



2021 Annual Report



Draft Agenda

FOR THE 126TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — NOVEMBER 25 & 26, 2021

THURSDAY

9 am	Meeting Registration + Morning Coffee
9:30 am	Call to Order Declaration of Quorum President's Address Approval of Agenda Minutes of the last meeting Business Arising from the Minutes
10 am	2020–2021 Financials – Auditor's Report Appointment of Auditor 2021–2022 Budget
10:45 am	Nominating Committee Report (Vote)
11:30 am	Bylaws
12 pm	LUNCH BREAK
1 pm	Executive Director Report
1:15 pm	Resolutions Report and Introduction
2:15 pm	Presentation of Standing Policies
3 pm	BREAK
3:30 pm	Government Speakers — TBC
5 pm	President's Happy Hour Reception
5:30 pm	NSYF Annual Meeting
7 pm	Banquet + Speaker — TBC

NSFA STAFF

Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director
Amy Langille, Operations Manager
Carolyn Marshall,
Environment & Climate Change Manager
Maxine MacLean, Policy Analyst
Katherine Tuttle,
Communications Coordinator
Shelly MacKenzie,
Administrative Services Coordinator
Tracey Otterson,
Financial Services Coordinator
Lori Brookhouse, Farm Safety Advisor
Trevor Davison,
Environmental Farm Plan Coordinator
Cory Roberts,
Environmental Farm Plan Coordinator
Janette McDonald, Public Trust Coordinator
Macy Cameron, Public Trust Assistant
Caitlyn Clements,
Workforce Development Coordinator
Nicole Shanahan,
Member Services Coordinator
Nick Cunningham, LMI Policy Analyst

NSFA COUNCIL

Tim Marsh, President
Allan Melvin, 1st Vice President
Lauren Park, 2nd Vice President
Chris de Waal,
Corporate Secretary & Treasurer
Victor Oulton, Past President
Andy Parker
Peter Morine
Jacob Mullen
Jocelyn Durston
Joe Piotti
Alicia King

FRIDAY

8 am	Breakfast
9 am	NSDA Update — TBC
9:15 am	Farm Technician Apprenticeship Update — TBC
9:30 am	Panel —TBC
10:15 am	CFA Report — TBC
10:30 am	BREAK
11 am	Mental Wellness Speaker — TBC
11:30 am	FSNS Board Meeting
12 pm	LUNCH BREAK
1 – 2 pm	Members Only Session
2 – 4 pm	Henry Vissers' Retirement Reception

Letter from the President

Dear Members,

Well, here we are, another year later and the world is still battling the COVID-19 pandemic. I am very proud of how we have continued to adapt and overcome each hurdle that comes our way. I knew that agriculture was a strong industry, but almost two years into the pandemic and there is not a doubt in my mind. I think we should all be proud of ourselves, our industry and our province.

This first year of my presidency has been an eventful one, and I am honoured to be leading our organization as we continue to work towards a sustainable future for the generations to come. I would like to thank the staff at the Federation for all of the hard work that they continue to put in on your behalf. We have been fortunate enough to expand our staff compliment even more this year, welcoming on three new staff members for the AgSector program with funding from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, as well as a new Operations Manager who will help streamline things around the office. Lots of new faces that are looking forward to connecting with you at our Annual Meeting.

One face that will surely be missed by NSFA staff, Council, and the agriculture industry is Henry's. Henry Vissers has been steering this ship for over 10 years, and it has been an honour to work alongside him the last few years. I wish him all the best in retirement. We will be celebrating Henry and his contributions to the industry during his retirement reception, which kicks off after the adjournment of our AGM on November 26th.

As we say goodbye to Henry, we are also saying hello to a new leader at the Federation. We are looking forward to the years to come with Carolyn Van Den Heuvel at the helm, she is a strong advocate for our industry.

Following a busy summer with two elections, we now have a new Minister of Agriculture for Nova Scotia! Minister Morrow has expressed his interest in learning more about our farming community here in Nova Scotia. We're looking forward to working with the new Minister to find solutions for our industry.

We're counting down the days to seeing you all face-to-face, for the first time in quite awhile! Our Annual Meeting will be taking place on November 25 and 26 at the Inn on Prince in Truro, this is a new location for us. While our meeting is taking place in-person, we will also be livestreaming the event for those who are unable to make the trek to Truro.

Until then,



Tim Marsh
President

NSFA Year in Review

This year's social platforms for NSFA and programs



TOTAL REACH:

1,369,570
people

PLUS NSFA sent **over 30 letters** to government officials from all levels of government, advocating on behalf of farm families across the province

ENGAGEMENT

NSFA took advantage of attending a variety of events throughout the year to have an opportunity to engage with our members in-person. Most of these events were hosted in the fall and winter months!

