

news+views

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Natural Resources and Economic Development - Challenges in the Agricultural Sector



On May 23rd, our Executive Director Carolyn Van Den Heuvel appeared as a witness before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development. Alongside Chicken Farmers of Nova Scotia, and the Department of Agriculture, we discussed the current challenges to the agriculture sector.

Carolyn's opening remarks covered the current state of our industry and the key challenges outlined in the 'Growing Nova Scotia Together' report. This included dire mental health statistics for farmers, stressors that farmers have identified and examples of the policies that can influence our industry such as increases in minimum wage, carbon tax and climate change. The bottom line was the critical need for constructive dialogue between policy makers and industry to ensure the prosperous and sustainable future of our agriculture industry.

Witnesses were asked a number of questions from elected officials spanning a variety of topics including:

- Rural Cell Service
- Food & Beverage Strategy
- Workforce Development
- Labour Shortages
- Agriculture Land Access
- Administrative Burdens
- Temporary Foreign Workers (MSI Coverage)
- Technology Advancements & Adoption

The committee meeting is available to watch online on the Nova Scotia Legislature's Youtube Channel at the following link:
youtube.com/@NovaScotiaLegislature



Message from the Executive Director

We recently faced the largest wildfires in Nova Scotia history. Farms were impacted by the Shelburne and Tantallon fires. We are working with farms in the impacted areas to identify their needs as they return to their operations. Our thoughts are with those affected. Please reach out with any concerns you may have.

I wanted to give you an update on the organization because as the industry evolves, so does the NSFA. Core to our mandate is to be responsive to the needs of the industry. It's no surprise to members that the challenges and opportunities facing the industry continue to increase.

A core part of our role is to ensure the industry's voice is represented and at the table. Our goal is to elevate the profile of agriculture throughout Nova Scotia and to influence government policy, legislation, and programs to strengthen the industry. You'll see updates on our Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture and our attendance at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development – this is how we work to elevate our profile!

But what does it mean to influence the government? We review legislation and policy that impacts farmers. Depending on the results of that review, we will make recommendations and advocate to the government to ensure an agriculture lens is applied to the policy and/or communicate the impact to farmers. We participate in various government and industry consultations and submit formal recommendations. This includes topics like the National Agriculture Labour Strategy, Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, Sustainable CAP Programming, Traffic Safety Act and regulations, and Temporary Foreign Worker Housing regulations.

We are strong believers in industry-led, government-supported initiatives. This means that the industry is taking the

lead in identifying the tools, resources and best practices needed, and the government provides the funding resources to do the work. We support our members by providing tools and resources to support farms in managing stressors and implementing best practices – Environmental Farm Plan, farm safety, workforce development, public trust, etc. And this is where things have really evolved in our organization over the past number of years and we're looking forward to tackling the work!

We have been successful in securing additional funding to support farmers in the areas of environment, public trust, mental health, farm safety and workforce development. This means you will be seeing announcements in the coming months to hire the people we need to do that work and to be a resource to you!

Position Transitions

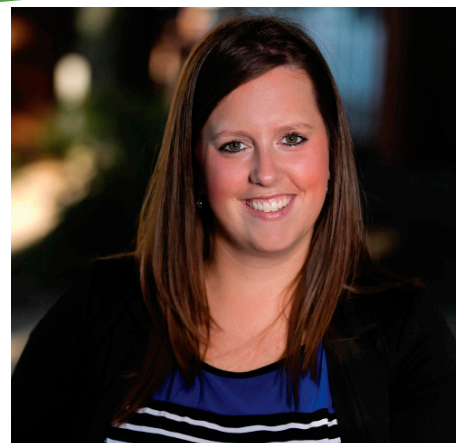
Katherine Tuttle, Communications Manager is currently on maternity and we are excited to have Leah Visser onboard to fill the role. I am also thrilled to announce that Janette McDonald has moved into the Associate Director role to support leadership and operational oversight across the organization! This means we will be looking for another agricultural ambassador to support the public trust work of the organization.

Farmer Wellness Coordinator

We recently welcomed Allison Hancock as a Farmer Wellness Coordinator. Allison will focus on reviewing, evaluating, and delivering mental health and wellness resources specifically for Nova Scotia farmers.

Environmental Farm Planner

There has been increased demand for our Environmental Farm Planners with the augmented focus on the environment and cross-compliance between EFP and other programs (e.g. ProAction, BRMs) so we will be adding a third coordinator to provide this support and meet your needs!



Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director

Farm Safety Coordinator

We will be filling our Farm Safety Coordinator position now that we have confirmed funding – there was a gap in this role as we secured funding. You will see this position have an increased focus on on-farm emergency preparedness as we continue to face disasters that challenge our industry.

We have a lot on the go at the Federation office. We are here to support you in navigating the challenges you face. Reach out to chat with any of our staff in the areas that you need support and be sure to let us know about any policy and legislative challenges you are facing so that we can advocate on your behalf!

FARM FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

FOR NOVA SCOTIA FARMERS &
IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS
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



Farm Family Support Line is managed by Morneau Shepell as a Member
Assistance Program funded by Farm Safety Nova Scotia



Ministerial Roundtable Recap

On May 18th, we hosted our first Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture, and presented “Growing Nova Scotia Together”, a report developed to outline the current challenges, opportunities, and solutions for a prosperous agriculture industry in Nova Scotia.

