

news+views

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128th Annual General Meeting NOVEMBER 23-24, 2023



We are excited to be hosting our 128th Annual General Meeting happening on November 23rd – 24th this year. We are back at the Inn on Prince in Truro and set to welcome another great tradeshow! We will be offering a hybrid event again this year so that those folks who can't attend in-person, can join us online. We are looking forward to sharing the highlights from this year's agenda- including the introduction of a new meeting format!

Our AGM serves as a valuable opportunity for farmers across the province to come together to learn, network and advocate for our agriculture industry. Thursday's agenda will be packed with engaging keynotes, NSFA updates, tradeshow, special guest and government speakers, followed by our Annual Meeting Banquet

in the evening. After receiving positive feedback from our members-only sessions at AGM, we will be moving to an NSFA Member's-Only agenda on Friday, November 24th. We will be testing this new format to encourage constructive dialogue and increased member engagement opportunities, as we cover a variety of industry topics and resolutions!

Mark your calendars, register and get ready for #NSFA128 as we work to shape the future of agriculture in Nova Scotia.

Register online at nsfa-fane.ca/event/128th-annual-general-meeting/

Continued on page 6 ...



Message from the Executive Director

This year's growing season has been a challenging one, to say the least. Across the province, farms of all types and sizes have been confronted with unpredictable and extreme weather conditions. Within the last year, we've seen a hurricane, a deep freeze, dry spring, wildfires, floods, and continuous rain. It's becoming increasingly evident that immediate support is needed to compensate for the losses and quality impacts farms are facing.

The reality is that these events have had significant impacts on the majority of Nova Scotia farmers. These unpredictable weather patterns have disrupted planting and harvesting schedules, damaged crops, and displaced livestock. There are crops that never made it to the shelves and were plowed under, and we are also seeing significant concerns with forage and grain quality that will impact livestock feed in the coming months.

We have made specific recommendations related to the "events" that have occurred like Fiona and the floods. There are often targeted programs like the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement Program that kick in for specific events. However, we also need to address the cumulative impacts of this season's unpredictable weather that aren't tied to one event or a specific program.

Immediate support is crucial to alleviate the burden farmers are currently experiencing. Government must step up to provide relief for the unprecedented losses we are seeing this season. Funding support and access to technical extension support to navigate the impacts on management practices are essential.

In addition to immediate support, it is critical that we take a comprehensive look at the business risk management programs currently in place. These programs were designed to protect farmers from unforeseen circumstances, but their effectiveness in addressing



Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director

the challenges faced by Nova Scotia farmers is questionable. There are several reasons these programs are not effective including changes in our climate and the diversity of Nova Scotia farms. We also need to remember that business risk management programs not only protect our farmers but also protect our food security.

The Federation has been advocating for changes to the Business Risk Management programs for several years and submitted recommendations to the provincial government in 2022 – yet further action is still required. We will be focusing efforts on business risk management programs in the coming months to further influence policy and program changes.

I haven't shared anything that you don't already know but what I want you to know is that we understand the impacts are significant. Farmers need support now and we need to improve our future resilience through effective business risk management programs and farm management practices.

I hope this season only gets better as we roll into the fall harvest. Remember to look after yourselves and each other.

You'll read more about our Annual Meeting in this edition and we hope to see you there!

Townhalls

We value opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions with our members and recognise this particular importance during times of disaster.

Wildfire Impact Townhall

In June NSFA hosted a Townhall in collaboration with the Yarmouth Shelburne County Federation on the impact of the wildfires to our farm community. We were pleased to be joined by the Honourable Greg Morrow, Minister of Agriculture, and Nolan Young, MLA for Shelburne County alongside additional NSDA representatives.

Flood Impact Townhalls

In June, the NSFA issued a flood impact survey that received 185 immediate responses and hosted two well-attended townhalls. Townhalls were hosted in the areas of Brooklyn and Stewiacke in collaboration with our county federation, the Department of Agriculture and Perennia. We were pleased to be joined by Honourable Minister Morrow and MLAs: Melissa Sheehy-Richard, John A. MacDonald and Larry Harrison.

Thank you to all farmers that attended. These townhalls allowed us to gain a better understanding of the aftermath that farmers are faced with, as well as to identify current support needs and available resources.

A summary outlining the impacts of both events and recommendations for support have been provided to the provincial government by NSFA.

Nova Scotia Agriculture Recovery Fund

The provincial government has invested \$4 million in the Nova Scotia Agriculture Recovery fund that will be delivered by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. Unfortunately, as we see emergency situations continue to evolve and we gain more experience in understanding how we need to be prepared and how we need to respond, the necessity for this work continues to grow.

The Federation will be working closely with our industry partners, members, and the Department of Agriculture to deliver the programming. The Agriculture Recovery Fund will be used to assist farmers with on-farm emergency preparedness and to lead a collaborative effort to enhance the industry's emergency response plan including communications and mental health support during an emergency.

NSFA will act as the convener of industry and emergency response stakeholders to establish and implement an actionable overarching emergency preparedness and response plan, including an incident command system for the industry.

This will support NSFA in actioning a resolution from last year's Annual Meeting - 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 fallout.

The NSFA will establish an industry Emergency Management Steering Committee to support this work to ensure plans are aligned across regions and commodities. The goal will be to integrate existing plans into the industry-wide incident command system to ensure consistency across emergency responses. This work will also incorporate the industry's crisis communication plan and integration of mental health supports before, during and after an emergency.

