

# news+views

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## AGM Recap



Back in November we held our 127th Annual General Meeting, it's hard to believe we're quickly closing in on 130 years as an organization! This was our second year at the Inn on Prince, and our second year running our meeting in a hybrid format – a big thank you to Art for his great audio-visual work. We would also like to thank everyone who attended, both in-person and online – we had a phenomenal turnout!

Included in this great turnout were several elected officials, we were happy to have them join us over the two-day meeting. Minister of Agriculture, Greg Morrow; Liberal Ag Critic, Keith Irving; and NDP Ag Critic, Lisa Lachance – each joined us to bring greetings and take time to answer questions from the members in attendance. Premier Tim Houston was with us in the evening for the Happy Hour and to kick off our annual meeting banquet!

On the second day MP Kody Blois brought greetings on behalf of the Honourable Marie Claude Bibeau and took some questions from the group.

In addition to our speakers, we were joined by a number of other MLAs: Honourable Barbara Adams (Minister of Seniors and Long Term Care), Tom Taggart (Colchester North), Dave Ritcey (Truro, Bible Hill, Millbrook, Salmon River), and Chris Palmer (Kings West). It's great to see our elected officials taking a vested interest in Nova Scotia agriculture and taking the time out of their busy schedules to attend our meeting and hear directly from our members.

Following Premier Houston's kick off of the banquet, we welcomed Tyler MacLean, President of the Scotsburn 4-H Club to present his winning speech on our evolving industry and the career opportunities that agriculture can provide. Did you know Tyler placed second at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair this year with that speech? Incredible!

Over the two days we heard updates from Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture,

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## Meet our new Team Members!

As the industry evolves, so does the team at NSFA. With a mandate to work on behalf of the industry, we have expanded our efforts in the area of environment & climate change and farm & workforce development. Over the last few months, we have welcomed a number of talented folks to our team here at the Federation to support this work. We'd like to introduce you to each of them and highlight the work each role will focus on.

### **Richard Barrett – Member Services Coordinator**



Richard is the first person you will see when you walk in the office door and likely the person you will hear at the end of the phone when you call the NSFA office. Richard will support members in navigating the supports and services provided by the NSFA and external organizations.

Born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Richard graduated from Memorial University in 2017 with a Bachelor of Commerce. After hopping over a province, Richard completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with a major in Plant Sciences from Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture, graduating in 2020. Richard's desire for sustainability and passion for gardening

was a key component to him working in the agriculture industry. He's looking forward to starting seeds and expanding his garden this spring.

### **Katherine Rutherford – Living Lab Coordinator**



Katherine has joined the Environment & Climate Change team responsible for the Living Labs project – focusing on on-farm research projects. As the project coordinator, Katherine is taking the lead on the land swap project and will be coordinate field work and data management.

Katherine grew up in the rural community of Old Barns, during her younger years she was involved with the 4-H Program and didn't have plans to work in agriculture. Fast forward to high school graduation, Katherine enrolled in the Nova Scotia Agricultural College to get an undergraduate science degree.

During her time at the AC, Katherine started working in research, she found that she really enjoyed it, and has been working in research and/or going to school ever since! Under her belt, Katherine has a BSc (Agr) in Animal Science, MSc in Agriculture and is currently completing a PhD in Biology!

Katherine now resides just outside Antigonish, in Briery Brook with her partner Jason and their two young children. Jason operates Lindenright Holsteins with his parents.

### **Jessica Gilice – Knowledge & Technology Transfer Coordinator**



Jessica also joins the Environment and Climate Change Team and Living Labs project team. Jessica will be supporting the Living Lab work in getting the information learned throughout the project into the hands of farmers. Jessica will be the face behind the workshops, resources, and website.

Jessica attended Saint Mary's University and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Studies in 2021. Growing up on a hobby farm, Jessica was an active participant in 4-H in her younger years and has always been interested in agriculture. This is her first career in the agriculture field, and she's looking forward to working on the Living Labs project! Jessica resides in Kennetcook with her partner Johnathan and their black lab, Rosco.

