social media. @nsfameetyourfarmer will find us on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. **Three newsletters** were created and distributed to the **1840 people signed up** to the Meet Your Farmer digital newsletter. **Two videos** were created with Zest Media Productions focused on sustainability. These videos featured Dean & Catherine Manning of Manning Family Farm and Greg & Suzanne Gerrits of Elmridge Farm, which were launched with the Your Farmers, Your NS campaign. Speaking of social media, this year we reached **over 200,000 people** across our platforms!



Training & Events

Training delivery and resource development focused on the creation of podcasts with NSDA, some factsheets and social media guides. These are all available on a new webpage at: <https://nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/>.

Public Trust events are a major part of the work happening. COVID-19 has thrown a wrench into some events but before the shut-down in mid-March, we hosted a successful Open Farm Day in September of 2019 with just **over 30 farms** taking part. In addition, we partnered with Dal AC to celebrate Canada's Ag Day in February of 2020 with panel which was live streamed on social media. In February, we took to Cole Harbour Place to host Meet Your Farmer on Heritage Day! **13 farmers** joined us to talk to **nearly 1,000 people**!

The remainder of 2020 is focused on finishing up the strategy and engaging with food system stakeholders with the help of our Public Trust Assistant, **Macy Cameron**. We look forward to hosting virtual events in the future and navigating how we will encourage small, safe and socially distanced events. Meet Your Farmer will also continue to collect recipes for a new contest featuring Nova Scotia produced food!

2020 has been a busy year for the EFP program. We continue to work towards revamping our program and have developed a new vision for how the EFP program will be delivered. The EFP coordinators, **Trevor Davison** and **Cory Roberts** will be delivering the same high levels of service as in the past including one-on-one farm visits, newly designed detailed reports, risk assessments and detailed recommendations (Appendix A and B) so farmers can prioritize actions on the farm and supply documentation for program funding applications.

The EFP program now falls within the new Agri-Environmental initiative which is a three-way partnership between NSFA, Perennia and the NSDA. Perennia has hired a new Agri-Environmental Specialist, **Thomas Harrington**. We are working closely with Thomas on developing new content that we can deliver through the EFP program.

EFP Handbook

We consulted with multiple stakeholders in developing and reviewing our new **Environmental Guide for Nova Scotia Farms**. We are expecting that it will be available on the new website when it launches. It is our intention to review and update this guide annually so it can be a reliable source of up-to-date environmental information for the industry.

Website Project

We have been working closely with our Communications Coordinator **Katherine Tuttle** in streamlining and improving of the EFP website. We are confident that the new website will be easy to navigate and will contain relevant updated information. We will have contact forms that will allow farmers to sign up for a new EFP or for those with existing EFPs to sign up for a follow-up. We are looking at options for our farms to have the ability to log in to access and update content.

EFP Database

We are in the process of instituting a new EFP data handling system including an updated database. We will be more efficient at collecting information from farmers and more quickly able to generate reports and other documentation (e.g. Appendix A and B). We have collaborated with NSDA to develop new key performance indicators which include high level aggregate information about how the EFP program is making a difference in the industry.

Farm Visits

Our ability to do farm visits was hampered from the end of March until August due to COVID-19. We focused our energies on

developing our new systems and on doing some of our EFP interviews over the phone. We have been doing farm visits to complete the on-farm portion of the process since getting back out on farms starting in August. Between January 1st and Oct 20th, **83 EFPs** had been done which puts us on target for **completing over 100 plans this year**. We expect that we will increase the numbers of EFPs completed annually as our new more efficient systems come on line. Apart from doing farm visits the EFP coordinators also got out to several industry events, contributed content for the News & Views and developed resource materials. Our intern, **Nicole Shanahan** has been reaching out to farms whose EFPs were completed more than five years ago. We have had lots of farms call the office to arrange follow-ups based on her efforts. If your phone number or address has changed, we may not be able to get in touch with you. Please contact the office to update your contact information.

SARPAL & CFGA Projects

A new two-year SARPAL (Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands) project was initiated last year following the completion of the Wood Turtle Strides program. The NSFA is partnering with Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry and CARP (Clean Annapolis River Project) to increase education and awareness for SAR and biodiversity enhancements on Nova Scotia farms. This project takes a multi-species approach and will not focus solely on Wood Turtle habitat. Current initiatives include factsheet and resource development, identification of high priority areas for multiple species and on-farm demonstrations of BMP's. Due to COVID-19, workshops and field days have been postponed and a video series will be developed to highlight current activities.

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) is taking the lead on a national project with financial support from the Canada Nature Fund. The CFGA is working with national and provincial stakeholder committees, governments, Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) programs and agricultural associations (e.g. the NSFA) to develop province-specific, on-line habitat and biodiversity management tools. Nova Scotia is one of three provinces to participate in the first phase of the project. This CFGA project builds on a recent three-year species-at-risk initiative in Alberta. CFGA projects are now underway in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia to customize the tool for each province and developing online opportunities to support the EFP program.