The objective is to engage with commodity organizations, regional Federations, the Department of Agriculture and both provincial and local Emergency Management Offices to ensure a coordinated effort. The Federation and the Department of Agriculture have worked closely together to support industry with recent emergencies and will continue to collaborate to support farms in managing these risks.

The NSFA will be establishing a steering committee to lead this work in the coming months. Following industry consultation, details on the programming will be released on the Federation's website and through its newsletters. The Federation is prioritizing a collaborative and strategic approach to this work to ensure that we will meet the needs of the industry into the future - it will take time to develop a comprehensive approach to emergency management but the results will be well worth the investment.





Growing Nova Scotia Together Report Update



Following the Growing Nova Scotia Together report presented at the Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture in May, the NSFA has continued discussions on the report's recommendations with government. This includes highlighting the critical support needs of the farm community in order to realise the full potential of the future of agriculture in our province.

Natural Resources & Renewables

In July, President, Allan Melvin and Executive Director, Carolyn Van Den Heuvel met with the Honourable Tory Rushton, Minister of Natural Resources & Renewables and his team as a follow up to the Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture and the Growing Nova Scotia Together recommendations.

Discussion topics included:

- Commercial Net Metering Program and its impact on agriculture
- Opportunities for renewable energy programs on-farm
- Protection of agricultural land as a natural resource
- Wildlife mitigation and nuisance wildlife control

Economic Development

In August, President, Allan Melvin and Executive Director, Carolyn Van Den Heuvel also met with the Honourable Susan Corkum-Greek, Minister of Economic Development and her team to discuss:

- Supporting the recommendations in the Growing Nova Scotia Together report
- Nova Scotia Loyal Program
- Technology and innovation in agriculture
- Cellular and internet service

We appreciate Minister Corkum-Greek and Minister Rushton taking the time to meet with us and discuss the opportunities facing our industry!

CFA Meeting

In July NSFA representatives, Allan Melvin, Carolyn Van Den Heuvel and Tim Marsh attended the CFA Semi-Annual Meeting in Fredericton. There was robust discussion on the current opportunities and challenges facing the industry along with numerous updates on national initiatives. The meeting included an FPT Roundtable with Federal and Provincial Ministers of Agriculture.

Nova Scotia was well represented with NSFA member Steven Eadie in attendance representing Turkey Farmers of Canada. Amy Vanderheide, also an NSFA member, was a panelist at the FPT Roundtable and spoke to sustainability on behalf of Chicken Farmers of Canada.



Summer Meeting Recap

Each year our Council holds their annual two-day meeting in a different part of the province and this year we were in Antigonish!

On Tuesday evening we were joined for our NSFA Summer Social by many local members and would also like to thank the Honourable Greg Morrow, MLA for Guysborough-Tracadie (Minister of Agriculture) and the Honourable Michelle Thompson, MLA for Antigonish (Minister of Health and Wellness) for attending. On Wednesday afternoon we wrapped up with an itinerary of farm tours in the area.

Our 1st Vice President, Alicia King, along with Danny King, owners of Six Maples Farm and Meghan Johnny from Marthas New Growers presented the Lochaber Growers Cooperative to Council on Tuesday. Staff and Council also visited the Antigonish Farmers Market to see part of the operations of the Lochaber Growers Cooperative, a collaboration of five farms providing their community with weekly CSA shares, as well as a presence online and at the market.

Next up we visited Lindenright Holsteins for a tour of their dairy farm covering solar powered energy on the farm,

their genetics program and continuous improvement initiatives that are being implemented on the farm!

Lastly, we visited Scott & Stewart Forestry for a tour of their nursery operations in producing Christmas trees and a variety of seedlings. We learned about environmentally focused forestry and the care taken to ensure that each seedling has the nutrients it needs to thrive at the farm and to perform when it hits the ground!

We also want to give a special thanks to Afton Hills Farm & Boyle's Forever Green Farm & Gardens who planned to welcome us for this year's tours. Our plans changed due to a traffic accident in the area. We send our deepest condolences to everyone affected. With some quick thinking from Council members and staff from the Antigonish area, tour locations were changed. We had a great day of tours and a productive Summer Meeting!



Our Fields to Forks commercial aired on CTV throughout September! This year, we promoted the role that Nova Scotia farmers play as environmental stewards while making integral contributions to the fabric of our province.

Check it out at atlantic.ctvnews.ca/fields-to-forks A special thank you to Angus Ells for being featured this year!

Annual Meeting Continued

Please note we are trying a new format for the 2023 Annual Meeting. Friday will be an invite only session for NSFA Members, staff and special guests. This session will be an opportunity for increased member discussion and engagement! This concept is being introduced after having positive feedback and constructive dialogue during the Member's Only Session held the past few years.

