

# news+views

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## Don't Forget to Check the Box!

As you're working through your farm registration renewal, please don't forget to **"Check the Box" on Section 6** to stay connected with the Federation. Being a member of the NSFA means you have your say in the direction the organization takes on industry issues, and stay up to date on news and events that are important to our industry, both provincially and nationally.

As your Federation we work in the best interest of our members, with the goal of ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for our farming community.

Our team monitors and reviews trends, legislation, and programs that impact the industry. We actively lobby and advocate for changes and improvements to legislation, programs, and public policy. We work to ensure your voices are represented and heard by **all levels** of government.

Along with our advocacy and lobbying work, the NSFA is home to a number of programs including; Farm and Workforce Development, Farm Safety Nova Scotia, Meet Your Farmer, and Environment & Climate Change. Additionally, the Federation provides support to the Nova Scotia Young Farmers organization.

Our team at the Federation has grown over the last number of years, with new projects and initiatives taking place under our roof. These are exciting times for us as your organization. We want to ensure we are providing our members with the tools, resources, and support you need in order to operate your farms successfully, safely, and sustainably.

Another perk to being a member of the NSFA is our Member Benefits Program! Some of the benefits include; access to Blue Cross group health insurance, preferred pricing with Payworks, Maritime Fuels and Superior Propane, as well as discounts at Choice Hotels, Mark's Work Warehouse, Enterprise, Safety Services Nova Scotia and more.

To become a member of the NSFA, you'll need to **"Check the Box" on Section 6** of your farm registration form – there is no additional cost above your farm registration fee.

Once you check the box, please feel free to reach out to us at the office to find out how you can get involved, if you have any ideas, or if you are facing any challenges.

We are here to support you!

### Not renewing your registration this year?

Are you not renewing your farm registration for the upcoming year, but still want to keep your finger on the pulse of Nova Scotia agriculture? You can become a Friend of the NSFA! A friend is a non-voting member and you would receive:

- A membership card
- Each edition of the News & Views for the membership year
- Access to training opportunities and discounts through NSFA programs
- Access to select member benefits

Our "Friends of the NSFA" program is a yearly \$75 membership. If you're interested in being our friend, or if you have any questions, please contact [comms@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:comms@nsfa-fane.ca) or call (902) 893-2293

# Message from the Executive Director

Last month I left you with some food for thought with how we have to shift the conversation we are having with the government, shifting how we deliver our message to ensure that it is understood that an investment in agriculture is an investment in our province. I truly believe this is vital for agriculture to gain the recognition and support we need and deserve.

How we develop the messaging to be used in that conversation is just as important, if not more important than the delivery of the message. So what does that mean for us as an industry and as an organization representing the voice of Nova Scotia farmers? We need to be **intentional** and **prepared**.

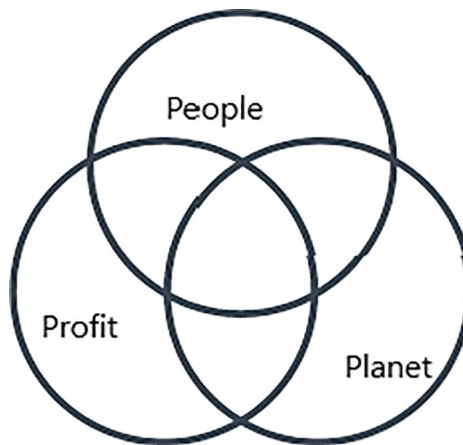
From an organizational perspective, this means we have to have an effective and efficient position development process. At our last Council meeting we had robust discussions around the process by which NSFA will develop its positions and policies. At the crux of this process is member engagement.

As your Federation, we play an essential role in representing all farms in the province. We need to harness this role by bringing together various commodities, farm sizes, locations etc. to ensure that we have as many lenses applied to our policy and position formulation. Some may say we have a tough role representing all farms in the province, varying in size, commodity, region and demographics. But I can argue that we can leverage this to strengthen our positions.

As the advocacy organization, we need to ensure we understand all sides of a position before and after we establish what our specific request is. If we don't, there is no way we will be able to answer the questions we need to, or properly defend the position we have. We must understand that the government is going to make decisions that are in the best interest of all their constituents so that is the lens we need to apply to our position development.

Our vision is a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers. This means whenever we are looking at policies and programs, it is incredibly important that we ensure what we are asking for today does not negatively impact our plans for tomorrow.

When we think about “tomorrow” sustainability is often a word that comes to mind. Sustainability is a big word, with many different explanations and definitions. The way I look at sustainability is this: people, planet, profit. The sweet spot is in the middle of that ven diagram, this is the balance that we need to find. Recognizing that we cannot always land in the middle, we need to understand all aspects before determining a position. If we do not, we could potentially be backing ourselves into a corner – solving one problem while possibly creating others.



So, the question we wrestle with is how do we best engage membership and stakeholders, with different perspectives, in an effective and timely manner? We have to make sure we look at and take advantage of multiple engagement methods like our annual meeting, roundtable sessions, surveys, website forms, discussion groups etc. While also keeping in mind the time commitment that comes with these engagement methods.



*Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director*

As an organization, we have to make improvements to our follow-up communication after engagement sessions. Whether that is sharing survey results, a “what we heard” report, or an update on what the future plans are.

As your organization, we want our advocacy efforts to be transparent and that you, our members, know what we have been advocating for on your behalf. This means we need to find a forum that allows us to effectively share that information. In an ideal world we could hit pause and put these structures in place, but the reality is that isn't possible so we need to build these systems while we continue to work on your behalf.

So, over the next year you will likely see the NSFA trying different mechanisms to engage with and communicate to membership. Sometimes we will get it right, sometimes we won't. But, we will continue to strive to represent the farm community in Nova Scotia to the best of our ability – ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers.

*Thoughts? Let's chat!*  
[cvandenheuvel@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:cvandenheuvel@nsfa-fane.ca)  
(902) 893-2293



# Mental Health Resources & Supports

The last two plus years have been quite strenuous for folks throughout the industry. We wanted to take a moment to highlight mental health resources and supports that are available to the farming community here in Nova Scotia.

First, let's look at resources and supports that are provided, supported or funded by Farm Safety Nova Scotia.

## Farm Family Support Centre

Farmers and their families have access to the Farm Family Support Line which is a confidential, short-term counselling and advisory service. It is designed to help farmers manage and reduce the stresses in life including; mental health, legal, financial, and more.

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

There is **no cost** for up to **3 hours** of service **per issue**. The line is **open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**.

**1-884-880-9142**

**TTY: 1-877-338-0275**

## Virtual Peer Support Group

In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association's Nova Scotia Division, *Fill Yer Boots* is a virtual peer support group open to anyone in the farming community in Nova Scotia. The 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-judgement, and completely confidential.**

Fill Yer Boots happens **every Tuesday evening at 7:30pm**. If you're interested in participating, or would like to learn more, please speak with Keith Anderson. You can reach him at:  
[keith.anderson@novascotia.cmha.ca](mailto:keith.anderson@novascotia.cmha.ca)

## We Talk. We Grow. Website

We Talk. We Grow. is an initiative of Farm Safety Nova Scotia 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.

On the website you will find resources developed to optimize stress-free farm communities and prevent mental health challenges; and when mental health challenges occur – they have created readily accessible, culturally appropriate, and most of all effective, programs and supports.

Resources are divided up into three sections: Prevention, Protection, and Engagement.

We encourage you to take a look around the site and browse the resources that have been collected so far. Visit:  
[wetalkwegrow.ca](http://wetalkwegrow.ca)

## Training & Education

Farm Safety Nova Scotia has hosted and coordinated many training and educational opportunities related to mental health and wellness.

Some of the training they have put on includes:

- In the Know: Mental Health Literacy Training
- Mental Health First Aid Training

There is an In the Know session scheduled for **March 17th**. You can find more details about it on page 9!

In 2021, Farm Safety hosted a three-part webinar series with Howatt HR. The three topics that were covered include:

- Mental Fitness 101
- Coping with Isolation and Loneliness
- Navigating Crisis

If you would like a link to these recordings, please email:  
[info@farmsafetyns.ca](mailto:info@farmsafetyns.ca)

## Sowing the Seeds of Mental Health

*Supporting the Mental Health of Canadian Farmers.*

Ag Safety organizations across Canada have partnered with Howatt HR on the Sowing the Seeds of Mental Health webinar series. This 10 week series covered a wide range of topics from *Why Mental Health Matters* to *Tips for Taming Negative Emotions*.

These sessions are available to watch from now until November by visiting:  
[www.howatthr.com/products-services/workplace-learning/sowing-the-seeds-of-mental-health/](http://www.howatthr.com/products-services/workplace-learning/sowing-the-seeds-of-mental-health/)

Now let's look at a few other resources and supports that are available to the agriculture industry.

## FCC Rooted in Strength

Farm Credit Canada developed *Rooted in Strength* a hard-copy and digital mini book that provides stories, resources and crisis information to support the mental wellness of anyone in Canadian agriculture. You can find out more by visiting: [www.fcc-fac.ca/en/community/wellness](http://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/community/wellness)

## Do More Ag Foundation

Do More Ag is a not-for-profit organization focusing on mental health in agriculture across Canada. Do More Ag focuses on three pillars: Awareness, Community, and Resources. Check out what they have to offer at: [domore.ag](http://domore.ag)

**If you are in crisis, please visit your local emergency department or call 911.**

**Nova Scotia Mental Health Crisis Line:**  
**1-888-429-8167 / 1-902-429-8167**



# Municipal Planning 101

## What is municipal planning and how can you get involved?

In recent years, there has been buzz about municipal planning. Some municipalities underwent an update to their Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) or had their actions challenged because the residents felt those actions didn't align with the MPS. Interestingly enough, many points of contention with municipal plans involved agricultural land or agricultural activity.

On February 9, NSFA had the opportunity to hear from Gordon Smith with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Gordon provided a high-level overview on municipal planning, what it is, how it pertains to agriculture, and emphasized the importance of getting involved.

Below is information that came out of that session.

