



For Immediate Release
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**FARM SAFETY NOVA SCOTIA LAUNCHES “WE TALK. WE GROW.” MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
IN SUPPORT OF NOVA SCOTIA’S FARM COMMUNITY**

Farm Safety Nova Scotia calls for united approach with provincial and federal counterparts

(Truro, NS) May 4, 2021 – Aligning with the [Canadian Mental Health Association’s Mental Health Week](#), Farm Safety Nova Scotia is introducing a new awareness campaign, “We Talk. We Grow.,” amplifying the need for a culture within the Nova Scotia farm community where mental health and well-being is valued, prioritized and protected. The campaign includes a [new website](#) offering a vast range of supports and resources, as well as a *Blueprint for a Mental Health Action Plan for Nova Scotia’s Farming Community*.

In an industry that cites 45 per cent of farmers report high-stress levels, the COVID-19 pandemic added more strain and challenges for farming communities across the country – and Nova Scotia was no exception. It was clear that Nova Scotian farmers needed mental health support and action, and that they needed it now.

“In early 2020, we had set-out to develop a significant mental health strategy for our Nova Scotia farming community,” said David Newcombe, President of Farm Safety Nova Scotia “COVID-19’s landing in our province, had us shift our focus – knowing we needed to implement immediate supports right away for our farmers, but we never lost sight of the need for a long-term, sustainable plan.”

Farm Safety Nova Scotia applied for and received funding through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) COVID-19 Agriculture Response Program, which allowed for immediate supports to be implemented, including a number of workshops and webinars for farmers, their employees and their families at no cost to the participant. The funding also allowed for the creation of a longer-term strategy to further create and maintain both mental and physical health – for our Nova Scotia farmers.

“Our department is proud to support the “We Talk, We Grow” campaign to help farmers experiencing mental health stress caused by workload, long hours, economic challenges, family issues, and Covid-related anxiety,” said Keith Colwell, Minister of Agriculture for Nova Scotia. “We encourage our farmers to take good care of themselves – and their families-- by taking advantage of these helpful mental health resources. “

The “We Talk. We Grow.” concept came from the understanding that stigma still readily exists within the farming community, particularly when it comes to accessing help and knowing that farmers face significant stressors in their business. The campaign includes a number of assets including mental health kits (both physical and online), farm signage, equipment decals, t-shirts, and postcards made of seeded wildflowers, for farmers to send to one another and plant as they receive, as a reminder that there are people out there who “get it”.

“Mental health is something that touches all of us, especially in this industry. Whether it’s ourselves, our friends, our family, or our neighbours. It’s the idea that when we open up, when we share that we aren’t doing so great, we not only help ourselves, but we help the entire community,” said Newcombe, “We



hope this campaign and the long-term strategy will mean that we will open up more, we will talk more and make sure we pay attention to not only our own mental health, but the mental health of those around us.”

Farm Safety Nova Scotia with support from the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture plans to use the Blueprint for a Mental Health Action Plan for Nova Scotia’s Farm Community in advocacy efforts with their partners in the community and in meetings with all levels of government.

“The farming community has been really engaged in the development of this strategy, and it is clear we have significant momentum from our membership and the industry to do what we can in order to take these recommendations outlined on paper and bring them to life on farm,” said Newcombe. “We’ve read the studies; we have gone through the reports; we’ve heard the stories. We know what needs to be done, and we’re ready to get to work.”

For more information visit www.wetalkwegrow.ca

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About Farm Safety Nova Scotia

Farm Safety Nova Scotia (FSNS) works with Nova Scotia farms to keep farmers, their families, and their employees safe. It is our goal to ensure farmers have access to the tools and resources they need to operate safe and productive farms.

About the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

Since 1895, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture has represented the interests of Nova Scotia’s agricultural community.

For Information:

Katherine Tuttle, Communications Coordinator
Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture
(902) 890-1891
comms@nsfa-fane.ca