

news+views

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Nova Scotia's International Recruitment Mission for Agriculture



In the Growing Nova Scotia Together Report presented to government in May 2023, the Federation recommended a targeted immigration program to support farm workers and farm operators moving to Nova Scotia. This recommendation is based on the current challenges in recruiting labour and farm successors along with the fact that Nova Scotia's agriculture workforce is aging with a declining interest amongst youth to enter the industry.

The government responded to the recommendation by conducting market research and identifying the Netherlands as a potential market for recruitment. The Netherlands boasts a wealth of agricultural expertise and has contributed to our industry with a history of successful immigration for many years.

Immigration and Population Growth (IPG), a division of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration,

coordinated the mission in April 2024 to align with Emigratiebeurs, Europe's largest immigration expo. As the first mission with an agriculture focus, this initiative had an exploratory lens and there were many learnings. The industry needed to better understand international markets and recruitment, while IPG needed to better understand the industry's needs.

Nova Scotia farm employers had the opportunity to participate in the mission to recruit for a specific job vacancy. They could join the travelling contingent to participate in person or send job postings to be shared with potential candidates. This opportunity was shared via NSFA's eNews and social media channels and distributed through commodity organizations. Several employers were interested, but many preferred to observe how the mission unfolded and gain a better understanding of the process first.

Continued on page 5...



Message from the Executive Director

As I write this article, there is some rain in the forecast for the coming week – a rain that is much needed! As we roll into another busy farming season, I'm optimistic for a productive season. The Council traditionally met for a two-day meeting in August, this year we moved this session to April to better align with the organization's fiscal year and farming seasons. Our two-day meeting is dedicated to strategic planning and member engagement.

Last August, we identified the following three strategic priorities and our planning session in April underscored that these three areas will continue to be a priority for the upcoming year.

1. Policy & Advocacy
2. Communications & Member Services
3. Organizational Effectiveness

Some of the initiatives identified were pending the changes to the farm registration fees, which were approved in February. We continue to work on these priorities, and you will see many of the outcomes of this in the coming months.

We focused a lot of our discussions on the advocacy priorities for the organization and central to the discussion was farm financial health and viability. Regardless of the topic of discussion whether it be workforce, environment, climate change, or local markets, the decreasing profit margins and increased risks farmers are facing are part of the conversation. We will be focusing efforts on advocating for policies and programs to support viable farming operations in Nova Scotia.

We are excited to be welcoming a Director of Policy & Advocacy to the organization in June. This role is key to the organization as we make efforts to increase our advocacy capacity. Over the next ~12 months we will likely see elections at all three levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal.

This fall will be a critical time to ensure agriculture is prioritized in election platforms and that Nova Scotians understand the importance of agriculture to our communities – our food security, our economy and our environment.

2023 Season Response Extension

You'll find a report on the following page on the extension of the 2023 Season Response Program. As stated in the report, the NSFA wasn't engaged in the program development or application assessment. For inquiries regarding these matters, please contact the Director of Programs. However, if you have any questions that NSFA can address, feel free to reach out to me directly at cvandenheuvel@nsfa-fane.ca or 902.893.2293.



Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, Executive Director



Spring Council Meeting

Each year, our Council holds a two-day strategy meeting in a different part of the province, and this year we were in East Hants! We take advantage of our Council members being together for two days by incorporating farm tours and a Spring Member Social to provide opportunities to engage with the local farm community. Thank you to everyone from farmers to local politicians who joined us for a great evening!

A special thanks to Amy and David Hill at Snowy River Farms, the Mostert Family at Windmill Holsteins Inc. and Nick Bokma and family at Bokma Farms Ltd. for welcoming us to your farms!



2023 Season Response Extension

To address the critical needs of the farming community, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) has distributed funds received from the Department of Agriculture for natural disaster recovery to the province's 2023 Season Response Program.

The 2023 Season Response Program was announced in late February by the Nova Scotia government. The program dedicated \$9.2 million to support farmers and other agricultural producers recovering from losses and damage due to the extreme weather and wildfires during the spring and summer of 2023. The 2023 Season Response Program builds on other business risk management programs that were available last year. This program is intended to help those still recovering or who were not sufficiently covered by the other support programs.

The province received hundreds of applications for the program and after reviewing all eligible claims, it has been determined that the needs of industry have exceeded the \$9.2 million in funding. This speaks to the significant impacts of the severe weather last year, and the urgent need for a solution to continue supporting agriculture and food production. Among these considerations were funds received by NSFA in March of 2023 to support the industry in recovering from natural disasters. These funds were specifically related to Hurricane Fiona, as the province continued to assess its impacts. Funds were distributed to the remaining claims related to Hurricane Fiona under the Fiona Agricultural Disaster Assistance Program in August 2023. The funds held in-trust were then available to support further initiatives.

Due to the needs of industry surpassing \$9.2 million in available provincial funding, the decision has been made to reallocate the funds held in-trust with the

Federation to extend the 2023 Season Response Program. This decision was made by the NSFA and the Department of Agriculture in recognition of the immediate needs of farmers.

The Department's 2023 Season Response Program remains the same. There have been no changes to the design, eligibility, guidelines, or payments – any questions or inquiries should continue to be directed to the Director of Programs at the Department of Agriculture.

The Federation understands that not all commodities were covered by the program; however, this did not detract from the needs of the farms that were eligible for the program and in need of immediate support. The Federation has brought forward the concerns of industry to the Department and encourages transparent communication about the decision-making process involved in developing the program's eligibility criteria.