### **Brian Udoh – Policy Analyst**



*Continued on page 3*

# Team Members Cont'd

The industry continues to face challenges in accessing the workforce it needs. Brian joins us on a term and will be focused on labour and economic policy. The labour market information survey and report will be a primary focus of Brian's. Our hope is that the analysis of data and policy impacting our labour challenges will support NSFA in making recommendations on policy and programming to better support the agriculture workforce.

Brian is an agriculture enthusiast; he has dedicated over 15 years of his career to working solely in the agricultural industry, and has received his education from various parts of the world. He is a Certified Expert in Agricultural Finance from the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, has a minMBA in Food and Agribusiness Management from Business School Netherlands, a Master of Business Administration from the University of South Wales, an Advance Post-Graduate Diploma in Agribusiness Management from James Lind's

Institute, and a Bachelors of Agricultural Technology from the Federal University of Technology, Akure.

With more than 15 years of experience as an agricultural policy advisor, manager, consultant, and project coordinator in the areas of agriculture, circular economy, investment, and trade, he can develop strategies to improve efficiency in the management of agricultural production and industry development based on sustainable solutions.

## AGM Recap Cont'd

Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture, and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. The group also received a presentation on Business Risk Management programs – which was quite beneficial for everyone still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona.

In addition to these updates, we welcomed three keynote speakers:

### **Economic Outlook – Gil Miner, Farm Credit Canada**

Gil provided a look into inflation: is it out of control?, the broad range of pressures on food inflation, how farm input prices are subject to major inflationary prices. According to FCC, the Bank of Canada is not done hiking its policy rate, but they believe that borrowing costs should plateau soon.

### **Safety & Sustainability – Cher Mereweather, Anthesis Provision**

Cher joined us virtually during the Farm Safety Nova Scotia annual meeting to talk about safety and sustainability. When we think about sustainability as an industry, how often are we including safety in that definition? Cher covered three main questions during her presentation: why sustainability matters now more than ever, why health & safety matters in sustainability, and where do we go from here. One quote we would like to leave you with from the presentation is this:

*"Sustainable agriculture is one which depletes neither the people nor the land."*

### **Lean Thinking on Farm – Jana Hocken, Lean Farm New Zealand**

Jana joined us at live from New Zealand at 5am her time to talk about the lean methodology and how it can be applied to farming operations. Lean is the relentless pursuit of identifying and eliminating waste in all its forms in order to improve business performance and customer satisfaction. This presentation was also a great highlight for the Continuous Improvement project that we are offering now through Farm & Workforce Development.

Copies of the presentations that were able to be recirculated following the meeting have been uploaded to the NSFA website. You can find them by visiting [nsfa-fane.ca/agm](https://nsfa-fane.ca/agm).

This was also our first time with a tradeshow at the Inn on Prince, we would like to thank everyone who participated in the tradeshow.

- Perennia
- Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board
- Nova Scotia Crop & Livestock Insurance Commission
- Scotiabank
- BrokerLink Insurance
- Cavendish Agri Services
- Green Diamond Equipment
- Tidal Tractor
- WCB Nova Scotia
- Thyagrissen Consulting Ltd.

- Farm Credit Canada
- TD
- Efficiency Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency

Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank our sponsors! Without their support, our meetings would not be the same. Thank you to:

- Farm Credit Canada
- Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board / Nova Scotia Crop & Livestock Insurance Commission
- Barrington Operational Performance Services
- MNP
- TD
- Scotiabank
- Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture
- Chicken Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Scotian Gold
- Egg Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Cattle Producers
- Digital nGenuity
- Milk Moovement
- Turkey Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Patterson Law
- Medavie Blue Cross
- Hub International
- Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association.

Save the date for #NSFA128! We'll be back at the Inn on Prince **November 23-24.**

## Policy Corner

### Labour Market Information Study 2.0

*NSFA is once again asking members to participate in the Labour Market Information survey!*

Until **February 28, 2023**, NSFA members are asked to complete the Labour Market Information Survey. The information gathered from this survey is invaluable. By completing the survey, you will be providing insight for activities worked on by our Farm and Workforce Development team and provide timely, relevant statistics to support our lobby and advocacy work.