Thursday, November 23, 2023	
9:00am	Registration + Morning Coffee + Tradeshow
9:30am	Welcoming Remarks
9:45am	Speaker – Farmer Tim
10:30am	NSFA Council Highlight – President
10:45am	<i>*Remarks from Canadian Federation of Agriculture - TBC</i>
11:15am	<i>*Remarks from Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada</i>
11:30 am	Media Relations – Jane Taber, National PR
12:15pm	Lunch Break + Tradeshow
1:15pm	NSFA Activity Highlights – Executive Director
1:30pm	<i>*Remarks from Dalhousie University</i>
1:45pm	<i>Climate & Risk Management Panel – Panelists TBC</i>
2:40pm	<i>*Remarks from Ag Critics</i>
3:00pm	Break + Tradeshow
3:30pm	<i>*Remarks from Ministers</i>
4pm	Recess Remarks
4:30pm	End of Day 1
5:00pm	Happy Hour
7:00pm	Banquet 4-H Speaker Lloyd Evans Memorial Award
9:30pm	President's Reception

INVITE ONLY - Friday, November 24, 2023	
8:00am	Morning Coffee (+ Tradeshow)
8:30 am	Welcome & Call to Order
	Declaration of Quorum
	President's Address
	Approval of Agenda
	Minutes of the last meeting
	Business Arising from the Minutes
8:45am	NSDA Update
9:15am	Nominations Committee Report (including candidate introduction)
9:30am	<i>*Agriculture Land Panel – Panelists TBC</i>
10:15am	Break (+ Tradeshow)
10:45am	2 nd Call for Nominations
10:50am	Farm Safety Nova Scotia Annual Meeting
11:15am	2022 – 2023 Financials – Auditor's Report
	Appointment of Auditor
	2023 – 2024 Budget + 5-year Farm Registration Review
11:45am	PAC Policy & Resolutions
12:25am	3 rd Call for Nominations
12:30pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Election of Council Members
1:15pm	PAC Policy & Resolutions (continued)
2:00pm	Growing Nova Scotia Together Update
2:30pm	Industry Issues – Open Mic
3:00pm	Adjourn

Farming the Fields of Social Media with Tim May

Tim May is an inspiring third-generation dairy farmer from Ontario, known to over 140, 000 followers online as “Farmer Tim”. Tim holds a degree in Animal Science from the University of Guelph, is an advocate for mental health and has a passion for consumer education in agriculture. “Farmer Tim” will be bringing his humour, wisdom, and experience to help you navigate the world of social media while effectively connecting with consumers!

Climate & Risk Management Panel

Agriculture Land Panel

We have two panels hitting the stage this year at AGM with farmers and industry experts on some of the pressing topics in agriculture. Panelists to be announced soon.

Register online at nsfa-fane.ca/event/128th-annual-general-meeting

Media Relations with Jane Taber

Jane Taber is the Senior Vice President for NATIONAL PR with an extensive background in media relations spanning her career. Jane's experience includes covering Parliament Hill for more than 25 years, co-hosting CTV's Question Period and working as Communications Director to the former Premier of Nova Scotia- just to name a few! Jane will be bringing her expertise in media training to the table to give you insights on how to respond to media, and how to engage media by telling stories that elevate the profile of agriculture in Nova Scotia!

Policy Corner

Farm & Workforce Challenges

Nova Scotia's agriculture industry contributes to the province's food security and economy, and is essential to the future success of our province. This article draws on what we heard in the Workforce Insight Survey (LMI 2.0) completed this year and recent Statistics Canada data. It also highlights farmers' interest in the application of new technologies and equipment and how farm families pass their farming businesses down to the next generation. Also discussed are the challenges farms have in finding workers and how all these issues impact income and jobs in the province.

Youth and Gender Diversity

Recent Statistics Canada data highlights a 16% employment drop in 2022, potentially jeopardizing productivity and the economy. The workforce's age distribution, with only 800 youth out of 5,100 workers, raises sustainability concerns. Yet, gender diversity has surged with a 60% rise in female participation since 2000, indicating progress. To thrive, the sector must attract young talent through educational initiatives and tech adoption. Leveraging gender diversity can also bolster innovation and resilience, steering Nova Scotia's agriculture toward a balanced and prosperous future.

Skills for Nova Scotia's Changing Agriculture

Nova Scotia's workforce needs are changing according to Nova Scotian farmers, highlighting the need for personal skills alongside technical ones. Getting a job isn't just about skills now. Teamwork (11%) and time management (8%) matter. Good communication, problem-solving, and understanding equipment are needed. The survey also says computer skills are more important now. The changing dynamic of farming in the province may increasingly warrant this mix of skills.

These changing trends are supported by Statistics Canada 2021 data. Between 2017-2021, the sector saw a decline from 6,270 to 6,000 jobs reflecting structural shifts that may be driven by technology and demand changes. Animal Production jobs dropped from 3,120 to 2,660 (2017-2021), yet efficiency rose, lowering unit labour costs and enhancing sustainability. Crop Production also had a slight dip in jobs (2,370 to 2,330), while greenhouse/nursery jobs surged from 555 to 960.

Efficient labour use drove growth, but challenges remain in labour distribution. This shows that farms tend to be more efficient as they constantly adopt approaches to attain and maintain efficiency, making each worker more productive. This has helped keep costs down while strengthening the overall farm economy.

Tech-Driven Farming on the Rise in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia's farming community is gearing up technologically, as reflected in the LMI 2.0 survey: 59% are enthusiastic about the use of innovative technology to address issues like climate variability and rising food demand. With 44% focusing on soil health and others eyeing automation, green energy, and precision farming, the future seems promising. However, cost concerns linger for 41% contemplating this tech transition. Encouragingly, 68% are poised to invest soon.