We were pleased to be joined by industry leaders from the following 14 commodity organizations across Nova Scotia:

- Chicken Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Egg Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Farmers’ Markets of Nova Scotia
- Horticulture Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Beekeepers Association
- Nova Scotia Cattle Producers
- Organic Nova Scotia
- Pork Nova Scotia
- Turkey Farmers of Nova Scotia
- Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association
- Sheep Producers Association of Nova Scotia
- Grape Growers Association of Nova Scotia
- Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia

Together, we highlighted the vital role that farming plays in the health of Nova Scotians and the viability of our rural communities. We would like to thank all the following Ministers for their participation including the Honourable

Greg Morrow, Minister of Agriculture, who co-chaired the Roundtable:

- Honourable Susan Corkum-Greek, Minister of Economic Development
- Honourable Jill Balser, Minister of Labour, Skills, and Immigration
- Honourable John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Honourable Tory Rushton, Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables

Over the course of the afternoon, many topics stemming from the presentation of the ‘Growing Nova Scotia Together’ report were brought to the table for constructive dialogue between industry and government. Topics included the province’s solar program, commercial net metering, the Grocer Code of Conduct, connecting industry to additional programs outside of NSDA offerings, Nova Scotia Loyal, capital investments, land banks, and much more!

The Ministerial Roundtable concluded with a Networking Social to facilitate further discussion on the vital role that agriculture plays in our province. We would also like to thank Honourable Timothy Halman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and Tom Taggart, MLA for Colchester North for their attendance at the Networking Social.

Finally, thank you to our industry members who contributed their time and efforts to making this Roundtable a success and bringing the unified voice of so many commodities to the table.

We look forward to collaborating across government departments in the weeks, months, and years ahead, as we work to grow Nova Scotia together.



Report Recap

Last month, the NSFA released a report identifying key areas that require immediate attention to propel our agriculture industry forward. This report lays the foundation for positioning agriculture as a vital sector that aligns with achieving our government's long-term goals in healthcare, population growth, food security, and environmental sustainability.

Nova Scotia's farmers want nothing more than to continue providing safe, affordable, and accessible food for Nova Scotians, but it cannot come at the expense of their physical and mental health, or at the expense of providing for their own families.

In order to provide a comprehensive view of the current state of our industry, the report provided recommendations on a broad spectrum of topics. Priority areas of impact outlined in the report include:

Nova Scotia's Agriculture Ecosystem

Farm cash receipts continue to grow reaching \$752.13 million in 2022, according to Statistics Canada. Yet farm profitability has been challenged for about half a decade in the province. It is critical that we view agriculture as a whole system that includes input suppliers, food processors, distributors and transporters, retail, waste management, and food service, but also involves people, government, society, and research institutions. It is crucial to consider the potential impact of policy decisions on agriculture and to engage in constructive dialogue between policymakers and industry stakeholders to ensure a sustainable and resilient future.

Agricultural Land

Use of land for agriculture is often not the most financially valuable use of the land in comparison to development, therefore, we need to consider agricultural land as a public good and implement effective programs and policy interventions as protection.

Workforce

Our people are our greatest assets and like many industries, we continue to experience a significant gap in our workforce. According to the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, it is estimated that Nova Scotia's agriculture industry has \$33 million in lost sales per year due to workforce challenges and the labour gap is forecasted to increase to 2,644 unfilled jobs by 2029. With 43% of the workforce expected to retire by 2029, there are many opportunities in the sector both at the employee and farm operator levels. There is opportunity that exists for the next generation and those new to the industry. However, we must make farms profitable for new entrants to see their future here, while providing increased investment and support to address the labour gap so that the future is sustainable.

Risk Management

Farms need access to effective risk management programs because it is not a matter of if the next weather event or market disruption hits, but when. We need to move to a more sustainable model where risks are effectively managed, and farms are less dependent on government support following emergency events.

Market Development

With various business models across Nova Scotia farms, both export and local markets must be developed and strengthened. A system-wide lens must be applied to market development and include consumers, grocers, markets, transportation, distribution, and processing. We must make amendments to government procurement policies in our province, while assessing the industry's opportunities and capacity for market development.

Climate Adaption and Resilience

While changes in growing seasons have allowed for crop diversification and extended production, extreme weather events resulting from climate change, such as hurricanes, droughts, heavy rains, minimal snow cover, and late frosts, have also presented significant challenges to the industry. With agriculture being heavily dependent on weather, the effects of climate change must be prioritized. While opportunities exist for agriculture to be part of the solution, the industry also needs support in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Rural Infrastructure

Like all rural industries, we are dependent on rural infrastructure to run our businesses and to recruit and retain our workforce. In order for our rural industries to flourish, investments in rural infrastructure such as cell service and rural roads must continue.

Recommendations

We are at a crucial juncture where our choice is clear – we must work together to alter the course, protecting not only one of Nova Scotia's oldest and most valued occupations – but to protect our farmers working tirelessly today, and the next generation of farmers tomorrow.

The overarching recommendations of the report were made to realize Nova Scotia's goal of achieving a healthy, growing population – and a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farmers and farm families.

An investment in agriculture is an investment in the health, sustainability, and prosperity of our province.

The only way to grow our industry and our province is to work toward a common goal of growing Nova Scotia together.

To view the entire report, visit nsfa-fane.ca/growingnstogether

Resolutions Update



The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) is responsible for managing and overseeing the resolution process while developing policy positions on various topics to support the achievement of a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers. PAC makes recommendations to Council on positions and actions to respond to the resolutions. The ultimate goal of PAC is to develop a policy position manual to support advocacy efforts and program delivery.

There are many different actions that may be taken to support a resolution including:

- We develop a position that states the NSFA's view on a specific topic. A position is used in our advocacy efforts so that we can state the organization's stance on a specific topic.
- We may need to dig deeper into an issue and develop a discussion paper. This is most common when it is a complex topic, and we need to better understand the needs, gaps and impacts on the industry in order to know what the best recommendation and position is.
- Sometimes resolutions require a resource or program to be developed (e.g. training). This often goes directly to one of our program teams or to an external organization that has the expertise on a topic.
- When resolutions are very specific, we may initiate direct advocacy on an issue and send a letter to the responsible government official or schedule a meeting to discuss a topic to ensure it is on their agenda.

Each resolution is approached differently to ensure that we are developing positions, making recommendations, and delivering the support members are requesting and need.

