



# news+views

Vol. 35 Issue 5 Winter 2023-2024

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## Check the Box in Section 6 in March!

Check the box in section 6 of your farm registration renewal in March to start and ensure the continuation of your NSFA membership! There is no additional cost to being a member of NSFA beyond your farm registration fee, and there are many benefits available to your farm! Farm registration is valid for 1 year, covering the period from April 1 of one year to March 31 of the next. It is renewable, and your renewal notice will be sent approximately 4 weeks before your farm registration expires. The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture is the issuing agency.

Being an NSFA member means that you influence the Federation's work on advocacy efforts, programs, resources and much more through your input as a voting member at our Annual Meeting. As a member, our team also works to keep you well-informed about news and events in the industry, while connecting you to available supports and providing access to extensive member benefits! Check out our Member Benefit Partners on page 15.

On behalf of our members, our dedicated team continues to work towards a prosperous and sustainable future for agriculture in Nova Scotia. Our work is currently expanding to meet the critical needs of our members amidst

the increasing challenges faced by the industry. The NSFA monitors events, trends, legislation and programs that impact the industry, in order to engage in proactive lobbying and advocacy efforts that represent the interests of our farm families and businesses.

The work of the Federation spans a variety of programs including Farm Safety Nova Scotia, Farm & Workforce Development, Environmental Farm Plan Program, Living Labs, Meet Your Farmer and support provided to Nova Scotia Young Farmers. These programs support farms with resources, training and consultation as they tackle pressing issues that effect the sustainability of our industry. This includes mental health and wellness, environment and climate change, public trust, labour challenges, succession, and much more!

As the sole general farm organization in Nova Scotia, the Federation represents the interests of over 90% of farms in the province and has been doing so since 1895. The NSFA has a strong position to convey the **voice of our farmers** to key audiences including political leaders, industry stakeholders, and consumers. The engagement of our members is integral to the success of our organization, and we are proud to represent farmers from across our province.

Continued on page 5...



# Message from the Executive Director

Well, I think the 2023 AGM is one for the books for me – I never thought I wouldn't be in attendance but was grateful for the ability to participate virtually. Clarity Sounds, a local AV business, does a great job of supporting our annual meeting to ensure a meaningful experience both in the room and online. I'm very appreciative of the staff and Executive for all their work in ensuring the meeting ran smoothly! We will be taking feedback from members into consideration as we begin planning for next year.

You will see on page 6 that we had several resolutions pass and we will get to work on those right away to see where we are able to make traction. I expect we will be able to gain support on several of the resolutions, while others may take some more time. I know this can sometimes be frustrating for membership, when we don't see the movement we would like; however, our role is to influence change and we need a willing partner to implement the change most times. Although we may not always get movement immediately, we continue to advocate at every opportunity.

The discussion at the meeting is always insightful and we glean a lot from the conversations in the room, open mic, questions to speakers, and discussion on resolutions. The challenges farmers faced this year were heard throughout the meeting, but there were also discussions on the opportunities that lie ahead. Succession planning was another big topic, and we recognize there are opportunities to increase efforts in supporting farms in navigating the available resources.

Generally, I would say that our industry, society, economic environment and climate are evolving, and we need to work together to create system changes to adapt and to support agriculture – this means both policy and program interventions. It also means a shift in management practices on the farm. We are at a critical point and collaboration

across the industry, government, and stakeholders is more important now than ever – we've got a lot of work to do!

These past few months, you have seen several job postings and new staff announcements. We are going into the 2024 year with a strong staff complement to work on your behalf. We have a passionate group of individuals working with us and I encourage you to reach out for any questions or ideas you have on how we can support the industry through programming or advocacy work. People are most familiar with our advocacy work, but we've also got a strong group of people working on resources, workshops, training, etc. to help you on your farm- so be sure to connect with the team!

I am looking forward to jumping into 2024 to continue the work we do on behalf of our members, but first I'm looking forward to taking some time to slow down and spending the holidays with family and friends. The NSFA office will be closed December 25 – January 1 inclusive, to allow our team to rest and recharge.

As we approach the holiday season, I wanted to take a moment to extend my warmest wishes to you. I hope that amidst the festivities and celebrations, you also find the time to rest and recharge, allowing yourself the opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and embrace the possibilities of the year ahead.

The holidays can be a joyous time filled with laughter, love, and connection. I encourage you to surround yourself



*Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director*

with those who bring positivity into your life and create cherished memories together. It's a season for gratitude and appreciation for the people who make our lives meaningful.

However, I also want to acknowledge that for some, the holidays can be a challenging time. If you find yourself facing difficulties or if this season brings up emotions that are hard to navigate, remember that it's okay to seek support and connections. Reach out to friends, family, or professionals who can lend a listening ear or offer guidance.

Let's use this time to foster a spirit of understanding and compassion. May we all extend kindness to ourselves and others, recognizing that everyone's experience during the holidays is unique. Whether you're celebrating joyously or facing challenges, know that you are not alone.

Wishing you a restful and rejuvenating holiday season, filled with meaningful connections and moments of joy!





# Annual Meeting Recap



A special thank-you to everyone who attended and supported our 128th Annual Meeting! We value the time and contributions that our members make in attending this meeting as it lays the foundation for our work in the upcoming year.

The AGM provided a valuable opportunity for our members from across the province to come together to discuss the industry's current challenges and opportunities. This year, we covered a number of timely topics that led to productive discussions including public trust, mental health, media relations, climate and risk management and the protection of agricultural land. Check out some of the key takeaways from this year's speakers!

Our first member's-only meeting day facilitated constructive dialogue where we covered many resolutions that can be found on page 6-7!