FUN FACT: NSFA hosted policy engagement sessions for farmers on wildlife programs and regulations!



58 MEDIA INTERVIEWS:
BETWEEN NSFA COUNCIL AND MEMBERS & LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA OUTLETS

MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT:

PROVINCIAL 8

FEDERAL 2

NSFA MEETINGS:

NSFA COUNCIL 9

POLICY ADVISORY 6

COMMITTEES 19

COUNTY PRESIDENTS 3

COMMODITY PRESIDENTS 2

COMMODITY MANAGERS 2

FUN FACT:

The NSFA, through our Grow Nova Scotia Committee, contributed funding towards the development of Nourish Nova Scotia's Local Food Lunch Toolkit!

DID YOU KNOW?

NSFA has participated in lots of government consultations including: TFW Accommodations, Sustainable Development Goals Act, and Traffic Safety Act Regulations

COMMUNICATION

with members

7	50	23	20
NEWS & VIEWS	WEEKLY ENEWS	TFW EMPLOYER UPDATES	SPECIAL MEMBER UPDATES

DID YOU KNOW?

NSFA has begun work with National Public Relations to develop a Crisis and Issues Management Plan that can be utilized and customized by both NSFA and our commodity organizations.

DID YOU KNOW?

NSFA continues to work on the Temporary Foreign Worker file, and plays a key role in the working group. Along with sending out over 20 updates to employers this year, the working group has met over 40 times!



50+ **TRAINING & WORKSHOPS**

Together, NSFA and its programs hosted over 50 training events, webinars, and workshops for our farm community

Policy Update

Agriculture Policy Framework

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture held a virtual round table session in March 2021 and had a survey open until mid-June for farmers and commodity groups to be able to provide input. NSFA also had discussions with our Agriculture Water, and Risk Management Committees. The feedback from these forums is what informed the what we heard report.

We captured a lot of high-level themes and changes that need to happen in order to encourage programs and funding that will be the most beneficial to our industry.

The conversations were predominantly around the six pillars that exist under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership—what needs to be maintained, what needs to be amended and what are the gaps. Some high-level highlights include:

- Strong regional focus in the areas of research, processing, public trust and market development
- AgriStability needs to change to be more accessible and beneficial to farms
- Support for farms adapting to climate change

The work in the space of the next agriculture policy framework isn't over when the framework is announced. The framework will be followed by bilateral agreements between the federal government and the province. Once these are negotiated and signed off on, we will see the province delivered programs roll out. We can expect consultations to roll out on programs—whether they be NSFA or NSDA led is to be determined, but we do know there are questions and concerns about programs in general—whether it be what is or isn't funded or the policies that determine who can access programs and how much funding recipients can access. We know from resolutions in recent years that work needs to be done to improve programs for all farms and we know those resolutions don't capture all the concerns and opinions on what can be done.

Regulatory Affairs

TFW Accommodation Survey

The Department of Economic and Social Development Canada (ESDC) launched a consultation on accommodations for Temporary Foreign Workers in Winter of 2020. NSFA responded to the recommendations with input from farmers who employ and house Temporary Foreign Workers.

While ESDC hasn't formally indicated their direction, based on staff-to-staff conversation, there was quite a bit of feedback that challenged the proposed changes. This comment and the lack of movement so far on changes to the accommodations alludes to if there are changes, they won't be as dire as was presented. NSFA will continue to keep our eye on the TFW file and keep our members in the loop.

Sustainable Development Goals Act

After a bit of a delay due to COVID-19, the consultations for the SDGA rolled out this year. These consultations were robust—there were many options and opportunities to be heard. The consultation focused on six themes: sustainable prosperity, cleaner energy, climate change, circular economy, inclusive economy and natural assets and biodiversity. One notable observation during the virtual sessions is that non-agriculture industry participants want to ensure rural voices are heard, which is encouraging for agriculture. NSFA commented on each of aforementioned themes and incorporated many of our policy and resolutions issues. Highlights of what was included:

- Ensure goals don't inadvertently inhibit agriculture growth
- Prioritize food production and security by protecting land, soil and water resources
- Keep rural business in focus by supporting workforce development initiatives, rural infrastructure (roads, high speed internet and cellular) and market access

Budget Submissions

Every winter both the federal and provincial governments provide opportunities for Canadians and Nova Scotians respectively to provide input on the budget. NSFA always makes submissions on what should be included to support agriculture. Highlights of NSFA's recommendations for the Federal Budget Submission include:

- Pilot project to compensate farmers for removing development rights
- Funding for local/regional processing
- Implement AgriStability proposal

The Nova Scotia budget submission was themed around supporting agriculture to enhance Nova Scotia's food security. Highlights from this budget submission included:

- Increasing capacity for meat inspection in Nova Scotia
- Local procurement policy
- Local food in schools
- Trespassing legislation to keep plants and livestock healthy
- High speed internet access across Nova Scotia

Land

Agricultural land is such a broad ranging topic. From protecting agricultural land, to land planning, to ensuring proper governance of community pastures, there are many facets of agricultural land that NSFA has been involved in or at the very least monitoring.

