



2023 Annual Report



REMEMBER,
**IT'S NOT
ALWAYS
POSSIBLE TO
PULL YOURSELF
UP BY YOUR
BOOTSTRAPS.**



WETALKWEGROW.CA

NEW FARM FAMILY SUPPORT LINE PHONE NUMBER COMING NOVEMBER 1ST, 2023

We Talk. We Grow. recognizes the importance of timely support for life's challenges.

Owning your own business can sometimes mean missing out on the support that traditional Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provide.

That's why Farm Safety Nova Scotia reminds you of your own EAP through TELUS Health – the Farm Family Support Centre. Life often throws complicated challenges our way, and with TELUS Health, you're never alone. Get help with all of life's questions, issues and concerns with TELUS Health. Any time, 24/7, 365 days a year.

The same Farm Family Support Centre, but better.

You can now feel supported and connected wherever you are with access to the TELUS Health ONE app and website.

With just one tap, you can access the same benefits of the Farm Family Support Centre, including expert advice, resources, and referrals.

Access your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 24/7 by phone, web or mobile app.

- 1 Download the TELUS Health One app or visit one.telushealth.com
- 2 Log in with the username and password below.



Username:

NSFarmers

Password:

wellness



Solutions for your work, health and life.

- Support well-being
- Manage relationships and family
- Deal with workplace challenges
- Tackle addictions
- Find child and elder care resources
- Get legal advice
- Financial helpline support



Draft Agenda

FOR THE 127TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — NOVEMBER 23 & 24, 2023

THURSDAY

9 am	Meeting Registration + Morning Coffee + Tradeshow
9:30 am	Welcoming Remarks
9:45 am	Speaker – Farmer Tim
10:30 am	NSFA Council Highlight – President
10:45 am	Remarks from Government Speakers
11:15 am	Remarks from Government Speakers
11:30 am	Media Relations – Jane Taber, National PR
12:15 pm LUNCH BREAK + TRADESHOW	
1:15 pm	NSFA Activity Highlights – Executive Director
1:30 pm	Remarks from Industry Stakeholder
1:45 pm	Climate & Risk Management Panel
2:40 pm	Remarks from Government Speakers
3 pm BREAK + TRADESHOW	
3:30 pm	Remarks from Government Speakers
4 to 4:30 pm	Recess Remarks
5 pm HAPPY HOUR	
7:00 pm	Banquet 4-H Speaker Lloyd Evans Memorial Award
9:30 pm	President's Reception

FRIDAY (NSFA MEMBERS ONLY)

8 am	Morning Coffee
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
8:45 am	NSDA Update
9:15 am	Nominations Committee Report (including candidate introduction)
9:30 am	Agriculture Land Panel
10:15 am BREAK	
10:45 am	2 nd Call for Nominations
10:50 am	Farm Safety Nova Scotia Annual Meeting
11:15 am	2022 – 2023 Financials – Auditor's Report Appointment of Auditor 2023 – 2024 Budget + 5-year Farm Registration Review
11:45 am	PAC Policy & Resolutions
12:25 am	3 rd Call for Nominations
12:30 pm LUNCH	
1:00 pm	Election of Council Members
1:15 pm	PAC Policy & Resolutions (continued)
2:00 pm	Growing Nova Scotia Together Update
2:30 pm	Industry Issues – Open Mic
3:00 pm	Adjourn

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!

Nominations are open for NSFA Council and Farm Safety Nova Scotia Board positions!

- **3 positions** on NSFA Council
- **2 positions** on the Farm Safety Nova Scotia Board

Nominations close **Wednesday, November 8.**

Find details and nomination forms at nsfa-fane.ca/agm/

Letter from the President

This past year has undoubtedly posed significant challenges to farmers across the province— regardless of size, region, or commodity. The challenges faced were felt across the industry. We are keenly aware of the struggles and frustrations that you have faced, and we continue to advocate for support and to find opportunities to improve the resilience of our industry into the future.

We invite you to join us at the Annual Meeting, an opportunity for members to convene, exchange experiences, and work toward shared objectives. It's a unique platform where you can help shape the future of the organization and the industry.

This year, we're introducing a new format for the Annual Meeting, setting aside the second day for a members and invite-only session. This format aims to foster candid and purposeful discussions among members, allowing for deeper dialogue on crucial issues.

Your participation is not only valued but also integral to the success of our organization. The Annual Meeting is where ideas take form, relationships are established, and actions are initiated. We look forward to your presence and active engagement as we continue our journey toward progress.

While the past year has been challenging, it has also underscored the strength of collaboration. This past year, NSFA refined its strategic direction as was presented at last year's Annual Meeting. We were able to make traction toward a number of goals but are particularly proud of the work to elevate the profile of agriculture throughout Nova Scotia and to lead a collective voice through collaboration and engagement. We hosted our first Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture, supported by the publication of the "Growing Nova Scotia Together" Report.

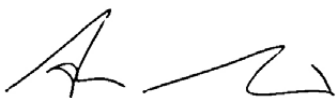
The Ministerial Roundtable provided a platform for meaningful dialogues between industry leaders, government officials, and dedicated individuals within the farm community. It served as an avenue to advocate for the needs and concerns of our members, facilitating closer communication with decision-makers.

Our "Growing NS Together" report comprises valuable recommendations for the government to support a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers. These recommendations were derived from the diligent work of our committees and insights that you, our members, have consistently contributed over the years through our policies and resolutions. These efforts and contributions form the foundation on which we built this report.

This event and publication are the beginning of our increased efforts to bring agriculture to the forefront of decision-makers, ensuring that an agricultural lens is applied to all government policies and programs and that we enhance our efforts to work collaboratively to support the industry.

Throughout this Annual Report, you will learn about other activities the NSFA has undertaken to support our members. I am grateful to my fellow Council members for their leadership as we continue to evolve as an organization and to the dedicated staff we have working on our behalf at the office.

I hope to see you all at our Annual Meeting!



Allan Melvin,
President

NSFA COUNCIL

Allan Melvin,
President

Alicia King,
1st Vice President

Jocelyn Durston,
2nd Vice President

Bert Meyer,
Corporate Secretary
& Treasurer

Tim Marsh,
Past President

Andy Parker

Peter Morine

Lauren Park

Mathew Roy

Catherine Manning

Harry Van der Linden

Jacob Mullen

2023: NSFA Year in Review

This year's social platforms for NSFA and programs



TOTAL REACH:

867,975
people

ENGAGEMENT

NSFA took advantage of attending and hosting a variety of events throughout the year to have an opportunity to engage with our members in-person. Most of these events were hosted in the fall and winter months!