The Puzzle of Recruiting and Retaining Talent in Nova Scotia's Farms

Nova Scotia's farms grapple with the challenge of attracting and retaining the right talent. The survey underscores this, shedding light on farmers' concerns and the innovative measures they've adopted. Finding the ideal workforce remains increasingly difficult; 39% of respondents are concerned about finding skilled labour in the future, while another 35% have already had challenges sourcing experienced workers. Such issues demand nuanced solutions. Hence, ongoing initiatives like the Agri-food and

Temporary Foreign Worker Programs are pivotal. Meanwhile, long-term strategies must stay on policymakers' agendas. While many farmers have embraced flexible roles and competitive pay, 24% signalled the need for enhanced strategies. Strengthening community bonds, leveraging recruitment agencies, and honing digital competencies emerge as valuable tools. Interestingly, the survey reveals the deep-rooted family nature of Nova Scotia's farms: a whopping 77% of farmers weave family into their daily farm routines. While this encourages sustainability, it prompts the question: Who will helm the future? The data presents a duality: 33% predominantly rely on family, whereas 13% predominantly employ external hands. The future blueprint will need to include young farmers, external talent, and forward-thinking strategies at every level.

Labour Shortages: A Looming Challenge for Nova Scotia's Farms

The Workforce Insight Survey 2.0 also showed that 24% of Nova Scotia's farms reported an average of 7% sales losses in 2022 due to labour shortages. While 65% didn't face any problems, the remaining farms experienced a significant hit, with 1% of farms experiencing a staggering 30-85% loss in sales due to a labour shortage. This translates to a potential loss of \$51.6 million for the sector, which highlights the urgent need to address the labour issue together.

The survey, combined with data from Statistics Canada, paints a varied picture of Nova Scotia's agriculture sector. Many farmers are keen to use technology for better results. However, there are challenges in finding and keeping workers. Now, farms look for both personal qualities and technical skills when hiring.

While family involvement plays a big role on many farms, there are concerns about who will take over in the future. Job trends in agriculture are also changing, with labour shortages being a major concern. This could affect the overall

Policy Corner Continued

health of the sector. To ensure a bright future for Nova Scotia's agriculture, it's essential to tackle these issues collaboratively.

The NSFA will continue to work with members, commodity partners, government, and other stakeholders to support through the workforce challenges. However, the reality is that there is no "one size fits all" approach and these challenges have been generations in the making. It will take time to find innovative solutions to support the needs of Nova Scotia agriculture as we see labour challenges facing all industries across the country.

Carbon Tax Impact

Carbon Tax Impact on Nova Scotia Farmers

Starting July 1, fuel prices for Nova Scotia's farmers changed because of a new Carbon Tax law called the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. This law increased gasoline by 14.31 cents per litre and diesel by 17.38 cents. Shortly after, the Clean Fuel Regulations, added 3.74 cents to gasoline and 4.17 cents to diesel prices. Under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, there are exemptions that apply to farmers. To receive these exemptions, you must complete the exemption certificates and submit them to your fuel supplier.

Exemption Certificates for Farmers

This applies to farmers who purchase from a registered distributor at a card

lock facility or receive on-farm delivery. Fuel purchased under the exemption must only be used for eligible activities and in eligible machinery. Some key definitions include:

Farmer – a person that carries on a farming business with a reasonable expectation of profit.

Farming – includes tillage of the soil, livestock raising or exhibiting, maintaining of horses for racing, raising of poultry, fur farming, dairy farming, fruit growing and the keeping of bees, but does not include an office or employment under a person engaged in the business of farming.

Eligible farming activity means the following activities:

- The operation of eligible farming machinery on a farm for the purposes of farming.
- The operation of eligible farming machinery for the purposes of going from a location at a farm to another location at a farm.
- The operation of eligible farming machinery for the purpose of travelling between a farm and a cardlock facility to obtain qualifying farming fuel.

Eligible farming machinery means property that is primarily used for the purposes of farming and that is a farm truck or a tractor.

Exemption Certificate for Greenhouses

A greenhouse operator is eligible to obtain relief of 80% of the fuel charge when it receives propane or marketable natural gas and an exemption certificate applies. The fuel must be used exclusively for the operation of a commercial greenhouse for growing any plants, including vegetables, fruits, bedding plants, cut flowers, ornamental plants, tree seedlings and medicinal plants.

Buying at the Pump

We understand a number of Nova Scotia farmers purchase fuel "at the pump". However, there is no mechanism to receive an exemption or a rebate for these purchases because of how the carbon tax system is setup. You can register at a card lock facility or look at opportunities for fuel storage on-farm. We encourage farmers to connect with fuel distributors in their area to determine what options are available to them.

Bill C-234

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the Agricultural Carbon Alliance have been pushing heavily to have the Senate pass Bill C-234 into law. Bill C-234 is an Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act to exempt natural gas and propane used on farms for necessary farm practices, such as irrigation, grain drying, feed preparation, and heating or cooling of barns and greenhouses, from the federal carbon price. The NSFA supports this bill and will continue to monitor and provide updates!

We encourage all farmers to look into the exemptions, eligibility criteria, and the process of claiming exemptions. Farmers and greenhouse operators can visit the CRA website at Carbon pollution pricing – what you need to know – Canada.ca or consult the CRA's guidance materials related to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.



Recognized Employer Pilot Program

Introducing the Recognized Employer Pilot: A New Approach to Temporary Foreign Worker Hiring

Employment and Social Development Canada recently announced a noteworthy development designed to address labour market shortages and reduce administrative burdens for repeat employers in Canada - the Recognized Employer Pilot (REP).

The REP is a three-year pilot program aimed at being more responsive to established labour market shortages while reducing the administrative burden for repeat employers who meet the highest standards for wages, working and living conditions, and worker protection. This initiative is especially geared towards employers who regularly access the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program and have no previous history of non-compliance.