As mentioned – this is the second iteration of the LMI survey. With the first survey, we created a Labour Market Information report. This report contained information from the analysis of the survey as well as trends from external sources such as Statistics Canada. Below are some findings from the survey and how we are using that information:

#### Technology Adoption:

Understanding the interest in technology adoption, the Farm and Workforce Development team has been working on information sessions and programs to support the adoption of Continuous Improvement on farms. More information about Continuous Improvement can be found at [nsfwd.ca/continuous-improvement](https://nsfwd.ca/continuous-improvement).

The survey last year asked about the attributes of employees that farms are looking for. From this list, the Farm and Workforce Development team is working to attract new employees to the sector



*Figure 1: Demonstrates the number of farms looking to adopt technology in the next 5 years (starting in 2022).*

and can demonstrate to people who are not familiar with the industry the attributes farms are looking for when hiring. Some of the traits include: willingness to learn, willingness to work, commitment and positive attitude to name a few.

Coupled with attributes is training. Once you have the person you are looking for, training may be required. Applied learning is an aspect of Farm and Workforce Development's work that will lead to the development of technical skills in both employees, employers, and new entrants to the industry.

The survey feeds into a larger Labour Market Information project also being worked on by the thirteen other industry sector councils. With the larger project, the team will work on a new dashboard with information relevant to farm employers and agriculture policy makers. While we have unique challenges and opportunities as an industry, conducting this project with other sectors will identify similarities across sectors and where we can align resources and efforts. Alternatively, we can see where we are

different from other associations. For those of you who participated last year – the survey is much shorter!

We'd like to thank everyone who participated in the survey last year! We had 145 responses – help us exceed that this year!

Questions about the survey and project can be directed to Maxine at [mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca)

#### Crop & Livestock Protection Webinar Recap

On December 14th of 2022, we hosted the Crop and Livestock Protection webinar, which was presented by a four-person panel of Managers in the Animal and Crop Protection branch at NSDA. Steven Tattrie (Director of Animal & Crop Protection), Kim Knight (Manager of Animal Health Laboratory), Dr. Wilma Schenkels (Chief Veterinary Officer/ Veterinary Services) and Amy Sangster (Manager of Animal & Crop Services) took time to discuss the work of their respective teams.

Amy is the manager of Animal and Crop Services and is involved with the Pest and

Regulation group, and the Animal and Plant laboratory. These teams play a vital role in the administration and inspection of the acts that are directly associated with agriculture. During her presentation, Amy explained the importance of coordination and strong communication with various organizations and agencies. The branch has a significant impact on the dairy industry, as they play a role in the education, investigation of licensed dairy facilities, investigation of farm milk quality related concerns and provide technical expertise to the bulk milk graders certification course. The Animal and Crop Services branch is also responsible for the enforcement of new regulations.

This branch plays a significant role in the management of weeds within the province due to their involvement in reviewing and updating Nova Scotia weed control legislation. The branch is involved with the weed control advisory committee, the wild chervil program for the protection of land, along with the planning and conducting of the rotating annual weed survey. Amy explained their role in the Agriculture and Marketing Act, including the prevention and control of apple maggot regulations and the Nova Scotia wine standards regulations.

They have projects regarding premise identification, mass deadstock disposal, pesticide minor use coordination, and nursery inspections for the strawberry and raspberry industry, with the help of their partners at Perennia. The branch works on the plant health strategy, which supports the national emergency preparedness. This involves collaboration with working groups targeted towards biosecurity, emergency response and surveillance. Amy is also involved with the Animal and Plant Lab. This is an ISO accredited lab that tests samples to support and inform the industry on production decisions. The most common samples taken are water, soil, raw milk and tissue.

Kim Knight spoke on her involvement with the Animal Health Laboratory, which is a level 2 biosafety facility and abides by both national and international standards. The lab is also a member of

the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network (CAHSN). This lab offers services and support to food safety for producers and the meat inspection program, provincial animal welfare programs, veterinary clinics and Agriculture producers and national disease surveillance programs. This lab tests for bacteriology, parasitology, serology, histology and pathology.