We recognize the critical importance of transitioning to a more proactive risk management system. Therefore, we will continue to advocate for a comprehensive review of Business Risk Management programs including Crop & Livestock Insurance, AgriRecovery, and AgriStability in particular. This review is essential to ensure that farms have access to the necessary tools to effectively manage and mitigate risks as we continue to strive to produce safe, quality food for our communities.

We look forward to working with our members and the province to push forward recommendations that meet the needs of Nova Scotia farmers.

Recruitment Mission Cont'd



Key Insights

- International recruitment is **heavily regulated** and therefore makes the missions more challenging. The process is simplest when employers are onsite to conduct interviews and make job offers. If employers cannot be present, interviews and job offers must be conducted by a licensed recruiter or government employee, or coordinated virtually after the mission.
- Having **active job postings** during a mission is critical, as individuals often explore multiple locations. Places offering a variety of job opportunities are the most appealing to candidates. When recruiting internationally, we are competing with a global market and need to be competitive.
- Employers need to be **immigration-ready**, which means obtaining a positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), providing genuine job offers, and maintaining ethical recruitment practices, among other things.
- It's crucial to **understand the market** you are recruiting in – this can range from understanding the current policy and workforce landscape, recognizing important social systems for potential candidates and understanding their motivations for relocation.
- Agriculture is specialized and diverse, it's not the same as recruiting for health care (as an example). It's important to understand the opportunities being brought to the international market so that the best potential candidates

can be recruited. Understanding the specific needs of Nova Scotia's agriculture industry and upcoming opportunities would enable more **effective promotion** in recruitment markets.

- Both sellers and buyers showed a preference to maintain discretion regarding their plans with a desire for **one-on-one engagements**.
- Buyers were interested in understanding Nova Scotia's **climate, soil, regulatory frameworks, as well as programming and extension services**.

What's Next?

- **Understand the Need:** A better understanding of who is interested in recruiting internationally, either for farm workers or for potential successors/buyers, is needed so that the next steps can be determined.
- **Immigration Process:** Farm employers need more information and resources to understand what they need to do to be immigration ready and how the immigration process works.
- **Identify Markets:** Further research is needed to identify other potential markets for recruitment, once there is an understanding of the need.
- **Promotional Material:** There needs to be promotional information available that enables potential candidates and buyers to gain comprehensive insights into Nova Scotia agriculture, in areas such as climate, soil, extension services, regulations, and funding programs.



The Federation will continue to work with the Department of Agriculture and Immigration and Population Growth to further explore opportunities for international recruitment to support farms in accessing the talent they need.

Highlights from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Issues Relating to the Horticulture Sector

Since November 2, 2023, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has undertaken a study to address the challenges facing Canada's horticulture sector. On May 7, 2024, the committee highlighted proposed policies from key stakeholders designed to strengthen the sector against climate challenges. The proposals from witnesses focus on refining Business Risk Management programs and enhancing sustainable agricultural practices. Contributions from Horticulture Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association brought forward the perspectives of Nova Scotia's fruit and vegetable industry. Visit the [Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food's website](#) to read more about this study.

Efforts to Stabilize Food Prices Through Government and Industry Collaboration

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has released its 18th report, "A Call to Action: How Government and Industry Can Fight Back Against Food Price Volatility," adopted on April 30, 2024, and presented to the House on May 23, 2024. The report highlights recommendations to stabilize food prices, focusing on improving Business Risk Management programs, addressing climate impacts, and enhancing food security. Notable witnesses included Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Canadian Federation of Agriculture and leaders from Empire Company, Costco, Loblaws, and Walmart. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report. Visit the [Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food's website](#) to read this report.



Katie Hirtle
Emergency Management
Coordinator

Katie works with farmers and stakeholders to support both our industry's preparation and response to emergencies.

Emergency Management: Long-Term Readiness over Short-Term Hurry

The Emergency Management Project, started in January 2024, aims to create a strong system to help farmers handle emergencies better. This project will include activities to empower a diverse team that can offer advice, information, and support to farmers during crises.

Farm emergencies, like natural disasters and disease outbreaks, can not only threaten crops and livestock but broader food supply chains and rural economies. With the increase in extreme weather events and diseases, the need for solid emergency preparedness is more critical than ever. Local emergencies can have global impacts due to interconnected markets, making comprehensive risk management essential as part of on-farm emergency planning.

Limited resources, both financial and human, pose significant challenges to proactive farm emergency management efforts. The unpredictable nature of emergencies complicates planning, requiring adaptable and practical strategies. Additionally, Nova Scotia farms vary greatly, so emergency plans need to be flexible enough to fit the different scales and capacities of the industry. Effective communication and coordination among stakeholders are critical yet challenging, requiring improved information sharing systems.

The Emergency Management Project will directly benefit farmers by addressing these challenges and leveraging innovative approaches.

Specifically, the project aims to:

Enhance Communication and

Coordination: By fostering a network of diverse stakeholders, the project will improve information sharing and coordination among farmers, local authorities, and agricultural experts. This network will ensure that farmers receive timely and accurate information during emergencies, enhancing their ability to respond effectively.

Promote Community Collaboration:

The project will encourage local farmers to collaborate, share resources, and support each other during crises. This community-based approach will strengthen the overall preparedness of the farming community.

Provide Essential Training and

Resources: Farmers will gain access to training programs and resources to develop effective emergency plans and build robust emergency kits. This training will help farmers understand and possibly utilize advanced technological tools such as drones and predictive analytics to monitor their farms better.

As farm emergencies become more frequent and severe, a proactive and integrated approach to emergency management is imperative. By addressing these challenges proactively and embracing innovative solutions, farmers can enhance their capacity to withstand emergencies and protect their livelihood. The Emergency Management Project at the NSFA strives to build a culture of preparedness and flexibility through education and outreach that can empower farmers to confront challenges effectively and with confidence.