Key Features of the REP:

1. Longer LMIA Validity Periods

Recognized employers will benefit from Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) validity periods of up to 36 months. This extension enables employers to better plan for their labour needs over a three-year period, reducing the number of LMIA applications otherwise needed to hire the same number of TFWs.

2. Simplified LMIA Applications

Recognized employers will gain access to simplified LMIA applications to address future hiring needs. These applications may be used for any of the 84 designated REP occupations, reducing the amount of information an employer needs to provide to receive subsequent LMIA approval under REP. The designated REP occupations include livestock labourers, harvesting labourers, specialized livestock workers and farm machinery operators and nursery and greenhouse labourers.

3. Visual Identifier on Job Bank

Recognized employers will benefit from a visual identifier on the TFW section of Job Bank that shows their recognized status.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the REP, employers must have a history of TFW Program compliance and must have received a minimum of three positive LMIAs over the past five years from the list of 84 designated occupations for REP. Employers may be ineligible for REP if they have received negative LMIA decisions based on inadequate housing reports, worker protections, working conditions, wages, etc., or have been found non-compliant or received significant and credible allegations for putting the health and safety of TFWs at risk.

REP Commitments

Recognized employers must commit to participating in random REP check-ins, undertaking annual wage reviews, making reasonable efforts to hire Canadians or permanent residents through ongoing recruitment efforts, and completing annual housing inspection reports of employer-provided accommodations. Employers must also adhere to TFW Program requirements and fulfill their obligations under their LMIAs.

Application Process and Timelines

The REP will open for agricultural employer intake on September 12, 2023, and for all other designated occupations on January 1, 2024. The intake for the REP will close on September 16, 2024, and the dual-purpose application to become a recognized employer will cease to be available. The proposed end date for the REP is December 31, 2026.

The Recognized Employer Pilot is a significant step towards addressing labour market shortages in Canada and making the process of hiring Temporary Foreign Workers more efficient for repeat employers. This will reduce red tape and administrative burdens while maintaining the highest standards for worker protection. The REP aims to create a win-win situation for both employers and foreign workers. For more information on the REP and how to apply, visit the Employment and Social Development Canada website. canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/recognized-employer.html

ECONOMICS



\$804.3 million

agriculture and agri-food contribution to Nova Scotia's GDP¹
**Adjusted for inflation*



\$752.13 million

in farm cash receipts²

FARM DEMOGRAPHICS



2,000+

registered farm businesses



720,045

acres farmed



49,000+

acres of farmland protected by dykes³



263

acres is the average farm size⁴

WORKFORCE



6,100

people employed in primary agriculture⁵



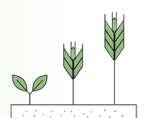
8,817

people employed in food manufacturing⁶



29%

of farm operators are female⁷



58

average age of farm operators⁸

Cultivate Your Future

Nova Scotia Young Farmers are leading a planning team that is organizing a January 2024 event focused on supports and opportunities for those between 18 and 40 years of age who are involved in or interested in agriculture.

The one-day event will feature local and national speakers, a panel discussion, breakout sessions, a trade show, networking opportunities, and a banquet with entertainment. Don't miss this event scheduled for Thursday, January 11th at the Inn on Prince in Truro!

While we often think first of financial assistance, there are a wide variety of supports that can help anyone as they begin or continue their journey in the agricultural industry – mentorship opportunities, new technologies, training or education on specific topics, help finding and retaining labour, and more!

The **2024 Cultivate Your Future: Youth in Agriculture Conference** will highlight what supports exist, determine what others would be helpful and share information on how to access the support you need. Through a variety of engaging presentations and opportunities to give feedback, participants will look at current offerings, hits and misses, and future targets. Stay tuned for presentation announcements!

Registration will open in October. A block of rooms for the evening of January 11th will be available at the Inn on Prince and can be booked now until December 11th. The conference rate of \$139 plus HST includes breakfast.



Cultivate Your Future Youth In Agriculture Event

Thursday, January 11, 2024
Inn on Prince, Truro



Plan to be a part of this event!

For sponsorship and tradeshow opportunities contact info@nsyoungfarmers.ca

We Talk. We Grow.

Sowing Seeds of Self-Care

What do we do when our tractors are running low on fuel? Well, the answer seems obvious. Without a second thought, we take the time to refuel them, making sure they can continue working the way we expect them to. But, do we apply the same idea when it feels as though we may be “running on empty?” In the demanding world of farming, where keeping our machinery in good working order is crucial for getting things done, it's ironic how often we overlook the most critical “machine” in our operation – ourselves! Just like the vital machinery we rely on; we must understand that taking care of ourselves is necessary for maintaining our physical and mental health.

Understanding Farming Challenges

Being a farmer is tough. Farmers have to regularly face things such as unpredictable weather, worries about

money, and long hours of work. These challenges can make farmers feel stressed, sad, or tired. On top of that, farmers typically work in rural areas, adding to feelings of isolation and loneliness. That is why it is especially important to remember that farming isn't just about the crops or animals – it's also about the people behind it.

What is Self-Care?

Self-care simply means taking the time to do things that make us feel good and relaxed. Although this may seem like a “luxury” at times, especially considering how busy life on the farm can get, practicing self-care is needed to make sure we can do all the things we need to and want to accomplish in a day. In other words, carving out this “me” time in your day – whether that is a couple of hours or 20 minutes – is not “selfish,” it's necessary!