## Why all the talk about municipal planning?

Municipalities throughout Nova Scotia have been legislated to develop municipal planning strategies or MPS. The regulations came into effect in 2019 and gave five or so years for municipalities to develop their plans. "Or so..." is there solely because of COVID-19. Municipal Planning Strategies require significant consultation with residents and in the midst of the pandemic, a lot of municipalities were working merely to survive and support their residents. Long term planning was on the radar of very few people. In saying all that, as we navigate our way through living with COVID-19, municipalities are starting to engage on their strategies.

## Where does agriculture fit in municipal planning?

Everywhere! Planning for industrial parks, residential development and agricultural activities all go hand in hand. We need to have agricultural land protected for the industry to continue into the future, as much as we need residential areas for farm employees to live. Additionally, retail and processing growth should all be part of municipal planning strategies to strengthen the local agriculture industry and ensure people are able to access food in their local communities.

Balance is key and trade-offs may need to be made. Continuing with industrial and residential growth in one area that is already established makes good planning sense. Good planning also takes into account neighbourhood considerations. For example, restrictions on residential development in areas with higher agriculture production is a way to manage complaints from neighbours not pleased with living near agriculture practices.

There are different components of municipal plans that influence agriculture. Municipal plans for communities where agriculture isn't prevalent like urban areas, may not take a position on agriculture, but focus on food security and access throughout their planned area. Other municipal plans, especially those for communities with a strong agriculture presence, may have entire sections dedicated to agriculture. Regardless of how food and agriculture are incorporated into an MPS, initial engagement in the development of the MPS and the ongoing engagement for changes over time will be needed to ensure the interests of farms and the agriculture industry are always applied.

There are different ways farmers and county federations can stay informed in municipal planning activities. From a regulatory perspective, municipalities are required to post in newspapers when consultations are taking place. Other

ways you can find out more information would be on your municipality website, contacting your elected councilor and following Municipal Council meeting agendas and minutes.

As an FYI - when there is a first reading of a topic, a decision will not be made at that meeting. If there are proposed changes to municipal planning documents that you are concerned about, this would be a great time to reach out to your Councilor and explain your concerns and why they should vote in a particular way.

Municipal Planning Strategies provide higher level statements that resemble the values of the municipality. Before reaching out to your Councilor or participating in an engagement session, some points to consider include:

- Why is farming important to your community, what does it offer economically, socially and in terms of the look and feel of the place?
- What things need to be protected?
- What things need to be made better?
- Are there things that you should just be able to do?
- Are there things that others do that affect your ability to run your operation effectively?

Municipal planning provides a common objective for local farmers to come together on. County/Regional Federations are well positioned to be a recognized voice by municipalities during engagement sessions. If you are or want to get involved in your County Federation, now would be a great time to come together to discuss what the municipality can do to protect and promote agriculture.



# Policy Corner

## Nova Scotia Power

On January 27, 2022, Nova Scotia Power (NSP) submitted a proposal to the Utility and Review Board (UARB). Under the Monopoly Act, NSP is required to file and seek approval from the UARB in order to increase rates or apply new rates. The hearing is scheduled for this September.

The power rate increase in the proposal alone is enough to raise alarm, but the biggest concern was around the net metering proposal. A common net-metering example in agriculture is solar installation. As many members know, this allows farms to install solar panels to generate enough electricity from solar power to run their farm operation. Any surplus energy is sold back to NSP. The farm is still connected to the electrical grid which is beneficial if they don't generate enough electricity to run their farm in that moment. As an example: if there are cloudy days or energy consumption in darker hours (think milking cows in the early hours of the morning) the farm will still be able to pay NSP for power to fill the gap when they aren't generating electricity.



Many agriculture projects are large and could be larger if it wasn't for the 100kw cap. The proposal put forward by NSP indicated a charge of \$8 per kwh per month. This would cost a farm with solar panels generating 100kwh of

electricity \$9,600 per year to generate their own electricity. It doesn't take much calculation to determine that with a tariff of \$8 per kwh, installing solar or other electricity generation projects becomes uneconomic. Frankly, even at ¼ the proposed rate, \$2 per kwh is still high. In a time where government is legislating coal plants to close by the turn of the decade and is encouraging green energy production, this was certainly a blow to the efforts.

On a note of cautious optimism, the provincial government stepped in indicating they will develop a regulatory framework for net metering that will prevent this rate increase from happening. This framework hasn't yet been developed.

Uncertainty still lingers. In a worst case scenario, what we do know is that without the regulatory framework, the proposed rate won't come into effect until at least early 2023. NSFA will continue to monitor the development of Nova Scotia Power's Proposal and the net metering framework to evaluate the impact to Nova Scotia farms.

## We Want to Hear From You!

With the fall announcement of the Guelph Statement indicating the priorities of the Next Policy Framework (NPF) NSFA is preparing submissions to the federal and provincial governments and we need your help!

Through resolutions, committee work, general conversations with members and more, we've heard a lot of feedback on programs as they exist and where gaps lie. Throughout March, members will have opportunities to provide input on what they believe is needed for their farms and the agriculture industry to be sustainable. NSFA is looking to gather feedback on a wide range of topics from programs that should be continued, what is working well from a program administration perspective, what needs to be fixed and what should be added.