The final speaker was Dr. Wilma Schenkels, who serves as the Chief Veterinary Officer. She spoke about her role and the importance of ensuring animal health and welfare, along with acquiring and retaining veterinarians for the province of Nova Scotia. Dr. Schenkels is a member of the Council of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVO), which strives for consistency of animal health and welfare approaches, policies, and information sharing within Canada. This includes animal health and welfare regulations, veterinary leadership on nationwide policies, disease prevention, control and surveillance and emergency planning.

This process requires strong collaboration on animal health issues within Canada. Her position also requires strong understanding and monitoring of Nova Scotia legislation pertaining to animals and livestock. She is involved with Livestock Health Services Program, along with involvement on several boards regarding animal health issues. She is also involved with emergency preparedness with respect to a number of potential diseases.

This webinar was posted to the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture's Youtube channel. The full webinar can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JILPtkrGgVs> and any questions can be sent to the panel (information provided in the video) or to Maxine MacLean ([mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:mmaclean@nsfa-fane.ca)).



# Introducing Your 2023 Council!

We ended our Annual Meeting with a full slate of Council members. At the first Council meeting following the AGM, the officer roles were decided on. We would like to introduce you to those who will be representing our farms across the province and working to ensure your voices are heard.

## **Allan Melvin, President – Kings County**

Together with his father and uncle, they operate Melvin Farms Ltd. a 600-acre farm that produces cauliflower, green onion, cabbage, romaine hearts, and leeks. Over the years he has served on various agricultural boards including the Nova Scotia Young Farmers, Kings County Federation of Agriculture, and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council.

## **Alicia King, 1st Vice President – Antigonish County**

Alicia and her husband, own and operate Six Maples Farm. Here they raise beef, sheep, meat birds and laying hens – they direct market much of their product, sell at the Antigonish Farmers Market, and on the commodity markets as well.

## **Jocelyn Durston, 2nd Vice President – Kings County**

Jocelyn and her partner, own and operate Seven Acres Farm. Together they grow a mix of vegetables, herbs and flowers. Additionally, they make naturally fermented foods like sauerkraut and kimchi. They sell their products through the Wolfville Farmers' Market and at their own roadside stand located on the farm.

## **Bert Meyer, Corporate Secretary & Treasurer – Pictou County**

Bert and his family own and operate Hummingbird Farm. Here they run beef cows and meat goats, they also grow raspberries and tree fruits. Additionally, Bert sells livestock supplies, and you can likely find him at the sale barn in Truro every Thursday.

## **Tim Marsh, Past President – Hants County**

Tim is a beef and crop farmer along the dykeland in Poplar Grove. Tim farms 750 acres of land of which almost 300 acres is dyke land. He currently serves as the NSFA rep for the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

## **Lauren Park – Kings County**

Lauren is a beekeeper, specializing in queen bee rearing. In addition to her farm, Forest Hill Apiary, Lauren manages the 2000 hive Cosman and Whidden Honey farm specializing in fruit pollination and honey production.

## **Peter Morine – Lunenburg County**

Peter and his wife Margaret are farming beef, forage and forestry with their son Andrew. Peter has been active in the agriculture industry for many years, he was one of the founding members of Farm Safety Nova Scotia and has been the President of the Lunenburg Queens Federation of Agriculture since 2003.

## **Andy Parker – Kings County**

Andy and his family operate CAP Farms Inc, an apple farm in Grafton. This farm was started by Andy and Gail in the 1980's and was managed by Gail until Andy's retirement in 2007. The farm is currently being transitioned to their daughter Janet.

## **Matthew Roy – Shelburne County**

Matthew owns and operates Coastal Grove Farm in Upper Port La Tour. Matthew has been farming for over 25 years. Whether it was with livestock, hay, vegetables, or novelty crops. Over the years he has farmed conventionally, no-till, biodynamically, and organically, and has also practiced permaculture.

## **Catherine Manning – Hants County**

Catherine grew up on a dairy farm in Pictou County. After graduating for the NSAC with a B.Sc. Agriculture, Catherine and her husband Dean pursued farming while holding down jobs in the agriculture industry. Together they operate Manning Family Farm, a mixed farm of beef and vegetables in Falmouth.

## **Harry Van der Linden – Antigonish County**

Harry Van der Linden operates Lindenright Holsteins with his family just outside Antigonish, in Brierly Brook. Harry has always been involved in agricultural organizations, most recently with Holstein Canada.