Top 5 Farm Emergency Preparedness Tips for Farms

1. Create an Emergency Plan

- Write down steps for various emergencies (e.g., fire, flood).
- Ensure everyone on the farm knows the plan.

2. Build an Emergency Kit

- Include first aid, water, food, and important documents.
- Keep 10 days of feed and supplies on hand for livestock and pets.

3. Maintain Equipment

- Regularly check and repair farm equipment and vehicles.
- Have firefighting tools and generators ready.

4. Know Your Neighbors

- Build a network with nearby farmers for mutual support.
- Maintain good relationships with feed, fuel and other suppliers.
- Share resources and help each other during emergencies.

5. Stay Informed

- Keep up with weather forecasts and local alerts.
- Use apps or radios for real-time updates.

Policy Corner

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) recently conducted a survey revealing critical needs in farm succession planning among its members. The survey results show that about half of the farmers are over 55, highlighting the urgent need for a smooth transition to the next generation. However, readiness is low: only 8.6% have a complete succession plan, over half have started but not finished, and 32.8% haven't started planning.

Challenges identified include high costs, complex legal issues, financial instability, and emotional connections to the land. Additionally, 68% of farms lack a confirmed successor, with only a quarter having identified a family successor. Many young potential leaders feel unprepared, citing a lack of training and involvement in decision-making. Communication issues and unclear goals further complicate the process.

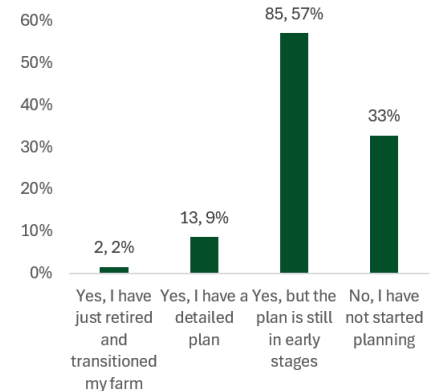
Resolutions Update

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

The ultimate goal of PAC is to develop a policy position manual to support advocacy efforts and program delivery, the first draft of this manual has been developed and will be distributed to members via email in the fall. This will allow members to understand the existing positions of the organization to

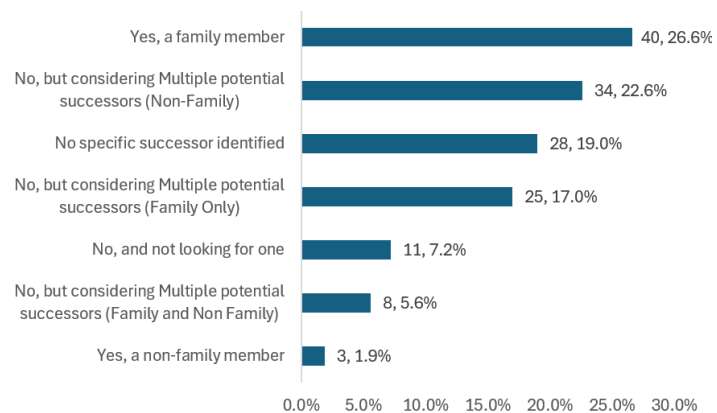
A significant 61.9% of potential successors feel hindered by communication barriers, and awareness of existing succession planning programs is low, with the highest awareness score at just 2.54 out of 5. There is a preference for informal support methods, such as family discussions, over structured resources, with 30.2% of farm owner respondents identifying this as the support used to develop their succession plans. It is essential that farmers start planning early, use professional services, and attend workshops to better prepare for succession. Open communication with potential successors to ensure clear expectations and smooth transitions are a must as farms engage in succession planning.

Have you started planning for the future of your farm after you retire?



A detailed report with more findings and recommendations will be available in June.

Have you identified a successor in your plan?



help inform resolutions. There are many different actions that may be taken to support a resolution including:

- We develop a position that states the NSFA's view on a specific topic. A position is used in our advocacy efforts so that we can state the organization's stance on a specific topic.
- We may need to dig deeper into an issue and develop a discussion paper. This is most common when it is a complex topic, and we need to better understand the needs, gaps and impacts on the industry in order to know what the best recommendation and position is.
- Sometimes resolutions require a

resource or program to be developed (e.g. training). This often goes directly to one of our program teams or to an external organization that has the expertise on a topic.

- When resolutions are very specific, we may initiate direct advocacy on an issue and send a letter to the responsible government official or schedule a meeting to discuss a topic to ensure it is on their agenda.

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

Resolutions Update

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture funding programs shall have increased cost-share and project caps for groups with an existing legal and governance structure that ensures the projects support multiple farm operations (e.g. co-ops, societies, machinery co-ops).

Activity Submitted with S-CAP recommendations.

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.

Position This resolution is supported by the existing position to establish an agricultural land bank.

Activity Recommendations made to the Farm Loan Board. Met with Farm Loan Board to discuss potential financing options that may support desired outcomes.

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.

Position This resolution is supported by the existing position to establish an agricultural land bank.

Activity Recommendations made to the Farm Loan Board. Met with Farm Loan Board to discuss potential financing options that may support desired outcomes.

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Department of Public works must work with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and Farm Safety Nova Scotia to introduce temporary signage to alert of farming activity and slow-moving vehicles to ensure the safety of the motoring public and farm community.

Activity Meeting to be requested with Public Works.

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.

Position The Province of Nova Scotia must ensure that Agencies, Boards and Commissions are fully populated, in a timely manner, and actively filling their roles as delegated by legislation.

The Province of Nova Scotia must prioritize populating the Marshland Conservation Commission.

Concerns relating to the vacancies on agricultural ABCs was brought forward to Minister Morrow. Additionally, a letter was specifically sent relating to the Marshland Conservation Commission.