PAC prioritizes resolutions following the Annual Meeting. This is not to say that every resolution isn't important, but we take into consideration industry impact, government priorities, and the level of work required and tackle them throughout the year. This ensures we can make the most impact with the capacity we have. Below you will find an update on the resolution activity, in the order prioritized by PAC.

NS Agriculture First Policy

Therefore, be it resolved, that NSFA lobby Provincial Government to change procurement strategy to a Nova Scotia Agriculture First Policy.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia must amend its procurement policies to require a Nova Scotia first preference for food and agricultural goods purchased by Government institutions including but not limited to hospitals, schools, and residential and detention facilities. The Government of Nova Scotia must recognize the economic, environmental, and social benefits of a Nova Scotia first policy and support the institutions through the required budget allocations, capital investments, education, and training.

Activity Institutional procurement was included in our Growing Nova Scotia Together Report presented at the Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture. We are currently working on a discussion paper to outline the benefits of a Nova Scotia First Policy.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture adopt an actionable diversity, equity and inclusion statement.

Our Position The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is committed to supporting the values of equity and inclusion, while growing the diversity of the industry by listening, engaging, and collaborating with equity-deserving communities.

Activity Diversity, equity and inclusion has been incorporated into the organization's values and will be integrated into NSFA governance and operations. NSFA will be hosting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training. "Growing in Diversity" is also a priority of the Farm & Workforce Development Strategy to foster a culture of inclusion across the Nova Scotia agriculture sector.

Industry-Supported Funding Model for Farm Safety Nova Scotia

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA support FSNS in establishing an industry-supported funding model to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization and its programming.

Our Position The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is committed to supporting Farm Safety Nova Scotia in promoting and supporting health and safety practices within the farm community and to advocate for industry-led, government-supported programming.

Activity FSNS has secured funding for the next 5-years and will be reviewing the request for industry-supported funding in the coming years.

Natural Products Marketing Council - Full Council

Be it resolved that, NSFA call on the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to recognize the vital role the NPMC plays in Nova Scotia's Agriculture Industry by appointing a full complement of Council members before the end of 2022.

No position required – direct advocacy.

Activity Letter was submitted to Minister Morrow, two positions have been filled and two positions remain vacant. NSFA will monitor Council composition.

Investment in Weather Forecasting and Data Collection

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA convey to government and appropriate agencies, the importance of increased and continued investment in more specific and detailed weather forecasting and data collection across Nova Scotia.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia and Government of Canada must increase investments in weather stations to ensure more accurate weather data and forecasting are available to farms to make proactive management decisions to mitigate the impacts of climate change and adverse weather conditions, and to support production management decisions. This investment must consider farm and regional-level weather stations with provincial distribution of stations to adequately address the needs of the farm community. Investments must be made to enhance both weather and climate modelling and forecasting to support agriculture production.

Activity Recommendations were included in Sustainable-CAP program feedback and in NSFA's submission to the Federal Governments Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. NSFA will monitor programs.

Agricultural Land Taxation

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA adopt a policy to encourage the behaviour that any farmland taken out of agricultural production, for whatever reason, be taxed by the governing authority at a rate that might encourage these new owners to allow it to continue to be used in agricultural production.

Position yet to be developed.

Activity The Agriculture Land Committee is actively discussing this resolution and reviewing existing policy.

Lab Services for Federally Reportable Diseases

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the government of Nova Scotia to invest in lab services to allow for accreditation for labs in Nova Scotia to test for federally reportable diseases, such as avian influenza and African swine fever.

No position developed at this time – further discussion is required with submitting organizations.

Activity Recommendations on improved emergency preparedness and response support was included in the Growing Nova Scotia Together report.

Natural Products Marketing Council - Conflict of Interest

Be it resolved that the NPMC, in consultation with the commodities it regulates develop conflict of interest guidelines for Council Members.

No position developed at this time.

Activity Letter submitted to Minister Morrow, response has been distributed to submitting organizations to determine whether or not the proposed approach satisfies the resolution.

Processing of Livestock and Poultry

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

No position developed at this time.

Activity The Department of Agriculture announced funding programs to support processing capacity, these programs will be monitored. The NSFA and Agri-Commodity Management Association have been in active discussion on this resolution to understand the gap and needs for processing.

Education on the Risks of Recreational Trespassing

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA in conjunction with the NSDA help educate the public of the risks involved with recreational trespassing.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia, particularly the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, along with industry is responsible for educating the public of the risks involved with recreational trespassing.

Activity NSFA's Communications and Public Trust team is working to develop farmer facing and public facing resources.

Avon River System Management

Therefore, be it resolved, that Hants County Federation of Agriculture is requesting support from the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to lobby for inclusion in the ongoing planning and consultation with federal and provincial governments regarding the management of the Avon River System.

Our Position The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture urges the Government of Nova Scotia and Government of Canada to come to a resolution on the management of the Avon River System and support farms in adapting to the impacts on agricultural land and freshwater resources.

Activity A letter will be sent to government officials to voice our position on the situation.

Increased Funding for Maintenance of Marshlands

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the provincial government for increased funding in relation to maintenance, repairs and upgrades of marshlands and infrastructure related to marshlands. And, further be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the provincial government to utilize the Agricultural Marshlands Conservation Commission in reviewing the provincial budget.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia and Government of Canada must increase its investment in maintenance, repairs and upgrades to the dyke infrastructure and prioritize infrastructure that is protecting viable agricultural land.

Activity This recommendation was included in the Growing Nova Scotia Together report, presented at the Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture. It was also included in NSFA's submission to the Federal Sustainable Agriculture Strategy consultation. Additionally, the 2023-24 provincial budget includes \$7.6M from the Department of Environment and Climate Change for year 5 of the 9-year Flood Mitigation Measures envelope to upgrade the dykeland system.