## **Jacob Mullen – Digby County**

Jacob and his wife Colette have been farming for 18 years. In 2002 they began farming with 1 cow/calf and 5 chickens, from there they have raised various numbers of broiler birds, laying hens, pigs, cattle and goats.

They are all looking forward to the year ahead.



# Young Farmers Update

NS Young Farmers are planning for an active year representing their membership.

Recently the 2023 executive was elected at the first board meeting following the AGM. They are:

**President:** Rebecca Archibald

**Vice-President:** Jillian Sogorka

**Corporate Secretary/Treasurer:** Allan Melvin

Other directors include: Jonathan Waugh, Alana Bent, Tyler Jordan and Sara Swinkels. The Canadian Young Farmers Forum (CYFF) is represented by Nichole van Dyk.

The group continues to work on the strategic goals identified in 2022.

## Connections and Networking

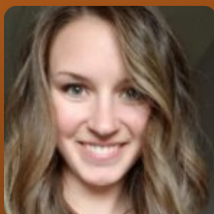
- Participating in a Maritime Ag Podcast in February
- Continuing to feature young farmers stories monthly on Social Media Takeovers
- Meeting with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture Council to explore common goals.

## Learning and Education

- NSYF members can access training at a reduced rate and participate in events that deliver pesticide points. These are primarily advertised through social media and newsletters.
- There is \$200 per member available for Personal Development or Training, including Farm Safety courses, First Aid, Forklift or Fall Protection and a variety of business or leadership courses and conferences.



## 2023 NSYF Officers



Rebecca Archibald  
President



Jill Sogorka  
Vice President



Allan Melvin  
Secretary/Treasurer

## Advocacy

- Developing a Policy and Position Document. This will help strengthen government relations by creating a young farmer centered framework.
- Member input is important and helps in making the organization aware of advocacy opportunities on your behalf is needed.

## Communications

- We continue to make sure we have the best methods of reaching members and responding to their needs in a timely manner.
- Recently an online Suggestion Box was created, where members can drop thoughts, ideas, information to share, event themes and action items. You can access the form here: [nsyoungfarmers.ca/about-nsyf/suggestion-box/](https://nsyoungfarmers.ca/about-nsyf/suggestion-box/)

## Future Pipeline

- Participating in Ag in the Classroom Day, high school career fairs, and events like Open Farm Day contribute to the Future Pipeline Theme which focuses on showcasing opportunities in agriculture.

# It's time to join Nova Scotia Young Farmers!

Sign up or renew your membership by visiting [nsyoungfarmers.ca](https://nsyoungfarmers.ca)



## Public Trust Update

Join us as we Celebrate Canadian Agriculture on February 15!



Let's celebrate the food we love

It's Canada's Agriculture Day! Wednesday, February 15, 2023, is Canada's Agriculture Day and we are celebrating in a few ways this year!

Meet Your Farmer has teamed up with The Kilted Chef! Tune in to his Facebook live show at 3PM on February 15 to cook an all-Canadian dish! A Nova Scotia farmer will be cooking along side Alain for an extra special show!

We've also teamed with Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture and Halifax Public Libraries to host our first in-person Ag Day event since 2020! We are so excited to be heading to Halifax Central Library! This event will also be livestreamed to Meet Your Farmer and Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture Facebook pages and Meet Your Farmer YouTube. Our theme for this year is "The Future of Food". You can find more details at [meetyourfarmer.ca/events](https://meetyourfarmer.ca/events).

Our very popular annual art contests for kids are back again this year! Grab your crayons, markers, paints, or whatever you like and head on over to [meetyourfarmer.ca](https://meetyourfarmer.ca) to find a colouring sheet to complete



Monday, February 27, 2023

10AM-3PM

Inn on Prince Hotel, Prince Street, Truro

Lunch provided



for a chance to win an awesome prize pack! Prizes available for ages 2-5 and 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 dream farm would look like and what you would grow or raise. You can include buildings, machinery, animals, and plants/crops. Let your imagination soar! Deadline to enter both competitions is February 15, 2023! Details are on our website.