As the Department of Municipal Affairs rolls out supporting resources for municipalities, NSFA will roll out resources for farmers. These resources highlight areas that may have an impact—positive or negative—on the agriculture industry or individual farms.

There are two areas that remain priorities though they are larger and more challenging to get government buy in. One is a tax credit for farmers who remove development rights from agricultural land and place agriculture easements on the land. For those familiar, this tax credit would be similar to the EcoGifts tax credit available to land owners who place conservation easements on land. The other priority area is a land bank. Part of the resistance to both of these questions when put forward to government or other organizations that could support the initiatives is long term financial support for the initiatives.

As part of the NSFA land work, a portion of our efforts has been around ensuring good governance of Community Pastures in Nova Scotia. Since bringing this issue forward to the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, the Farm Loan Board and other government agencies prepared reports and suggested next steps which are now widely available on the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board website.

Soil Health

What We Heard

NSFA held a round table where members provided input on what is needed with regards to soil health. There was lots of great discussion that took place. The information identified gaps and provided ideas to move forward.

Highlights that came out include:

- Farm level information and resources
- General information on water use
- Province wide benchmarking

The drive to enhance soil health was demonstrated outside the industry as well. A soil health day was hosted by Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture where a cross section of soil stakeholders participated in presentation and discussion. It's clear the university has a keen interest in soil health with general interest for a Centre for Soil Health housed at the university. Another topic that arose during the day stemmed from the presentation by representatives from Ontario. In recent years, Ontario conducted a benchmarking study to understand the state of soil health throughout the primary agriculture regions in the province. The study was very technical and incorporated traditional maps as well as current LiDAR mapping. Such a study would be beneficial here in Nova Scotia—this gives us a place to start building our soil policy from. Between Nova Scotia's soil health lab, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture and DNR's LiDAR maps, we have the expertise in Nova Scotia to conduct such research. All that's needed is money to support the project.

Going forward, NSFA has revamped the work of the Water Committee to include Soil. A lot of the high-level themes as well as government departments that are involved are the same across both topic areas. As well, from an applied perspective, there are many synergies in the efforts to protect soil and water. Additionally, the Living Labs project through the Agriculture Climate Solutions funding at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Though the projects for Nova Scotia under this program haven't yet been identified, there appears to be opportunity to demonstrate soil health best practices at a field/farm level.

Resolutions Update

- ▶ 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

UPDATE — Along with requesting that the Department of Agriculture do the necessary repair work on the dyke system, NSFA also requested the Department of Agriculture create a five-year plan for dyke system maintenance. This plan hasn't yet been successful.

- ▶ 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.

UPDATE — This committee was presented on and requested at a meeting in April 2021 with Minister of Agriculture, Keith Colwell. There isn't traction from the provincial government to establish such a committee.

- ▶ Therefore be it resolved, that Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry for a Spring Bear Hunt.

UPDATE — The Department of Lands and Forestry at the time indicated the argument for a spring bear hunt will be a challenge without an adequate black bear population count. Such a project will have substantial cost and isn't in the department's budget at this time.

- ▶ 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

UPDATE — Existing road maintenance protocols and standards were updated and made available by TIR in Winter 2021. NSFA also conducted a road survey and provided information to TIR in anticipation that some of Rural Infrastructure Maintenance fund would be allocated to the roads with concerns.

- ▶ 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.

UPDATE — In line with the Road Maintenance Standards above, these standards were communicated to members with recommendation to connect with Area Managers with concern. Going forward, there is also plans to bring rural road maintenance as an issue to the Auditor General of Nova Scotia.

- ▶ 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.

UPDATE — With support from NSDA, NSFA received a brief to understand how trespassing laws pertain to trespassing on farms. There has been no traction from government on making changes to legislation to better protect farms and animals on this matter.

- ▶ Further, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture work towards educating the membership on how to handle such protests.

UPDATE — While some resources are available and communicated, more work needs to be done in this space to support farmers in the event of a protest or concern on their farm.

- ▶ Therefore be it resolved that, the NSFA 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.

UPDATE — NSFA continues to keep a pulse on rural infrastructure matters. This includes mentions in the federal and provincial budget submissions and monitoring Develop Nova Scotia's efforts to improve high speed internet access across Nova Scotia. NSFA also conducted a survey this year to see if there were many/any improvements to rural internet since Develop Nova Scotia's announcement on projects throughout Nova Scotia in 2021.

- ▶ 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.