Cost of Liability Insurance

Therefore, be it resolved, that NSFA should lobby the appropriate provincial government agencies and relevant organizations, and, ask their national federation to lobby the appropriate federal government agencies for actions to resolve this issue; And, further be it resolved, that in the future, liability insurance will be affordable to the agricultural community, either individually or as a blanket policy.

No position developed at this time.

Activity As this is a Canada-wide issue, a resolution has been submitted to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. The NSFA will also further review available insurance and impacts on Nova Scotia farms.



Trucking Assistance on all Limestone Products

Therefore, be it resolved that NSFA lobby the provincial government to pay trucking assistance on all pH-building products with a calcium carbonate equivalent component, based on the percentage of calcium carbonate equivalent in the product.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia and Government of Canada must increase its investment in products improving soil pH to enhance soil health. The Government of Nova Scotia must expand its limestone trucking assistance program to include all pH-building products.

Activity Included in Sustainable CAP recommendations and NSFA's submission to Federal Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Consultations. NSFA will monitor programs.

Emergency Preparedness Committee

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA establish an emergency preparedness committee that would support the proactive preparation and planning that needs to take place in each community across Nova Scotia in collaboration with regionally based federations so that if there is severe destruction, farmers are better prepared to deal with the fall out.

No position required at this time.

Activity NSFA met with the provincial Emergency Management Office and Department of Agriculture representatives to better understand the current emergency management system. NSFA and Farm Safety Nova Scotia have included emergency preparedness, management, and response as part of it farm safety programming. Work will be initiated to establish an industry committee and to provide on-farm resources.

Soil Health KTT

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA Soil and Water Committee prioritize province-wide knowledge and technology transfer of soil health research and best practices.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia, particularly the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, must prioritize province-wide knowledge and technology transfer of soil health research and best practices.

Activity Recommendation submitted to Sustainable CAP to include KTT as a mandatory component of any funded research.

Nuisance Licenses

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby the NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables and the government of Canada to make standing nuisance licenses more readily available.

Our Position Hunting and trapping programs should be available for nuisance instances out of season. Hunting and trapping programs should have a clear and transparent process and be easy to access. The wildlife types designated under these hunting and trapping programs should be reviewed annually to ensure that farmers are able to access appropriate and timely approvals.

Activity Ongoing monitoring as we continue to see challenges of consistency in enforcement across the province.

Access to Resources

Therefore, be it resolved, that NSFA lobbies the Nova Scotia Government to promote or improve access to available government resources and programming for remote areas.

Our Position Nova Scotia farms should have equitable access to government resources and programming throughout the province.

Activity Further analysis is required to understand resource distribution across the province – to be completed at a later time.

Review and Increase Animal Herd Health Assistance

Therefore, be it resolved, that NSFA lobby the Department of Agriculture to review the current rate of Animal Herd Health Assistance and consider increasing rates to reflect inflation and increased cost of veterinarian care for farm animals in Nova Scotia.

Our Position The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture shall conduct a review of the current rate of Animal Herd Health Assistance and consider increasing assistance rates to reflect inflation and increased cost of veterinary care for farm animals in Nova Scotia.

Activity Resolution was shared with the government-industry Veterinary Services Working Group for consideration.

Nuisance Starlings

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture reach out to other Nova Scotia groups (i.e. homeowners) to join efforts to encourage the Nova Scotia government to mitigate the impact of this specific bird species.

Our Position Current research to understand the effectiveness of wildlife mitigation tactics should be funded by government. This research needs to be across industry and province to provide the most value to all farms and production systems. The Department of Natural Resources and Renewables should be responsible for proactively educating and sharing information of best practices for preventing damage. The Department of Natural Resources and Renewables to share, on an annual basis, new and emerging strategies to mitigate against wildlife damage. These may be strategies founded in research or demonstrated as effective in other jurisdictions.

No activity.

Inclusion of Honey Bees in Animal Herd Health Program

Therefore, be it resolved, that NSFA lobby the Department of Agriculture to include honey bees in the Animal Herd Health Program.

Our Position Animal Herd Health Program should be evaluated and modernized to include additional commodities such as honeybees.

Activity Resolution was shared with the government-industry Veterinary Services Working Group for consideration.

Used Guardrails for Farm Use

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby the Provincial Government to allow farmers access to used guardrails.

No position required.

Activity Request was made to Public Works; however used guardrails are part of the contract to install/replace guardrails by vendors who perform the services. Guardrails may be available from vendors.

Farmer Owners Eligible to Collect EI

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby the Nova Scotia Government and the federal government to create the necessary programming to allow farmers the same opportunities as fishers to make EI payments while farming produces income and collect EI when there are periods of no farming income.

No position developed at this time. Further research is required.

Activity Research will be completed later in the year to determine the desired outcome and identify policy solutions.

Community Pasture Funding

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Mira Pasture Cooperative have access to the Community Pasture Support Program.

Our Position The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture should expand the eligibility of the Community Pasture Support Program to all Community Pasture Cooperatives that are accessible to all Nova Scotia farmers.

Activity Recommendation has been made to the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. However, current priority is on Farm Loan Board-owned pastures.

Multi-Farm Funding Applications

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to extend eligibility to allow for multi-farm funding applications which would support joint ventures for a specific project; and where applicable, develop the necessary policy and guidelines to reflect joint venture applications.

Our Position Funding programs should allow for multi-farm applications to support joint ventures on specific projects such as specialized equipment and pond construction. The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture should provide policy guidelines to support successful joint venture projects.

Activity Included in Sustainable CAP recommendations and NSFA's submission to Federal Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Consultations. NSFA will monitor programs.



Harmonization of Regulations to Allow Regulated use of Drones for Pest Control

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby and advocate that the PMRA harmonize its regulations with competing agricultural producing countries to allow regulated use of drones for pest control application.