Members can provide input in various formats including submitting their written thoughts, answering some questions and/or attending sessions. Specific details on each of these formats can be found on NSFA's website: [nsfa-fane.ca/npf](https://nsfa-fane.ca/npf)

## The Guelph Statement



### A Vision to 2028

Canada is recognized as a world leader in sustainable agriculture and agri-food production and drives forward to 2028 from a solid foundation of regional strengths and diversity, as well as the strong leadership of the Provinces and Territories, in order to rise to the climate change challenge, to expand new markets and trade while meeting the expectations of consumers, and to feed Canadians and a growing global population.



### The Priorities

- ◆ Tackling **climate change and environmental protection** to support GHG emission reductions and the long-term vitality of the sector while positioning producers and processors to seize economic opportunities from evolving consumer demands
- ◆ Continued and targeted investments in **science, research and innovation** to address key challenges and opportunities
- ◆ Supporting sustainable agriculture and economic growth by creating the conditions for Canadian businesses to meet evolving challenges of the interconnected **domestic and global marketplace**
- ◆ Building **sector capacity and growth** through realizing the potential of value added agri-food and agri-products
- ◆ Enhancing **resiliency** to anticipate, mitigate and respond to risks, including a robust suite of Business Risk Management programs



### Guiding Principles

- ◆ Lead on **ensuring a sustainable agriculture and agri-food sector**, by addressing climate risks and creating conditions for industry to **succeed and compete globally**
- ◆ **Shared jurisdiction of agriculture and international trade obligations** are respected
- ◆ **Collaboration** among stakeholders to leverage innovation, regional strengths and diversity
- ◆ Programs respond to the **realities of producers and participants**, and seek to **reduce red tape**
- ◆ In order to maximize shared investments and contribute to **collective outcomes**, governments will deliver **measurable results**, while maintaining flexibility in the design, delivery and management of programs across provinces and territories
- ◆ Work to address barriers to participation and consider the needs of **underrepresented groups** such as youth and women, and **strengthen relationships with Indigenous Peoples** to better support sector participation



# Survey Results Shed Light on Barriers to BMP Adoption

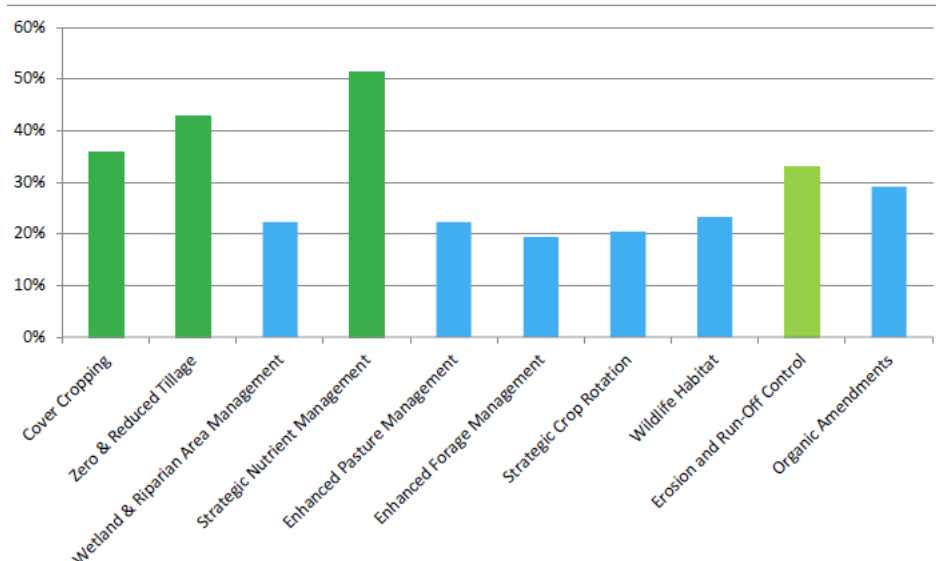
In late 2021, we conducted a survey on barriers to the adoption of best management practices (BMP) through the Smart Prosperity Group. This was done to help inform the Nova Scotia Agricultural Climate Solutions Living Labs program as we built our proposal. The goal was to get an overview of attitudes towards climate change and barriers to adoption of BMPs before the start of the Living Labs program to use as a benchmark. This information can be used to inform the outreach and knowledge transfer plans for the proposed Living Labs program.

The BMPs addressed by the survey were:

- Cover Cropping
- Reduced and No-tillage
- Wetland and Riparian Area Management
- Nutrient Management
- Rotational Grazing
- Forage Management
- Crop Rotation
- Wildlife Habitat
- Erosion and Run-off Control
- Organic Amendments

## Attitudes to Climate Change

We had 130 survey responses. Just under 80% of respondents agreed that management decisions made on the farm can contribute to climate change and 82% responded that they play an important part in climate change mitigation. Over 90% agreed that certain management practices on farm can help prevent or lessen the impact of climate change. These numbers are certainly encouraging. However, a smaller



*Top BMPs of importance or interest. Bars represent the percentage of respondents that felt a BMP was important or of interest.*

percentage (73%) agreed that reducing environmental impact could be done without reducing farm productivity, showing more uncertainty around the potential cost of implementing BMPs.