UPDATE — NSFA continues to press the importance of institutional procurement of Nova Scotia food. This topic was part of budget submissions and part of election efforts this year. NSFA is also actively involved in NSDA's Get Your Hands on Local Program.

- ▶ Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture jointly undertake a review and decide on the criteria for the Nova Scotia Farm Registration System.

UPDATE — NSFA has reviewed bylaws and amendments are on the agenda for the 2021 AGM.

- ▶ Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby for the inclusion of processing on farm for the TFW and SAWP programs.

UPDATE — Processing to be included in the SAWP program has been put forward to the CFA TFW Working Group Committee as a topic for future discussion. Currently, discussion is predominantly COVID-19 policy focused, so this avenue has received little traction. Having wider support from organizations across Canada for this resolution is important as SAWP is national program.

- ▶ Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Government to close the infrastructure gap by looking at on-farm and/or mobile inspected slaughter, funding for new entrants in processing capacity and funding for existing processors.

UPDATE — NSFA has been working with stakeholders to understand the barriers and opportunities for processing in Nova Scotia. High level themes and some tangible actions such as training have been identified. Further out, advocacy plans for incentive programs and more will need to be developed.

- ▶ Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby the Department of Agriculture to have Wood Ash/Fly Ash transportation subsidized similarly to the Limestone Transportation subsidy through the Business and Risk Management Programs.

UPDATE — This resolution was presented to the Minister of Agriculture in early 2021. This resolution garnered no traction, much like a similar resolution from 2017.

The following resolutions pertain to funding programs under the Federal/Provincial/Territorial programs and/or Soil Health. While there continues to be little to no traction, the next agriculture policy framework provides opportunity to have these included.

- ▶ 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.

- ▶ 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.

- ▶ 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.

- ▶ 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.

- ▶ Therefore, be it resolved, that Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby for a subsidy on the purchase of lime.

- ▶ 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.

- ▶ 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.

- ▶ 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.

Communications & Member Relations

Over the last year, NSFA has continued to enhance our communications and member relations efforts. In the coming months we will be working on rolling out the strategies and deliverables in our new communications plan that was developed by our Communications Coordinator.

Below you will find some quick highlights on some of our communications work over the last 365 days.

Media Requests

Over the last 12 months, the NSFA received 58 media requests from over 20 news media outlets, both provincial and national. NSFA was even featured in news stories in Alberta and Manitoba! Topics of discussion covered a wide range: government funding announcements, weather events, Open Farm Day, labour challenges, campaign launches, elections, and initiatives such as Hay West. It's encouraging to see an increase in media requests coming to the Federation, as we strive to be the main point of contact for agriculture related issues and topics with news media throughout Nova Scotia. A big thank you to our members who help us respond to these media requests, and get more agriculture stories in the news.

Member Relations

NSFA has contracted the services of National Public Relations to develop a Crisis and Issues Management Plan for the Federation, as well as a customizable plan for industry. This work is being led by a Project Team consisting of: two representatives from NSFA, two staff members from National, as well as reps from Egg Farmers of Nova Scotia, Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia, Agri Commodity Management Association, and Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia. We are grateful for the input this group is providing, and look forward to the completion of this plan.

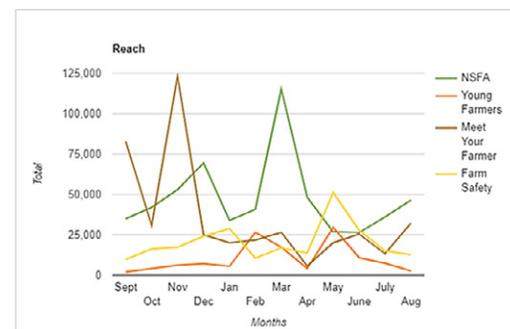
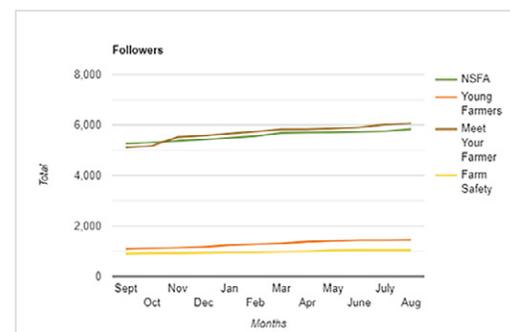
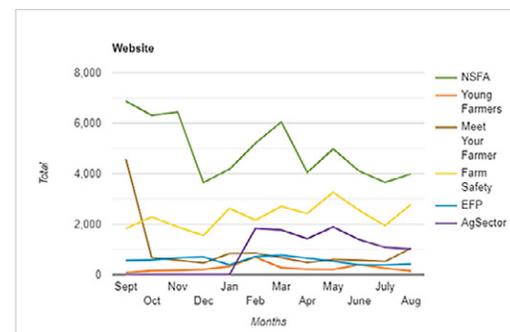
When it comes to member communication, there are a number of different avenues we connect with you on in order to keep you up to date on our activities, initiatives and what's coming up in the near future.