Our Position The Pest Management Regulatory Agency must harmonize its regulations with competing agricultural producing countries to allow regulated use of drones for pest control application.

Activity An equivalent resolution has passed at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture Annual Meeting. NSFA will support and monitor this work.

Endorse Coalition for Healthy School Food

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA bring its provincial voice and influence to this coalition and also endorse the Coalition for Healthy School Food and formally express that support through the Coalition's website.

Our Position The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture supports the development of a universal, cost-shared healthy school food program for Canada focused on healthy and local food.

No activity at this time.

TFW and Processing

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

Our Position The Agriculture Stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program should be expanded to include the on-farm processing under the eligible National Occupational Codes.

Activity Resolution submitted and passed at Canadian Federation of Agriculture Annual meeting in 2022. NSFA continues to participate in the TFW Working Group. No progress on this resolution to date.

Condition 23 Endorsement for New Drivers

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobbies the Department of Transportation to allow new drivers to take the Condition 23 Endorsement exam provided they have already passed a Tractor Handling Safety Course.

Not applicable.

Activity The NSFA made recommendations to the Traffic Safety Act and regulations consultation, including very specific recommendations on the proposed licensing system. The recommendations made support this resolution.

NS Seats at the Atlantic Veterinary College

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA lobby the Province of Nova Scotia to increase the number of food animal vet seats available to Nova Scotia residents annually at Atlantic Veterinary College to be effective immediately.

Our Position The Government of Nova Scotia should increase the number of food animal vet seats available to Nova Scotia residents at the Atlantic Veterinary College.

Activity Resolution was shared with the government-industry Veterinary Services Working Group. There are a number of potential tactics and recommendations made to support an increased number of veterinarians returning to Nova Scotia food animal practice. Funding for seats at the Atlantic Veterinary College is currently in discussion and NSFA is an active participant in this work.

TFW Employer Supports and Services

Therefore, be it resolved, that the NSFA pursue a feasibility study on the development of an agency that can respond to regional needs and that can assist our agricultural industries in accessing TFW's and SAW's.

No position required at this time.

Activity NSFA engaged consultants to complete a needs and gap assessment report. This report has been reviewed by the Temporary Foreign Worker Employer Advisory Committee and recommendations are going to the June Council meeting for consideration and next steps.

Public Trust Update

Open Farm Day Registration NOW OPEN!

Open Farm Day is Sunday, September 17, 2023. It's the 23rd anniversary and we are gearing up for an exciting year! Open Farm Day will be held online and in-person again this year with the option to register your farm to participate online, in-person or both!

To be eligible to participate we require that:

- Your farm registration is current, and you are member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.
- A virtual visit on your farm will provide an educational experience to the public and/or that an in-person visit will provide an educational experience to the public and follow all current public health guidelines.
- You do not charge admission to visit your farm on Open Farm Day.

Farms that are participating online will need to have recorded videos complete and submitted by August 25th. Support for video editing and creation is available so don't let your hesitation stop you. You don't need to create a video; we can help you!

We are excited to be working with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island again this year. Participating farms will be shared on the Atlantic Open Farm Day website at: www.atlanticfarmday.ca along with the map of farms and all videos! As always, Meet Your Farmer will also be sharing the event.

Open Farm Day is a wildly popular event in Nova Scotia! It is something families from all over the province look forward to each year. To make this event the most



successful it can be, we need farms to share their stories and welcome guests in-person or online. We are here to support you. Please reach out to discuss how we can help.

Registration deadline: July 31, 2023!!

Registration can be completed online at: <https://nsfa-fane.ca/open-farm-day/>

Food Day Canada is Saturday, August 5, 2023!

Shop. Cook. Dine. Celebrate. Canadian. Food Day Canada is an annual event all about celebrating and exploring the flavours of Canada from coast to coast to coast! Help us put Canada on the menu by pledging Canadian and taking part in #FoodDayCanada activities.

Some fun ways for you to celebrate include:

- Hosting a summer BBQ using local ingredients for your family or farm team
- Shop at your local Farmers' Market
- Eat out at your favourite restaurant

OPEN FARM DAY REGISTRATION JUNE 1- JULY 31

Open Farm Day is Sunday, September 17, 2023 and we are inviting farms to participate!

You can:

- host in-person farm tours and events
- create a video
- go live on your social media accounts
- or a combination of any of these!

Details & registration: <https://nsfa-fane.ca/open-farm-day/>

Questions?: Janette McDonald, Public Trust Coordinator-
meetyourfarmer@nsfa-fane.ca or 902-893-2293

OPEN FARM DAY
JOURNÉE AGRICOLE PORTES OUVERTES

MEET YOUR FARMER

and share your meal on social media using #FoodDayCanada

- Pack a picnic and head to the beach or park to enjoy Canadian food in the great outdoors!

Tell your friends and family to shop, cook, and dine Canadian on August 5th! Don't forget to snap a few pictures and share!

Planning an event or display of your own?

If you are preparing for an event or hosting a display at a fair or exhibition, Meet Your Farmer has lots of resources to support you. Colouring sheets, fortune tellers, farm bingo, wool craft, seed jewelry, and more!

Download and print your own materials or receive support printing and shipping. For more information email meetyourfarmer@nsfa-fane.ca or call 902-893-2293.



Cover Crops

Cover Cropping in Annual Systems: Why, What, When, and Where?

You've likely heard of cover crops and their many benefits, but if not, cover crops are crops whose primary purpose is protecting and improving the soil. They can be grown between regular crop production, between rows of perennial crops (orchards and vineyards), or within a crop.

Why grow cover crops?

There are many benefits to using cover crops in your cropping system, such as:

- Decreasing the risk of soil erosion.
- Improving nutrient cycling and decreasing nutrient leaching (particularly nitrogen).
- Helping prevent overland erosion, which can help with manure management.
- Reducing fertilizer costs by keeping nutrients on the field.
- Improving soil organic matter.
- Improving soil biology.
- Improving soil structure.
- Use for livestock grazing and forage.
- Moderating soil temperature.
- Weed suppression.
- Mitigating pests and diseases.
- Nitrogen fixation.