Starting a self-care routine doesn't have to be hard. Here are some ideas to help you begin:

- Get some fresh air
- Spend time with your loved ones – children, grandchildren, friends
- Cook or order in your favourite meal
- Turn your phone off for a bit
- Journal about how you're feeling in your We Talk. We Grow. notebook (Interested? Email ahancock@nsfa-fane.ca to be sent your own, free of charge).



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

Public Trust Update

23rd Annual Open Farm Day In Nova Scotia

A huge and heartfelt thank you to all our participating farms who agreed to open their doors and welcome the public on Sunday, September 24! The original date was scheduled for Sunday, September 17th but with Hurricane Lee impacts we quickly shifted to move to the 24th. It has been a challenging year and we are so very grateful for the support from our members to host another successful Open Farm Day in partnership with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

OPEN FARM
JOURNÉE AGRICOLE PORTES OUVERTES

We will go through visitor and farm participant evaluations so we can create a full report on the event, and we will be sharing pictures and highlights of the day on Meet Your Farmer's social media pages. If you have memories to share, please email them to: meetyourfarmer@nsfa-fane.ca

We are always looking for new farms to participate in Open Farm Day. Registration will open in June 2024 so please reach out if you are interested.

Devour! The Food Film Fest

Meet Your Farmer is pleased to be offering a tour event at Devour! The Food Film Fest again this year! The festival runs from October 23-29 in Wolfville. This year focuses on French Cuisine et Culture. We will be organizing a family-friendly tour to visit a few different farms and to discuss the aboiteau systems and their impact on farmlands. Registration for this event will be available at devourfest.com.



2023 Public Trust Summit: Cultivating Trust through Collaboration

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture communications staff are excited to be attending the national public trust summit hosted by The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity in Toronto. This year's summit brings together industry leaders, government officials, and experts from across Canada to discuss and address the challenges and opportunities related to building public trust in the food system. There are speakers focused on consumer trends, SEO, audience demographics, and more. It's also a chance to hear the results of CCFI's annual research to help identify where we can support building trust in Nova Scotia.

New Resources

Looking for ways to build and strength trust or have conversations about food, farming, and agriculture?

We have been developing new resources for events, information, and building displays. Please visit: nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/ for new factsheets and infographics.

We Talk. We Grow. Continued

Knowing Where to Start

Starting a self-care routine is about finding activities that bring you joy and balance and doing more of them. Begin by choosing one thing you'd like to do more of, like reading or going for walks. Start off by trying to practice it once a week, then twice a week, and work up to practicing it every day for a whole week. Then, reflect on how that makes you feel. Gradually, try to add more self-care practices, such as journaling or writing down what you are grateful for. As farmers, embracing self-care is a practical investment, not only for our well-being but also for our business. It

empowers us to face challenges with resilience, care for our crops and animals diligently, and live a happy, fulfilling life. Just like we prioritize taking care of our machinery, tending to ourselves is essential for long-term success.

Let's remember that self-care is not a luxury but a necessity, enabling us to sow the seeds of a balanced and rewarding farming journey. #WeTalkWeGrow



Species-at-Risk: The Striking Bobolink



Pictured: Male Bobolink



Pictured: Female Bobolink

Bobolinks are one of the many species-at-risk birds that reside in Nova Scotia. Unlike other widely known species-at-risk, such as barn swallows, the bobolink is unfamiliar to many. A key step in the conservation of bobolink is raising awareness and the ability to identify them.

Bobolinks are a mid-sized songbird ranging in size from 16-20 cm long. Bobolink males can be identified by their distinct feather colours. During the breeding season the male bobolink has black feathers on its front with a strip of white along its back (the only North American bird with black on the front and white on the back) and the back of its neck is a distinct yellow color. The easiest way to spot them is flying low over fields in the spring and early summer as they display for the females. Once the breeding season ends, they start to resemble the female bobolinks. The female bobolinks look similar to sparrows. They are a light beige color with brown streaks along their backs. They differ from sparrows by their yellow head and neck, pink-ish bills, and black eyeline.

During the breeding season which takes place from May 15th to July 15th, bobolinks live across North America, specifically southern regions of Canada and northern regions of the United States. Once the breeding season is completed the bobolinks will migrate towards South America residing there until next year's breeding season. Bobolinks have one of the longest migrations for the songbirds- in a round trip they will travel over 20,000 km each

season. They travel in large groups through Florida, continuing along the Gulf of Mexico.

The most common areas for bobolinks to nest during their breeding season are prairies, meadows, hayfields, and other grassland areas. This includes pastures and abandoned farmland. The male bobolinks will breed with multiple females during each breeding season, and the females may breed with different males, laying eggs from multiple males. The bobolinks build their nests in the ground of the field, which makes them less visible to those around them. The female bobolink determines the place of the nest and collects what is needed to form the nest. She uses materials within a hundred metre distance and begins building the nest over one or two days. The nest is built from grass, weeds, and soil. The bobolink will lay 3 to 7 eggs each time with 1 to 2 broods a season. Young take 8-14 days to leave the nest. The eggs

can be identified by their blue-gray to red-brown color with blotches of brown and lavender. The bobolinks will also return to the same area and nest for years after.

The population of bobolinks is continuously declining due to the loss of their breeding habitat. Since the bobolink's nest in grass and hayfields, they are put at risk with the other activities taking place in the fields. As advancements in farming practices have led to earlier haying dates over the decades, it is common for farmers to hay during the bobolink breeding season. Haying causes a loss of their nests, as they are in the ground and cannot be seen. It also puts adult bobolinks at risk if they are in the field at the time. Since bobolinks go back to the same areas for nesting each year, they can keep returning and keep failing to fledge their young. Other reasons for their population decline are the changing of crops in the fields they nest in and urbanization.