Here is a quick look at some of the communication pieces that went out:

News & Views	7 editions
NSFA eNews	50 editions
Special email updates to membership	20
Updates for Temporary Foreign Worker employers	23

Website & Social Media

Below you will find charts that show our website visits, social media followers, and our reach totals for our social media channels.



2021 has been a busy year for the EFP program as we continue to work towards improving our program. The EFP Coordinators, Trevor Davison and Cory Roberts have conducted one-on-one farm visits (as COVID-19 restrictions permitted) providing detailed reports, risk assessments and recommendations (Appendix A and B).

These are key, so farmers can prioritize actions on their farms, access NSDA funding opportunities through the Soil and Water Sustainability Program, and new this year, comply with a commodity quality assurance program (proAction for the dairy industry).

The EFP program is one of the pillars of the Agri-Environmental Program (AEP) initiative which is a three-way partnership between NSFA, Perennia and the NSDA. Thomas Harrington, Agri-Environmental Specialist at Perennia, works with the EFP Coordinators and Perennia extension staff to conduct on-farm research on environmental issues and develop new resources and training opportunities for farmers.

As part of the EFP changes, the Environmental Guide for Nova Scotia Farms has been available on our new EFP website and is provided as a companion document to the EFP report. We have already identified new content for various sections and hope to update the guide this fall/winter so it can be a reliable source of up-to-date environmental information for the industry.

What's New?

We are very pleased with our new EFP website and have been working to add new content and resources, including the videos from the webinar series that was completed last winter. We have added contact forms that allow farmers to sign up for a new EFP or for those with existing EFPs to sign up for a follow-up visit. We try to contact all of the farms within our program regarding updates, but contact information changes and we can't always connect with previous participants. We hope this easy sign-up option makes it convenient for the farmer to reach out to us when they have time available to have a plan developed or need a new update.

We are in the process of developing a new EFP database. It will expand on the original database and allow for better analysis of our industry; as a province, region or commodity. As part of the changes to the EFP program, we want to be more efficient at collecting information from farmers and more quickly able to generate reports and other documentation (e.g. Appendix A and B).

Our ability to do farm visits has been hampered due to COVID-19, but after a slow start in the spring, the summer has been more active. We focused on doing some of our EFP interviews over the phone and scheduling farm visits for a later date. It will be a busy fall but we intend to increase the number of EFPs completed annually as our new systems become more familiar.

Partnerships, Collaborations and Projects

We are continuing to collaborate with NSDA and Perennia to develop new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to better understand and communicate the value and effectiveness of the Agri-Environmental Program. We are being asked to provide performance measures to show the degree to which Nova Scotia farms are implementing recommendations and taking actions to reduce environmental risk and therefore increasing environmental sustainability.

The NSFA has maintained a partnership with Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables – Wildlife Division and Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) to increase education and awareness for Species at Risk and biodiversity enhancements on Nova Scotia farms through funding from the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL) program. Previous initiatives included factsheet and resource development, identification of high priority areas for multiple species and on-farm demonstrations of BMP's. These activities will continue through 2021 and 2022.

The Federation is also partnering with the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) to develop a province-specific, on-line habitat and biodiversity management tool for NS farms. Phase 1 is complete and the tool is being beta tested now with the hopes of it being available for wider use later this fall.

2021 has been a good growing season and we are extremely lucky in comparison to western Canada, but there is still a lot of uncertainty across the industry as COVID continues to impact our communities. We are looking forward to AAFC's Living Labs initiative and the potential role our EFP program can have to enhance this initiative, and we welcome **Carolyn Marshall** in her new role managing NSFA's Environment and Climate Change programs.

Public Trust

The past year was a busy one despite COVID-19 continuing to hamper in-person events and program delivery. Key activities for the year centered around strategy implementation and roll-out, campaigns, training, resource development, and events.

Strategy Work

The Strategy for Earning Public Trust in Food and Farming in Nova Scotia was completed in early 2021. Following its completion, we hosted a series of Strategy Launch sessions to share results, discuss outcomes, and gain interest in the work. From those sessions, we will be creating an advisory group made up of stakeholders from across the food system in Nova Scotia.

Campaigns & Social Media

When it comes to campaigns and social media, we focused on Your Farmers, Your Nova Scotia (YFYNS) and building our social media following and engagement.

Earlier in the year, we hosted a recipe competition for Nova Scotians to submit their favourite recipes that were judged by a panel of Nova Scotia farmers. The winning recipe was Maritime Glory Loaf, submitted by Donna Wager and judged by Victor and Novadawn Oulton. Before the holiday season in 2020, we teamed up with 13 not-for-profit groups in Nova Scotia and across Canada to feature a #giveback series. This series highlighted not-for-profit groups that are working in food.

