Guidance for Precautionary Measures While Operating Heavy Agricultural Equipment

Premier Houston has asked farmers to adopt the same wildfire precautions that are currently mandated on Crown Land. This means doing our part to **minimize wildfire risks wherever possible** while still meeting the urgent needs of farming – such as harvesting crops for livestock feed, irrigating, and managing other essential tasks.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and Farm Safety Nova Scotia recognize that farmers are already taking steps to reduce risk and believe we can continue to take precautions while balancing essential farm operations.

As farmers, you know the tasks most likely to cause sparks or heat during this dry season.

Conduct a **risk assessment** before starting work. Even lower-risk tasks are best completed **before 12:00 p.m**. when conditions are cooler and humidity is higher.

The Province has asked farmers to follow these key precautions:

- **Delay any non-critical work** if possible.
- **Switch to night operations** (8:00 p.m. – 10:00 a.m.) when feasible. If not, work in the mornings and evenings to avoid the hottest part of the day.
- **Have fire extinguishers** with you at all times.
- **Have extra water sources** on-site (e.g., water tanks, fire extinguishers, backpack sprayers).
- **Maintain a two-hour fire watch** after finishing work in a field.
- **Report fires immediately** by calling 1-800-565-2224 and 9-1-1.

We know that it is not always possible to switch to night operations, given tight harvest windows so we ask that you take all possible precautions to mitigate fire risks when it is essential for you to operate during the day.

Additional Safety Recommendations

- Keep fire extinguishers on all equipment and in the field.
- Have readily available water.
- Keep a tractor with a set of discs nearby to create a fire break if needed.
- In fields near wooded areas, consider leaving the outside rounds unharvested when using equipment to create additional separation.
- Fuel equipment in areas free of vegetation.
- Keep equipment greased, maintained, and clean – check for leaks and remove debris.
- Train all workers in fire safety and how to use fire extinguishers.
- Ensure two-way communication – if cell service is poor, use radios.
- If possible, have a “watch person” in the field with you to catch any signs of smoke.

We understand this is a stressful time. By following these precautions, we can protect our farms, our communities, and our people while continuing essential agricultural work.