Canada's Agriculture Day is one to celebrate. We encourage everyone to participate and to help you, we have put together some resources for you to. Visit [nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/fact-sheets-infographics/](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!

### Preparing for Media and Presentations- Training with Allison Garber Communications

Do you get media requests or speak in front of audiences? Are you a Canadian Ag Literacy volunteer? We've got a one-day training opportunity with Allison Garber Communications to learn about: the current media environment, how to prepare for interviews, developing key messages, and a presentation refresher. We are also going to run some mock interview sessions to put these skills to the test! No cost to attend but registration is required.

### We're Going on Tour!

We've teamed up with the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists to host a food systems partner tour! Check back in with us for a chance to visit farms and food businesses and chat with other food system partners. Details coming soon!

# Benefits of Riparian Zones and Shelterbelts

Written by: Thomas Cornell

As part of the Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS) – Living Lab program, Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) will be working with producers in Nova Scotia to establish forest riparian buffer zones on agricultural lands where none currently exist, and they will be planting shelterbelts along the edges of wild blueberry fields. For more than 30 years CARP has been involved in projects to help protect our waterways, making them a great candidate to develop best management practices for this activity.

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into cropping and livestock systems. Establishing forested riparian buffer zones (FRBZs) by planting trees around exposed waterways, and planting shelterbelts (sometimes called windbreaks) at field edges or within fields, are two effective agroforestry strategies which address several on-farm challenges and play key roles in climate change mitigation.

Over 50 years of research have demonstrated that FRBZs have the potential to provide many direct benefits to an agro-ecosystem and contribute to the intergenerational resilience of a farm. Mature trees act as windbreaks, limiting topsoil loss, drying of the soil, and protecting crops from damage from wind. Depending on design, these windbreaks can capture and spread snow over fields, protecting soil from winter rains and wind, reducing both compaction and erosion. Leaf litter from deciduous trees can add valuable organic matter to streams and surrounding fields, feeding soil life, and potentially improving plant health.

During flood events, floodplain areas that are planted as riparian buffers slow the flow of water and encourage infiltration, avoiding crop losses and mitigating downstream flood damage. Flowering plants and grasses in the buffer zone provide



habitat for a diversity of beneficial insects and invertebrates, part of an integrated approach to managing agricultural pests and performing crop pollination. In the root zone of established FRBZs – which is typically saturated with groundwater – microorganisms convert nitrate from fertilizer into nitrogen or nitrous oxide gas, limiting pollution of downstream waterways and helping to protect the ocean from harmful algal blooms which are toxic to wildlife and humans. Finally, the shading that trees provide to natural waterways is vital – this keeps water cool, improving habitat quality for fish and macroinvertebrates which require it for their survival and reproduction.

Many similar farm benefits exist for shelterbelt plantings. In addition to reducing wind erosion and crop damage, well-designed shelterbelts restore lost habitat for beneficial insects, mammals, birds, and amphibians, and can connect already existing forested areas with corridors that did not previously exist. They can also be designed to produce crops such as nuts, fruit, or woody materials.

In both cases, FRBZs and Shelterbelts have massive potential to store carbon and mitigate climate change effects. Woody biomass, the living portion of trees both above and below ground, constitutes much of the carbon stored. Disturbed soils expose organic carbon compounds to oxygen, making it available for microbial breakdown, so soil that is converted from a regularly disturbed system, such as annual tillage, to a stable system with perennial plant roots, will have carbon stores increased. The soil food web

community of micro- and macro-organisms such as bacteria, fungi, nematodes, and insects in these stable systems contribute to healthier soil and can provide integrated pest management services. Such carbon-rich soil is less susceptible to erosion and more capable of storing precipitation and replenishing groundwater, further increasing the water resilience of the entire landscape.

This proposed Living Lab activity aims to establish three FRBZs and three shelterbelts on working farms. The shelterbelts will be implemented in wild blueberry production, which stands to benefit from pollination services provided by native bees which require native plant diversity for habitat (these bees are early emergers and can be more effective pollinators of wild blueberries than the introduced European Honeybee). FRBZs will be established in fields currently in annual production, with increased soil disturbance. In each case, the species of trees and shrubs selected will be tailored to the site, taking into consideration soil type and quality, water, and nutrient availability. Effects on water quality, insect abundance and diversity, soil carbon, greenhouse gas emissions from soil, and overall measures of soil health will be studied.