Overall, 2020 has been a year full of uncertainty across the industry and our wider society. Throughout the year the EFP program has also been in a state of transition with a lot of changing systems and structures. Despite the changes, we have remained focused on improving our program and look forward to next year when we hope our farms will see the benefit of our investments.

Farm Safety Nova Scotia has been working hard to bring new tools, resources, training and education to the farming community in Nova Scotia. Here is what our Farm Safety Advisor, **Lori Brookhouse** has been working on this year.

Awareness & Communications

Social Media

Facebook Followers (@farmsafetyns) = 700+ followers

Website Views (farmsafetyns.ca) = 19,650 views

Twitter Followers (@farmsafetyns) = 185+ followers

Campaigns

One Road Campaign continued throughout the year by distributing posters, rack cards, and digital media to equipment dealers, Farmers Markets, car dealerships, and parts stores throughout the province as well as an article in the Farm Focus, News & Views and E-News.

Mind the Gap: FARM-FARM-FARM campaign launched and an infographic was distributed. A method to promote building a farm safety plan that includes creating a positive culture of safety on farm, the importance of building a plan as well as what can interfere with safety program success.

News & Events

The Sustainability Series continued to the end of November 2019, giving farms the tools needed to integrate their farm safety plan with the Farm Sustainability Tool.

Advisory Services offered to farms who want help with developing a Farm Safety Plan specifically for their farm activities and would like a consult on other farm safety issues, concerns or initiatives. 6 farms participated in these services.

YouTube Channel up and running to house webinars and videos conducted throughout the year.

CASA Provincial Partnership: The Farm Safety Advisor meets with other safety professionals from each of the provinces to share provincial safety resources; started as a forum to share COVID-19 resources and has evolved from there.

Article and Publications: Articles submitted to Christmas Tree Growers Journal, News & Views, Farm Focus, and Agricola.

Contests held throughout the Winter 2020 with an **outreach of 11,440** and prizes included promotional material from Farm Safety Nova Scotia, gift certificates, and other items.

Tools & Resources

COVID-19 Resources developed and added to its' own webpage on the Farm Safety Nova Scotia website.

Commodity Specific Farm Safety Plan for Fruit Growers developed and distributed on **30 USBs** and added to Farm Safety website for download.

Passport to Safety now available in print and digital formats to document and track training courses.

Best Practices and Templates: A variety of policies, best practices and templates created to include topics such as: Workplace Violence & Harassment, fall protection policy, PPE and more! These resources can be found on our website farmsafetyns.ca.

Industry Events

Webinars

U-Pick COVID-19
Guidelines

88 attendees

Wild Blueberry
COVID-19
Guidelines

72 attendees

Cultivating your
way to Burnout

42 attendees

Health & Safety
Committee / Rep
Requirements
6 attendees

Farmers Safety
Corner Launched

Training & Courses

- Endorsement Testing in Colchester & Kings Counties: **66 conducted**
- Tractor Safety Course for Class 8 held at Dal AC: **6 participants**

- Emergency First Aid in Colchester & Kings Counties: **44 certified**

Workshops

- Progressive Ag Safety Days held in Milford x **34 kids**
- Phase 2 Inspections - 1 inspection conducted with **8 participants** in attendance and **5 inspections** on waiting list.
- Mental Health in Ag training with Do More Ag x **18 attendees**
- Mental Health Focus Group with Wilton Consulting x **10 attendees**
- Build a Farm Safety Plan Colchester & Kings Counties x **84 attendees**
- Diploma Equipment Operator (OHS Legislation, Road Safety & Tractor Safety in 3 modules) x **19 participants** in each module.

Online Training

Online Training platform launched in the spring of 2020. Total number of **124 users**.

The AgSector Program was launched to support farms by providing access to the tools and resources they need to ensure a sustainable workforce. Our work is focused on the needs of employers and workers, and actively promotes agriculture as a rewarding career. We have been developing and communicating resources to help employers effectively manage their employees. Providing employers and employees with information on relevant programs, education and training opportunities, we support the growth of farms and their workforce. Supporting succession planning happens through access to resources and technical expertise. Laying the groundwork for a strong foundation, here is what our AgSector Coordinator, **Heather Boyd**, has been up to:

CAHRC AgriHR Toolkit

We have partnered with the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) to provide members with access to the AgriHR Toolkit at no cost. It offers everything needed to improve people-management skills and develop key resources. [Contact us](#) for details on how to get access at **no cost**.

Job Bank - nsajobs.ca

In April we launched [nsajobs.ca](#) in response to industry need for local labour during the pandemic. The job bank was well received by users and received recognition and exposure all over Canada. As of August 31st, there were **634 Job Vacancies** in **58 Job Postings**, and **81 Employees Registered**, with over **28,000 site visits**. We actively promote the [Agriculture On-Farm Student Bursary](#) on the site to aid students working in agriculture. Due to the positive response and ongoing need for the job bank, we upgraded the functionality. Users can create and manage their own accounts, job postings, and notifications. Please feel free to provide feedback on the job bank to nsajobs@nsfa-fane.ca.

