

news+views

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2022 Farm Registration

It's that time of year again! With farm registration renewals set to go out in the near future, we wanted to take a moment to highlight some of the benefits of being a member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture!

Please remember, to become/continue to be a member of the NSFA, you will have to **check the box on Section 6** of the farm registration form!

8 Reasons to Become a NSFA Member

- 1. A Trusted Voice:** The NSFA has been the voice of Nova Scotia farmers since 1895. Representing the interests of over 90% of all agricultural production across the province.
- 2. Accountable Representation:** NSFA Council members are elected directly from NSFA membership at the Annual General Meeting. The NSFA works closely with County Federations and commodity organizations – hosting county & commodity presidents roundtables, commodity manager meetings and participating in their events whenever possible.
- 3. Strong Committees:** The NSFA is home to a number of committees that help influence and guide the work of the Federation. Committee membership consists of Council members, members-at-large and various stakeholders.
- 4. Effective Lobbying:** As the only general farm organization in the province, the results of NSFA's lobbying and advocacy efforts are a serious benefit to our members as well as the agriculture industry in the province. Results of NSFA lobbying and advocacy include farm plates, fuel tax rebates, government funding programs, labour advocacy in relation to Temporary Foreign Workers, changes to the Municipal Planning Act and TIR Regulations.
- 5. Dedicated Staff:** The NSFA is home to a team of dedicated individuals who are passionate about the agriculture industry in Nova Scotia. This team works to tackle issues and challenges facing the industry and offer programs and other supports to the farming community.
- 6. Supporting Nova Scotia Young Farmers:** The NSFA is a proud supporter of the Nova Scotia Young Farmers Forum. NSYF receives direct support from the Federation for governance, finance, communication, event logistics and more! We are happy to support the industry's future leaders.
- 7. Delivery of industry led programs:** NSFA is home to a variety of programs including Farm Safety Nova Scotia, Farm & Workforce Development, Environmental Farm Plan Program and Meet Your Farmer. These programs support farms in accessing the tools and resources they need to operate safe and sustainable farm businesses.
- 8. Member Benefits:** NSFA Member Benefit partners offer significant savings to our members. Some of these benefits include: health insurance, fleet pricing on vehicles, retail discounts, preferred rates on fuel and propane – and that's just a few!

Message from the Executive Director

As I settle into my role as Executive Director, it is amazing to reflect on all the work that the NSFA does. In turn, it's also hard to decide what to write about – not because there isn't anything to say, but because there are so many things to cover! However, in the rest of the newsletter you'll learn about all the work that is being done on your behalf from an operational perspective, so I will try to stick to the high-level items.

Our Annual Meeting was a great success – we are so pleased we were able to bring people together before the Omicron wave we are in. Mostly, I am grateful for the conversations we had and direction we were able to glean from resolutions and those discussions. Council has kicked-off the year with a monthly meeting schedule, rotating between virtual and in-person, to ensure we are staying abreast of industry issues and on top of the work that needs to be done.

As we begin 2022, we are also looking at how we approach policy and position development here at NSFA. We want to ensure we understand our members' voice and the impact of those policies and positions on our industry's sustainability. We are working towards transparent and intentional advocacy and lobby efforts. As we do this, we need to be thinking about the language we use.

I have had the opportunity to chat with a number of members over the past couple of months and I would like to leave you with some food for thought that I have been contemplating after these conversations...

As we slowly come out of this pandemic, is agriculture getting the recognition it should? Agriculture is quite literally the epitome of essential – we produce food and products that are essential to human life. We have seen an increase in awareness on the production of food and food security over the past couple of years. And we have seen some government programming and policy support agriculture throughout the pandemic. But are we going to maintain that recognition beyond the pandemic? In fact, have we even maintained that recognition through the pandemic? Unfortunately, I don't think we have. We continue to see that a food and agriculture lens has not been applied to policy and programs

as they roll out. In fact, it often isn't until agriculture organizations bring it to the attention of decision makers that the industry is considered. The **one** industry that we cannot live without, is not kept top of mind as decisions are made.

We are seeing the highest inflation that we have seen in decades, and it is impacting the cost of food. We are hearing a lot of talk about food prices right now, yet there is an astonishing lack of awareness that inflation is also increasing cost of production. I truly believe that farmers are concerned about the cost of food, because after all, we are consumers as well as producers. We know that we need to manage our cost of production, while also ensuring we can afford to provide a suitable lifestyle to our families.