Meet Your Farmer also hosted a colouring competition for youth ages 2–12. We had over 100 submissions and selected three winners: Daniel van Zutphen, Rosemary, and Ella MacDonald. Winning entries are posted at:

meetyourfarmer.ca/create-with-us/

Training & Resources

Training and resource development focused on the creation of “From the Ground Up!,” a 24-page digital publication highlighting food and farming in Nova Scotia.

Public Trust is also supporting the work of Issues and Crisis Management in response to #buttergate that started in February 2021. Working alongside NSFA Communications as part of the Project Team that is overseeing the development of a Crisis and Issues Management Plan.

Events

Events continued to be disrupted with COVID-19, but we have adapted to online streaming, webinars, videos, and working with public health guidelines for attending and hosting events safely.

In 2021 Open Farm Day was both online and in-person! Open Farm Day in 2020 was completely online and had 32 participating farms with recorded or live videos. The videos were watched over 3,800 times in the first two weeks of viewing!

We launched a new event series called Meet Your Farmer: Let’s Get Cooking. We teamed up with Nova Scotia Young Farmers to host Chef Andy Hay of Andy’s East Coast Kitchen to cook live on Zoom to make Beef Kofta with tabouli, lemon roasted potatoes and yogurt. Andy came back to cook with three Nova Scotia farmers to make Blueberry Maple Shortcakes and talk live on Facebook and YouTube. We partnered with Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia to welcome Chef René Lavalée of The Canteen to make Brown Butter Chocolate Chip Ice Cream Sandwiches. You can watch the video at:

www.youtube.com/user/meetyourfarmer

We presented our first webinar on Keeping Food Safe with Elaine Grant from Perennia, Mike Horwich from Dalhousie University, Andrew Rand from Randsland Farm, and Taryn Stevenson from Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

February 23, 2021 was #CdnAgDay! We hosted a live panel discussion on Facebook with Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture. Amy Sangster moderated a wonderful panel on Soil- What’s Happening Beneath Our Feet? made up of Angus Ells, David Blanchard, and Dr. David Burton.

We even attended our first online tradeshow and had a booth and video feature at Saltscapes Virtual Expo in April.

FROM SEPTEMBER 2020 TO AUGUST 2021

 Reached 5,000 Likes on Facebook	 NEW Meet your Farmer Profiles 20	 Instagram followers: 1,100+
 Our YouTube channel shares Open Farm Day videos, hosts live events, and shares profile stories from the YFYNS campaign.	SIX electronic newsletters were sent to 1,940 contacts subscribed to the digital Meet Your Farmer publication.	

Awareness & Communications

Campaigns

One Road Campaign

Continued throughout the year by distributing posters, rack cards, stick figure window stickers, and digital media. These were distributed to equipment dealers, farmers markets, car dealerships, and parts stores throughout the province as well as an article in Farm Focus, News & Views and e-News. We also participated in the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Road Safety Week with the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association in May 2021.

We Talk. We Grow

This campaign was launched in May 2021. An initiative raising awareness and taking action to protect and nurture the mental health and well-being of Nova Scotia's farming community, and enhance and maintain a culture where mental health is valued, prioritized and protected. A website filled with tools, training & resources was developed as well as the available collateral including: yard signs, mental health kits, posters, rack cards, apps, and more.

Mind the Gap: FARM-FARM-FARM.

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. A recorded webinar was added to the Christmas Tree Forum and is used in all training courses and webinars.

Social Media

Facebook (@farmsafetyns) = 766 likes

FSNS Website Views (farmsafetyns.ca) = 28,037 views

Twitter Followers (@farmsafetyns) = 279 followers

YouTube Visits = 65 viewers



News & Events

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. Six farms participated in these services.

Farm Safety Nova Scotia Website Update—improved navigating for training, tools and resources.

Events Calendar continuously updated with in-house and external training resources.

Farmers Safety Rally posted in the E-News once per week. Templates for farms to hold their own safety meetings on farm. Template includes information, agenda, questions to encourage discussion, quiz questions to test participant understanding, and an attendance sheet. 52 developed.

YouTube Channel hosts recorded 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.

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

Tools & Resources

COVID-19 Resources ongoing updates as needed and added to the Farm Safety Nova Scotia Website.

farmsafetyns.ca

Commodity Specific Farm Safety Plan for Christmas Tree Growers developed and distributed on 30 USBs and added to Farm Safety website for download. Both NS Fruit Growers and Christmas Tree Growers Farm Safety Plans translated to Spanish and available on the Farm Safety Nova Scotia Website.