Activity The NSFA is monitoring the announcements from the spring recruitment session.

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.

Position The Province of Nova Scotia shall develop a policy that outlines the requirement and process for consultation with the agricultural industry prior to acquiring land for government-led and government-funded projects.

Activity Priority was focused on land bordering on dyke system and a letter sent to Minister Morrow.

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture must recognize the significant role of the Natural Products Marketing Council plays in the agriculture industry and provide Council with the resources required to ensure they are able to provide comprehensive and timely administration on matters before them.

Activity This work is being led by impacted commodity organizations.

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change shall complete a review, in consultation with industry, of the pesticide applicators license to improve its effectiveness and accessibility to the farm community.

Resolutions Update Cont'd

Activity Meeting scheduled with Department of Environment and Climate Change for June 5th to discuss potential solutions.

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.

No position developed at this time – further policy research required.

Activity The NSFA EFP team hosted a workshop in March. Additionally meeting is scheduled for June 5th with Department of Environment and Climate Change to discuss potential solutions.

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.

Position The Government of Canada shall recognize HST on the construction, maintenance and furnishings of bunkhouses for seasonal agricultural and temporary workers as an eligible input tax credit.

Activity A resolution was submitted to CFA to advance this recommendation.

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture supports the adoption of Private Members' Bill C-359 by the Federal Government.

Activity Monitor bill and advocate when opportunity arises - have committed support to submitting Private Member.

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture shall improve transparency of its programs by incorporating a scoring rubric in funding program guidelines.

Activity Submitted with S-CAP recommendations.

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.

Position Remove the arm's length rule by adding standards for eligible expenses.

- Incorporating family labour as an eligible expense may include using wage rates identified with NOC codes.
- Incorporating contract work as an eligible expense based on a standard set of rates.

Activity Submitted with S-CAP recommendations.

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.

Position The Province of Nova Scotia must develop policies and programs to minimize food waste throughout the supply chain.

No activity at this time.

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.

No position developed at this time.

Activity Intend to engage with Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia and Food Hubs to understand the needs.

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.

Position The Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change shall 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.

Activity Meeting scheduled with Department of Environment and Climate Change for June 5th to discuss potential solutions.

Public Trust Update

Open Farm Day Registration is now Live!

Have you been part of Open Farm Day in the past, or are you considering signing up this year? We're excited for new and returning farms to join us on the third Sunday of September, falling on Sunday September 15th this year! Farms can participate online or host the public on their farms in-person. We are hoping to have lots of great new farmer-generated video content, so please feel free to reach out. We are happy to talk about what that might look like for your farm even if you're not able to have members of the public visit you in person.

Nova Scotia's participating farms will be shared on the Atlantic Open Farm Day website at: www.atlanticfarmday.ca. The website will include descriptions for each participating farm, links to your websites and social media pages, and links to videos for online participants. It also features a helpful map showing all participating farms so that visitors can plan their route.

Please note, to be eligible to participate in-person or online we require that:

- Your farm registration is current
- You have adequate insurance coverage
- You are a member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture
- An in-person event provides an educational experience to the public and follows all current public health guidelines and/or a virtual visit on your farm provides an educational experience to the public
- You do not charge admission to visit your farm on Open Farm Day (paid activities are allowed)

Ready to get on board and join us in promoting Nova Scotia's farms and farmers to members of the public? Register at nsfa-fane.ca/event/ofd-24. Registration closes **Monday, July 31!**



Want to know more, or brainstorm some Open Farm Day ideas? Call April at 902-892-2293 to talk about the possibilities!

OPEN FARM DAY
JOURNÉE AGRICOLE PORTES OUVERTES

Sunday, September 15th

**REGISTRATION OPEN
UNTIL JULY 31, 2024**

Food Day Canada is Saturday, August 3, 2024!

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

- Hosting a summer BBQ using local ingredients for your family or farm team
- Shop at your local Farmers' Market
- Eat out at your favourite restaurant and share your meal on social media using #FoodDayCanada
- Pack a picnic and head to the beach or park to enjoy Canadian food in the great outdoors!

Planning an event or display of your own?

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

Download and print your own materials or connect with us to arrange shipping. For more information email meetyourfarmer@nsfa-fane.ca or call 902-893-2293.

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





The Power of Short Pauses for Well-Being

As we head into the summer, we enter one of our busiest seasons, filled with what can feel like never-ending days in the field, constant attention to the weather, and the ongoing pressure to make sure it's a successful harvest. It is during this demanding time that it is especially important to pause and do those all-important check-ins with ourselves, asking, "How am I doing, really?" However, amidst all this activity and the urgency to bring in the crops, it's easy to overlook the power of taking a break.

Let this be your reminder that scheduled breaks—short, deliberate pauses throughout the day—are not a self-indulgent luxury; they are necessary for sustaining your overall well-being this season. We can think of these breaks as maintenance for our minds, just as we would regularly service our equipment to keep it running smoothly.

The Science Behind Taking Breaks

Did you know that research consistently shows that regular breaks can significantly improve overall performance and health? Short breaks help to:

- **Reduce Stress:** Continuous work without breaks can lead to high levels of stress, impacting both mental and physical health, as well as the quality of our work. Brief pauses allow the mind and body to return to baseline, relax, and reduce stress levels.
- **Increase Productivity:** Contrary to the belief that working longer hours leads to more productivity, studies have found that regular breaks can enhance focus and efficiency. Short pauses help prevent burnout, ensuring sustained productivity throughout the season.

- **Enhance Physical Health:** There's no question that the job can be physically demanding, often involving repetitive movements and heavy lifting. Short breaks for stretching and walking can prevent muscle strain and improve circulation.