We know that Canadians are concerned about the affordability of food but unfortunately, I think there are often misconceptions about the profitability of our farm operations. While I wasn't able to pull concrete data on the percentage of farms not recovering their cost of production these past couple of years, anecdotally it seems that it may be higher than we think right now. The reality is that our farms need to be sustainable, which also means profitable. Our farmers must be able to produce their product while also being able to ensure that there is food on the table for their families – what all Nova Scotians strive for.

If we look at the mandate letter of the provincial Minister of Agriculture it outlines the commitment to “examine policies and programs to reduce costs of healthy foods for consumers, in acknowledgment of the barriers in cost to eating healthy” – I think this is fabulous – food security (and/or food sovereignty) is something I value and it is disheartening to know that Nova Scotia is the most food insecure province in Canada. However, what I believe is essential to this work is to examine policies and programs to ensure sustainable and competitive farming operations in Nova Scotia. In turn, this will not only reduce the cost of healthy food but also improve accessibility.

If we can improve accessibility and affordability of safe and healthy food



Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director

for Nova Scotians and empower our communities to consume healthy (and local) food – can we also support the province's vision to address the health care crisis longer-term? Healthy food = healthy people.

So, this is my challenge to you as farmers, and to us as your representative organization – reflect on how we have conversations and discussions with the public and government officials when asking for an agriculture and food lens to be applied to government policy and programs.

We need to ensure that the public and our government understand that when a food and agriculture lens is applied to programs and policies or when there is an investment made into agriculture, that it is not just an investment in farm businesses, but instead an investment in both our province, and in our communities. We need to ensure it is understood that when we are concerned about the impact of costs on our businesses, it's not only on the sustainability of our businesses but on the sustainability and growth of our province.

If the goal of our province is to double our population by 2060, it is essential that we make sure that we can produce enough agricultural product to ensure the food security as well as the health and well-being of our communities. Is an investment in agriculture just about investing in farm businesses? I would argue it's an investment in our communities, our province, and our society – without agriculture, where would we be?

Thoughts? Let's chat!
cvandenheuvel@nsfa-fane.ca
(902) 893-2293

Join one of our Committees!

For the last 126 years, the Federation has served as the voice of Nova Scotia farmers. Our advocacy work, our program development, and our engagement would not be possible without the input, knowledge and experience our members bring to the table!

We are always looking for members who are interested in supporting and informing our work towards a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers.

We have a number of opportunities available for folks who are looking to get involved with the Federation!

We have:

- One vacancy on the NSFA Council
- Two vacancies on the Policy Advisory Committee

To the right are some details on each!

NSFA Council

This term ends in November of this year, **10 months** is a great chunk of time to see how being on Council would work for you and your schedule! The Council works on behalf of the entire industry to help ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms.

Council provides oversight and direction for the activities and policy of the Federation in the areas of:

- Advocacy
- Financial Management
- Governance
- Public Relations
- Strategic Planning
- Member Relations
- Issues Management

If this is something you would be interested in, please email Shelly: smackenzie@nsfa-fane.ca

Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

These vacancies would be for three year terms. At the Federation, PAC is responsible for:

- Policy and position formulation
- Resolutions
- Monitoring industry issues & trends.

Do those topics pique your interest? Any questions related to the Policy Advisory Committee can be directed to Maxine: mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca

If you would like to submit your name for Policy Advisory Committee, you can do so online by visiting nsfa-fane.ca/committee-applications

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars! Our **127th Annual General Meeting** will be taking place on **November 24-25, 2022.**

We will be heading back to the **Inn on Prince, Truro.**

Keep your eyes and ears open for future updates on #NSFA127!