We are still seeking a third producer partner for the riparian buffer portion of this project. If you are interested or would like to learn more about this project, please contact Thomas Cornell, Clean Annapolis River Project's Assistant Stewardship Coordinator at [thomas@annapolisriver.ca](mailto:thomas@annapolisriver.ca). If you would like more information on the Living Lab project, please contact Carolyn Marshall, the NSFA's Environment and Climate Change Manager at [cmarshall@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:cmarshall@nsfa-fane.ca).

## Hiring Workers

Hiring workers is one of the most important activities you will take on in your business. Although it might seem early, now is the time to start thinking about hiring for the upcoming busy season! There are lots of items to consider such as the job description, job posting, platform for recruiting and what to do when people apply.

As an NSFA member, you have access to the Agri HR Toolkit developed by CAHRC, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council. This toolkit can help you find skilled workers by providing guides, templates, resources and critical questions for you to ask yourself about your business. Many of the resources can be downloaded and customized. The Farm and Workforce Development team has partnered with CAHRC to offer this tool to all NSFA members for free. Be sure to contact the NSFA office to receive your access code!

### Job descriptions and postings

A good, well thought out job description will help you determine what's important in a particular role -what attitudes, skills or experience someone needs to be successful on your farm. It will also help the job seeker decide if they might be a good fit. Job descriptions clearly identify the key tasks, duties and responsibilities of a particular job. This document will play a key role in clarifying roles and expectations for new workers during orientation as well as help you to accurately evaluate performance and track progress.

As an employer, you should start with a *job analysis*. It should be an accurate and honest evaluation of what you need and what you can offer. It's just for you, so be blunt – you can re-word it later for the actual job description and posting.

- What do you specifically want this employee position to address?
- What salary/wages can you pay?
- What benefits can you offer? Medical, dental, vacation time, employee discounts or free products, flexible hours, option to work remotely.
- What hours do I need the employee to work?
- What Core Competencies does the employee need? These are observable behaviors, skills and knowledge such as communication, teamwork, specific computer literacy, attention to detail.
- Are there specific training requirements? Certificates like First Aid or WHMIS? Ability to use certain equipment?
- Are there specific educational needs? Do they need to have a degree or diploma?

Once you have those details, you can create the *job description*.

**The AgriHR Toolkit has job descriptions for multiple positions and multiple commodities ready to download and modify to meet your needs!**

A *job posting* is an external document used in recruiting efforts. In addition to providing the job description, a job posting is your opportunity to let potential workers know other aspects of the job and work environment. These might include working conditions, organizational values and why they should come work for you!

A good job will strike a balance between being realistic and highlighting what is unique, interesting, and exciting about the job. It is important to market what sets your farm or business apart from the rest or what makes it a great place to work. Think about your farm/business culture. What are you passionate about that makes your farm a great place to

work? Are you focused on your people, environmental concerns, adapting new technology?

### NS Ag Jobs

Farm and Workforce Development oversees the Nova Scotia AgJobs job bank. This job bank provides an easy way for job seekers to see what jobs are available in the province, specifically in agriculture.

This job bank is actively promoted at job and career fairs across the province. In December 2022 alone, NS Ag Jobs had 663 website clicks, averaging at 21 per day.

Visit [nsagjobs.ca](https://nsagjobs.ca) to create a profile and upload your job postings today! If you need assistance, reach out to the NSFA office at 902-893-2293 or email [farmandworkforce@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:farmandworkforce@nsfa-fane.ca)

*Remember: the advertising process is about attracting the best-suited workers to your farm, not the greatest number.*

### Interviewing Process

Although interviews may seem time consuming, they can help to save time in the long term, as they are a great way to make sure that the candidate has the skills needed for the job and are a good match for your farm.