Implementing Scheduled Breaks on the Farm

Incorporating scheduled breaks into a busy day can seem impossible at times, but with a few practical strategies, it can be done effectively. Try these:

1. **Set a Timer:** Use a timer or alarm on your phone to remind yourself to take a break at least every two hours. These reminders can help you establish a routine and ensure you don't skip breaks, even when you might not feel you 'deserve' it. (Hint: You probably do!)
2. **Take Micro-Breaks:** Even a 5-minute break can make a difference. Use this time to stand up, stretch, take a few deep breaths, and really notice what's around you. These micro-breaks are enough to reset your mind and refresh your body.
3. **Walk and Reflect:** If possible, take a short walk around the farm. Walking not only gives your body a break from

the physical strain of farming tasks but can also provide a much-needed mental break. Use this time to reflect on your progress and enjoy the natural surroundings of the farm.

4. **Refuel:** Use breaks as an opportunity to hydrate and have a healthy snack. Drinking water and eating nutritious snacks like fruits, nuts, or yogurt can help maintain your energy levels and keep you focused.

Remember, a break should be just that – a break. Try to resist the urge to fill this time with chores like laundry or doing the dishes, unless those activities genuinely relax and rejuvenate you. While it can sometimes take practice to be okay with doing nothing, it is these guilt-free, actual breaks, that can make a real difference.

Takeaway

The summer season is demanding, and the pressures of longer days can weigh heavily on our minds, leading to stress, anxiety, and burnout. While your to-do list might seem endless, maintaining your well-being should remain a top priority.

This season, make it a habit to check in with yourself regularly and don't underestimate the power of short pauses in your day-to-day routine. While we often adopt a go-go-go mentality, these breaks provide valuable opportunities to decompress and reset, supporting both your farm's success and your personal well-being.



One Road; Safety is a Two- Way Street

If someone were to ask you “what are some of the most stressful parts of your job?”, would travelling with machinery on public roads make your list? You wouldn’t be alone if it did. According to Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting, traffic collisions were among the top 10 causes of fatal agricultural injuries from 2011 to 2020, accounting for 5% of all fatalities. This grave statistic doesn’t include injuries or account for the number of near misses that many farm equipment operators experience on the road.

The One Road Campaign was introduced in 2018 as a public safety campaign emphasizing the responsibility we all share in keeping our roads safe. One Road engages the public through awareness and education and provides farm equipment operators with information and resources on road safety.

Work Safely

When you travel on the road with farm equipment, it becomes an extension of your workplace. Using that frame of mind can shift how you think about road safety. So what can you do to make your workplace safer, before, after and on the road?

- Completing a pre-trip inspection before you travel gives you the opportunity to ensure that your farm equipment will not harm you or other motorists.
- Using your left-hand signal light to let other drivers know that you will be making a left turn will help to reduce the most common type of farm vehicle incident.
- Not pulling over on soft or narrow road shoulders decreases the risk of a rollover. Allow vehicles to pass only when you have the space to safely do so.



ONE ROAD
SAFETY IS A TWO-WAY STREET

By taking these actions, you can move your equipment with more confidence knowing that for your part, you have taken actions to keep yourself and others safe.

Slow Moving Vehicle Signs

Slow Moving Vehicle Signs (SMV's) are used to alert other drivers that you are going slower than the usual flow of traffic. According to the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act, you must have a Slow-Moving Vehicle sign mounted on the backs of the following vehicles:

- Farm tractors
- Trailers being towed by farm tractors
- Any vehicle that cannot go faster than 40 km/h

By mounting a Slow-Moving Vehicle sign to the back of your farm equipment, you are doing your part to make yourself visible to other drivers on the road. Visibility is crucial, as vehicles travelling on the roadway can come up behind farm machinery very quickly. It only takes 6.5 seconds for a vehicle travelling at 80km/hour to close a distance of 100 meters to a tractor travelling 25 km/hour. Under normal conditions, a slow-moving vehicle sign can be seen at a distance of 150 metres.

Public Awareness

Highlighting that road safety is a shared responsibility, the One Road campaign will be working to increase awareness to the driving public throughout the campaign. We will be educating the public on what to do when you see a Slow-Moving Vehicle Sign: it’s the farmer’s responsibility to install it, and it’s the public motorist’s responsibility to understand and respect it. By increasing the public visibility of the One Road campaign through the distribution

of resources, social media, and other communication channels, we will be fostering awareness of road safety around farm equipment to other drivers.

Show Your Support

You can show your support for the One Road Campaign in many ways. Putting road safety into practice is a great way! Make sure you are implementing the safety tips mentioned below:

- Completing a pre-trip inspection before you travel on public roads
- Using a Slow Moving Vehicle Sign and amber warning lights
- Checking for passing vehicles before making any turns
- Watching for nervous or aggressive drivers

You can also show your support by proudly displaying our One Road promotional resources. One Road materials are available on our website at www.farmsafetyns.ca/oneroad/. We have floor decals, bumper stickers, posters, and more. Our pre-trip checklist sticker can be mounted in tractor cabs to ensure that you don’t leave anything out before you hit the road. If you own or operate a public business, you can increase public outreach by displaying our One Road material. Please contact 902-893-2293 to order materials.

The One Road Campaign reminds us that we all share the road and have a role to play in keeping each other safe. There is only one road, with many ways to use it. Be visible, be aware, and be courteous—because safety is a two-way street.



Workplace Needs Assessment in Agriculture

How does a Workplace Needs Assessment (WNA) work for your farm?

This assessment provides farm owners with the opportunity to understand what can be improved to support human resource management.