November 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Policy Corner

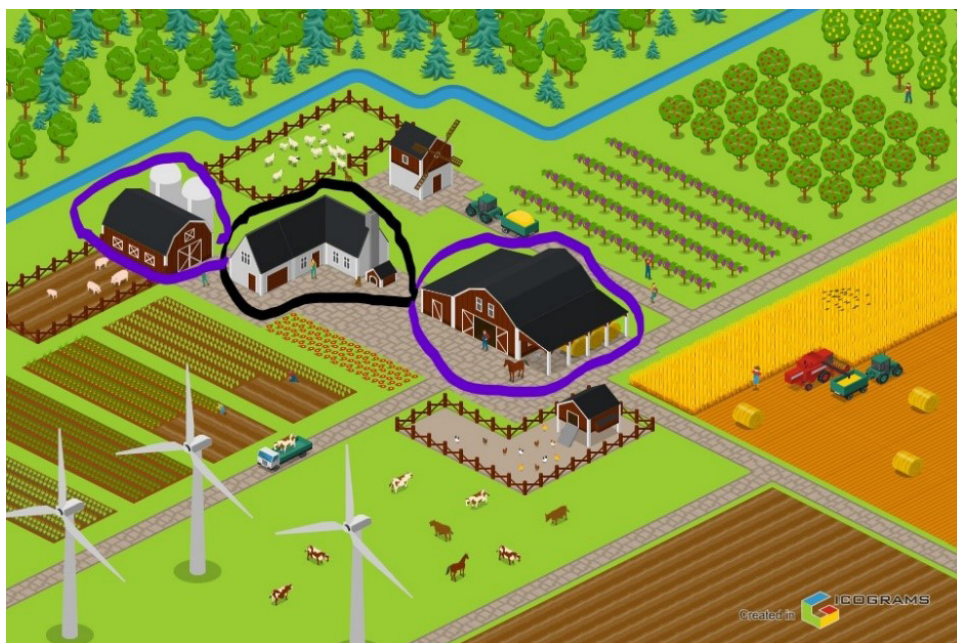
Property Taxes and Your Farm

Your property assessment will be in the mail soon if you haven't received them yet. Be sure to check each parcel to make sure the use on the assessment is in line with your farm use.

Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) issues to owners a "property assessment" for every property in Nova Scotia. The assessment notice will let you know there is a 30-day period after receiving the notice in which you can dispute your assessment. Once this 30-day window passes, you will have to wait until next January to dispute your assessment and will be required to pay your tax bill as stated for that year.

The assessment doesn't give the breakdown of the taxes you will be paying – that's what your Tax Bill is for. The assessment lets you and your municipality know the percentage of your property by use. This allows your municipality to assign the proper rate according to their rate schedule. Uses of property include: Residential, where people live; Commercial/Industrial - work buildings; Resource, which includes wetlands and forested areas; and agriculture, or farmed land. These uses usually just carry over from one tax year to the next, however, changes like a new building or owner will trigger PVSC to review your property to make sure the correct categories are assigned to your property.

Similarly, if you cleared forested land that you formerly paid resource taxes on, and are now farming that land, you can request a review to have that tax rating changed. Again, this review needs to be done within the 30-day window of receiving your assessment. For example, it is common for a piece of land to have a home, farm buildings, agricultural land and a forested area. PVSC uses aerial imagery and mapping to determine the



As a rough example of how rates are applied: in the diagram above, the house circled in black would be taxed as residential, the buildings circled in purple would be classed as commercial/industrial and the other land below the river would be classified as agriculture. The only part of this picture that doesn't have a definitive explanation are the windmills – they would be assessed on a case by case basis and their rate class would be dependent on how/if the land around them is used. If cattle or sheep are grazing around the windmills, a farmer would probably be able to make the case for agriculture exemption. However, if the land is only being used for grasses, there is a chance this land may be classed as resource. Above the river in this picture, there's a forest; this would be classed as resource.

percentage of the property that should be taxed at the resource rate (25 cents per acre) or receive the agriculture exemption. Any part of the property that is deemed residential or industrial/commercial will be taxed according to the rate assigned by the municipality.

Residential rates and commercial/industrial rates are determined by municipal councils, usually as part of their budgeting process. Rates are usually expressed as per \$100 per assessment. For example, the average residential rate in a rural municipality in 2020 was 0.99 per \$100 of assessment. If a house was assessed at \$150,000, the property taxes for the year would be \$1485. Farm buildings are taxed similarly, but using the commercial/industrial rate. Residential rates vary within a municipality as much as they vary across municipalities; the same can be said for industrial/commercial rates.

The services and amenities provided by the municipality will often influence the rate. For example, one property might have a rate of 1.15 and a similar property 3km down the road might have a rate of 0.80. The difference may be the property with the rate of 1.15 has access to municipal water and the property taxed at 0.80 is on their own private well. For industrial/commercial rates, similar circumstances apply.

Keep in mind, the municipality is taxing that building/property itself, not what is in it. A relatively simple way to put this is – if you were to sell a piece of property, what would be sold as the property? Robots, work benches, farm equipment, tools in farm buildings are above and beyond the "property" as these can all be sold individually. If the municipality or PVSC reach out for more details so they can better prepare your tax assessment, you'll want to make sure you give them the right values

Minimum Wage

In January the Nova Scotia Government announced a significant increase to minimum wage. Jill Balser, Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration, stated as of **April 1st, 2022**, minimum wage will be **\$13.35**.