## Farmer Tim

"Farming the Fields of Social Media"

### Key Takeaways:

- Beware of the "Good, Bad, and Ugly" on social media. Don't reshare misinformation or fear tactic posts to educate consumers. Create your own using facts and correct information.
- Farmers are consumers too. Use the opportunity of you buying your own products to show that you value what you are producing.
- Think like a consumer. Avoid industry jargon and imagine what the average consumer is seeing when you share what's happening on your farm.
- Be authentic and personal. Your story and experiences as a farmer are unique. Share your hobbies, family, and what makes you, you!

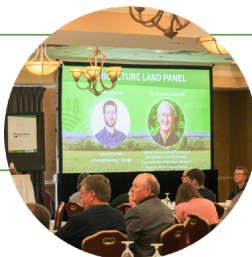


## Jane Taber, Senior VP National PR

Media Relations 101

### Key Takeaways:

- Be bolder on social media- there is lots of opportunity to communicate and share. Social media is media too.
- Scan media often- What is the messaging and how can you participate?
- Know what journalists are looking for- usable information from a responsive, articulate spokesperson. Get to know reporters, especially in your community.
- Be effective in your delivery- Show passion, learn to use determined pauses and be confident.
- Craft and use key messages as tools to convey what you want your audience to remember. They are also a great tactic to bridge to what you want to say and stay on track in an interview.



## Agricultural Land Panel

Ian Watson, UPLAND  
Dr. Wayne Caldwell

### Key Takeaways:

- Planning is important to the future of agriculture to protect farmers, farmland and food security. Learn from the policies and actions in other provinces and jurisdictions.
- Participate in strategy consultations and be active in the planning process through platforms such as online surveys, public meetings and hearings.
- Familiarize yourself with Nova Scotia's Statement of Provincial Interest regarding Agricultural Land.



## Climate & Risk Management Panel

AJ Gill, MNP  
Steve Ells, Ellslea Farms  
Amy Hill, Snowy River Farms  
John Vissers, Winding River Farms

### Key Takeaways:

- Plan! Have a plan that is specific to risk and understand what risks might impact your operation.
- Share! Use your advisors to support you and make sure they are included in what's happening. Don't go it alone.
- Advocate! Talk about what's working and not working for you to help advocate for changes to programs.

**We value your feedback!** Are there speakers that you would like to see at the 129th Annual Meeting? Do you have ways to make the Annual Meeting more valuable for you, our members? We will be taking all of our survey feedback into account in planning next year's Annual Meeting and you can reach out to us at anytime by emailing [comms@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:comms@nsfa-fane.ca)!

## Annual Meeting Recap Cont'd

### 2023 Lloyd Evans Memorial Award

Congratulations to the 2023 recipient of Farm Safety Nova Scotia's Lloyd Evans Award, David Newcombe!

David is a 10th-generation farmer from Cornwallis Farms in Port Williams, where he farms with his family. As a former Farm Safety Nova Scotia board member and president, David has been a vocal advocate for safe farm practices, however his leadership extended beyond the boardroom. David is also a volunteer firefighter with a genuine understanding of the critical link between emergency response and farm safety. David's contributions serve as an inspiration, urging the industry to embrace a culture of safety and well-being for generations to come.



"I am honoured to have received the Lloyd Evans Memorial Award. I was privileged enough to work with Lloyd on the Farm Safety Nova Scotia board and see his passion firsthand. I was also on the board when we decided to create this award to recognize safety leaders and honour Lloyd's work. I will continue to advocate for farm safety and its importance for both physical and mental health for the entire farm community." - David Newcombe

*Farm Safety Nova Scotia's Vice-President, Janice Lutz presented David with his award at the Annual Meeting Banquet.*

### NSFA Council Election

The input of our members is critical to the success of the Federation and we were pleased to see a high level of interest in our available Council positions this year! Thank you to all the nominees and to everyone for your participation in the voting process.

Congratulations to Alicia King, Bruce Wright, and Lauren Park on being elected to Council. We would also like to thank Jocelyn Durston for her contributions on Council and on the NSFA Executive. Our team is wishing Jocelyn, her family and farm the best!



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## Farm Registration Cont'd

When you check the box to be a part of the Federation you are "checking the box" on...



### ☒ **A Trusted Voice**

The NSFA has been the voice of Nova Scotia farmers since 1895. Representing the interests of over 90% of all agricultural production across the province.

### ☒ **Accountable Representation**

NSFA Council members are elected directly from NSFA membership at the Annual General Meeting. The NSFA works closely with County Federations and commodity organizations.

### ☒ **Strong Committees**

The NSFA is supported by a number of committees that help influence and guide the work of the Federation including Policy Advisory, and Agricultural Land, to name a few. Committee membership consists of Council members, members-at-large and various stakeholders.

### ☒ **Effective Lobbying**

As the only general farm organization in the province, the results of NSFA's lobbying and advocacy efforts are a significant benefit to our members, as well as the agriculture industry in the province. Results of NSFA lobbying and advocacy include farm plates, fuel tax rebates, government funding programs, labour advocacy in relation to Temporary Foreign Workers, changes to the Municipal Planning Act and TIR Regulations.

### ☒ **Dedicated Staff**

The NSFA has a team of dedicated individuals who are passionate about the agriculture industry in Nova Scotia. This team works to tackle issues and challenges facing the industry and offers programs and other support to the farming community.

### ☒ **Supporting Nova Scotia Young Farmers**

The NSFA is a proud supporter of the Nova Scotia Young Farmers. NSYF receives direct support from the Federation for governance, finance, communication, event logistics and more! We are happy to support the industry's future leaders.