PUBLIC EVENTS

HOSTED OR
ATTENDED: 22

INCLUDING TOWNHALLS, OUR MEMBER SUMMER SOCIAL, TFW EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT SESSION AND MORE!

66 MEDIA INTERVIEWS:

BETWEEN NSFA COUNCIL AND MEMBERS & LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA OUTLETS



INDUSTRY EVENTS

HOSTED: 25

NSFA MEETINGS:

NSFA COUNCIL 11

POLICY ADVISORY 4

COMMITTEES 10

COMMODITY ROUNDTABLES 3

MEETINGS WITH POLITICIANS:

PROVINCIAL 6

FEDERAL 6

DID YOU KNOW?

Together, NSFA and its programs interacted with over 830 farms throughout the year through training, engagement sessions, EFPs and other events.

RESOURCES DEVELOPED: 31

FARM INTERACTIONS: 830+

COMMUNICATION

with members

7
NEWS & VIEWS

51
WEEKLY ENEWS

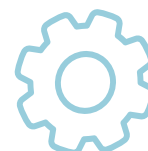
7
TFW EMPLOYER UPDATES

29
SPECIAL MEMBER UPDATES

DID YOU KNOW?

Our Executive Director, Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, appeared before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, along with Chicken Farmers of Nova Scotia, and the Department of Agriculture. The standing committee discussed current challenges to the agriculture sector.

TRAINING & CONSULTATION SESSIONS:



54

TRAINING COURSES FACILITATED

WORKSHOPS & WEBINARS:

22

BETWEEN NSFA, FARM SAFETY, FARM & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, LIVING LABS, AND MEET YOUR FARMER — BOTH IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE

NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

WWW.NSFA-FANE.CA

Update from Executive Director

This past year was a transformative one for the Federation as we continue to evolve as an organization. A challenging year for the industry meant we've been shifting our focus to ensure we are effectively representing and supporting our members.

Our strategic plan underwent a revision, ensuring that our efforts align with our members' growing needs and the ever-changing landscape of the industry. Member engagement was a core focus, and we achieved this through events such as the Summer Social, the expansion of the Policy Advisory Committee, and commodity roundtables.

Throughout this past year, we hosted a series of townhall meetings, primarily in response to emergency events. These engagements have proven invaluable in gaining insights into our members' needs, enabling us to effectively advocate for support and solutions. We hope to continue to build on this member engagement to strengthen our grassroots connection to members in the future. While advocacy sometimes takes longer than we would like, we are committed to persistently pushing for the progress we need.

We also focused efforts on our operational and governance structures. To achieve this, we updated policies and manuals, realigned roles and responsibilities, and conducted governance reviews. This allows us to lay a stronger foundation for our organization, both in terms of its operational efficiency and governance integrity.

We invested significant effort in strengthening stakeholder relations, with particular attention to commodities, Dalhousie University and the provincial government. We successfully developed a government relations strategy and initiated its implementation to ensure that the voice of our industry is heard and understood by policymakers. We are particularly proud of the successful Ministerial Roundtable held in May and will continue to build on this.

Policy and government relations are crucial aspects of our work and essential in elevating the profile of agriculture and influencing government policy and programs. We will place an increased emphasis on this work in the upcoming year to ensure that our industry's interests are well-represented.

In 2023, many of our programs were up for renewal, and we successfully secured over \$8 million in multi-year funding to deliver crucial programming to support our members. This funding covers areas such as environment and climate change, farm and workforce development, farm safety, mental health, and public trust.

Furthermore, we received \$4 million from the provincial government to enhance industry emergency management. With the increasing frequency of such events, we will be collaborating with our commodities and members to establish effective systems and resources that ensure industry preparedness and resilience.

As our industry evolves, so do we. We recognize that our organization's ability to meet your needs and provide support and advocacy is paramount. Our farm registration revenues play a vital role in supporting our core policy and advocacy work, and we've successfully leveraged additional funding to enhance our program capacity to further support you.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and passion of the individuals who make up the NSFA team. I am deeply grateful for the hard work and commitment of our staff and Council members. Your collective efforts are the driving force behind our organization's strength and success.

Thank you for your ongoing support, I continue to be honoured to work on your behalf!

Carolyn Van Den Heuvel,
Executive Director

Administrative Team



CAROLYN VAN DEN HEUVEL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



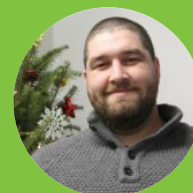
JANETTE MCDONALD
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



SHELLY MACKENZIE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



TRACEY OTTERSON
FINANCE COORDINATOR



RICHARD BARRETT
MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR

Communications & Public Relations

Communications Platforms

In our commitment to keeping you informed and fostering strong connections in the industry and with the public, we use a variety of communication platforms. From News & Views and weekly eNews, to websites and social media channels—we have many avenues to keep you up to date!

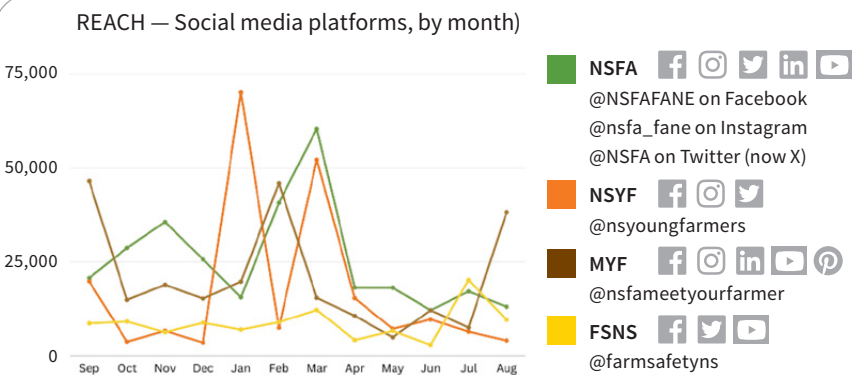
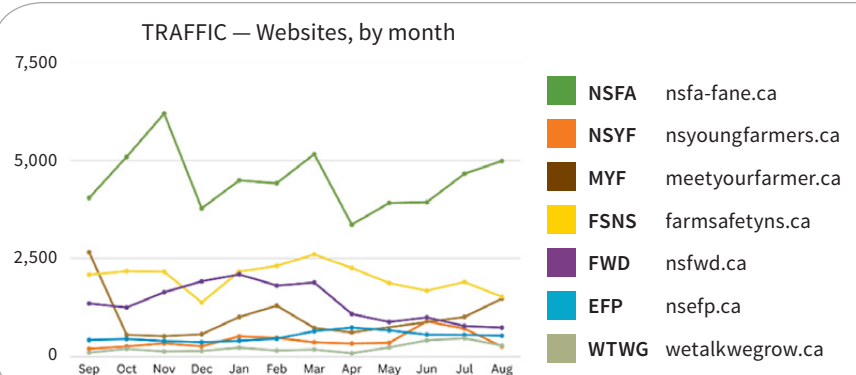
Websites — The top graph shows website traffic (by month), depicting the periods of high activity and slower ones, for our websites that all serve the farming community.