By looking closely at the working conditions, skills needed, and overall environment, a WNA can help farmers improve recruitment, retention, and productivity, and here's how:

1. Improving Recruitment

Finding Skills Gaps:

A WNA helps find out what skills and abilities are needed for different jobs on the farm. By knowing what is missing, farmers can create better job postings and reach out to the right people who have those skills. This makes it easier to find the right candidates quickly.



Better Job Descriptions:

Clear job descriptions are important to attract the right people. A WNA shows what each job involves, allowing farmers to write accurate and appealing job descriptions. This helps potential employees understand what the job is about, making it more attractive to the right candidates.

Targeted Recruitment Strategies:

Understanding the farm's needs helps farmers create better recruitment plans. For example, if a WNA shows a need for technical skills, farmers can focus on reaching out to agricultural colleges or training programs. Knowing what the farm needs can also help farmers use community networks, social media, and job boards to find the right candidates.

2. Enhancing Retention

Better Working Conditions:

A WNA often shows areas where working conditions can improve, such as safety measures, equipment, or work-life balance. Fixing these issues can make employees happier and more motivated, reducing turnover. Employees are more likely to stay if they feel safe and comfortable at work.

Professional Development Opportunities:

Finding skills gaps and training needs lets farmers invest in their employees' growth. Offering learning opportunities not only fills skill gaps but also shows employees that the farm cares about their future. This makes employees feel valued and less likely to leave.

Building a Positive Workplace Culture:

A WNA can reveal insights into the workplace culture and employee morale. By addressing any negative aspects and fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive work environment, farmers can significantly enhance employee satisfaction. A strong, positive workplace culture is a key factor in retaining skilled workers.



Colin Bawn, our Workforce Development Coordinator, is available to support farms in enhancing their recruitment, retention, and productivity through a Workplace Needs Assessment (WNA) on your farm.

How does it work?

Colin will conduct an onsite visit that will take between 2-3 hours, involving a tour the operation, and conversations with the employer, HR lead, and employees. A report identifying strengths and weaknesses will be provided within 2 weeks of the visit, along with potential recommendations for resources, training, and funding to support the farm.

3. Boosting Productivity

Optimizing Workflow and Processes:

A WNA finds inefficiencies in current workflows and processes to help farmers make operations smoother, reduce waste, and increase productivity. This might involve reorganizing tasks, upgrading equipment, or using new technologies to make daily work easier.

Better Communication:

Good communication is important for a productive workplace. A WNA can show where communication is lacking and suggest improvements. Clear, consistent communication ensures everyone understands their roles and the farm's goals. This alignment is essential for maximizing productivity.

Tailored Training Programs:

Understanding the specific training needs of the workforce helps farmers develop the right training programs. These programs ensure all employees have the necessary skills to do their jobs well, leading to increased productivity and better-quality work.

Employee Engagement:

Engaged employees are more productive and committed to their work. A WNA helps find out what makes employees feel engaged, such as recognition programs, team-building activities, or opportunities for feedback. By fostering a highly engaged workforce, farmers can enhance productivity and job satisfaction simultaneously.

A Workplace Needs Assessment is a powerful tool that can greatly improve recruitment, retention, and productivity in agriculture. By carefully looking at and addressing the specific needs of the workplace, farmers can create a more attractive, efficient, and satisfying work environment. This comprehensive approach not only helps build a skilled and stable workforce but also ensures the long-term success of agricultural operations.



Contact Colin at
cbawn@nsfa-fane.ca or
(902)893-2293 for more
information!



Nova Scotia Young Farmers- not just farmers!

The Nova Scotia Young Farmers organization was established in 2001 to facilitate communication and foster collaboration between young and beginning farmers, mirroring the goals of the Canadian Young Farmers Forum that was established in 1997.

The objectives of the group were to:

- Identify the problems encountered by young people looking to become established in agriculture and exchange ideas about solutions applied in Canada and around the world;
- Promote and exchange ideas on issues of training and capacity building, and identify program needs and preferred delivery methods;
- Enable young people throughout Nova Scotia to become familiar with the realities of the agriculture industry;
- Prepare young and beginning farmers for a more active role in provincial and national agricultural organizations; and,
- Consolidate the opinion of young and beginning farmers across Nova Scotia on agriculture and rural issues.

These objectives are reflected in the current Nova Scotia Young Farmers **Mission:** To support the growth and development of young farmers and agricultural professionals through networking and learning opportunities. and our **Vision:** Growing the next generation of industry leaders to ensure a sustainable future for Nova Scotia agriculture.

The inclusion of young agricultural professionals as important members of the organization is a key point that many are unaware of. With the word ‘Farmers’ in the name, many interpret the young farmers group to be limited to primary producers of agricultural products. However, the organization is open to and encourages those in other roles in the industry to join as well. Whether it’s sales, extension, equipment servicing, finance, human resources, marketing, engineering, research, or any of the other agriculture support roles, NSYF welcomes the unique and varied perspectives that all involved in the sector bring.

Beginning farmers can take advantage of the network of people willing to share their experiences, knowledge, and best practices with others.

If you are involved in agriculture in Nova Scotia, are between the ages of eighteen and forty, and resonate with our mission and vision, consider joining the Nova Scotia Young Farmers organization. By bringing together producers of all sizes in all commodities, and those who support them in many roles, we can increase the communication and collaboration of young and beginning farmers.



Reach out to someone in an agricultural support role and encourage them to participate.