Out of all the respondents, 76% felt that climate change was already impacting their farming operation and an additional 11% thought they would experience the impacts in the next two to five years. Only 3% felt climate change would never impact their operations. This could be due to the highly visible climate disasters that occurred elsewhere in Canada in 2021, such as the drought in the west and the flooding in British Columbia.

## Interest and Barriers to Adoption

Strategic nutrient management was chosen by over 50% of respondents as an important BMP or a BMP of interest. This was followed by reduced or no-tillage, and cover cropping rounding out the top three out of the 10 BMPs included in the survey.

The barriers highlighted in the survey results show a path forward to increase adoption of BMPs in Nova Scotia. Cost came out as the most prominent barrier for BMP adoption in general.

The second most prominent reason was a close tie between significant complexity associated with the practice and significant changes to daily or yearly management responsibilities.

Barriers also varied between BMPs. For cover crop adoption, for example, only a very small percentage of producers agreed that they had the knowledge of how to incorporate legumes (5% of respondents) and service crops (15%). It is apparent that there are some significant knowledge gaps regarding cover cropping practices. In contrast, for crop rotations, the top barrier was a perceived lack of value for changing crop rotations (43%).

## Trusted Sources of Information

Our survey asked producers to rank sources of information from 1 to 6, where 1 indicated the most trusted source when looking for information about new management practices. The results show that peers and other producers are the most trusted source of information, as over 42% of respondents ranked them as number one. Agronomists and certified crop advisors are a close second. One of the suggestions from the survey was to consider the availability of crop advisors

in Nova Scotia. They were the second most trusted source of information, but one in every two respondents did not agree with the statement “When needed, certified crop advisors, agronomists, or other experts are available to assist me with using or learning about new practices that can help prevent or lessen the impact of climate change.”

Educational and research institutions like universities were ranked as the top choice for information sources by about 19% of respondents and producer associations were ranked as the top choice by only 9% of respondents. Surprisingly, retailers and input suppliers and the federal or provincial government were regarded as the least trusted sources of information among survey respondents, as over 31% and 47% of respondents ranked these options as their last choice, respectively. Federal and provincial governments performed significantly worse than the other 5 information sources, as less than 10% of respondents selected them

amongst their first, second, or even third choice.

These results show the potential of the Living Labs approach, which is producer driven. All BMPs in the NSFA’s proposed Living Labs program will be tested on site and informed by producers throughout the process. This can help us maximize the impact on BMP adoption. Demonstrations and field days were given by 39% of respondents as something they wanted to attend before considering the adoption of a new BMP. Demonstrations and field days will play a large role in the proposed Living Lab framework to encourage BMP adoption.

### Conclusion

This survey provided valuable insight into how the farming community views their role in climate change mitigation and to specific BMPs. It showed that while producers see climate change mitigation

playing a role in farming, there are gaps that prevent certain practices from being adopted.

The information gained can be used not only to shape the proposed Living Labs program in Nova Scotia but other agricultural-based climate programs, to help eliminate these gaps and create a sustainable future for farming in Nova Scotia.

If you have any questions about the survey or would like a copy of the full final report, please contact the Environment and Climate Change Manager, Carolyn Marshall at [cmarshall@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:cmarshall@nsfa-fane.ca).



# SAVE EVERY TIME YOU USE IT!

Look for your new Mark's Commercial discount card found in this newsletter. With it, as an NSFA member, you'll be able to

## SAVE 10%

on regular priced items in-store at Mark's stores across Canada.\*

*Just another great reason to be part of NSFA.*

\*excludes previous purchases and gift cards.