A variety of policies, best practices and templates created to include: Conveyors, Manure Pits, Heat & Cold Stress, Sharps, First Aid Needs Evaluation, and Confined Space and Smoke Free Workplaces Act Fact Sheets.

We Talk. We Grow.

Awareness & Communications

Public Awareness Campaign

We Talk. We Grow campaign launched in May 2021. An initiative raising awareness and taking action to protect and nurture the mental health and well-being of Nova Scotia's farming community, and enhance and maintain a culture where mental health is valued, prioritized and protected. A website filled with tools, training & resources is now available, as well as yard signs, mental health kits, posters, rack cards, t-shirts, apps, and more.

While we are happy to provide a number of diverse supports and resources, we know more work must be done. To address this need, we have developed a Blueprint for a Mental Health Action Plan for Nova Scotia Farmers, as well as the creation of the We Talk. We Grow. public awareness campaign.

We've called this a "blueprint" for an action plan, rather than an action plan itself. The reason being the approach needs to be shared-with, consulted-with and discussed-with our industry and government partners in order for the way forward to be fully embraced and supported by all necessary change makers.

What is absolutely clear is the need to act, and the need to act now.

This was all made possible through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) COVID-19 Agriculture Response Program.

News & Events

We Talk. We Grow Website Launch – Website created to communicate available resources & training, advocacy, leadership charters, how to get involved, and becoming a partner. Website Views (wetalkwegrow.ca) = 1,508

The **Maintaining Mental Fitness Series 2** posts of micro-skills to help maintain mental fitness to include topics of loneliness, feeling overwhelmed, negative emotions, relationships, emotional exhaustion, positive and negative daily change, Irritability, self-doubt, unplugging from work, social rejection, with two more to come this fall



Supporting the **MENTAL HEALTH** of Nova Scotia Farmers ❤️

Social Media Messaging added to the E-News, Facebook and Twitter to focus on an aspect of the resources and training available, self-care tip of the week, and "Don't Tough it Out, Talk It Out" messaging campaign with Do More Ag.

Training, Tools & Resources

Webinars and Participants

Mental Health Focus Group (WTWG)	22
Mental Health First Aid	49
In the Know, Mental Health Literacy Training	36
Maintaining Mental Fitness	59
Coping with Isolation and Loneliness	12
Navigating Crisis	10

Ag101

A program to educate mental health professionals on Agriculture specific needs. AgCulture is a program to educate mental health professionals with the Do More Ag Foundation

- Program evaluated and waiting for draft User Agreement
- Working with DalAC Extended Learning to determine potential 2- or 3-way partnership on this program.

Mental Health Kits

- Physical Kit includes Stress Tractor, Notebook, Breathing Card, & Ear Plugs x 73
- Digital Kit includes a Key Chain with QR Code to download the apps. x 63

We've seen many changes to the AgSector Program this year as we continue to grow. We have welcomed three new team members who continue to focus on the needs of employers, employees, and the farming community. Get to know the team below and what they each do to support the program.

Nicole Shanahan, Member Services Coordinator, joined us in April after transitioning from Environmental Farm Plan Assistant. Nicole works on new entrant and career promotion initiatives, supports Nova Scotia Young Farmers, and other administrative tasks.

Caitlyn Clements, Workforce Development Coordinator, came on in July, returning home to Nova Scotia after spending time in northern Saskatchewan. Caitlyn's work focuses on labour concerns such as recruitment and retention and sustainability of the workforce. She also plays a role in education and training program delivery.

Nick Cunningham, Policy Analyst, knows numbers. Nick also joined the team in July by working on a Labour Market Information project. He is analyzing the current state of the Nova Scotia agriculture labour market and developing a user-friendly dashboard to house the findings.

We are working to rebrand our team to give a better understanding of what it is we do. In the months to come we will roll out our new title: **Farm & Workforce Development**.

Strategic Planning

Extensive work has been underway to finalize the strategic plan. Our five core themes have been consistent throughout, and some of our planned work is outlined below.

Connect to Farming – Ensure we are consistently present in the community through public marketing campaigns and engagement with Nova Scotia youth. Clarify agriculture career pathways and develop a mentorship program.

Prepare Strong Farmers – Expand agricultural learning opportunities through formal and informal training and support the growth of the new Farm Technician trade. Utilize labour market information to identify and close skills gaps.

Manage Farms & People – Help develop and connect farm operators to the HR tools and risk management information they need to run a successful business. Develop a strategy to address recruitment and retention issues at all levels.

Automate and Innovate – Identify and influence existing programs to engage farmers and stakeholders in a meaningful way. Increase understanding of Continuous Improvement methods and assist in applying them to agriculture here.

Grow in Diversity – Increase collaboration and cross cultural understanding within Nova Scotia Agriculture. Work to highlight and celebrate our diversity.