Social Media — To increase engagement across our platforms, we track analytics. This includes a valuable metric called **reach**—the number of unique users who have seen our content. Tracking on-line data reflects our commitment to maximizing our outreach and connecting with a broad audience!

The second graph shows “reach” by month. The high points relate to posts featuring farms, celebrating women in agriculture, campaign efforts, events, and much more!

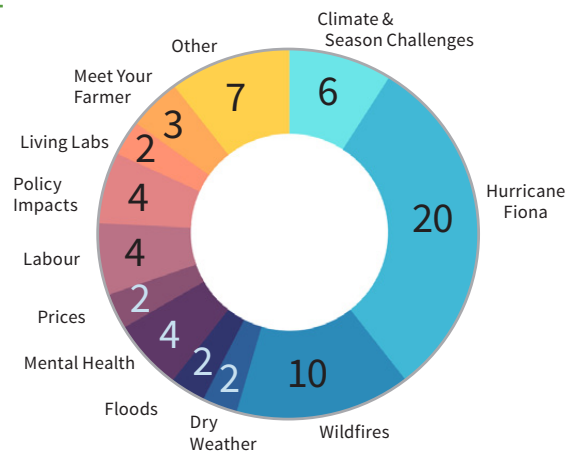
Media Relations— Our communications efforts include engaging media to elevate the profile of agriculture in the province, as well as addressing challenges in the industry as they arise. After a challenging season of climate events, there were many media requests on the impacts to farmers—helping inform the public and encourage public support for farmers.

Campaigns— We teamed up with Farm Safety Nova Scotia to focus our CTV Fields to Forks campaign on road safety in September 2022!



NSFA handled media requests on a variety of topics over the year.

CTV ATLANTIC: 11
 GLOBAL: 2
 SALTWIRE: 9
 CBC NOVA SCOTIA: 16
 NEWS 95.7: 7
 OTHER: 21
TOTAL 66



Communications Team



LEAH VISSER



KATHERINE TUTTLE

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER*

* For Katherine Tuttle (On Parental Leave)



Resolutions Report

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) is responsible for making recommendations to Council through the following activities:

1. Manage and oversee the resolution process including process management, resolution prioritization, and resolution action and follow-up.
2. Develop and review annually policies and positions on various topics that will support the achievement of a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers. All policies and positions will be in alignment with the strategic direction and values of the organization.
3. Review and provide comments on policy and positions developed by Council, working groups and committees as requested by Council.

PAC spent a significant amount of time refining our resolutions process this past year. This included

prioritizing resolutions for completion and assigning a status to resolutions for transparent communication with members. The statuses are defined as follows:

- Adopted** the NSFA has established a position or activity relating to the resolution that is adopted into operations and advocacy.
- Closed** the NSFA has not adopted a position and the activity outlined in the resolution has been deemed complete.
- In progress** work continues on this resolution to develop a position and/or complete related activities.

New members

The Policy Advisory Committee is looking for new members. If you're interested in joining, please complete an application at nsfa-fane.ca/committee-applications/

- The deadline for resolutions to the 2023 Annual Meeting is **Thursday, November 9**.
- Resolutions can be submitted by a:
 - County/Regional Federation;
 - Recognized commodity organization;
 - Recognized affiliate organization; or
 - Group of five voting members of NSFA



BRIAN UDOH, POLICY ANALYST

Resolutions Update

2021-01 NS Agriculture First Policy

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

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 HIGHLIGHTS — Institutional procurement was included in our Growing Nova Scotia Together Report presented at the Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture.

STATUS — Adopted

2021-11 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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

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 HIGHLIGHTS — 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.

STATUS — Adopted

Resolutions Update (cont'd)

2022-03 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.

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

STATUS — Closed

2022-15 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.

POSITION — N/A — activity based resolution.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Letter was submitted to Minister Morrow. Council is now fully populated.

STATUS — Closed

2022-10 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — Recommendations were included in Sustainable-CAP program feedback and in NSFA's submission to the Federal Government's Sustainable Agriculture Strategy.

STATUS — Adopted

2022-13 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 — Not yet complete.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Further work is required to understand current policy and enforcement processes prior to establishing a position.

STATUS — In Progress

2022-16 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.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Recommendations on improved emergency preparedness and response support were included in the Growing Nova Scotia Together report.

STATUS — In Progress

2022-17 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.

POSITION — N/A - activity based resolution.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Letter was submitted to Minister Morrow. NPC is subject to the conflict of interest directives outlined in "Governing in the Public Sector: A Guide for Province of Nova Scotia Government Agencies." Additionally, NSDA has proposed a process to ensure commodity expertise are made available to the Council as required.

STATUS — Closed

Resolutions Update (cont'd)

2020-03 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.

POSITION — Not yet complete.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — 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 to develop position recommendations.

Increased processing capacity was included in the Growing Nova Scotia Together Report.

STATUS — In Progress

2022-12 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.

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

STATUS — In Progress

2021-03 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — This engagement will continue to be monitored as the work is still in progress.

STATUS — In Progress

2021-06 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — 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.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Additionally, the 2023-24 provincial budget includes \$7.6 M from the Department of Environment and Climate Change for year 5 of the 9- year Flood Mitigation Measures envelope to upgrade the dykeland system.