# Public Trust Update

## Canada's Ag Day Celebrated Online

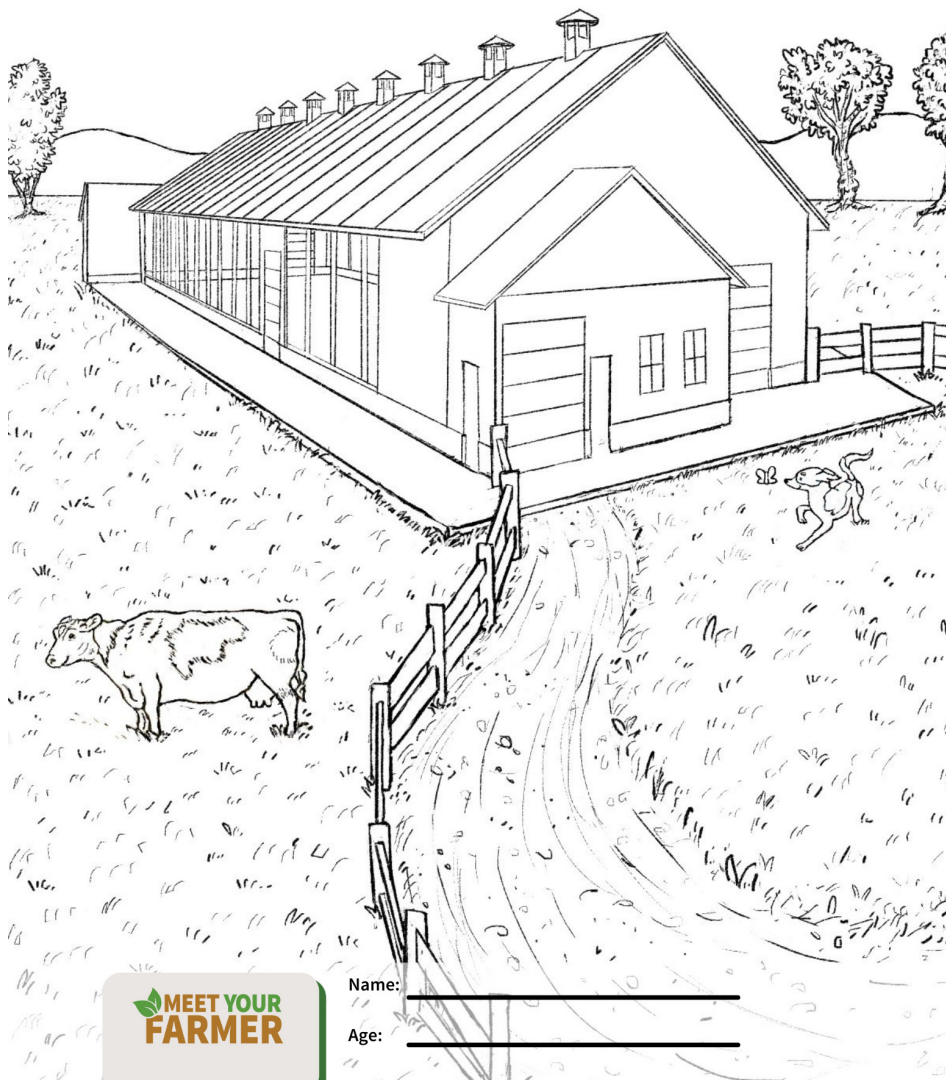
We were part of the nation-wide celebration of Canada's Agriculture Day and it was a great one! Meet Your Farmer joined the Kilted Chef on his Facebook live show to make a delicious soup recipe featuring Nova Scotia products. Young Farmer, Daniel Muir took part in making the recipe and taking audience questions. You find the recipe at: [kiltedchef.ca/our-recipes](http://kiltedchef.ca/our-recipes)

Meet Your Farmer joined forces with Dalhousie Agricultural Campus to host a virtual fireside chat on 'The Rising Cost of Food'. Dr. David Gray, Richard Melvin, Gordon Stewart, and Ashley MacDonald discussed issues related to the increasing cost of foods and took audience questions. If you didn't catch the live viewing you can find it on the Meet Your Farmer [YouTube channel](#) or [Facebook page](#).

## Art Contests a Bright Success

The second annual colouring contest featured five new colouring pages that were designed by Nova Scotia artist Sarah MacNeil. You can see more of her artwork on her Instagram page @sarahmacneilart. All completed entries have been posted to the Meet Your Farmer Facebook page. Winning entries can be found at: [meetyourfarmer.ca/create-with-us/](http://meetyourfarmer.ca/create-with-us/)

We introduced a new contest called "My Dream Farm". Youth ages 10-13 could submit an original piece of art showing what they would have on their own farm. All completed entries have been posted to the Meet Your Farmer Facebook page. Winning entries can be found at: [meetyourfarmer.ca/create-with-us/](http://meetyourfarmer.ca/create-with-us/). We love the creativity and hope that maybe some of these farms will become reality someday! Great work everyone and thanks for taking part!



**MEET YOUR FARMER**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_

## Public Trust Resources

We've added new resources to the Public Trust Resource page at: [nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/](http://nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/).

- Recordings of the Using Social Media To Tell Your Story webinars
- Using Hashtags on Social Media
- Getting Started with Canva
- From the Ground Up: An Inside Look at Farming and Food in Nova Scotia

We add new resources regularly. Please check back often for new information related to communication, farming and food in Nova Scotia, and public trust.

## Saltscapes Halifax Expo Returns

Meet Your Farmer will be attending Saltscapes Halifax Expo from April 8th to 10th at the Halifax Exhibition Centre! We are creating a family friendly space.

If you would like to join us to meet and talk with Expo visitors, please contact Janette McDonald. Volunteers are always welcome! You can reach Janette at, [jmcdonald@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:jmcdonald@nsfa-fane.ca) or by calling the office at 902-893-2293.



# Canadian Agricultural Safety Week taking place March 13 – 19

This year, the focus of Canadian Agricultural Safety Week is to inspire farmers, farm families, and farm communities to value #FarmSafetyEveryday. Safety is an ongoing commitment that must be top of mind for those of us living and working on a farm. It's important to keep in mind that farm safety goes beyond just the physical safety of workers, it must also prioritize the mental health and wellbeing of those who keep your farming operations going.

For more than a decade, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) has been raising awareness about the importance of safety on Canadian farms through the Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) campaign. This initiative serves as an opportunity to reflect on the importance of farm safety and provide producers with the resources you need to make your farms safer.

Every year, Farm Safety Nova Scotia celebrates CASW through campaigns, workshops and events. Below are some of the plans for this year's Ag Safety Week!