The increase comes following a report by the Minimum Wage Review Committee. The report, which was completed in December 2021, includes a pathway to a \$15 minimum wage by 2024. The implementation of this pathway and other recommendations will be decided by government after receiving additional input.

Changes to regulations for logging hours of service and trip inspections

Amendments to both the *Commercial Vehicle Drivers' Hours of Service Regulations* and *Commercial Vehicle Trip Inspection Regulations* were released in December. The changes made now include an exemption for the user – in NSFA's case a farmer - to transport the products they will use on farm. These products were updated to include fertilizer. Another change also allows the farmer to pickup an item they would use on farm on a return trip.

The regulations now state:

3. These regulations apply to all commercial vehicles other than the following vehicles:

- (a)** a 2-axle or 3-axle commercial vehicle while it is being used for any of the following when the driver or the carrier is the producer or user of the products:
- (i)** a trip to pick up feed grain, fertilizer or the primary products of a farm, forest, sea or lake,
- (ii)** a trip to transport feed grain or the primary products of a farm, forest, sea or lake,
- (iii)** a return trip after transporting an item in subclause (II) if the vehicle is empty or is transporting a supply item used in the production of a primary product of a farm, forest, sea or lake.

These changes are certainly a welcomed surprise and a step is a right direction for hauling farm goods. They allow drivers of the vehicles that meet the exemption requirements to drive without a formal log book for hours of service or conduct a formal trip inspection. While hours of service and trip inspections are no longer required to be documented, it is still good and safe practice to inspect your vehicle and load before heading out and check in with yourself to make sure you aren't too tired to drive.

No changes have been made for larger trucks. For any truck and trailer combo larger than what is defined, the regulations remain the same.

Mandate Letters

Federal mandate letters were issued back in December. The prominent themes in the Federal mandate letters weren't a surprise as it was evident, they built on the Liberal campaign platform and initiatives in the last couple Liberal government mandates. Cross-cutting commitments include: climate change action including reduce emissions, create clean jobs and address climate related challenges communities are facing; Move faster on path of reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Metis; Address profound systemic inequities and disparities. The impact of each of these mandates to agriculture depends on how they are implemented.

Highlights from the agriculture and agri-food mandate letter that are relevant to Nova Scotia agriculture and the work of NSFA include:

- Develop a sector-specific strategy to address persistent and chronic labour shortages in farming and food processing;
- Support climate resiliency to strengthen food security;
- Cut agriculture's environmental footprint;
- Sustainable growth of the agri-food sector;
- Develop a national school food policy;
- Update BRM programs to include climate risk management, environmental practices and climate readiness;

- Increase support for farmers to develop and adopt agricultural management practices to reduce emissions, store carbon in healthy soil and enhance resiliency;
- Implement sector-based work permits and strengthen the inspection regime to ensure the health and safety of temporary foreign workers;
- Expand pathways to Permanent Residence for international students and agriculture temporary foreign workers through the Express Entry system;
- Develop the next agricultural policy framework;
- Support the establishment of a Canada Water Agency and a strengthened Fresh Water Action Plan.

Areas highlighted in the mandate letters we will be keeping an eye on at NSFA include: TFW program, mental health in rural communities, and employment insurance reform.

Upcoming Event

Municipal Planning

If it isn't there yet, municipal planning will be in your municipality soon. The Provincial Government update the Municipal Affairs Act to require municipal planning all across Nova Scotia. As intimidating as government rules can be, Municipal Planning doesn't have to be.

Early engagement by the farming community will help Planners and municipal councillors understand the priorities of their community members. Want to learn more about what municipal planning can do for agriculture? Sign up for a webinar on **February 9th at noon**.

Visit nsfa-fane.ca/events to register!

Living Labs

Farmers leading the way for climate solutions!

Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS) is a multi-stream program that will assist the development and implementation of farming practices to help tackle climate change. ACS is a program within the Natural Climate Solutions Fund, providing more than \$4 billion to support initiatives. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is partnering with Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to develop projects that invest in natural climate solutions, including the 2 Billion Trees program and the Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund.

Agricultural Climate Solutions – Living Labs, is a \$185 million, 10-year program that will expand on the initial Living Laboratories Initiative to establish a Canada-wide network of living labs. PEI was selected as the initial site for Atlantic Canada, but the new funding allows for project proposals from each Atlantic province.