However, the question remains, how do you incorporate them into your cropping system? This project with the Living Labs hopes to tackle that question by using on-farm research to look at different cover crops and termination timings in a winter wheat system. Given that the main goal of the living lab's project is to enhance carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gases, this project will monitor these things while also looking at the feasibility of establishing cover crops in different annual cropping systems. Winter wheat is a common crop included in horticulture and field crop rotations, often to break pest cycles. It is typically

harvested in August, and often no plant residues are left because they are used as animal bedding; this leaves the soil exposed and vulnerable to erosion and loss of nutrients via leaching and runoff. Cover crops can be established to prevent this and help build soil organic carbon.

What cover crops are being grown?

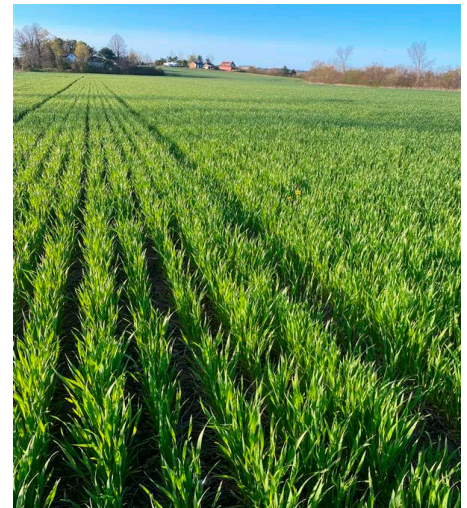
In this project, we look at four different cover crops and two termination timings. These treatments are established in strips 20 feet wide and 200 feet long. The five cover crop treatments are:

1. Frost-seeded single-cut red clover
2. Frost-seeded double-cut red clover
3. Oats and peas no-till drilled into wheat stubble
4. Brown mustard no-till drilled into wheat stubble
5. Control: wheat stubble/volunteer wheat

When to terminate a cover crop?

Typically, cover crops terminate in the spring or the fall. Different termination timing may impact soil carbon, winter weed pressures, and nitrogen credits provided to the subsequent crop. Different cover crops need different termination strategies, depending on how hardy they are; for example, volunteer red clover may compete with a horticulture cash crop, so it needs to be sprayed with herbicide and tilled, while other crops can be winter killed.

Each 200-foot treatment strip is divided in half, each with a different termination timing: spring and fall. The red clover treatments will be terminated in the fall using a herbicide and tilling one week later, and they will be terminated in the spring by spraying and incorporating prior to the cash crop. The oats and peas treatment will be terminated in the fall by incorporating them in the soil and terminated in the spring by leaving it to frost kill. The brown mustard treatment will be terminated in the fall by mowing and incorporating it into the soil and terminated in the spring by being left to frost kill. The control will be terminated in the fall using a herbicide and terminated



in the spring by being left to frost kill.

Where is this project taking place?

One of the challenges of cropping systems in Nova Scotia is the diversity of cropping systems, climate conditions, and soil types. Each farm faces its own challenges and has to come up with solutions that work for them based on their fields, crops, soil type, climate, equipment, and management strategies. We want to capture these variabilities by including systems from across the province. Each year there is one replicated site and three satellite sites throughout the province. This year the replicated site is in Middle Musquodoboit, and the three replicated sites are near Brooklyn, Kingston, and Sheffield Mills. As the project progresses, additional sites will be scattered throughout the province to capture climate, soil, and management variabilities.

This project design is aimed to replicate realistic management practices and understand how they can be incorporated into a production system with the benefits of carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emission reduction, and any potential co-benefits. From this work, we hope to better understand the amount of carbon sequestered and the economics of incorporating cover crops into annual cropping systems. In the long run, farmers will be more equipped to incorporate cover crops on more farms while contributing to a sustainable future.

To learn more about the Living Lab project you can check out our website at <https://nsfa-fane.ca/livinglabs/>.

Sun Safety



Farm Safety Nova Scotia wants to remind you of summer safety tips to keep in mind while working outdoors and around the farm. Take a few minutes each day to consider the importance of sun safety, heat stress, hydration, fatigue and road safety for your families, yourself and your employees.

Sun Safety

It will come as no surprise that farms are one of the top three work environments with high sun exposure, alongside construction and building/property maintenance. High sun exposure can lead to sunburn, sun stroke and long-term effects such as skin cancer.

The Canadian Dermatology Association recommends a number of ways to protect yourself, your family and your employees from too much sun, including:

- Limiting your sun exposure during the times when the sun's radiation is the strongest, between 11 am and 3 pm. Many farms do this by working early in the morning, taking a break during those mid-day hours, and working again into the evening.
- Using a sunscreen with at least SPF 30 and reapply it often. Choose a water-resistant and broad-spectrum sunscreen which provides protection against both UVA and UVB rays, and don't forget to protect your lips with an SPF 30 lip balm. Throw a tube into the tractor and farm truck for easy access.

- Wearing wide-brimmed hats or hard hats with neck flaps and loose clothing that shades your skin.
- Taking advantage of the shade from trees, awnings, buildings or even large equipment.
- Being aware of medications you may be taking that cause your skin to be more sun sensitive.
- Putting in place a sun safety policy or a sun safety program as part of your wellness supports for employees.
- Learning how to check for skin cancer and checking regularly for skin changes.

Sunsafetyatwork.ca has information on sun safety, help for creating your own sun safety program and many resources.

Heat Stress

Working in greenhouses or outdoors on the farm can be heat intensive. The heat from the sun combined with your physical activity can lead to heat stress. Heat stress happens when your body can't self-regulate its temperature, which can lead to heat rash, fainting, heat exhaustion, or even heat stroke.