## Ag Safety Ribbon and Online Resources



Visi

Association's website: [agsafetyweek.ca](https://agsafetyweek.ca) to find virtual ag safety ribbons and more! The ribbons symbolize the importance of farm safety and help to raise awareness. Use the ribbon to start conversation. It is for all Canadians, not just farmers. You are encouraged to share this ribbon on your website, social media pages, and amongst any other electronic communications.

## CASW Celebrations

For the past five years, select equipment dealers across the province have offered 20% discounts on safety related items for the entire month of March. Make sure to visit Tidal Tractor, Central Equipment, and Green Diamond! We would like to thank these partners for all that they do to support safe farming practices here in Nova Scotia.

## CASW Events

### In the Know – Mental Health Literacy Training

To support mental health and wellness during Canadian Ag Safety Week, Farm Safety Nova Scotia will be delivering In the Know Mental Health Literacy training on March 17th from 9:30am-2:30pm with our local instructor Duncan Veasey. This is available at **no cost!** The objective of the program is to understand 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.

For more information, or to register, please visit [farmsafetyns.ca/events](https://farmsafetyns.ca/events)

## Gear Up for Ag

An interactive program involving personal protective equipment for many types of agricultural exposures with discussion of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for individual exposures.

There is a resource discussion and distribution including local and regional resources as well as distribution of PPE Startup Kit worth up to \$75. A pre-course survey will help customize this training experience specifically to your needs.

Happening March 15 from 11am-1pm.

## Farm Safety Resources

Looking to get your kids involved in ag safety too? Visit the Farm Safety for Kids Page ([farmsafetyns.ca/farm-safety-for-kids/](https://farmsafetyns.ca/farm-safety-for-kids/)) 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.

For all other Farm Safety Nova Scotia resources and tools please visit: [farmsafetyns.ca](https://farmsafetyns.ca)

These are just a few of the ways you can get involved in Canadian Ag Safety Week this year! Whether you are taking in the activities or not, we encourage you all to take time during Ag Safety Week to reflect and look for ways to further improve your current farm safety plans.

Let's all come together and show our support as we mitigate risk and make farm safety an everyday commitment.



# Farm & Workforce Development Update

## Discovery Tool for New Entrants

As part of our goal to **provide necessary resources for successful farm business management**, work has begun on a Nova Scotia based Discovery Tool for 'new entrants' to farming. We are defining new entrants as those who have been operating their business for five years or less, and those intending to enter the industry as a farm business operator. The information accessed through this tool can be used by all farming operations, however the focus is on those interested in entering, or who have recently entered the Nova Scotia agriculture industry.

The purpose of the Discovery Tool is to consolidate, update, develop, and provide comprehensive and accessible business management resources. This tool would navigate users through compiled resources by a series of questions and the information deemed most valuable, based on answers, would be presented. A key feature of the Discovery Tool is that there is no start or finish line – the resources can be accessed at any point.

*This project is a joint effort between Farm and Workforce Development (NSFA), Perennia, and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.*

## Bridge Into Agriculture

The Bridge Into Agriculture project is set to begin on March 21, 2022. This project has been developed through collaboration with NSFA, African Nova Scotian Affairs, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, and Dalhousie Extended Learning. Bridge Into Agriculture is



a Farm and Workforce Development initiative stemming directly from our goal to **foster a culture of inclusion across the Nova Scotia agriculture industry**.

The aim of this project is to increase participation of African Nova Scotians in the agriculture industry.

The main component of this project is a 22-week horticulture-based course that participants will complete online. This course will be coupled with farm tours and guest speakers.

If you are willing to host a small group of visitors to your farm, we are looking to set-up tours for the last weeks of April, May, and June. Please contact the Workforce Development Coordinator at [cclements@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:cclements@nsfa-fane.ca) to sign up as a host and show off your farming operation!

## Survey Panel

A strategy is being developed to create a dedicated NSFA Survey Panel. Due to the growing demand to gather insights into various areas of the agriculture sector, a proposal was made for a dedicated survey panel. The panel will be a voluntary group that have chosen to take part in our survey research on a regular basis.

## Economic Report

Secondary data (StatsCan, CARHC, NSDA, NSDFTB) has been collected and analyzed into a comprehensive data warehouse to support the creation of the NSFA's 1st edition of the State of the Sector Economic Report. The report is an in-depth analysis into the Agriculture and Food Processing sector in Nova Scotia. The report will touch on several economic areas (e.g., labour force, TFWs, financials, wages, hours, education,

skills, and demographics). Smaller, more condensed, one-page documents will also compliment the larger report (e.g., Key Statistics and Economic Highlights).

## Temporary Foreign Workers

In an effort to streamline the processing of Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) applications under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, ESDC is implementing a temporary policy change to requirements for advertising and recruitment. The minimum advertising requirements for employers has been suspended for LMIA applications submitted to Service Canada on or before June 30, 2022.

This suspension of an important program requirement will result in Service Canada not reviewing advertising and recruitment information in its assessment of LMIA applications, however, employers are expected to continue efforts to recruit Canadians and permanent residents.