The NSFA was selected to submit the funding proposal on behalf of Nova Scotia, and we will keep you posted on the status of our proposal!

In creating our proposal, we brought together farmers, scientists, and other industry partners to select and develop the projects that have the greatest opportunity to reduce our environmental footprint and enhance climate resiliency.

What makes this project so appealing are the core principals of the initiative. These initiatives focus on farmers' needs and farmers are key collaborators throughout the process. The practices and technologies are tested on local farms under real agricultural production conditions. The Living Labs steering committee has chosen the following four projects as part of the funding proposal.



14 species cover crop mix planted after winter wheat at Bethesda Holsteins in Waterville in 2021

Project 1: Cover Crops in Perennial Crops

Orchards and vineyards typically maintain a strip of bare soil under the trees or vines to improve crop production. These “herbicide strips” are prone to erosion, especially on sloped fields common in vineyard production. Carbon sequestration can be enhanced by limiting the amount of exposed soil and evaluating alternative seed mixes or living mulches for both the alley ways between rows and the area directly beneath the plants. New seed mixes and mowing practices can also support beneficial insects and other pollinators.

New orchard establishment is most successful on land that has not previously been in orchard. Traditionally, land is cultivated and fumigated prior to orchard establishment. Fumigation can control destructive organisms (e.g. nematodes and other pathogens), but are also toxic to a broad spectrum of biological

organisms within the soil. There is increased interest in finding alternatives to chemical fumigation and evaluating various cover crops as biofumigants that can provide growers with an alternative that is less detrimental to the soil biology, improving soil health and the wider environment.

Project 2: Cover Crops in Annual Crops

Annual cropping systems tend to have higher management intensity leading to more soil disturbance and the return of less crop residues to the soil. This can lead to the depletion of soil carbon, a reduction in soil health and a diminished overall system resiliency. Planting cover crops has been shown to build soil organic matter, reduce erosion potential, improve water holding capacity, improve nutrient cycling, fix atmospheric nitrogen and reduce denitrification (a source of greenhouse gas). Despite the many benefits planting cover crops can have, the adoption of this management practice has not been consistent across



the province or across commodities. This project will focus on, among other things, cover crop establishment best practices (e.g., species, rates, timing, nutrient requirements), the impact of soil moisture, soil temperature, termination strategies and the impact of cover crop residues on the crop rotation.

Project 3: Land Swap

High disturbance cropping systems, such as horticultural production, often have lower soil carbon compared to less disturbed systems. These systems would benefit from incorporating periods of perennial crop production, such as forages. Growing forages can increase and stabilize soil carbon and can also reduce GHG emissions. Grazing livestock cycle nutrients and deposit manure which can result in increased soil carbon, biological activity and overall fertility. Livestock producers, especially young people or new entrants, are often looking for additional land for the production of high-quality forages and grazing. In Nova Scotia, where livestock operations exist in close proximity to horticultural producers, there is an opportunity to capitalize on this mutual need through land-swapping agreements. Apart from increasing soil carbon, other benefits may include, reduced reliance on GHG intensive fertilizers (where

legumes are grown) and fuels, lowered erosion potential, reduced reliance on irrigation, breaking pest/disease cycles and increasing yields/quality. Some of the challenges may include livestock transportation, fencing and access to water.

Project 4: Riparian Zones and Shelterbelts

There is a high potential to sequester carbon in riparian and shelterbelt areas. Carbon can be stored in the soil through the roots and in the woody biomass of the plant species established in these undisturbed areas. There are also many secondary benefits that these plantings will provide; including improving soil health, preserving water quality and enhancing biodiversity. This project will establish riparian zones (i.e. along a watercourse) for field crops where none currently exist and shelterbelts (i.e. in-field plantings) in wild blueberry fields.

Conclusion

The Living Labs project is a great opportunity for the NS agriculture industry to come together to identify areas where we can make changes or improvements to our management practices with the intent of helping to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change. The individual projects we

submitted, are primarily based on their potential to sequester carbon dioxide but each has the potential for many spinoff benefits including enhanced biodiversity, improved soil and water quality and increased food-production system resiliency. One of the key aspects built into this project will be effectively sharing new knowledge gained through the research with the entire industry.