STATUS — Adopted

2021-07 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 future, liability insurance will be affordable to the agricultural community, either individually or as a blanket policy.

POSITION — Not yet complete.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — As this is a Canada-wide issue, a resolution has been submitted to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

The NSFA is re-establishing its Risk Management Committee, which will include an insurance review.

STATUS — In Progress

Resolutions Update (cont'd)

2021-12 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.

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

STATUS — Adopted

2022-05 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.

POSITION — N/A - activity based resolution.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — This will be supported via Ag Recovery Fund and Farm Safety Nova Scotia programming. NSFA met with the provincial Emergency Management Office and Department of Agriculture representatives to better understand the current emergency management system. Work will be initiated to establish an industry committee and to provide on-farm resources.

STATUS — Adopted

2022-07 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.

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

STATUS — Adopted

2021-02 Nuisance Licenses

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

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

STATUS — Adopted

2021-04 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.

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

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — A review of government extension support was conducted, which indicated the ratios of Agriculture Representatives and Business Development Officers were very satisfactory in remote areas of the province, in comparison to more agriculturally dense areas.

STATUS — Closed

2022-02 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — Resolution was shared with the government-industry Veterinary Services Working Group for consideration. Review has not be completed at this time.

STATUS — Adopted

Resolutions Update (cont'd)

2021-08 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.

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.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Highlighted nuisance wildlife challenges in meeting with Department of Natural Resources and Renewables. Follow-up with staff will be completed.

STATUS — Adopted

2022-14 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.

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

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Resolution was shared with the government-industry Veterinary Services Working Group for consideration.

STATUS — Adopted

2022-01 Used Guardrails for Farm Use

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

POSITION — N/A

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — 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.

STATUS — Closed

2022-04 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.

POSITION — Not yet complete.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — This work will continue into the coming year. NSFA followed up with submitting County to better understand the intent to ensure program recommendations align with the needs of industry.

STATUS — In Progress

2022-09 Community Pasture Funding

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

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

STATUS — Closed

2022-11 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.

POSITION — Funding programs should allow for multi-farm applications to support joint ventures on specific projects such as specialized equipment and pond construction.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture should provide policy guidelines to support successful joint venture projects.

Included in Sustainable CAP recommendations and NSFA's submission to Federal Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Consultations. Further discussion with NSDA is needed to understand how this could be implemented.

STATUS — In Progress

Resolutions Update (cont'd)

2022-06 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — An equivalent resolution has passed at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture Annual Meeting.

STATUS — Adopted

2022-08 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.

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.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — NSFA endorsed the Coalition for Healthy School Food.

STATUS — Adopted

2020-02 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — 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.

STATUS — Adopted

2021-05 Condition 23 Endorsement for New Drivers

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

POSITION — N/A - previously developed.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — Recommendations specific to the draft legislation were submitted to the Traffic Safety Act and regulation consultation. NSFA will continue to monitor and advocate for these recommendations.

STATUS — Adopted

2021-09 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.

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 HIGHLIGHTS — 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.

STATUS — Adopted

2021-10 TFW Employer Supports and Services

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

POSITION — N/A - activity based resolution.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS — NSFA enlisted the services of consultants to carry out an assessment report focusing on needs and gaps. The report underwent a thorough examination by the Temporary Foreign Worker Employer Advisory Committee, leading to the formulation of recommendations for both policy and program enhancements, which will be executed in the coming year.

STATUS — In Progress

Growing NOVA SCOTIA TOGETHER

In 2023 we launched the Growing Nova Scotia Together report ahead of our first Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture on May 18th.

Why now?

Our industry has always been at the mercy of external factors while offering an invaluable contribution to the prosperity of our province. In the last number of years these external factors have hit hard from all sides. Unprecedented climate events, labour shortages, increased input costs and rural infrastructure needs are pushing many farmers in our industry into a corner. In the midst of food insecurity, a healthcare crisis, a growing population and changing climate, Nova Scotia needs agriculture as an integral part of the economic, social and environmental fabric of rural communities.

It is critical to protect and support the industry now to safeguard the future of our farmers and our food system.

What are the key areas of focus?

Nova Scotia's Agriculture Ecosystem
Agricultural Land
Workforce
Risk Management
Climate Adaptation and Resilience
Market Development
Rural Infrastructure

Where are we growing from here?

As we plan and prepare for the next Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture, our focus is on continuing to drive industry-led, government supported collaboration on our priority areas of impact.

We are actively collaborating with Department of Agriculture to establish a framework for an Advisory Committee to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to addressing the recommendations within the report.

Ministerial Roundtable on Agriculture

5 Ministers
14 Commodities Represented
3 Minister Follow-up Meetings **4 Senior Staff Follow-up Meetings**

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



Find the full report at nsfa-fane.ca/growingnstogether/

Notice: Farm Registration Review

In Nova Scotia, the farm registration system, established under the “Farm Registration Act,” plays a crucial role in supporting the industry. This system is designed to provide fair and equitable access to the numerous benefits that come with farm registration, ensuring that farmers have the resources they need to succeed.

The Farm Registration has three primary objectives:

1. **Facilitating Access to Government Programs:** Farm registration simplifies the process of accessing government programs for farm businesses. It serves as the gateway to a variety of assistance initiatives aimed at supporting the agriculture sector.
2. **Database Creation and Management:** The system maintains a comprehensive database that government departments use to verify farm-business eligibility for assistance programs. This database also informs the development of agricultural policies.
3. **Equitable Funding for General Farm Organizations:** The farm registration system ensures that the general farm organization, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, receives funding to support the NSFA in representing and supporting Nova Scotia farmers.

Every five years, a Farm Registration Committee reviews the farm registration system. This process involves:

1. **Committee Recommendations:** The committee reviews the existing fee structure and process, and formulates recommendations.
2. **Council Review:** The NSFA Council reviews these recommendations, ensuring their fairness and alignment with industry and organizational needs.
3. **Department of Agriculture Engagement:** The recommendations are then presented to the Department of Agriculture for government evaluation.
4. **Annual Meeting Approval:** Members review and approve the recommendations at the NSFA Annual Meeting.
5. **Government Decision:** If endorsed at the Annual Meeting, the recommendations are sent to the government for final approval by Cabinet.
6. **Effective Implementation:** Approved changes take effect on April 1 of the following year.