The humidity and the outdoor temperature combine to contribute to how hot it "feels" outside, and is reported as the humidex rating.

Protecting yourself and employees from heat stress includes:

- Being alert to the signs and symptoms of heat stress in yourself and others.
- Wearing sunscreen, a hat and light weight, loose fitting clothing.
- Drinking lots of water - aim for one cup every 15-20 minutes.
- Taking frequent breaks and moving into the shade.
- Working in the early morning and later afternoon into the evening rather than during the hottest part of the day.
- Knowing first aid responses to heat stress: having the person lay down in the shade, providing sips of chilled water or a sports drink with electrolytes, spraying or sponging with cool water, fanning, and loosening tight or heavy clothing.

Hydration

Water is as important to your health as it is for the animals and plants you may be working with. Drinking plenty of cool water during hot weather helps control your body temperature and keeps your body, joints and organs working. When you sweat, you lose body fluids and those need to be replaced regularly. By the time you feel thirsty, you may already have started to be dehydrated. Here are some ways to get enough fluids:

- Get fluids by drinking water and eating fruits and vegetables that are high in water such as strawberries, melons, apples and grapes.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol which can cause dehydration.
- Add sports drinks to replace lost fluids and electrolytes.
- Carry an insulated reusable water bottle, and make sure others have them as well.
- Milk can help with hydration as it contains sodium, carbohydrates and protein.
- Most adults need two to three litres of fluid per day. Consider starting your day with a glass of water.

Working outside in high temperatures and high humidity, accompanied by sweating, can increase the risk of dehydration. Recognize dehydration by looking for signs like a dry mouth, thirst, tiredness, headaches, dizziness, confusion or dark coloured urine.

Fatigue

When the sun comes up early and sets late in the evening, it's tempting to use all those hours of daylight for work related activities. That can lead to being over-tired and result in accidents and injuries. When you factor in the long hours, physical labour and warm weather, exhaustion can be overwhelming. While there are certainly jobs that have to be completed before it rains, or when timing is crucial, try to balance those tasks with some down time for rest and re-energizing.

As you, your families and your employees work throughout the summer, keep these warm weather safety concerns in mind, and remember that people are a farms most important asset.

Responding to Farmer's Education and Training Needs

The NSFA recognizes the value of having a strong talent pipeline filled with people who are trained and ready to work in a safe, professional, and expert way. Farm and Workforce Development initiatives provide skills training and education that is relevant, practical, and accessible.

Training Assessment Survey

At the beginning of 2023, the FWD team issued a survey around education and training opportunities. The survey's purpose was to understand the needs of our farming community and use this information to shape our decisions around future programming. We had 40 responses, and we would like to extend a thank you to all of those who took the time to complete the survey.

We would also like to remind everyone that any suggestions, ideas or concerns around the education, training and workshop opportunities we provide are always welcome. You can reach out to farmandworkforce@nsfa-fane.ca or phone the NSFA office, 902-893-2293.

Highlights from the survey

The intent of the survey was to explore and assess the training and education needs of Nova Scotia farmers and their employees. We measured the degree of importance that farm operators placed on a variety of topics. Maintaining Environmental Health, Managing Finances and Marketing were all deemed highly important by 45%, 30% and 30%, of respondents respectively. Retirement and Succession Planning (23%) and

Farm Safety Planning and Management (20%) also had significant scores. When asked about topics for courses under the Workplace Education Initiative, the interest in marketing was high again with 67% of respondents either moderately or highly interested in attending the Marketing for Business course. This was followed by Project Management (67% moderately or highly interested), Social Media for Business (64% moderately or highly interested) and Website Design (52% moderately or highly interested). These responses indicate that Nova Scotia's farmers see value in acquiring skills related to marketing, project management, and social media to enhance their agriculture businesses. Being aware of these interests will help us determine which courses will best suit the needs of our members.

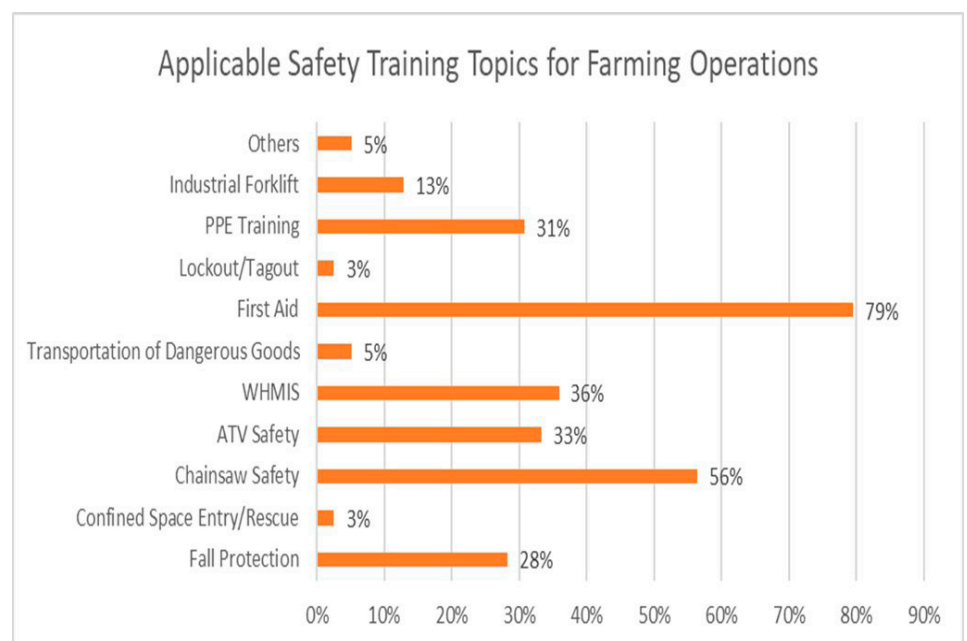
Regarding safety training, which is arranged in partnership with Farm Safety Nova Scotia, the chart below presents the most applicable training and tickets for farming operations based on the interest of respondents.