### ☒ **Delivery of Industry-Led Programs**

NSFA delivers a variety of programs including Farm Safety Nova Scotia, Farm and Workforce Development, Environmental Farm Plan Program, Living Labs - Nova Scotia and Meet Your Farmer. These programs support farms in accessing the tools and resources they need to operate safe and sustainable farm businesses.

### ☒ **Member Benefits**

NSFA Member Benefit partners offer significant savings to our members. *Check out the NSFA Member Benefit Partners on page 15.*

### **Friends of NSFA**

Looking to stay connected to the NSFA? Our 'Friends of the NSFA' program is a way to stay involved even when circumstances may have changed for you.

A Friend is a non-voting member who receives:

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

If you are interested in becoming a "Friend of the NSFA" member for the annual fee of \$75, contact us at [comms@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:comms@nsfa-fane.ca) or at 902-893-2293.

## Join the Survey Panel

As a survey panel participant you will support:

- Providing policy direction.
- Understanding your training and skill capacity development needs, interests, and forms of delivery.
- Providing information for industry reports and policy recommendations.
- And more!



Completed surveys will give you automatic entries into a semi-annual prize draw for a Visa gift card of

# \$250!

Register online & find details at [nsfa-fane.ca/surveypanel/](https://nsfa-fane.ca/surveypanel/)

## Join an NSFA Policy Committee!



NSFA has a number of committee vacancies seeking member participation! There is an application process to participate – visit [nsfa-fane.ca/committee-applications/](https://nsfa-fane.ca/committee-applications/) to apply.

We understand that it takes time away from your farm; therefore, committee members are provided with a per diem for their participation and any required travel expenses are covered under the expense claim policy. Meetings are held in-person or virtually depending on the committee needs.

The following committees are seeking member participation:

### Policy Advisory Committee

**Objective:** To create a forum that will carry out policy and position formulation, study and prepare resolutions and liaise with members and county federations. The long-term objective of PAC is to establish a comprehensive policy and position manual for the organization that supports both advocacy efforts and program delivery.

**Meeting Frequency:** 4 times per year (min. 2 in-person/hybrid)

### Agriculture Land Use Committee

**Objective:** To create a forum to discuss the impact of land use policies on agriculture. The goal is to develop recommendations and strategies that ensure the long-term protection of agricultural land. This includes crafting policy recommendations that encourage and support agricultural land remaining in production, such as addressing taxation, establishing land banks, and agricultural easements.

**Meeting Frequency:** Anticipated to meet 2 – 4 times per year

### Risk Management Committee

**Objective:** To create a forum to study the risk management issues affecting Nova Scotia farms, including the available risk management programs (e.g. AgriStability, Crop Insurance), along with general liability and worker liability. The objective is to ensure farmers have an understanding of risk management options and to advocate for improvements to risk management programs.

**Meeting Frequency:** Anticipated to meet 2 – 4 times per year

## Resolutions

The following resolutions were adopted at the 2023 Annual Meeting on November 24. There were a total of 17 resolutions submitted, and one resolution was defeated by membership vote.

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) oversees the resolution process. Resolutions will all be reviewed and background research initiated by staff. PAC will meet to review and prioritize resolutions. Actions to move forward on resolutions may include position development, advocacy and/or activity plans. We will provide a mid-year update on resolutions in late spring.

### Increase Funding for Group Programs

Therefore be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Department of Agriculture to increase the levels of Program funding assistance (cost share and project caps) available for groups (not-for-profits, co-ops societies, etc.);

And, further be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Department of Agriculture to prioritize funding of “equipment and technology” programs.

### Land Bank Program

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the provincial government to establish a land bank program to ensure viable agriculture land remains in production and supports farm transition.

### Land Leasing for New Entrants

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development to purchase agriculture land to lease out to new entrants to grow the sector and the economy.

### Temporary Road Signage for Farming Activity

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture collaborate with the appropriate

government departments to develop and implement a temporary signage program alerting of farming activity and slow-moving farm vehicles.

#### **Agencies, Boards and Commissions**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture pressure the Provincial government to fully populate the agricultural ABCs with a particular emphasis on the Marshland Conservation Commission.

#### **Government Acquisition of Agricultural Land**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Provincial Government to establish a policy to proactively consult with the agriculture industry before planned acquisition of agricultural land for government-led and government-funded projects.

#### **Natural Products Marketing Council – Fully Resourced, Independent Body**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture call on the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to recognize the important role the Natural Products Marketing Council plays in Nova Scotia's Agriculture Industry by providing Council with enough dedicated staff to ensure they can provide comprehensive, timely administration of matters before them.

#### **Pesticide Applicators License**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture consult with government to review the pesticide applicators license to improve effectiveness and accessibility.

#### **Waterways and Drainage Maintenance**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate change that waterways and drainage systems can be maintained to function properly by the landowner to prevent damage to farmland and farm infrastructure.

#### **HST as Eligible Input Tax Credit on Bunkhouses**

Therefore, be it resolved, that The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture support efforts to advocate to the federal government to include HST as an eligible input tax credit on the construction, maintenance, and furnishing of bunkhouses for seasonal agricultural and temporary foreign workers.

#### **Adoption of Private Member's Bill C-359**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture support publicly and advocate for the adoption of Private Member's Bill C-359 by the federal government.

#### **Scoring Rubrics for NSDA Projects**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to create and include fully transparent scoring rubrics detailing how each project will be scored and selected.

#### **Funding Eligibility – Farm Compensation**

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to change Programs to allow farmers to perform their own work and be compensated at provincial averages, which would otherwise be completed by a third-party contractor.

#### **Food Waste**

Therefore, be it resolved that, the Nova Scotia Federation Agriculture lobby the government to pass a law to divert food waste away from landfills and let charities and livestock farms make use of it.