“Support the Source” on YouTube

Our Support the Source video campaign launched on YouTube has gotten our job bank great exposure, with **37,500 views** and reaching **over 72,300 people!** This video ad ran for the month of July, if you haven't watched it yet you can find the video [here](#) or on our YouTube Channel!

Community Roots Pilot Program

The Community Roots Pilot Program was launched in the Valley area this summer. Designed to help fill the local labour gap by removing barriers and providing wage support, the pilot matched vetted unemployed individuals with farms needing local labour. We learned of some challenges but also made some exciting discoveries! Small, diverse farms eager to change the traditional narrative about farm work seized the opportunity to expand and hire employees for the

first time. With a vision for long-term seasonal employment for people in their community, these farms are cultivating flexible arrangements to accommodate employees' personal lives and needs, without compromising the farm's success and productivity. Wage subsidies available through the pilot provided incentive and made the hiring experience less financially risky. The biggest challenges discovered through the pilot were transportation and matching employer needs with employee availability. Many lessons were learned and we continue to work on a long-term strategy and an adapted program for next season. If your farm is interested in taking part, please let us know.

Farm Technician Apprenticeship

The Farm Technician trade designation was approved by Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency Board in February 2020. The AgSector Coordinator is part of a working group that has been established to develop the occupational standard, exam bank, and curriculum standard. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Farm Technician Trade.

Other Tidbits

Partnering with MNP, the [COVID-19 Financial Relief Measures Guide](#) was developed to provide information on government programs to help agricultural businesses in Nova Scotia. The programs are monitored and the guide is updated as changes are made to programs. With the assistance of CAHRC we developed an [infographic](#) that revealed some interesting stats on the NS ag labour market.

Training & Education

During the pandemic, everyone got used to the world of Zoom. We delivered a number of webinars and will continue to do so during the fall and winter. Most recordings are available on the [AgSector YouTube Channel](#). Work is also underway on a **custom online training marketplace** and the Workplace Education winter course plan.

To help build a more **inclusive and therefore diverse workforce**, we are engaging with stakeholders to develop relationships and programs. We are striving to increase awareness and open-mindedness of employers. As we deliver best practice resources, we will be including tips on how your farm can help lead inclusion in the workplace.

Looking Ahead

A big focus is the launch of our website! The website will house information on programs, resources, best practices, industry statistics, training, and career pathways. Some exciting things that we are doing in the fall are career fair, career promotion YouTube video launch. We will also continue to deliver webinars, providing employer resources on best practices, and developing a career pathways guide for employees.

How can we support you?

Contact us at agsector@nsfa-fane.ca or 902-893-2293 to discuss how we can help your farm's labour needs. Your feedback is essential for us to provide you with what you need!



In the beginning of the year Nova Scotia Young Farmers set out with the goal of reconnecting with the youth involved in Nova Scotia agriculture, recruiting a passionate and engaged membership and enhancing our relationships with organizations across the province. We have established a formal working relationship with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture that we find quite exciting as it provides us more access to NSFA staff and resources. Through this relationship, the NSFA has brought us into their branding strategy which allowed us to redesign our logo! We love the fresh new look.



Back in March, our board met with NSFA staff to participate in a strategic planning session in order to determine the direction we wanted our organization to go over the next five years. We revised our mission and vision statements, identified our priorities moving forward and highlighted the tactics we planned to implement over time. Our new mission and vision are as follows:

Mission

To support the growth and development of young farmers and ag professionals through networking and learning opportunities

Vision

Growing the next generation of industry leaders to ensure a sustainable future for Nova Scotia agriculture.

Together the NSYF board set multiple priorities for the organization moving forward which included some of the following.

Improve governance of the organization

- Review and update by-laws
- Host two in-person board meetings per year
- Host Annual Meeting in conjunction with NSFA

Provide educational and networking opportunities

- Host three regional networking events (e.g. farm tours) – Western, Central and Eastern
- Host educational workshop at AGM in conjunction with NSFA
- Host Tailgate Party at AGM in conjunction with NSFA

Enhance member value proposition

- Expand membership to young farmers and ag professionals
- Approach industry partners to include a “NSYF Discount” for industry conference registrations

While a number of our tactics are on hold or have been modified due to COVID-19, we thought it was important to share our future plans with you.

Nova Scotia Young Farmers Board



Back (L to R) Jonathan Waugh - Central Region, Alana Bent - Treasurer, Nichole van Dyk - CYFF Representative (NS/NFLD), Megan McCully - Secretary, Mandy Vosman - Eastern Region. Front (L to R) Nicolas Roy - Past President, Larry Weatherby Jr - Vice President, Rebecca Archibald - President, Jillian Bent - Western Region.

Last year we launched our #HowNSAgs photo contest, a yearly photo submission contest where anyone in the agriculture industry in Nova Scotia between the ages of 18-40 can submit photos of what their agriculture looks like. This year was our second year for the contest, and we were excited to see an increased number of submissions! Below is just a sample of the range of beautiful photos we received, we can't wait to bring this contest back next year.



We encourage you to follow us on social media (@nsyoungfarmers) to stay up to date on all things Young Farmers!