#### Tips on deciding which questions to ask:

- *Job knowledge questions* that focus on the technical knowledge required. Example: What steps are involved in planting a strawberry field?
- *Situational questions* that explore what the candidate would do in hypothetical job-related situations. Example: How would you respond to a customer who is not happy with the products received in their CSA box?
- *Behavioral questions* give insight into how the candidate behaved previously in job-related situations. Example: Can you give me an example of a time that you solved a problem at work? What steps did you take?

**Temporary Foreign Worker hiring reminder: if you are planning for arrivals May-September, now is the time to start your LMIA application.**

# Winter.



The weather is cold, wet and unpredictable.

The sun sets before the supper dishes are cleared from the table.

You don't feel like going out, socializing or doing much at all.

For some people, this time of year is a wonderful – skiing, snowshoeing, cozy nights by a fire – for others it may be difficult to get through each day. It is okay for the winter months to be less enjoyable, but if you feel that you or someone you know is experiencing increased stress or sadness, it may be time to talk to someone.

## Signs and symptoms of declining mental health may include:

- **Change in substance use.** *Are you drinking or smoking more than usual?*
- **Over or under functioning.** *Are you not performing the way you used to?*
- **Impatience.** *Do you constantly feel on your last nerve?*
- **Anger and intentional cruelty.** *Are you lashing out at others?*
- **Avoidance.** *Are you avoiding friends, family, situations?*
- **Forgetting things, being distracted.** *Are you unable to focus on what's going on around you?*
- **Changes in sleep or appetite.** *Are you sleeping or eating more than usual? Less?*

- **Headaches or lack of energy.** *Do you just not feel yourself physically?*
- **Feeling hopeless or depressed.** *Does nothing seem worth the effort?*
- **Self-blame.** *Do you feel that things going wrong are your fault?*
- **Shame.** *Are you ashamed about any of the above?*

If you or someone you care about is experiencing the above, you might consider phoning the **Farm Family Support Line**.

1.844.880.9142

This number will give you access to confidential and immediate support 24/7/365. This is intended for farmers, their families and their employees. Financially supported by Farm Safety Nova Scotia through various funding sources, you have access to up to 3 hours of service at no cost.

## Strategies for coping with declining mental health

If you joined us in December to hear from Patricia Auchnie, you are familiar with the 4 strategies she presented on improving your state of mental health. These strategies - Accepting what can't be changed, Avoiding stressors, Altering your situation and Adapting your internal thoughts are useful tools for addressing your mental health and improving your wellness.

Don't forget to visit the We Talk. We Grow. website at [wetalkwegrow.ca](http://wetalkwegrow.ca) for other mental health resources.

### Strategy 1: Accept

Accept what you cannot change

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable
- Share your feelings to reduce their power over you
- Learn to forgive and move on
- Look at challenges as opportunities for growth

### Strategy 2: Avoid

Avoid unnecessary stressors when you can

- Learn to say no
- Set up personal boundaries
- When you can, avoid people who create a stressful environment
- Prioritize your to-do list and drop tasks/activities that aren't truly necessary

### Strategy 3: Alter

Alter the external situation

- Modify your environment
- Change up routines – what you consume, how you move, what you watch, where you go
- Establish boundaries in your relationships

### Strategy 4: Adapt

Adapt your internal thought process

- Reframe problems as a desired solution. "I don't sleep enough" becomes "I need to improve the quality of my sleep"
- Evaluate the potential consequences of various actions, make sure you look at the bigger picture
- Set clear and reasonable expectations and standards for yourself.

# Upcoming Events

## February 14-16

Atlantic Poultry Conference

## February 15

Canada's Agriculture Day

## March 1

Chicken Producers Association of Nova Scotia Annual Meeting

## March 7

Egg Farmers of Nova Scotia Annual Meeting

## March 12-18

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week

## March 28-30

Dairy Focus Atlantic



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## FARM FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

A confidential, short-term counselling and advisory service - 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.

Available to farmers or their immediate family members.

Farm Family Support Line is funded by Atlantic Provinces  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Farm Safety Nova Scotia



FOR NOVA SCOTIA FARMERS  
SEEKING SUPPORT

NO COST FOR UP TO 3 HOURS  
OF SERVICE PER ISSUE

LINE IS OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY

1-884-880-9142

TTY: 1-877-338-0275



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