#### **Farmers' Markets and Food Hubs**

Therefore, be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture provide more support to alternative, co-operative ways to sell farm products such as Farmers' Markets and Food Hubs;

And, further be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobbies the government to financially help and promote these alternative ways to sell farm products.

#### **Adopt a One Permit System for Schedule A Foods Market and Event Permits**

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture lobby the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment to adopt a one permit system, eliminating unnecessary administrative and financial burdens, so that a farmer or food producer who qualifies to sell their Schedule A goods can do so at any market or event in Nova Scotia, without having to reapply for the same permit multiple times in order to sell in multiple locations.





## Public Trust Update

### Canada's Agriculture Day

Tuesday, February 13th, 2024 is Canada's Agriculture Day! Planning is underway for another great celebration. Our very popular annual colouring and art contests for kids will be back again this year! Colouring contest prizes will be awarded for ages 2-5 and 6-9 years old. Youth ages 10-12 years old are invited to draw and colour "My Dream Farm". Show us what your own dream farm would look like and what you would grow or raise. You can include buildings, machinery, animals, and plants/crops. Let your imagination soar! Deadline to enter both competitions is February 13, 2024! Details will be available on our website.

We're also working with the Kilted Chef on some exciting ideas for this year's Canada's Ag Day celebration. Watch for details on our Facebook, Instagram, and at [meetyourfarmer.ca](http://meetyourfarmer.ca)!



**Let's celebrate the food we love**

**Save the date for Meet Your Farmer on Heritage Day at Cole Harbour Place – Monday February 19th!**

We will be looking for farmers to join us to share their story and talk with the public on February 19th at the Cole Harbour Place. Please reach out to April if you are interested in attending on February 19 at [amaclean@nsfa-fane.ca](mailto:amaclean@nsfa-fane.ca) or calling 902-893-2293.

### TRESPASSING

## Did you know?

Christmas Tree farms are agricultural lands, not forests. Hunting on a tree farm without landowner permission is trespassing.

Ask before you enter!



### Trespass Information Series

NSFA staff have developed a 12-month communications plan in support of Resolution 2022-12 on education related to the risks of recreational trespassing.

Content in support of this plan will be shared on various platforms including social media, newsletters, e-news, [nsfa-fane.ca](http://nsfa-fane.ca), [meetyourfarmer.ca](http://meetyourfarmer.ca), and social media pages for Meet Your Farmer, Farm Safety Nova Scotia, and NSFA. Each month our messages will align with the season (ex. trespass on sugarbush areas will be discussed in Feb/March).

We have also developed print resources: "Trespassing on Farmlands - What You Need to Know" to support farmers and "Entering Farmlands - What You Need to Know" to educate members of the public. These pdf documents are available at [nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/](http://nsfa-fane.ca/publictrust/)

Digital marketing through social media, websites and email can be a valuable tool to use in building public trust. While agriculture is subject to challenges online such as the spread of misinformation, the industry also has a great opportunity to leverage their stories, products and facts about farming. We aim to equip our members with the skills and knowledge to navigate these social platforms, while building public trust.

### Digital Harvest

Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on a Public Trust and digital marketing event to take place in February 2024.

Be sure to keep an eye out as this will be an event you won't want to miss!



# Staying Safe through the Winter

Winter is upon us once again. This means many health and safety concerns that have not been on our minds since the spring are being reintroduced. Although winter can be a slower time for some farms, even doing routine chores in the icy weather can create a new set of hazards. Keeping safety top of mind over the winter ensures that you're healthy and ready to go in the spring.

## Cold Weather

Working in extreme weather is a part of the job when it comes to agriculture, but working in the cold is often overlooked as a safety hazard. Cold exposure can bring frostnip, frostbite, and even hypothermia. Never ignore numb fingers and toes; once numbness sets in, it's harder to detect the damage occurring.

You may have heard that you should consume warm drinks when working in the cold. Although a pot of coffee in the barn will help wake you up, caffeine, as with alcohol, can cause peripheral vasodilation, which reduces body temperature. Try filling your mug with a caffeine-free option such as different flavours of caffeine-free tea or decaffeinated coffee.

Make sure you layer up when working in cold temperatures over the winter with three layers: an inner layer for ventilation, a middle layer that retains insulation, and an outer layer that breaks the wind. It's a good idea for both you and your staff to keep an extra set of clothing stored at the farm over the winter. If your clothes become wet, they lose their insulating value very quickly. Comfort is also a factor- nobody enjoys working in cold,



wet clothes. Consider keeping a bin of extra gloves and hats available to anyone who may need one.

## Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls are common in the winter when the ground becomes icy. The wide variety of weather that we get in Nova Scotia can contribute to this as well. A cold rain when the weather is warmer during the day can quickly become an ice patch overnight. If you notice that you slip on ice anywhere in the work area, eliminate the hazard immediately with salt, sand, or melting agents. The next person, or yourself, will thank you!

If you keep a pail of traction material by each doorway, it will make it easier to quickly take care of the problem. Remember that it isn't only you who may be walking through high traffic areas on your farm: salespeople, suppliers, and visitors are also at risk of falling when they come through.

Another large risk factor that contributes to trips is lack of proper lighting. If you can't see where you are going, you're more likely to trip over something. In the wintertime, when we have less daylight, more work may be done in the dark. This makes it extra important to ensure that you have enough light to allow you to see your surroundings clearly when working, especially if you are carrying something.

Depending on the job, headlamps, floodlights, or flashlights can be used. Whichever works best for what you're doing and ensures that you can clearly see your path of travel. Overall tidiness should also be practiced helping prevent trips by creating a clear work area. If you can see an obstacle in the daylight, remember that it will be less visible to yourself and others in the dark.