2023 Farm Registration Committee Members

- Allan Melvin, President
- Alicia King, 1st Vice-President
- Bert Meyer, Corporate Secretary & Treasurer
- Tyler Jordan, Nova Scotia Young Farmers representative
- Members at large: Philip Keddy, Beth O’Leary, Sathish Kumar Thangavel

Farm Registration Recommendations

System Integrity — The Committee had significant discussions on the integrity of the farm registration system, highlighting that it is critical to ensure fair and equitable access to the benefits of farm registration. Cross-compliance with programs such as herd health, farm plates, fuel tax rebate, etc. must be enforced across the government.

Income Categories & Fees — In the previous review, fee categories were reduced, which caused concern that they were too broad and lacked equity among different income levels. To address this, we recommend the addition of new categories within the income ranges of \$100,000 to \$499,999, \$500,000 to \$999,999, and for farms with an income exceeding \$2.5 million.

As part of this adjustment, you will notice changes in the categories of \$30,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000 to \$249,999. These modifications aim to create greater fairness and balance among the fee categories.

Small Farm New Entrant Refund Policy — The NSFA is positioned to implement a “Small Farm New Entrant Refund Policy” for new entrants \$29,999 and under for the first year of business operations for those businesses and owners that have not registered in the last 5 years. This will be application based with the policy and process shared in early 2024.

NSFA Capacity — In recognition of the industry’s significant challenges, there was discussion on the impacts of the increase on members. However, the committee felt strongly that because the issues are increasing, the work of the NSFA is also increasing and it’s essential that the NSFA has the funds required to effectively represent farmers.

This increase in funds will not only account for the impact of operational inflation but will also enable the NSFA to enhance its focus on policy and advocacy work. Detailed

(CONT'D)

insights into this strategic direction and five-year budget projections will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

Promotional Resources — There is a requirement for promotional materials aimed at highlighting the advantages of farm registration and NSFA membership, encompassing both financial benefits and enhanced access to resources. These benefits encompass cost savings on fuel taxes, access to specialized programs, and the valuable support offered through initiatives like the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and Farm Safety Nova Scotia (FSNS).

These funds provide vital support for the industry's essential advocacy efforts, ensuring that policymakers grasp the industry's needs and understand the effects of government policies and programs on Nova Scotia's farming community.

Administration

There are also recommendations aimed at enhancing the management of farm registration, such as expediting processing times, enabling mid-year updates for farm information, and increasing transparency in the criteria for new entrant qualification, especially in cases where proof of farming income is not readily available.

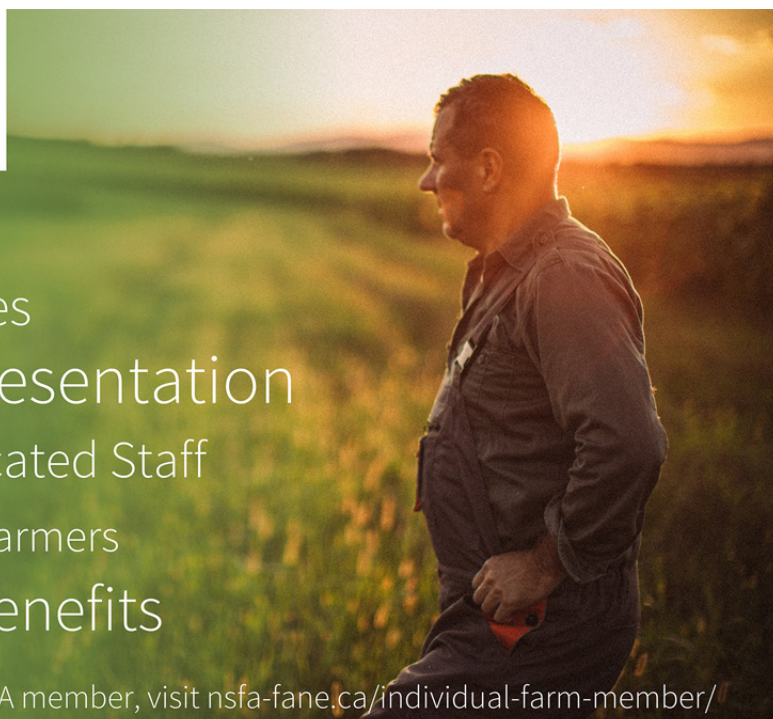
Gross Farm Income Category	Current Fees 2019 – 2024	Proposed Fees 2024 – 2029
< \$29,999	\$ 175	\$ 205
\$30,000 – \$99,999	\$ 400	\$ 325
\$100,000 – \$249,999	\$ 600	\$ 500
\$250,000 – 499,999	\$ 600	\$ 675
\$500,000 – \$749,999	\$ 800	\$ 850
\$750,000 – \$999,999	\$ 800	\$ 1,030
\$1,000,000 – 2,499,999	\$ 975	\$ 1,205
\$2,500,000 or more	\$ 975	\$ 1,380
Estimated Total Farm Registration*	\$800,400	\$869,220

*ASSUMPTION THAT THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED FARMS DOES NOT DECREASE



A Trusted Voice
Strong Committees
Accountable Representation
Effective Lobbying Dedicated Staff
Support for Nova Scotia's Young Farmers
Member Benefits

To learn more about your benefits as an NSFA member, visit nsfa-fane.ca/individual-farm-member/



Environment and Climate Change Update

The Environment and Climate Change team has had a great year delivering environmental programs for the farm community. Interest in this area continues to grow as awareness around the current and future impacts of climate change spreads. We are happy to be able to help farmers play a role as environmental stewards, while enhancing their resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

Environmental Farm Plan

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) has entered into a new agreement with the province under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. As part of this five-year agreement, we have expanded our number of coordinators. The EFP program has seen an increase in demand around program deadlines, as farmers in the province utilize the funding programs available, including new funding opportunities under the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program. Our expanded capacity will allow us to meet this growing demand.



A new database has been developed with Luna Geospatial and is in its final testing stage. This database will allow the EFP to use geospatial data to better understand farms and the environmental risks they might face.

Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands

Our Species-at-Risk programming has been highlighting some of the bird species that are at risk in Nova Scotia. Earlier in the year we collected data around the occurrence of Barn Swallows and held a workshop around

protecting and creating habitat for these familiar farmyard species. Our EFP coordinators have been getting nesting cups out to farmers to help support Barn Swallows. Later in the summer we highlighted the Bobolink, a lesser known but striking grassland bird. Raising awareness and helping people identify this species is the first step in helping local conservation efforts.



Bobolink

Highlights

Farmers are really interested in opportunities to combat climate change and to make their farms more resilient!

54 FARMS REACHED OUT TO THE EFP PROGRAM FOR APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING PROGRAMS

23 FARMERS ARE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE LIVING LABS FIELD TRIALS

Environment & Climate Change Team



CAROLYN MARSHALL
ECC MANAGER



TREVOR DAVISON
ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN COORDINATORS



CORY ROBERTS



JILLIAN SAULNIER
ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN COORDINATORS



KATHERINE RUTHERFORD
LIVING LABS COORDINATOR



SALLY OPPONG (LEFT), KNOWLEDGE & TECH TRANSFER COORDINATOR *



* For Jessica Gilice (On Parental Leave)

Agricultural Climate Solutions Living Lab

The Living Lab project has completed our first full year of field work. The goal of this project is to increase adoption of management practices that will sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We have 23 farmers involved on 21 field sites focused on four best management practices (BMPs):

1. Cover crops in annual cropping systems
2. Floor management in perennial systems (orchards and vineyards)
3. Establishment of riparian zones and shelterbelts
4. Land swap

Over the past year we have collected data on soil carbon, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, earthworms, dung beetles, pollinators, insect biodiversity, and crop health. A characteristic of a living lab is constantly getting and giving feedback on the project, so as this data rolls in and is analyzed we will be sharing it with the farming community.

The Living Lab team and our partners have had a busy year spreading the word about the work we are doing. Our field sites were highlighted at field days with Horticulture Nova Scotia, Grape Growers Association of Nova Scotia, Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia, and the Fruit Growers Association of Nova Scotia. We also held a successful field tour



with Perennia during the Canadian Soil Science Society's annual conference that showcased the Living Lab along with OFCAF field sites. The Living Lab program has also been featured in Cattlemen's Magazine, Rural Delivery, CBC's Mainstreet, and Perennia's cropping podcast, "Outstanding in the Field."



(left) Keep an eye out for our Living Lab field sites. The Living Lab has 21 field sites across the province; (below) Katherine Rutherford samples greenhouse gas emissions at one of our Living Lab sites. Emissions are monitored year-round.



Meet Your Farmer focuses on building and strengthening trust in food and farming in Nova Scotia. Our work focuses on four areas: forums, campaigns, resources, and events.

Forums

In October 2022, our Public Trust Coordinator (PTC) and Communications Manager attended the national Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Summit in Toronto. In November our PTC attended the Dig In! Summit in Debert. We hosted our first food systems partner tour in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists in March 2023. We visited Martock Glen Farm, Manning Family Farm, Schoolhouse Brewery, and The Station Food Hub. The Public Trust Committee was not fulfilled as interest was low. We hosted two industry forums in October and January to give updates on public trust efforts and engage with stakeholders. A new conference will be developed in 2024 to expand on these sessions and strengthen industry collaboration in public trust efforts.

Campaigns

This continues to be a big part of what we do through Meet Your Farmer. Campaigns include our social media platforms, website, 'Your Farmers, Your Nova Scotia' campaign, as well as our Public Trust Survey and metrics. We have reached over 6,700 followers on the Meet Your Farmer Facebook page and nearly 1,600 followers on Instagram. From September 2022 to August 2023, we added 4 new profiles to meetyourfarmer.ca. Five electronic newsletters were sent to 1,974 contacts subscribed to the digital publication throughout the year.

Our Nova Scotia Food and Farming Feedback survey had 659 Nova Scotians complete the survey. 70.2% of respondents indicated that the food system in Nova Scotia is moving in the right direction. A full report has been compiled and is available by request.

Resources

This winter, we hosted in-person and online training focused on Media and Preparing Presentations with Allison Garber Communications. New informational resources on trespass are drafted and will be available this fall. You can find all resources on our Public Trust Resources page on the NSFA website: nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust. This year we received resource requests from seven exhibitions and one Farmers' Market from across Nova Scotia, each was sent resources and display materials.

Events

Events were a great mix of online and in-person experiences.

Open Farm Day in 2022 had farms hosting visitors in-person and online across the province. 21 farms participated with over 4,600 people taking in the event.

Devour! Food Film Festival — Meet Your Farmer hosted a tour as part of Devour Food Film Festival in October. We visited three farms with approximately 50 festival goers.

Let's Get Cooking — In November, we partnered with Chicken Farmers of Nova Scotia to host a Let's Get Cooking event with Chef Jason Lynch who prepared a wonderful meal for over 100 participants! In June we partnered with Horticulture Nova Scotia to bring Chef Ben Kelly to Cole Harbour Heritage Farm to cook two fantastic dishes featuring asparagus and strawberries.

Meet Your Farmer on Heritage Day — We were pleased to be back at Cole Harbour Place for this event, which was a fun-filled day talking with more than 500 visitors.

Canada's Agriculture Day — We celebrated Canada's Agriculture Day with the Kilted Chef and had him cook with Jason Van Der Linden of Lindenright Holsteins at their farm. This was livestreamed to the Kilted Chef's following and has over 8,500 views. We also partnered with Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture to host a Future of Food panel at Halifax Central Library and had our 3rd annual colouring contest as well!

Saltscapes Expo — We attended Saltscapes Expo in-person at Halifax Exhibition Centre in April. We gave away 400 packets of local kale and Swiss chard seeds to visitors.

Meet Your Farmer Team



APRIL MACLEAN
PUBLIC TRUST COORDINATOR

265,000+
REACH on our
social media & website



OVER
6,700
Facebook
followers

Instagram
followers:
1,600



5 electronic newsletters
were sent to
contacts **1,974**
subscribed to the digital
Meet Your Farmer publication.



Our YouTube channel shares
Open Farm Day videos,
hosts live events, and
shares profile stories from
the YFNS campaign.

Farm Safety Nova Scotia has been working hard to provide new resources, supports and training opportunities to the farming community. Take a look at what we accomplished in the 2022-2023 year.