It is important to know the locations of where bobolinks are being spotted so conservation strategies can be developed to meet the needs of the birds and also the farmers. The Federation, as part of the Species-at-Risk Partnership on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL) with Environmental and Climate Change Canada is raising awareness of this species to make identification easier and help form future strategies.





Living Labs

Digging Deeper into AAFC's Research with Living Lab – Nova Scotia

Farmers across Canada face increased challenges related to climate change. For generations, farmers and researchers have been finding new ways to address these challenges while protecting the environment.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is working to strengthen the climate resiliency of our nation's food systems through programs like AAFC's Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS) – Living Labs Program.

As part of the program, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, lead for Living Lab – Nova Scotia, is focusing on beneficial management practices (BMPs) that are important to this region for the purposes of improving soil health, increasing soil carbon sequestration, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These include exploring the use of innovative orchard and vineyard floor management practices, experimenting with cover crops in annual systems, establishing riparian zones and shelterbelts, and land swapping.

AAFC Researching Orchard and Vineyard Floor Management in Apples and Grapes

The AAFC research team, co-led by Dr. Erin Smith and Keith Fuller of the Kentville Research and Development Centre, is leading one of the six activities in Living Lab – Nova Scotia. Their research activity focuses on testing innovative orchard and vineyard floor

management practices that have been co-developed with growers. These practices will enhance carbon sequestration and mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in two of Nova Scotia's largest woody perennial crops; apples and grapes. The research is expected not only to alleviate the impacts of climate change, but to also have co-benefits such as improved soil health, pest and disease management, and biodiversity.

Four commercial apple orchards and four vineyards in Nova Scotia have been participating as test sites for this activity, as of spring of 2023. The team has been actively measuring GHG emissions and analyzing soil samples for carbon sequestration and soil health to obtain a GHG and soil carbon baseline. They have also implemented the testing of innovative BMPs at these sites.

At the apple orchard sites, existing vegetated laneways were successfully enriched with four different clover (legume) species using sustainable no-till seeding technology. The carbon and nitrogen dynamics in these laneways will be compared with conventionally vegetated laneways in order to measure changes, primarily in GHG emissions and carbon sequestration, but also changes in soil health, insect dynamics and biodiversity.



At the vineyard sites, the AAFC team is evaluating the use of no-till practices in the vegetated laneways for reduced GHG emissions and improved carbon sequestration, compared with laneways that receive conventional tillage every second year.

The team will continue to monitor changes in GHG emissions and soil carbon content in response to these orchard and vineyard floor management practices for the next three years. By 2027, the team expects to select and disseminate the BMPs for wider adoption by farmers.

More About the ACS – Living Labs Program

The ACS – Living Labs program uses a new approach to agricultural innovation in Canada that brings together farmers, scientists, and other collaborators to co-develop and test innovative practices and technologies to address agri-environmental issues. The program aims to develop and evaluate farming practices that will help tackle climate change through a network of living labs across Canada.

If you would like to stay up-to-date on the AAFC Living Lab – Nova Scotia team's activity or learn more about other Living Lab – Nova Scotia activities, please visit NSFA's Living Lab – Nova Scotia website.

nsfa-fane.ca/livinglabs/



Succession Planning

It takes a lot of work to run a farm and farm owners want to see their farms thrive even long after they've handed over the reins. One of the keys to making this happen is a succession plan. Having a formalized plan helps alleviate worry of the future for current farm owners and paves the way for ongoing prosperity under new ownership.

In Nova Scotia, a staggering 61% of farms do not have a plan for transitioning their farm. Of those who do, only 15% have a written, legal document that outlines that plan.

Having a **detailed** plan for farm succession allows current owners to know things such as how much money they'll have for retirement, the transfer of farm assets, and whether or not their business will stay in the family. For those moving into farm ownership, it provides timelines and the ability to plan their future income. At a time when farmers are overwhelmed and feeling the stress caused by unpredictability in the agriculture industry, succession planning helps bring more certainty to all of those involved.

Having a **written** plan helps facilitate important conversations about the future of the business and everyone's roles and responsibilities within it. Farm owners who prepare and follow a written succession plan experience greater levels of confidence in their decision-making and reduced stress and anxiety. It also improves family/farm team harmony during a time that can sometimes cause turmoil.

Things to Consider

Succession Planning is a multi-step process with many aspects to consider. It requires time, energy and potentially difficult conversations as business and emotions collide. A succession plan will review your business structure, finances, goals, values, and more.

Succession planning should be on-going. It's never too early to start thinking about succession! The younger the owners are when they start to plan, the more time there is to set up the operation with the future in mind. Planning gives everyone time to make the right long-term investments along the way. Early planning also gives owners time to plant the seeds with their kids or other family members, that the farm can be part of their future and livelihood if they choose. It doesn't mean they have to take over the farm. It just means they know it's an option and, if they want to do it, they have time to plan their education and work experience to fit. It also allows the next generation to know what they can expect from the operation early on and whether they would need an additional income stream.

How long it takes to create a Succession Plan varies from one farm to the next. Families or business partners that communicate well and share a common vision of the farm can accomplish this plan quite quickly. For others, it may take a bit more time to discuss options and

desires. It's also a good idea to discuss your succession plans with your lawyer and accountant. They can help with the more technical aspects of transitioning farm assets.