## Winter Storms

With winter, of course comes winter storms and it's important to be prepared. Test all your backup power systems as part of your maintenance schedule and storm preparation.. You don't want to be stuck with a failed backup system when the power is out.

Keep your emergency kit on hand and well stocked. Be sure you keep at minimum, a three-day supply of food, water, and any medications you may take. Talk with your staff about their comfort level travelling on poor roads. If they're unable to come in due to road conditions, try to come up with a contingency plan to be sure that their work gets done. They will appreciate your foresight in keeping their safety top of mind.

Although winter brings new safety concerns, recognizing those concerns and acting on them will ensure we keep our farms safe year-round, no matter the weather. Take time to enjoy the season, and above all, stay safe.



# Recognized Employer Pilot

## Recognized Employer Pilot for those employing through TFW Programs

On August 8th, 2023, a three-year Recognized Employer Pilot (REP) was announced to assist those employers utilizing Temporary Foreign Worker Programs. The REP is designed to be more responsive to labour market shortages and reduce the administrative burden for repeat employers. Employers selected to participate in this pilot program must still meet the highest standards for wages, working and living conditions, and worker protection. The REP will reduce red tape by introducing longer Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) validity periods of up to 36 months. This enables recognized employers to better plan for their labour needs over this three-year period. It also reduces the number of LMIA applications they will need to submit.

Recognized employers will also gain access to simplified LMIA applications to address future hiring needs.

It will also reduce the amount of information an employer needs to provide to receive a subsequent LMIA approval under the REP program. The assessment will be based on information previously provided and new information, focusing on the work location, occupation, number of requested positions, wage and working conditions.

As of September 2023, applications are accepted for employees in the following occupations:

- Livestock labourers
- Harvesting labourers
- Specialized livestock workers and farm machinery operators
- Nursery and Greenhouse labourers.

Employers who regularly access the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Programs and have no previous history of non-compliance are encouraged to apply to the pilot.

### Key Take Aways

- Eligibility criteria includes being a TFWP Employer for 3-5 years – allowing for sufficient history to evaluate.
- There will be no change in responses to allegations, recognized employer or not. Founded allegations could impact program participation.
- Random check-ins will still occur.
- Non-compliance with inspections will result in removal from the pilot program.
- On advertising efforts – There is an expectation that employers will continue the current level of local advertising and recruitment efforts, despite no requirement to submit the proof.
- All standards remain the same, including annual wage reviews and housing inspection reports of employer-provided accommodations.

### Simplified REP LMIA's

Simplified LMIA applications to address future hiring needs will be assessed based on a combination of two things: information previously provided and new information required of a recognized employer. In a simplified LMIA, most of the sections will be pre-filled by the Department of Agriculture using information from previous applications.

Employers will only need to answer a few sections pertaining to the job offer in cases where they have applied for that same occupation in the past. In cases where there is no application history for the requested position, more information may be required.

Simplified LMIA's will be available online to REP employers in December of 2023.

### Dual-Purpose LMIA's

Employers can request to be considered for Recognized Employer status at the same time as they apply for their LMIA's under any of the existing four streams: Permanent Resident (PR), Low-Wage, High-Wage or Primary Agriculture (including SAWP). As a reminder, primary agriculture is exempt from the \$1,000 per position LMIA fee.

The maximum employment durations currently applicable to the existing Program streams will remain in effect for REP participants.

### Recognized Employer Pilot Timelines

A phased approach to REP is as follows:

**January 1, 2024:** Intake open for all occupations

**September 16, 2024:** Intake for the REP closes and the dual-purpose application to become a recognized employer would cease to be available

**December 31, 2026:** Proposed end date for the REP



In 2022, 1,649 agriculture workers in Nova Scotia were employed through TFW Programs

### What are the Benefits of TFWP's for Agriculture?

#### 1. Addressing Seasonal Labor Shortages:

Agriculture is highly seasonal, and there are often peak periods where additional labor is required. The agriculture industry benefits from accessing TFW Programs by using them to fill these seasonal gaps, ensuring that crops are planted, cultivated, and harvested in a timely manner.

#### 2. Transfer of Skills and Knowledge:

Foreign agricultural employees bring valuable skills and knowledge to Canadian farms. This transfer of expertise benefits the local workforce and contributes to the overall improvement of agricultural practices.

**3. Economic Contributions:** Those employed through TFW programs in the agricultural industry contribute to Nova Scotia's economy through their work, spending on goods and services, and payment of taxes.



# Cultivate Your Future

Plans for the Cultivate Your Future youth in agriculture conference are well under way, with an exciting line-up of speakers and activities.

The conference will take place on Thursday, January 11th at the Inn on Prince in Truro. The day will include a variety of speakers, a panel discussion, brainstorming sessions, an address by the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Greg Morrow, and an evening banquet with entertainment. The overall theme of the conference is supports for youth in agriculture; to share what is currently available and to identify would be helpful in the future.

## Speakers



### Lauren Van Ewyk

Lauren Van Ewyk is an engaging speaker, registered social worker, foster mom, and agricultural mental health advocate. She has appeared in numerous radio, television and print articles speaking on issues such as mental wellness and mental health in the agriculture sector. Lauren is a founding member of the National Farmer Mental Health Alliance. The alliance works with individuals, families and corporations across Canada and the US to support the agriculture industry. As both farmers and therapists, the alliance understands the unique aspects of care needed to help farmers

thrive. Lauren will share farmer wellness information as well as recent research results on the mental health impact of women's roles in agriculture.

### Benjamin Feagin Jr.

Benjamin Feagin Jr. is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Agritech North, a social enterprise in Dryden, Ontario committed to providing high quality, nutritious leafy greens, herbs, and small fruiting crops year-round, contributing to food security in Northwestern Ontario. Benjamin will explain how they use a vertical hydroponic growing system to reduce the retail costs and increase the availability of fresh produce in their community with their adaptable production model.