Events

Partnering with Nova Scotia Young Farmers, we held a Virtual Information Session with the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board. As well as a succession and transition panel, this featured a panel of farmers who shared their experiences and gave the opportunity for discussion with members.

Continuing to navigate the virtual world, we held a number of informative webinars this year. We welcomed Jennifer Wright from the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) as she held a series of workforce and labour focused webinars titled: *Workforce Planning for the Upcoming Season*, *How to Hire Foreign Workers*, *How to Recruit Workers for the Season*, *Managing People on the Farm*, and *How to Keep Workers*. You can check them out on the NSFA YouTube channel.

We released the HR Best Practices Series over the course of six weeks, aimed at supporting farmers with their operations. Topics ranged from Recruitment and Hiring to Labour Legislation Compliance. You can find more information on the AgSector website. nsagsector.ca

Farm Technician Apprenticeship Program

Work has been underway on the Farm Technician program as it becomes a recognized trade in Nova Scotia. Farm Technicians manage on-farm operations. They have knowledge of crops and livestock as well as operations, maintenance, and some repair of farm equipment.

Experienced farmers with at least 5400 hours in the trade can take the exam and if successful, receive certification and become a Journeyperson. Journeyperson status is required to take on an apprentice in the trade.

For more information visit www.nsapprenticeship.ca or contact the NSFA.

Labour Market Information (LMI) Dashboard

The work is in-progress on an economic dashboard that will compile the agri-food sectors most important labour market indicators in one place. The dashboard will present a quick snapshot of our current economic state within the agri-food sector in Nova Scotia.

The LMI dashboard will serve as a benchmark of relevant and timely agri-food data for any interested stakeholder (employees, employers, analysts, decision-makers, and politicians). The dashboard will cover data on the Nova Scotian agri-food labour market, along with information on sector financials, demographics, wages, hours worked, and Temporary Foreign Workers. With this information, the NSFA can better respond to producer risks and challenges to assist them in growing their business by providing targeted support through recommendations for new programs and initiatives.

Making Connections

Nova Scotia Young Farmers had the opportunity to meet with NDP Ag Critic Lisa Roberts and the PC Caucus. We were able to bring some of the pressing issues faced by Young Farmers forward while connecting with local government and providing them with recommendations and solutions to the challenges. The topics we covered during our meetings included: **Investment**, ensuring that we continue to invest in the future of our industry. **Local Markets & Distribution**, highlighting the importance of local markets and distribution for all farmers, and bringing attention to the challenges young farmers face in accessing markets. **Social & Family**, highlighting challenges surrounding childcare as well as succession and transition.

In 2020, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau established the Canadian Agricultural Youth Council; a group of young Canadians that provide advice and consultation to policies and programs affecting the agriculture and agri-food sectors. Two board members, President Rebecca Archibald and Canadian Young Farmers Forum representative Nichole van Dyk, had the opportunity to participate in a Canadian Agricultural Youth Council Meeting in August. It was exciting to have a seat at the table on a national level to discuss programs, funding, and the Next Policy Framework for the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector.

Social and Socially Distanced

This year, as we continue to navigate the virtual world, we were able to hold a number of online events. We were able to hold a Virtual Information Session with the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board. As well as a succession and transition panel alongside our Annual Meeting, this featured a panel of farmers who shared their experiences with succession and gave the opportunity for discussion with members.

We partnered with Meet Your Farmer to welcome Chef Andy Hay from East Coast Kitchen and seen on MasterChef Canada to host a virtual cooking demo. Let's Get Cooking featured locally sourced products produced by Nova Scotia Young Farmers! Following along with Andy's instructions, participants cooked beef kofta with tabouli, roasted lemon potatoes, and yogurt. We were excited to have a local chef showcasing some of the many products produced here in the province! You can find the recipe and where the ingredients were sourced on our website.

This year we took on New Brunswick Young Farmers in a Virtual Trivia Night. It was great to spend an evening competing with our provincial neighbours in good fun. Both teams did a great job, but it was New Brunswick that came out the winners! Maybe we'll see a rematch in the future!

#HowNSAgs Photo Contest



We held our annual #HowNSAgs photo contest again this year. 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 third year for the contest, and we saw many great photos! Pictured is the winning photo submitted by Keigan and Nadia Levy! Keep an eye out next year for the #HowNSAgs photo contest.

Looking Ahead

Last year we began participating in strategic planning sessions to determine the direction of the organization over the next five years. We proposed slight revisions to our mission and vision statements, identified our priorities moving forward and highlighted the tactics we planned to implement over time. Now, with the help of the NSFA AgSector, we are further developing our strategic plan with Barrington Consulting. We are looking forward to this next chapter and path forward to best support our members and the agriculture community.

Be sure to follow [@nsyoungfarmers](#) to stay in the loop on all things Young Farmers!