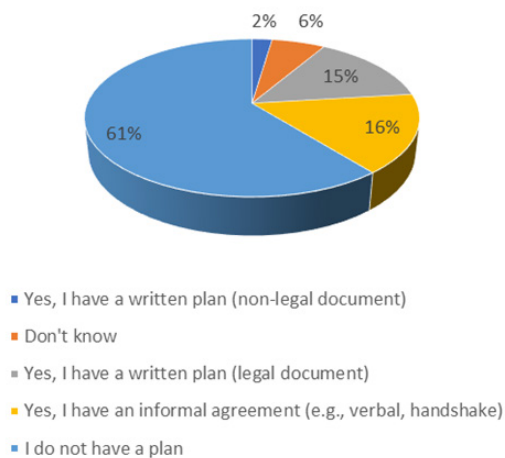
A good plan will ensure that all of the owners' family/families feel part of the plan, not just those taking over the farm. It ensures that all of the owner's children feel valued, whether they take over the farm or choose another lifestyle.

Succession Planning Resources

Did you know the NSFA runs a website dedicated to helping with the farm succession process? Whether you're just getting started or want to make sure you've covered everything, check out www.nsfarmsuccession.ca. We're excited to share that this resource has been updated and those changes will soon be available!

This website, along with its accompanying workbook, breaks down the planning process into bite-sized pieces and walks you through each step so you don't need to feel overwhelmed by the task. It will help you keep track of your progress and easily pick up where you left off between sessions. Though you'll need to crunch some numbers and prepare for some conversations around tough subjects like money, feelings, and goals- we have the tools to help.

Succession Plan upon Retirement



One Road

It's that time of year again; when roads are busy with commuter traffic, school busses and farmers preparing for harvest. It's also the time of year that Farm Safety Nova Scotia reminds you that **safety is a two-way street** through our One Road campaign.

Driving on rural roads to move equipment and material from farm to field in a safe manner can be stressful. Now more than ever, it is important to keep road safety in mind when moving equipment and do your part to share the road safely.

When it comes to road safety and on-road accidents, the most common incidents include: left turn collisions, rear end collisions and passing collisions.

Left turn collisions occur when a farm vehicle is about to make a left turn and the motorist behind the tractor decides to pass. **Rear end collisions** happen when a motorist misjudges the speed when approaching a slow-moving vehicle. This gives the motorist only a few seconds to react and slow

down. **Passing collisions** result when a motorist attempts to pass a farm vehicle and may be unaware that the equipment is extra wide or long until they are in the passing lane.

The key to avoiding accidents is to anticipate the hazard. Be aware of the traffic around you and drivers that may be displaying impatience.

When possible, pull over to allow commuter traffic to pass, but be aware of when it is safe or not safe to do so! Road shoulders can be narrow and sometimes unpredictable. With the amount of rain that we have seen lately in Nova Scotia, the gravel sides of roads may be softer than you expect. Driving heavy equipment onto these shoulders can be dangerous and may increase the chance of a roll-over. Pulling into the entrance of a side road is a much safer place to move aside and let traffic pass.

We all share the same road. Even if we use it for different purposes, we all want to get home safely at the end of the day. All road users must learn the hazards of the road and how to ensure everyone is safe.

Through the One Road campaign, Farm Safety Nova Scotia is working to get the message of road safety out to the public. Messaging around how to share the road with farm equipment, when it is or isn't safe to pass, and encouraging drivers to be patient, is widely shared.



If you would like to share the road safety message, be sure to follow Farm Safety Nova Scotia on social media and share our One Road posts.

There are also a number of free One Road resources that you or your business can use to both practice and help promote road safety:

- Posters
- Rack cards to hand out or display at your place of business
- Tractor windshield decals with a trip safety checklist
- Bumper stickers
- Floor decals promoting the campaign

Send an email to info@farmsafetytyns.ca listing the resources you would like and the number of each, and we will mail them out or drop them off to you.

Lloyd Evans Memorial Award

The Lloyd Evans Memorial Award is now open for nominations! In recognition of Lloyd's many contributions and his role as a safety leader, the memorial award bearing his name was created and is presented at the banquet during the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture's Annual General Meeting in November.

Do you know someone that you would consider a safety leader? Someone who has had a positive impact on the agriculture industry and continuously works towards improving health and safety? Nominate them for the Lloyd Evans Memorial Award! Deadline to nominate is October 31st. Visit farmsafetytyns.ca/award/ for criteria and how to nominate, or call the office at 902-893-2293.



Lloyd Evans Memorial Award

Send nominations to
info@farmsafetytyns.ca
by October 31

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Upcoming Events

For more details on upcoming events and how to register, visit nsfa-fane.ca/events

Efficiency Symposium
October 2nd, Inn on Prince, Truro

Chainsaw Safety Courses

- October 12th - Springhill
- October 19th - Port Hawkesbury

Progressive Agriculture Safety Day
October 27th, Berwick

NSFA's 128th Annual General Meeting
November 23rd - 24th, Inn on Prince, Truro

Young Farmers: Cultivate Your Future
January 11th, Inn on Prince, Truro

Mental Health Training
In The Know Workshops:
January & February (Date TBD)

Mental Health First Aid

- For Industry Stakeholders: November 9th & 10th, NSFA Office, Truro
- For Farmers: January 17th & 18th



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

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