If our proposal is successful, we will have a wide variety of activities to promote the research findings to increase the adoption of these BMPs including field days, coffee shop chats, workshops and publications. In addition, we will be conducting an economic analysis of all BMPs compared to business as usual to provide local financial numbers to producers so they can feel more confident when choosing to adopt new practices.

The Living Labs project has huge potential to build public trust in agriculture and confidence in agriculture's ability to address climate change.

For more information on Living Labs, contact: Carolyn Marshall - Environment and Climate Change Manager - cmarshall@nsfa-fane.ca

Public Trust Update

Celebrate on February 22!

Tuesday, February 22, 2022, is Canada's Agriculture Day and we are celebrating in a few different ways this year!

Meet Your Farmer has teamed up with The Kilted Chef! Tune in to his Facebook live show at 3PM on February 22 to cook an all-Canadian dish!

We're partnering with Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture to host a virtual Fireside Chat. We will be focusing on the rising cost of food. This will be livestreamed on the Meet Your Farmer and Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture Facebook pages, and Meet Your Farmer YouTube. You can find more details at meetyourfarmer.ca/events

We are hosting a Colouring and Drawing Contest for kids again this year! With over 100 entries last year, we are looking forward to seeing all the wonderful art created this year. Grab your crayons, markers, paints, or whatever you like and head on over to meetyourfarmer.ca to find a colouring sheet to complete for a chance to win an awesome prize pack! This contest is open to ages 2-9, with two prize packs available. One pack for 2-5 years old and another for 6-9 years old.

For youth ages 10-12 years old, we want you to draw and colour "My Dream Farm." Show us what your own farm would look like and what you would grow or raise. You can include buildings, machinery, animals, and plants/crops. Let your imagination soar, for a chance to win a prize pack!

Deadline to enter both competitions is February 22, 2022! Details are on our website.



Let's celebrate the food we love

We have put together some resources for you to use to help you celebrate online and in-person. Visit <https://nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/fact-sheets-infographics/>. Remember to use #CdnAgDay and let's raise a fork to the food we love and the people who produce it! How you celebrate is up to you but have fun, show your ag pride, and make some noise on social media for Canadian food!

Feeding Body & Mind Webinar

Thank you to our moderator and panelists for a great webinar on January 20! Margo Riebe-Butt, Jennifer Ferguson, Susan Slater, and Nicole Marchand joined together to talk about nutrition and the relationship of food to our physical, mental and spiritual health. If you missed the livestream you can catch the replay on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/meetyourfarmer/>

Lunch & Learn: Using Social Media to Share Your Story

We have two more Lunch & Learn sessions coming up on **February 14** and **March 14**. We will be focusing on: tools for graphic design, hashtags and keywords, Your Farmers, Your NS campaign materials, metrics and engagement, and using an influencer.

These are free, and open to farmers and anyone working in food and agriculture. You can register for one or both at: nsfa-fane.ca/events



Farm Safety Update

As you dive into the new year, Farm Safety Nova Scotia is here to help provide tools and resources to protect the physical and mental health of those working in the agriculture industry.

Sowing the Seeds of Mental Health

In partnership with other safety associations and Federations of Agriculture across Canada, and Howatt HR, we launched the Sowing the Seeds of Mental Health series.

Dr. Bill Howatt and Dr. Dayna Bagley are hosting a **FREE** 10-week webinar series which raps up on March 8, 2022. Join us **every Tuesday from 3-4pm** to learn a new microskill to sow the seeds of mental health.

Upcoming session topics include:

- February 8 – Busting Self Stigma
- February 15 – Seasonal Work and Overall Wellness
- February 22 – Tips for Taming Negative Emotions
- March 1 – The Benefits of Monitoring Daily Charges and Drains
- March 8 – Insulating for Irritability

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week

Mark your calendars, **March 13 -19, 2022**, is Canadian Agricultural Safety Week! The theme is Safety is our Standard. Visit the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association's website: casa-acsa.ca to find virtual ag safety ribbons and more!

Looking to get your kids involved in ag safety? Visit the [Farm Safety For Kids Page](#) to explore youth work guidelines, resources provided by the Progressive Agricultural Safety Foundation, request a copy of the Farm Safety Activity book, download coloring pages, and do some puzzles. These activities may keep the kids busy this March break.



To support mental health and wellness during Canadian Ag Safety Week, we will be delivering In the Know Mental Health Literacy training on **March 17th** with our local instructor Duncan Vesey.