Join or update your membership using the registration form on the website here nsyoungfarmers.ca/membership/#benefits

A great way to check out the NSYF organization is to join us for a Summer Event on Saturday, July 27th in Kings County. Beginning in the afternoon, the day will include tours of Van Meekeren Farms apple operation Wink Apples, and a tour of the Valley Carrot operations. A social time and meal will follow at the Millstone Brewery in Sheffield Mills. The day is family-friendly, with activities for children and some limited child-watching provided by local 4-H members. Watch for details on timing and the registration form on social media [@nsyoungfarmers](https://twitter.com/nsyoungfarmers) or on the website nsyoungfarmers.ca under events.

SAVE THE DATE!

NSYF Summer Event



Saturday, July 27

Kings County

A family-friendly event including tours, meal, entertainment and social time.



10 Reasons to Use Cover Crops on the Farm

Now that crops are in the ground, it's a good time to think about how you could incorporate cover crops into your crop rotations. In this region there are options for fall planted cover crops that could help protect and improve your soil over the winter months. Here are 10 good reasons why you should consider using cover crops on your farm.

1. Prevent Soil Erosion

Cover crops form a protective layer over the soil surface, minimizing soil loss by shielding particles from the impact of raindrops and wind. Root systems of cover crops bind soil particles together, improving its ability to resist erosion. Additionally, cover crops can improve soil porosity allowing water to infiltrate more easily, reducing surface runoff, which can be important in spring with snowmelt and spring rains.

2. Improve Nutrient Cycling

Cover crops take up nutrients from the soil and release them slowly as they decompose. Fall planted cover crops can scavenge nutrients remaining after harvest and prevent them from being lost over winter. Some cover crops are especially well suited to storing particular nutrients in the soil (e.g., buckwheat with phosphorus). Legume cover crops can convert atmospheric nitrogen and make it available to the following crop. This is great option to reduce reliance on expensive fossil fuel derived nitrogen fertilizer.

3. Increase Soil Biology

Cover crops release many chemical compounds into the soil from their roots including carbohydrates, organic acids, proteins, and lipids. These "exudates", or chemicals released from plant roots, support diverse ecological communities

that contribute to healthy plant growth. Terminated cover crops also supply a source of energy and nutrients for soil organisms as they decay.

4. Sequester Carbon

Cover crops have the capacity to increase the organic matter content of soils over time. Increasing the organic matter content of a hectare of soil by 1% could remove about 20 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere. Be patient, soil organic matter changes take time.

5. Improve Soil Physical Characteristics

Certain cover crops (e.g., tillage radish) penetrate deep into the soil, breaking up compacted layers improving soil aeration. Farmers report better trafficability and less rutting while harvesting late season crops where cover crops have been established. Improved soil structure can also improve water holding capacity and increase resiliency to drought.

6. Suppress Weeds

Cover crops can directly or indirectly suppress weeds through competition, creating a physical barrier, ecological interactions, or by biochemical means (allelopathy).

7. Interrupt Disease and Pest Cycles

Cover crops can provide habitat and food sources for beneficial organisms that can help control pest populations, such as predatory insects, parasitic nematodes, and microorganisms. Some cover crops even release biochemicals that can inhibit fungi, nematodes, and insects. Brown mustard, for example, contains compounds similar to commercially available soil fumigants and acts as a biofumigant after plow down.

8. Supply Livestock with Forage

Certain cover crops can be used as forage for livestock, providing additional income or feed resources to extend the grazing season.

9. Support Biodiversity

A multi-species cover crop mix can provide habitat for beneficial insects, fostering biodiversity, natural pest control, and foraging areas for native pollinators.

10. Economics

The long-term viability of our agricultural systems requires investments be made in soil conservation and soil health. Using cover crops is one form of investment, with costs including seed, fuel, equipment and labour. There may also be an opportunity cost associated with passing up growing a more profitable crop. The economic payoff will be realized in the longer term through more self-reliance, including decreased external inputs, like fertilizer, and more resiliency in the face of changing weather and climate.

While the benefits of cover crops are numerous, it's important to acknowledge potential challenges. These can include delayed soil warming, interference with planting due to biomass accumulation, allelopathic effects on subsequent crops, disease and pest hosting, and the risk of becoming weeds if not properly managed. The Living Lab – Nova Scotia Project, led by NSFA and funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is testing solutions to address these limitations with on-farm research of cover crop practices. The project will measure cover crop impacts on farm economics, crop health and climate change.

If you are interested in incorporating cover crops into your rotation this fall, you can explore the new Cover Crop Selection Tool (farmdatatools.ca/services/covercroptool) from Perennia. You can also ask your EFP coordinator about cover crops (nsefp.ca and efp@nsfa-fane.ca).



Living Labs - Tackling Climate Change from Both Sides

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Agriculture can play a major role in helping mitigate and reduce the impact of climate change. One of the ways it can do that is by using agricultural soil as a carbon sink – storing carbon and thereby reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. However, agriculture also produces carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHG) through crop production, fuel use, and livestock. So, agriculture can tackle climate change from both sides; removing carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere and reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

GHG in Agriculture

In Canada, GHG emissions from agriculture account for about 10% of our total emissions. This is not an insignificant proportion, and reducing the amount produced can help reduce the amount of climate change we will experience.

So, what are greenhouse gases? They are gases in our atmosphere that allow the heat of the sun to pass through as it enters the atmosphere but then trap that heat when it is reflected back up to space. This process is essential for life on earth, but the levels of GHGs are out of balance and are driving climate change – warming our air and oceans, changing wind and weather patterns, and shifting when and how much precipitation falls. The GHGs consist of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. Methane and nitrous oxide are much more potent GHGs compared to carbon dioxide but occur in much smaller amounts.

BMPs to Increase Soil Nutrients

One of the challenges in reducing our GHG emissions is that our baseline data is not very accurate. It is difficult to predict the impact of specific management practices on GHG emissions because they depend on temperature, moisture, soil biology, soil type, animal feed, animal genetics... the list goes on and on! As part of Living Lab – Nova Scotia, We are taking careful measurements of GHG throughout the entire year and over several years to understand the impact the best management practices (BMP) that are part of LL-NS can have on emissions.