Training, Education and Workshops

Farm Safety's online training was moved to the NSFA's SkillsPass platform this year. The FSNS courses are 'featured courses' on the site, making them easy for the user to find. Since the move this summer, over 140 people enrolled in these courses, predominately accessing Intro to Farm Safety, Intro to Farm Safety (Spanish) and Agriculture Road Safety.

Various safety-related courses and workshops were offered in person. These included:

- Intermediate First Aid
- Chainsaw Safety
- Forklift Training
- Transportation Guideline Info Sessions

Endorsement testing for Condition 23 continued to be arranged by the Farm Safety team, with 6 days of testing available across the province.

In response to concerns around insurance for those employed through Temporary Foreign Worker Programs, we worked with Safety Services Nova Scotia to develop a variety of supports. Two preparatory courses were developed including "Rules of the Road" and "Road Signs." Road Signs flashcards were developed as a supplementary study aid, available in English and Spanish. These supports assist users with passing the Knowledge Test required for obtaining a N.S. drivers license. The Farm Safety team arranged for multiple Knowledge Test days as well as a Spanish-language interpreter, enabling 33 farm employees to take these tests.

Resources

We are dedicated to providing relevant safety resources. Here is a look at what was created this past year:

- FSNS Hours of Service transportation logbook and vehicle inspection sheet
- Two "Intro to Farm Safety" narrated presentations for use with onboarding employees. One general and one tailored to horticulture operations.
- Safety Orientation Check List, for use in employee onboarding

- Spanish Nutrition Information Sheets
- ATV Safety Awareness Sheet for youth
- Safety video for use at exhibitions (waiting for release)
- Safety video for use at farm tours (waiting for release)

One Road Campaign

Farm Safety continues to promote One Road, a campaign originally launched in 2018.

Resources such as posters, bumper stickers and tractor safety checklists, have been steadily distributed through direct mailouts, or by utilizing farm equipment dealers and farm supply stores around the province. New this year, Fisher Transport was approached to have the One Road bumper stickers placed on their trucks and responded enthusiastically with a request for 50 stickers. Although this campaign is active in the summer and early fall, road safety remains an important aspect of farm and rural life, all year round.

HIGHLIGHTS

Progressive Agriculture Safety Days

Two PASD events were held, one in Windsor (Nov 2022) and one in St. Andrews (May 2023). Across these two events, 61 youth aged 7–13 participated and learned about various topics such as chemical safety, tractor awareness, mental health and stress, sun safety, the Search and Rescue 'hug-a-tree' program, and much more.

Canada's Agriculture Safety Week

In March of 2023, Farm Safety Nova Scotia participated in CASW, a nationwide week of recognition around agriculture safety. We hosted 3 online sessions, which were all recorded and are available on our YouTube channel.

- Panel discussion about Emergency Preparedness
- OHS Presentation from N.S. Department of Labour, Skills & Immigration – Safety Branch
- Panel discussion on keeping youth safe on farm

This week was widely promoted and the familiar burlap CASW ribbons were distributed. Local equipment dealers were also engaged in this week and once again generously offered a 10% discount on items for the entire month of March.

The Farm and Workforce Development team continues to work under the 5 pillars of its strategy.

Connect to farming

We actively promote agriculture careers by attending career fairs across the province. At these events we engage in discussions and share resources such as our *Pathways into Ag* post-secondary guide and our newly developed Career Sheets. We currently have Career Sheets detailing seven specific careers and four career paths showing how common fields of study apply to agriculture.

Our job bank, **NSAgJobs** continues to be active and well utilized. This year we have increased opportunities for employers to promote their vacancies at job fairs.

Prepare Strong Farmers

To help assess the training and education needs of our industry, a survey was conducted. The results will help inform decisions on the content and delivery method of future programs.

We arranged four Workplace Education courses this year: Proposal Writing, Financial Fundamentals Level 1, Communication Skills for Supervisors and Business Skills—with a total of 43 participants.

In partnership with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, we continue to support the Farm Technician trade. Recruitment of Certified Farm Technicians remains a high priority, with training for apprentices starting January 2024.

Manage Farms and People

The Farm Management Resources toolkit on the nsfwd.ca and the NSFarmDiscovery.ca websites remain available as resources to assist farm owners at various stages of their operations. Additionally, we continue to provide free access to support and resources from the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, including the Agriculture HR Toolkit.

Succession planning has been a focus of our team this year. We celebrated Farm Transition Appreciation Day in January with resources, giveaways, and an online webinar. The NSFarmSuccession.ca website was also revised to update language as well as include additional information and resources. It has now been launched.

We collaborated on the Veterinary Student Placement Program, delivered through the NS Department of Agriculture, by providing training, recruiting farm employers, and assisting with monitoring placements. Stemming from this project, we developed employer-based supports for hiring term positions. These supports include a guide and workshop-style training.

Automate and Innovate

This year we embarked on a new initiative around Continuous Improvement (CI). This began with a 5-tiered project, funded through both ACOA and WIPSI, that involved awareness and promotion, peer learning and the opportunity to receive direct funding to implement on-farm improvements. This initial project gave us valuable insight into how CI practices apply to Nova Scotia agriculture. The project closed and the remaining funds were reallocated to new activities. The focus of these activities is awareness, networking and the development and delivery of practical resources, such as training videos and guiding documents.

Grow in Diversity

The Bridge Into Agriculture program ran for a second time from March–August 2023. This program is offered in partnership with Dalhousie Extended Learning, the NS Department of Agriculture and African Nova Scotia Affairs. It is an online, horticulture-based program. This year there were 17 participants from across the province. As part of our support for this program, we organized 3 farm tours as well as participated as a guest speaker on agriculture entrepreneurship.

Over the summer months, the FWD team visited, interviewed, and created “Ag. Profiles” for two separate farms—Beaver Creek Natural Farm and Homi Garden Farm—to celebrate diversity in our agriculture industry. These profiles will be featured on the Farm and Workforce Development website as well as cross promoted with the Meet Your Farmer program.

Farm & Workforce Development Team



CAITLYN CREELMAN
FWD MANAGER



**MARGARET ELLS, TRAINING
& AWARENESS COORDINATOR**



**ALLISON HANCOCK, FARMER
WELLNESS COORDINATOR**



**JAMIE O'KANE, FARM
SAFETY COORDINATOR**



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
COORDINATOR, COMING SOON**

We Talk. We Grow.