The objective of the program is to address farmer specific barriers to accessing mental health programming and resources. The program identifies the specific struggles of farming, and supports building confidence in recognizing mental health struggles, in talking about mental health, and in helping others. This workshop is designed for farmers, producers, and those who have direct contact with the farming community such as family members, peers, veterinarians, breeders, seed or feed salespeople, financial institutions, accountants or community members.

Keep an eye out for other Canadian Agriculture Safety Week events and initiatives!

Fill Yer Boots! A Peer-to-Peer Support Program

When we launched the We Talk We Grow campaign, we also released our Blueprint for a Mental Health Action Plan. Within this document were a number of suggested action items

that were identified by industry, or are implemented in other farming communities!

One of these action items was the development of a peer-to-peer support program. So, allow us to introduce... Fill Yer Boots! We are happy to be working with the Canadian Mental Health Association's Nova Scotia Division, to bring this goal to life!

Fill Yer Boots, is a virtual peer support group, open to anyone in the farming community in Nova Scotia.

This group provides a respectful and safe space to discuss mental health challenges, at no cost!

Sessions are led by peers who have lived experience with mental health challenges but also understand the unique challenges of rural living and working in agriculture.

This group is non-clinical, non-judgmental and completely confidential!

Fill Yer Boots will be taking place **every Tuesday evening at 7:30pm**. If you have any questions, or would like to register, please contact Keith Anderson with CMHA. You can reach him at: keith.anderson@novascotia.cmha.ca

Farm & Workforce Development Update

NS Agriculture Job Bank

The NS Ag Job Bank is a great way to start 2022 by searching for your new career in agriculture or finding the right workers to join your operation! Did you know you can create an account and post vacancies to a job board solely dedicated to agriculture in Nova Scotia? This job bank has been utilized by over 250 employers since its creation. The NS Ag Job Bank is a trusted and recognized source of employment opportunities in the agriculture and agri-food industry in Nova Scotia. In 2021 alone, there were over 6,100 visits to the NS Ag Job Bank with over 450 jobs posted.

Now is the time to get started and find your career in agriculture, or post an available position in your operation and reach local job seekers by visiting nsagjobs.ca

Workforce Insight Survey

The Workforce Insights Survey is now live and we're depending on you to help us get the results we need. Your input is important and will allow us to better understand the workforce issues our industry is facing. Your participation in the Workforce Insights Survey will help us focus on the challenges your businesses are up against and help us work towards finding solutions.

If you complete our Workforce Insight Survey, you will be entered to win one of 25 \$100 gift cards to a local business of your choice! If you have not received a link, please reach out to our Policy Analyst, Nick Cunningham at ncunningham@nsfa-fane.ca or 902-893-

2293.

Outreach Projects

Farm and Workforce Development has two major outreach projects coming up this spring.

Bridge Into Agriculture: Launching in March and delivered online, this project consists of a 22-week horticulture-based course coupled with farm tours and guest speakers. This project will engage African Nova Scotia community members across the province and help re-connect them to the agriculture industry. Farm and Workforce Development has partnered with African Nova Scotia Affairs, Dalhousie Extended Learning and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to deliver this course.

Continuous Improvement: This project will feature five tiers of support regarding Continuous Improvement methods and applications, from awareness sessions and facility tours to customized and in-depth CI implementation. Awareness sessions will start at the end of February and will be held both in-person and in webinar format. Stay tuned for dates, times and locations.

If your farm operation currently engages CI or Lean Manufacturing practices and you are willing to host a group tour, please contact the Workforce Development Coordinator, Caitlyn Clements, at cclements@nsfa-fane.ca or 902-893-2293

Farm Technician Apprenticeship What does a Farm Technician do?

Farm Techs handle general farm management tasks and maintenance of properties such as buildings, farm grounds and storage facilities. They must be able to safely operate, maintain and adjust various pieces of equipment such as tractors, forklifts, skid steers, loaders, and precision agriculture systems as well as several hand and power tools. They may also use various types of technology to increase overall efficiency and productivity including computers, robotics, programmable logic controllers (PLC) and mobile devices.

On a crop or fiber farm they may be responsible for crop production activities such as soil and nutrient management, crop management and integrated pest management. Where applicable, they are involved in packing, grading, storing and shipping of food and farm products. On a livestock farm, Farm Technicians may be responsible for herd/flock management including health, care and welfare, breeding, feeding and environmental control.

The Curriculum Standard for this trade is expected to be completed by June 2022. The first delivery of apprenticeship training for Farm Technician will start January 2023. The program has a term of 3600 hours and will consist of two levels of training.