Why Skills Training Matters

Having the opportunity to participate in training related to workplace skills can increase job satisfaction. The ability to learn new skills or strengthen those they already have may influence an employee's decision to stay by enhancing their productivity and enthusiasm for the job. Growing the skills of your employees can also allow them to take on different roles and responsibilities within your farming operation.

Using online employee training tools can increase uptake due to the often self-paced format and accessibility of joining virtually. Farm and Workforce Development provides several opportunities for virtual skills training at no cost to NSFA members.



Notably, there is a high interest in First Aid (79%) and Chainsaw Safety (56%). WHMIS (36%), ATV Safety (33%) and Fall Protection (28%) also garnered moderate interest.

Young Farmers Update

How NS Ags!

The fifth annual contest to gather pictures of what agriculture looks like to farmers across Nova Scotia took place throughout the month of May. Entries were received through social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and a wide variety of great photos came our way! Thanks to all of those who posted and tagged us – your names were entered into the draw for two tickets to the Tim Hicks concert coming up on September 22nd at Noggins Farm in Greenwich. The winner was chosen through a random draw.

Congratulations to Dave Meister and Christina Caldwell of Bar M Ranch in New Ross for sharing the above photo of their beef cattle on pasture!

Watch for next year's contest and keep taking those pictures of what your NS agriculture looks like!



Summer Event, Antigonish

Mark your calendars and save July 29th for young farmers!

Plans are in the works for a family friendly event that will include a farm tour focusing on the continuous improvement challenge at Lindenright Holsteins, activities for children, and family BBQ social time.

Watch for details and registration through our social media accounts, website events page or emailing us at info@nsyoungfarmers.ca.

Training Funding

The Farm Workforce Development team of the NSFA has made funds available for training, personal development, or professional development.

All members of NS Young Farmers can access \$200 for courses, workshops or training including:

- Safety Training
- Pesticide Courses
- Physical or Mental Health First Aid
- Business & Finance
- Human Resources
- Management
- Leadership
- Succession & Transition
- Plus much more!

When you find a course or training event you would like to have covered, email info@nsyoungfarmers.ca to ensure the training qualifies. We'll help with the paperwork to have you reimbursed for those expenses.

Courses can be in-person or online. There may be fewer opportunities during this busy season, but take a look ahead into the fall and winter, and plan to invest in yourself!

Farm & Workforce Development Continued

Opportunities Through NSFA

SkillsPass

On our SkillsPass marketplace, you can choose from a library of numerous training activities. You have access to short, self-paced courses on topics such as Finance, Communication, Management and much more. This platform also hosts Farm Safety courses, previously accessed through the Farm Safety Nova Scotia website. These include Tractor and Farm Machinery

Awareness, Animal Handling, WHMIS (English and Spanish versions) and several others.

As an employer, you can create a private portal to track staff training and ensure employees are well equipped to help their business succeed. Individuals have access to their certifications in one place to share easily. For a list of available courses and to get started visit www.nsfa.skillspass.com.

Workplace Education

Through partnership with the NS Department of Labour, Skills and

Immigration and their Workplace Education Initiative, we offer mid-length courses to the farming community throughout the winter months. These courses are 10 weeks / 40 hours in length, typically hosted virtually and provide a certificate upon completion. Recent courses offered include Business Skills, Proposal Writing, Financial Fundamentals and Microsoft Excel.

The Farm and Workforce Development team is dedicated to addressing the training needs and preferences of Nova Scotia's farmers. We seek to support the success of our industry by fostering the talent of our workforce and promoting continuous learning.

2023 Council Members

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Upcoming Events

July 4th

FWD is hosting IRCC to present on
Hiring Foreign Talent for Primary
Agriculture
6-7pm, Virtual Event

July 13th

Meeting with Wild Blueberry
Producers Association of Nova Scotia
2:00 pm

July 29th

NSYF Summer Social Event,
Antigonish
Check social for details

August 5th

Canada Food Day

August 9th

Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association
Summer Orchard Tour

August 15-16th

Summer Council Meeting

August 15th

Summer Social, Antigonish

Local Members will receive an RSVP through mail

August 14th

Decisive Farming Webinar - Farm
Management Canada & Telus Agriculture

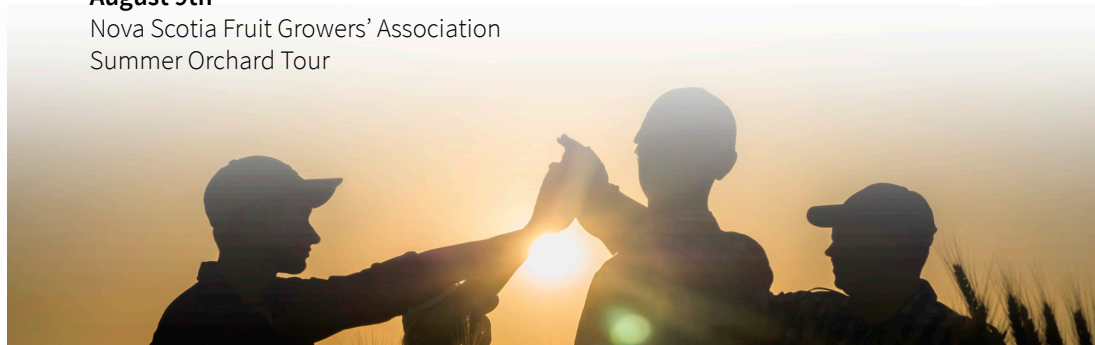
September 17th

Open Farm Day!

Online & In-person

November 23-24th

Annual General Meeting



STAFF

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Shelly MacKenzie
Executive Assistant

Tracey Otterson
Finance Coordinator

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Coordinator

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.