The We Talk. We Grow. campaign remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing mental health awareness within the farming community. Our multifaceted approach, encompassing outreach, resource development, training, and collaboration, has been instrumental in advancing the We Talk. We Grow. campaign.

Throughout the summer, our campaign took an active stance during a period of unprecedented weather events that severely impacted our farming community. We made We Talk. We Grow. resources readily accessible at three different townhall meetings held in affected communities. Furthermore, these valuable resources were distributed at prominent industry events, such as the Northeastern Christmas Tree Association's 50th anniversary meeting, the Hants County Exhibition, and NSFA's Annual Summer Social Event.

Campaign Promotion

We continue to extend our online presence through regular updates in the NSFA E-News as well as on our Facebook, and Twitter pages. These platforms serve as channels for educational mental health messages and promotion of resources and upcoming events. In addition to these updates, we have shared blog posts addressing self-care, expressive writing, and combating mental health stigma. To maximize our outreach, we have also harnessed industry communication channels, with our articles being shared in the Wild Blueberry Producers of Nova Scotia's weekly E-Newsletter and the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia's quarterly journal.

We will continue amplifying the We Talk. We Grow. campaign by recruiting Champions and Ambassadors who can bolster our messaging and engage closely with peers in the farming community to facilitate what can often be challenging conversations.

Resources and Training Supports

In December 2022 we hosted a webinar on Signs, Symptoms and Strategies related to mental health struggles. This webinar was recorded and is available to watch on the FSNS YouTube channel. From the information presented in that session, we created an informational wallet-card which has been widely distributed.

Two new resources sheets were developed and are available online. One addresses Psychological Safety in the Workplace and the other delving into Stress and Succession Planning.

Recognizing the pivotal role of mental health literacy, we hosted training sessions earlier this year: Mental Health First Aid and Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace. These will continue to be offered to our farming community, with new opportunities added as they become available.

In the last year we created and continue to refine a Personal Wellness Space. This is intended for use at events such as conferences, tradeshow and industry AGMS. This space provides a quiet area where attendees can take a much-needed break and recharge at large events. It also showcases We Talk. We Grow. resources while allowing people to access them privately. We hope to see this space become a consistent fixture at trade shows and other industry gatherings.

Farm Family Support Line

In our commitment to continuous improvement, we have taken note of valuable feedback regarding the current Farm Family Support Line. In response, we have begun the process of implementing a new phone line, exclusively for our farming community. While the services remain unchanged, we anticipate that this dedicated phone line will streamline accessibility, ensuring that support is readily available to those who seek it. We are also exploring opportunities to complement our new line with additional mental health support, drawing from best practices in other jurisdictions.

As we move forward into the next year, we remain committed to the cause, continuously evaluating and adapting our efforts to better serve the mental health needs of Nova Scotia's farming community.

Establishment of the Farmer Wellness Coordinator Role

In June, we marked a significant milestone by introducing the Farmer Wellness Coordinator role. This addition has enabled Farm Safety to invest more into its mental health and wellness initiatives. It has allowed us to foster vital conversations with several key stakeholders in the industry on the topic of mental health, including commodity groups and agricultural representatives. These engagements not only facilitated relationship-building but also shed light on critical gaps in the availability of mental health and services for farmers, which we are determined to address collaboratively.

Nova Scotia Young Farmers have been active and engaged over the past year, supporting their membership in a variety of ways and increasing awareness of the organization.

Support

Thanks to financial support from the Farm and Workforce Development team of the NSFA, a training fund for NSYF members was established. Funding of \$200 per member was made available to offset training fees for a variety of courses. These included First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Pesticide Handling as well as other safety and professional development courses. We have been able to support several members with valuable training and continue to share the opportunity with young farmers.

Farm Credit Canada also supported NSYF members with funding for education-based activities, such as hosting workshops and group training. Being able to help reduce the financial burden of training and education is a valuable way to support the continued growth of our young farmers.

Engagement

Beginning with a well-attended Annual General Meeting in November 2022, featuring a panel of new entrants into farming, we have been actively engaging with our membership and the industry.

We met with the NSFA Council in April, where we raised issues of concern including land planning, land use and support for young farmers. Additionally, the request was made to ensure that policy creation and revision recommendations include a young farmers' lens. As a result, there have been representatives from NSYF added to several NSFA committees, providing a welcome platform for discussion.

Our summer event was held in late July, which began with a tour of Lindenright Holsteins and a look at the results of their recent continuous improvement project, as well as discussion around its ongoing benefits. Participants were able to hear how the project was conceived, planned and carried out, and many were impressed with the possibilities for their own operations. Gary Cox of Barrington Consulting led an informative session, which was followed by a social networking session at Half-Cocked Brewing Company, complete with a brewery tour, live music and The Boneyard food truck. Members of the St. Andrews 4-H Club helped provide children's activities at both locations, which was greatly appreciated.

Connections

NS Young Farmers have been increasingly visible through several projects including:

- Monthly social media takeovers that feature the experiences of young farmers and agricultural professionals
- Participation in the Maritime Ag Podcast in April 2023
- Attendance at the International Rural Exchange conference in Truro in October 2022
- Obtained passes for members to attend the 2023 Minister's Conference
- Java Blend coffee fundraising campaign: But First, Farmers!
- Development of an online suggestion box
- New online membership fee payment option
- Videos for Canada's Ag Day, featuring several members of the NSYF Board
- Trivia challenge with New Brunswick Young Farmers
- Fifth annual #HowNSAgs photo contest
- New pull-up banner debuted at the Halifax County exhibition, August 2023

Looking to the Future

As we enter the next year, we will continue to work to provide education and training on relevant topics to all Nova Scotia's young farmers, including succession and transition, funding and supports, land use, and labour challenges.

Social Media Takeovers

Nova Scotia Young Farmers hosted 6 Social Media Takeovers this year. These online events foster public engagement while showcasing various aspects of agriculture.

2022-2023 Takeovers included:

- Allan Melvin – Melvin Farms
- Kaitlin Knox, Ryan McCarron – South River Ranch
- Mandy and Will Vosman – Trivee Farms
- Sara and Devin Swinkels – Afton Hills Farms
- Tyler Jordan – Jordans Natural Acres
- Thomas Harrington – Bragg Lumber Ltd