If you are looking to become a certified **Farm Technician Journey person**, a Certification Exam is now available for those with 5400 hours in the trade. Visit nsapprenticeship.ca for more information.

If you'd like to refresh your knowledge and review the Occupational Standard before taking the exam, the Agricultural Campus of Dalhousie University is offering a 90 hour, self-directed refresher course. It will run from February 21 to March 28th, 2022. Enrollment for this course can also be found on the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency website.

For more information or to register for the Farm Technician refresher course or certification exam, contact Michelle Turner, Industry Training Consultant: Michelle.Turner@novascotia.ca 902-679-4303

Agriculture in the Classroom - Nova Scotia

2020-2021 Annual Report

We're on a mission to teach students where their food comes, the importance of agriculture to our province, and the wide variety of rewarding careers available in agriculture! Check out our 2020-21 Annual Report to see how we met the Year 2 goals of our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Agriculture in the Classroom – Nova Scotia is funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership – a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

Some highlights from our Annual Report include:

- The growth of the GenAg agricultural career exploration program for Grade 9 students
- The growth of the All Kinds of Apples program for P-3 students
- Bringing the Little Green Sprouts program, which originated in Saskatchewan and is now offered in over half the provinces, to Nova Scotia
- Launching the Quest for the Perfect Strawberry program for Grade 9 students
- The development of new resources for Grade 5 Science (Weather on the Farm), Grade 6 Science (Agriculture & Renewable Energy), Grade 7 & 8 Science (Digging Deeper) and Grade 7 Science & Grade 8 Social Studies (Pkwiman: Wild Blueberries in Mi'kmaki and Wabanaki)
- Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month celebrated its tenth anniversary! This initiative began in Nova Scotia and is now celebrated in all ten provinces.

How can you help us grow the program even more?

1. Spread the word to any teachers you know
2. Volunteer to visit a classroom as part of Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month
3. Volunteer to participate in a school career fair – there are booth materials available for loan from each of the Department of Agriculture's Regional Offices

Reach by Resource

Hope Blooms
Garden Kits



- Schools
- Classrooms
40 Students

Schools **65**
Classrooms **156**
Students **3024**



All Kinds
of Apples

Little Green
Sprouts



63 Schools
88 Classrooms
1650 Students

Schools **62**
Classrooms **104**
Students **2164**



CALM

genAG



5 Schools
7 Classrooms
135 Students

Schools **22**
Classrooms **54**
Students **1063**



The Quest
for the Perfect
Strawberry

African
Nova Scotian
Webinar



3 Schools
- Classrooms
15 Students

220

Schools

409

Classrooms

8091

Students

A Chance to Tell Your Story

Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month – March 2022

Why Participate?

- Increase public trust in agriculture by educating the next generation of consumers about where their food comes from.
- Create a personal connection with students to help create a positive image of agriculture.
- Increase the connection to farms and producers that has been lost over time.
- Share your story about how amazing an agriculture career can be.

Please join us

Virtually and in-person to bring the story of "Our Food, Our Story" to Nova Scotia classrooms.

If you would like to participate, please email Ag.Education@novascotia.ca.

Resources and assistance will be supplied to all volunteers.

Upcoming Events

February 9, 2022

Lunch & Learn: Municipal Planning

February 14, 2022

Lunch & Learn: Using Social Media to Tell Your Story

February 17, 2022

In the Know: Mental Health Literacy Training

February 22, 2022

Canada's Agriculture Day

March 2, 2022

Chicken Producers of Nova Scotia AGM

March 2-3, 2022

Canadian Federation of Agriculture AGM

March 15, 2022

Egg Farmers of Nova Scotia AGM

March 13-19, 2022

Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

March 14, 2022

Lunch & Learn: Using Social Media to Tell Your Story



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Website: www.nsfa-fane.ca

@nsfafane
 @nsfa
 @nsfa_fane

We know that farming is more than a business – it's a way of life. We are committed to serving Canada's farm communities by providing flexible financial solutions that let you get on with the business of farming. We'll take the time necessary to understand your unique needs. Together we can meet today's challenges and anticipate tomorrow's opportunities.



Inge McKeown
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Ready for you

2021 COUNCIL MEMBERS

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NSFA News + Views is the Newsletter of the NS Federation of Agriculture, the voice of Nova Scotia's agriculture industry.

News + Views is provided free of charge to its members. We value comments and concerns from our members. Please direct them to Council members or Office Staff.