We expect the BMPs that are part of LL-NS will help reduce emissions. The BMPs that are being tested on farm are expected to sequester carbon through the addition of organic matter. We are doing this in a variety of ways:

- Incorporating cover crop biomass into the soil of annual crop rotations
- Using alternative mowing and mulching methods in orchards and vineyards
- Incorporating rotational grazing into horticulture rotations

Organic Matter at Work

This organic matter is then broken down by soil organisms which release nutrients that can be taken up by the crop. This can help to reduce the amount of inputs required (such as chemical fertilizer, compost, or manure) to meet the crops needs. This process is a great example of how agriculture can actively remove carbon from the atmosphere, while helping to reduce its release, as fertilizer production and use is a major source of GHG emissions. Excess nitrogen in the soil is used by soil microbes who then convert it to nitrous oxide, one of the more potent greenhouse gasses mentioned above (almost 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide!).

As an additional bonus to helping in the fight against climate change, these practices could offer long-term savings to farms through reduced purchases of fertilizer. The LL-NS team is working with a local economist to understand



the potential cost savings over time for farmers using these management practices.

How can your farm take action?

As the LL-NS collects and analyzes the data on GHG emissions and their economics, you can take action right now by getting your soil regularly tested.

Knowing how much organic matter and nutrients are already present will help make informed choices about the most effective inputs to ensure good crop growth without putting unnecessary emissions into the atmosphere. Your Environmental Farm Plan coordinator is also a great resource to talk to about how to sample for soil testing, interpreting your soil test reports, and ways to reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer (nsefp.ca and efp@nsfa-fane.ca).



2023 Council Members

Allan Melvin, President
902-499-6968

Alicia King, 1st Vice
902-870-4810

Matthew Roy, 2nd Vice
902-768-2460

Bert Meyer, Corporate Secretary & Treasurer
902-396-7595

Tim Marsh, Past President/CFA
902-798-7924

Lauren Park
902-292-5160

Peter Morine
902-527-3274

Andy Parker
902-679-8630

Catherine Manning
902-306-0783

Harry Van der Linden
902-870-0301

Jacob Mullen
902-778-1376

Bruce Wright
902-529-1535



7 Atlantic Central Drive
East Mountain
NS B6L 2Z2

Ph: 893-2293
Fax: 893-7063
Email: info@nsfa-fane.ca

Website: www.nsfa-fane.ca

@nsfafane
 @nsfa
 @nsfa_fane

Upcoming Events

Progressive Ag Safety Day
Bridgewater Exhibition Grounds
June 27, 9am - 2:30pm

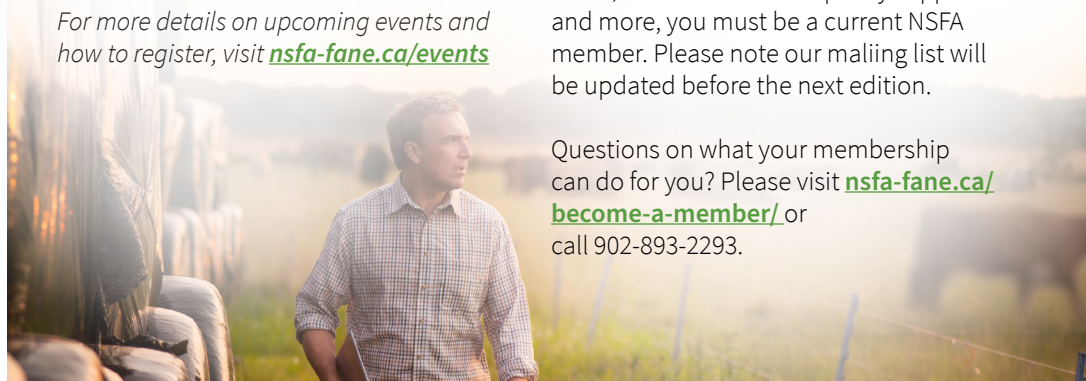
Young Farmer's Summer Event
Kings County
Saturday, July 27

Canada's Food Day
Saturday, August 3

Open Farm Day
Sunday, September 15

NSFA Annual Meeting
Best Western Glengarry
Tuesday-Wednesday
November 26 - 27

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



New Member Benefits!

Check out the new benefits available to NSFA members! Head to our website nsfa-fane.ca/members for a full list of our partners and how to access your NSFA member benefits!



To continue receiving access to member benefits, communications like News & Views, farm resource and policy supports and more, you must be a current NSFA member. Please note our mailing list will be updated before the next edition.

Questions on what your membership can do for you? Please visit nsfa-fane.ca/become-a-member/ or call 902-893-2293.

STAFF

Carolyn Van Den Heuvel
Executive Director

Janette McDonald
Associate Director

Shelly MacKenzie
Executive Assistant

Tracey Otterson
Finance Coordinator

Brian Udoh
Policy Analyst

Leah Visser
Communications
Manager

April McLean
Public Trust Coordinator

Margaret Ells
Training & Awareness
Coordinator

Colin Bawn
Workforce Development
Coordinator

Allison Hancock
Farmer Wellness
Coordinator

Jaime O'Kane
Farm Safety Coordinator

Carolyn Marshall
Environment & Climate
Change Manager

Trevor Davison
Cory Roberts
Jillian Saulnier
EFP Coordinators

Katherine Rutherford
Living Lab Coordinator

Sally Oppong
KTT Coordinator

Katie Hirtle
Emergency Management
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.