## Reminder:

All TFWs should download the ArriveCAN app on their phones and use ArriveCAN to provide mandatory travel information before their entry into Canada. The app is free and available in English, French and Spanish. A desktop/web version is also available and a printed ArriveCAN receipt is acceptable as proof and can be used for the purpose of boarding a flight.



# Farm Technician Apprenticeship

## Why was the Farm Technician trade created?

The development of the Farm Technician trade was sparked by industry need. The lack of skilled labour was identified as a critical issue for Nova Scotia farms, and resulted in an NSFA policy on this very issue. The need for a farm specific trade was requested by the agriculture industry here in Nova Scotia, and we have had a significant amount of input, support, and guidance from countless farmers and commodities.

## How would this be a benefit to me and my operation?

It will provide comprehensive skills training that will allow both farm technicians and the farms they work on meet the technical, climatic, safety, and human resource challenges of the future. By combining classroom training with on-farm skills training farm technicians will have a unique education, that will equip them for success.

## What skills would a Farm Technician have?

Farm Technicians work on farms that raise livestock and/or grow crops and fibres.

### Crops/fibres:

Farm Technicians are responsible for crop production activities such as:

- Soil and nutrient management
- Crop management
- Integrated pest management

Where applicable, they are involved in:

- Packing
- Grading
- Storing
- Shipping of food and farm products

### Livestock:

Farm Technicians are responsible for herd/flock management including:

- Health
- Care and welfare
- Breeding
- Feeding
- Environmental control

### General Duties

- Farm management tasks and maintenance of properties such as buildings, farm grounds and storage facilities

- Farm Technicians must safely operate, maintain and adjust various equipment such as tractors, forklifts, skid steers, loaders, and precision agriculture systems as well as various 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

## What occupations could a Farm Technician do/what roles would benefit from taking this training?

- Agricultural service contractors
- Farm supervisors
- Specialized livestock workers (e.g. herdspersons)
- Farm foreman/woman

## What is an apprentice?

An apprentice is an entry-level employee who takes part in a specialized training program with a skilled employer. Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training (learning from a certified Journeyperson) and technical training (in-class or virtual).

## Who is a journeyperson?

A journeyperson is someone who has obtained a certificate of qualification in a skilled trade. They are certified to train apprentices. Journeypersons pass on their knowledge and skills to apprentices.

## How many hours do I need in order to be a journeyperson?

Those looking to become a journeyperson right away need 5400 hours in order to challenge the exam. This means you will not go through the apprenticeship pathway. A good example of this would be someone must have 5400 hours as a herdsperson already, in order to challenge the exam.

## What if I have the hours but would like a refresher before taking the exam?

Those with 5400 hours can take the exam, however, if they want to take the refresher course they can do so to prepare for the exam. The refresher course is self-directed, which means it won't take place in a classroom, and should take 90 hours to complete.

## What is the cost associated with this?

Trade qualifier fee is \$740 but is being waived until November 2023. The exam fee is \$148.18.

## How long does the apprenticeship training take?

The apprenticeship training that is set to begin in 2023, will take two years to complete.

## What is the Apprenticeship START Program?

Once an employer has someone on staff that is certified in the Farm technician trade, they can then proceed to register an apprentice to work under their supervision. It's at that time, when NS Apprenticeship Agency staff are completing the registration paperwork, that they will automatically register the employer for the START program, if they qualify.

The employer will receive \$2,500 for registering the apprentice, \$5,000 after they complete level 1 of their apprenticeship (1,800 hours work experience + level 1 technical training), \$5,000 after they complete level 2 of their apprenticeship (3,600 hours work experience + level 2 technical training) and a final completion payment of \$2,500, once they write their exam and become certified in the Farm Technician trade.

If the employer hires a diverse apprentice (women in non-traditional trades, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginal Nova Scotians, Immigrants and Persons with a Physical Disability), the two \$2,500 payments increase to two \$5,000 payments instead. The apprentice will need to self-identify under the Diversity Management section on their registration form, in order to be considered a diverse apprentice.

Depending on the apprentice, the employer (or farm) will receive between \$15,000 - \$20,000 per apprentice through the START program, throughout the whole apprenticeship program. Employers can only qualify for up to 10 apprentices for the START program at one time. Employers need to be registered through Nova Scotia Joint Stock Registry and have an 'active' status at the time of application.

## Questions?

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](mailto:Michelle.Turner@novascotia.ca) 902-679-4303.



# Upcoming Events

## 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

## March 15, 2022

Gear Up for Ag

## March 17, 2022

In the Know: Mental Health Literacy Training

## March 18, 2022

Living Labs Project Session: Riparian Zones and Shelterbelts

## March 23, 2022

Next Policy Framework In-Person Session

## March 24, 2022

Living Labs Project Session: Land Swap

## March 25, 2022

Next Policy Framework Virtual Session

## April 6, 2022

Chicken Producers Association of Nova Scotia AGM



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# Mark's Cards

The new Mark's cards are here! These cards are good for **two** years.

If you need more than one card, please contact Katherine to order more! [comms@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:comms@nsfa-fane.ca) or call 902-893-2293.

## 2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

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