### Cathy Munro

Cathy Munro is the Founder and Farmer at Bramble Hill Farm, a commercial greenhouse operation in Greenhill, Pictou, established in 2017. Starting off as a project in self-reliance and winter farming, Cathy has grown Bramble Hill Farm into one of the largest year-round microgreen farms east of Montreal. Bramble Hill's unique microgreen salad mixes can be found at independent retailers throughout Nova Scotia. This farm thinks outside the traditional and was recognized in 2019 by Pictou County Chamber of Commerce and then in 2021 by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture as a new leader in small business. Coming out of the pandemic and recognizing the need for more people to connect with their food sources, Cathy developed a unique-to-market, grow-your-own microgreens kit: Micro Garden. This has allowed the farm to expand its customer base and grow beyond the geographic limitations of their fresh product market base.

## Panel Discussion

A panel discussion about supports that were available and used by the participants in their producer journeys will feature Blake Jennings of Bayview Poultry Farms, Ryan McCarron of South River Ranch and William Spurr of Spurr Brothers Farm. This will be an opportunity to learn from local farmers and gain insights from their experiences.

## Tabletop Brainstorming

Two sessions will offer a chance to brainstorm ideas on a variety of topics relevant to our young farmers, including Advocacy, Transition/Succession, Mentorships, Land Access Options and Less Traditional Crops to Explore. Tables will be led by facilitators, with the aim of identifying some strategies and action items that could be used to support young farmers over the coming years.

## Tradeshow

With just over two hours of time built into the schedule to visit the tradeshow booths and network, conference participants can engage with a variety of support businesses and organizations.

## NS Young Farmers AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia Young Farmers organization will take place over the lunch break, with a review of the past year's activities and financials and election of new Directors and Officers. All NSYF members are asked to attend the AGM. Anyone interested in joining the Board of Directors can contact [info@nsyoungfarmers.ca](mailto:info@nsyoungfarmers.ca) to request a nomination form.

And more fun...! Following the day's events, we invite everyone to join us in the hospitality room to enjoy local drinks and socializing while the evening banquet is set up. Featuring local foods and an entertainer, the banquet is the perfect end to the day!

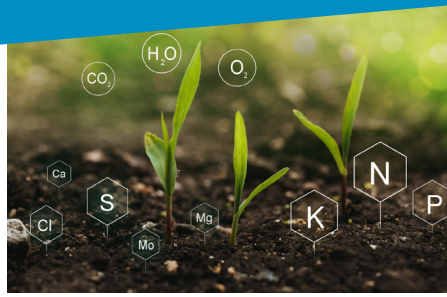
Don't miss this conference! Register now at [nsyoungfarmers.ca/event/cultivate-your-future-youth-in-agriculture-conference/](https://nsyoungfarmers.ca/event/cultivate-your-future-youth-in-agriculture-conference/)

## A Case for Manure Storage Expansion

It is well understood that applying adequate nutrients is required for growing quality crops and achieving good yields. Many Nova Scotia farms do soil testing and have developed nutrient management plans to optimize nutrient use on farm. Over the past few years, purchasing nutrients in the form of fertilizer has become significantly more expensive. Alternative sources of fertility such as alkaline stabilized biosolids or wood ash can be cost-effective alternatives, but availability is limited. Livestock farms have a strong incentive to find additional ways to tighten up their manure use efficiency to improve the farm's bottom line.

In order to avoid manure run-off, the NS Manure Management Guidelines recommend that manure not be land applied on frozen, snow covered or saturated soils. Conditions for land application are generally not suitable between December 1st and April 1st. Manure that is applied closer to the time when an actively growing crop can use it (e.g. May through August), is more efficiently utilized. Research has shown that fall-applied dairy manure can have a 16% lower fertility value than spring applied manure, based on nutrient losses over the winter.

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program recommends the best management practice of having enough manure storage capacity to store 7 months of manure production. This allows farmers to avoid land applying manure at non-ideal times if there is an early winter or a late spring. Manure applied to frozen, snow covered, or saturated soil, or when applied when there is not an actively growing crop, can



be underutilized. Nutrients that run-off or leach are lost for crop production and represent a risk to ground and surface water quality as well as an economic loss from the farm.

Farms that do not have adequate manure storage capacity are often faced with the reality of land applying manure during non-ideal times, resulting in a financial loss that could be prevented with increased manure storage capacity. An interesting question to ask is, do the economic losses from nutrient run-off and/or leaching, due to non-ideal manure application timing, justify an investment in expanding manure storages?

This is a complex question as every livestock operation is unique with different feeding programs, manure storage and handling systems. It is also tricky to predict how land applied manure nutrients will react under different soils and climatic conditions from year to year. That said, we can look at some numbers that might help to put things into perspective.

An average NS dairy farm that milks 88 cows that are confined to a barn year-round and that has 24 dry cows and 35 heifers that are on pasture for 5 months would produce approximately 2.31 million liters of manure needing to be stored annually. This figure does not include any wash water or precipitation water.

Livestock are inefficient at extracting nutrients from their feed; with 75 to 90 per cent of the nutrients contained in the feed passing directly through the animal ending up in the manure. Based on an average dairy manure nutrient analysis, the resulting manure may contain approximately 0.52% total nitrogen, 0.13% phosphorus and 0.31% potassium.

The fertilizer replacement value of the manure based on recent fertilizer prices would be in the neighbourhood of \$70,000.00.

It is clear that manure is a large fertility resource for livestock farms and more efficient use of this resource could make substantial improvements to the farm's bottom line and reduce the farm's environmental risk. Liquid manure injection, or immediate incorporation of manure after application, can increase nitrogen use efficiency. This practice that has been supported through funding by the On Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) program.

Applying manure in the season when crops are actively growing can increase manure use efficiency by increasing the percentage of nutrients taken up by the crop. Manure storage expansion or construction to increase a farm's capacity to at least 7 months of manure production, would allow farmers to improve their manure application timing. Manure storage construction is not cheap, but alternatives to expensive concrete construction are available (e.g. engineered earthen manure storages). The increased nutrient use efficiency of manure applied at appropriate times should be considered when looking at the cost of increasing storage capacity and offsetting fertilizer expenses.

It is recommended that farms test their manure to understand the concentration of the nutrients available. Your analysis is only as good as the sample taken, so be sure to get a good representative sample from well agitated manure. Engage your nutrient management planner in a discussion of the economic implications of your current manure management practices and look for opportunities to tighten up the manure nutrient cycle to save your farm money. Be sure to consider the potential cost savings of the improved nutrient efficiency when new technology or infrastructure are being considered. If you are interested in having a conversation about your manure storage and handling system and opportunities for making improvements, contact an EFP Coordinator at (902) 893-2293.



## Living Labs



*Some of the rotationally grazed livestock at a Living Lab Land Swap site.*

### Maximizing Agricultural Potential in Nova Scotia through Land Swapping

Creating and maintaining healthy agricultural land is an important aspect of sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation. Part of Living Lab – Nova Scotia, funded by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada's Agriculture Climate Solutions, is the land swap. Land swapping is an innovative strategy for maximizing land use that involves exchanging horticulture land for pasture. It contributes to healthier and more resilient agricultural land.

As part of our research, some of the benefits of land swapping that we are looking at include:

- **Soil Health:** The improvement of soil health is being looked as one of the major advantages of swapping horticulture land to grazing land. Horticulture operations often includes high cultivation (or frequent disturbance), which can degrade the soil over time. Pasture, on the other hand, allows for soil regeneration. Including legumes in the pasture

mixture can further improve soil fertility by fixing nitrogen and stimulating microbial activity.

- **Carbon Sequestration:** Swapping horticulture land for pasture can help sequester carbon in the soil. Plants absorb and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which helps mitigate climate change. Pastures act as carbon sinks, making land swapping a climate-friendly practice.
- **Cost Effectiveness:** By alternating between annual and perennial cropping systems every few years, horticulture farmers and livestock producers can work together to increase soil health. One of the goals of the living lab project is to determine how feasible, both financially and logistically, this practice is and how cost and responsibilities can be shared.
- **Enhanced Biodiversity and Conservation:** Pastures can often be home to a wide variety of plants, insects, birds, and small mammals. This biodiversity can have a positive impact on the ecosystem, promoting pollination and natural pest control. We are specifically looking at earthworms and dung beetles for their ability to pull organic matter, such as manure, deeper into the soil where it can be protected, increased carbon sequestration.

After establishment, pastures require fewer inputs than horticulture production. However, establishing a pasture takes time. Factors such as landscape, rotational grazing plan, water source, and seeding mix all must be considered. Some materials needed for creating pastures are temporary fencing and watering systems.

The land swap project is rotationally grazing cattle, which has some known benefits such as:

- Increasing pasture productivity by favouring desirable plant species and allowing for even manure distribution.
- Reducing soil compaction by limiting the time that cattle spend in one place.
- Reducing soil erosion through consistent soil cover.
- Increasing carbon sequestration by encouraging root growth and plant re-growth.

The transformation of horticulture land to pasture through land swapping marks a significant shift in the agricultural landscape. We hope this shift is categorized by improved soil health, reduced environmental impact, carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity. As the world faces increasing challenges related to climate change and sustainable agriculture, land swapping can be a valuable tool in developing more resilient and environmentally friendly farming systems. It is a step towards a more sustainable and prosperous future for both farmers and consumers.

Visit us on our website to learn more about the ongoing project and how you can adopt some of the best management practices at [nsfa-fane.ca/livinglabs/](https://nsfa-fane.ca/livinglabs/)



*A dung beetle collected at one of our Living Lab Land Swap sites.*

# Winter Wellness: Beating the Blues

As winter settles in, routine challenges can emerge – coaxing cold equipment to life, layering up for the trek to the barn, and the inevitable struggle against seasonal cold and flu. On top of that, shorter days seem to cast a shadow on our energy levels, leaving many of us feeling consistently tired, a bit more anxious, and overall moodier. It's a natural response to the changing season that is more common than you may think.

The onset of that gloomy feeling – the one that has us entertaining the idea of hibernation come November – is a shared experience which has been deeply ingrained in many of us.

## The Science Behind the Blues

What exactly is it about the darkening days that tends to leave many of us feeling down? To put it simply, the dwindling sunlight can throw our body out of its usual rhythm. With shorter days, our body's internal clock, known as the "circadian rhythm," gets disrupted. This clock, which is attuned to environmental cues like lighting, normally guides when we should stay alert and when it's time to wind down for bedtime.

The decreased sunlight triggers our brain to produce more melatonin, a hormone influencing both our sleep patterns and mood. This excess melatonin can leave us feeling tired and lacking motivation. Not only that, but the reduction in sunlight may contribute to a decline in serotonin levels, a chemical linked to feelings of happiness and well-being. This dip in serotonin production can naturally evoke a sense of melancholy or even depression.

## How to Beat the Blues this Season:

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to overcoming this "I-can't-wait-for-winter-to-end" feeling, there are some accessible and effective strategies that may help to uplift your spirits:

### 1. Maximize Natural Light Exposure:

Recognizing that many of us already spend significant time outdoors for work, consider making a conscious effort to continue enjoying daylight. Being intentional about soaking in natural light can support your well-being by helping to reset your body's internal clock and boost your mood in the process.

### 2. Stay Active:

Acknowledging the physical demands of farming, remember to engage in regular physical activities that bring enjoyment. Even a brief daily walk has proven to be a mood booster, effectively alleviating symptoms of depression.

### 3. Maintain a Healthy Diet:

Moderating your intake of sugary and processed foods, which are known contributors to lower mood, can be helpful. Strive for a balanced diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, to nurture both your physical and mental well-being.

### 4. Socialize and Connect:

When the cold weather tempts you to stay indoors, combat the urge to cocoon on the couch each night. Instead, prioritize spending time with friends and loved ones. Maintaining these connections is crucial for preserving morale throughout the winter months.

### 5. Plan Enjoyable Activities:

Carving out time to engage in activities you genuinely enjoy can help boost your

## Beating the Blues: Breakfast and Learn

Date: January 15th, 2024

Time: 9 am – 12 pm

Location: Old Orchard Inn, 153 Greenwich Road S, Wolfville Ridge, NS

Step away from the farm routine on "Blue Monday," commonly acknowledged as the most depressing day of the year, and join us for a Breakfast and Learning session as you connect with friends and neighbours.

mood. Engaging in hobbies, new or old, is an effective way to pass the time and elevate your mood.

If you're finding it difficult to shake these winter doldrums, even after trying various mood-boosting strategies, please consider reaching out for support.

**The Farm Family Support Line is available 24/7/365 by calling 1-833-754-3692**

While it's tempting to dismiss seasonal blues as just that – a passing mood – it becomes particularly crucial to seek help if you notice a decline in motivation, significant shifts in eating and sleeping patterns, or the emergence of feelings of hopelessness. Remember, reaching out for support is a proactive step towards reclaiming your well-being.

It's also important to acknowledge that, amidst the twinkling lights and festive cheer, the holiday season can cast shadows of significant stress and strain on our mental well-being. If you're feeling the weight of the season, our Farm Family Support Line stands ready, 24/7/365 with free expert advice.

## Farm Family Support Line

You can now access the benefits of the Farm Family Support Line at your fingertips.

- 1 Download the TELUS Health One app or visit [one.telushealth.com](https://one.telushealth.com)
- 2 Log in with the username and password below.

Username: **NSFarmers**

Password: **wellness**

**1-833-754-3692**

WE  
TALK  
→ WE ←  
GROW





# Member Benefits

NSFA members have access to an extensive and growing number of benefits and special discounts offered through the following Member Benefit Partners!



## CAHRC

NSFA members are able to access the CAHRC AgriHR Toolkit, contact the NSFA office to receive your discount code.



## Choice Hotels Canada

Significant Organization Savings rate program is designed to reward NSFA members with discounted room rates at participating Choice locations worldwide.



## Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Enterprise Rent-A-Car offers NSFA members corporate class rental pricing.



## Rogers

NSFA members have access to SAVE, mobile plans!



## GBS Mobility

Through GBS Mobility, NSFA members receive preferred business rates on mobile phones and service on the Telus network plus a Free Procure kit with every new phone activated.



## Kent Building Supplies

NSFA members receive a discount on any of Kent's store front items and special pricing on lumber and building materials.



## Mark's Work Wearhouse

Mark's Work Wearhouse offers NSFA members an exclusive discount card on selected items and brand names.



## BrokerLink Insurance

Offering NSFA members exclusive access to Farm Advantage. The program offers unique and enhanced farm insurance coverage.



## MHCSI

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture members are eligible for the Preferred Supplementary Pharmacy Benefits Program offered by MHCSI-Managed Health Care Services Inc.



## Medavie Blue Cross

Please contact Morneau Shepell, 1-800-667-6328 for an enrollment package. This coverage includes health, dental, disability, life and more.



## Payworks

NSFA members receive Special Pricing with Payworks, a leading expert in the field of total workforce management solutions, providing innovative cloud-based solutions for Payroll, HR, Employee Time and Absence Management.



## Superior Propane

NSFA members receive preferred business rates, a free wireless SMART Tank Sensor and tank rentals for only \$1 annually.



## Safety Services Nova Scotia

Thanks to Farm Safety Nova Scotia's membership with Safety Services Nova Scotia, you have access to discounts on all of their services as well as other perks.



## Turner Drake & Partners Ltd.

Real Estate experts Turner Drake offers NSFA members a 15% discount on valuation and property tax advisory services on farm properties throughout the province.



## Chrysler Canada

*Coming soon: 2024 Fleet Rebate Discounts offered by Chrysler Canada. Contact the NSFA office for details!*

# 2023 Council Members

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902-499-6968

Alicia King, 1st Vice  
902-870-4810

Bert Meyer, Corporate Secretary  
& Treasurer  
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Tim Marsh, Past President/CFA  
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## Upcoming Events

For more details on upcoming events and how to register, visit [nsfa-fane.ca/events](http://nsfa-fane.ca/events)

### Young Farmers: Cultivate Your Future

January 11th, Inn on Prince, Truro

### Mental Health Training

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

### Beating the Blues: Breakfast and Learn

January 15th, 2024  
9 am – 12 pm  
Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville

### Mental Health First Aid

January 17th & 18th

### Canada's Agriculture Day

February 13th

### Meet Your Farmer on Heritage Day

Cole Harbour Place

February 19th

### Living Labs Yearly Meeting

Winter 2024



## STAFF

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Training & Awareness  
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Colin Bawn  
Workforce Development  
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Allison Hancock  
Farmer Wellness  
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Katherine Rutherford  
Living Lab Coordinator

Sally Oppong  
KTT Coordinator

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

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