



CSA Incentive Pilot Program Guidelines

Version 1.1 – Revised January 30, 2026

Introduction

The Nova Scotia Loyal Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Incentive Pilot Program has been developed to explore whether offering a 10% consumer discount encourages greater participation in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs across Nova Scotia. Supported by Nova Scotia Loyal, this pilot aims to boost CSA sales and strengthen connections between farmers and consumers.

The program guidelines outline objectives, eligibility criteria, program requirements, and reporting expectations to support transparent and consistent delivery and to guide participating farms through the full process from application to reimbursement.

Eligible participating farms may receive:

- Reimbursement for the 10% consumer discount applied to eligible CSA subscriptions
- \$2,000 per farm in eligible marketing and advertising reimbursement*
- A one-year Local Line subscription subsidized by the Program

**See Appendix A*

Program Objective

The CSA Incentive Pilot Program aims to strengthen and expand Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs in Nova Scotia by:

- Increasing the number of new CSA customers; and
- Supporting overall growth in CSA subscription sales

By offering a 10% discount to consumers, the program assesses whether financial incentives encourage greater participation in CSA programs and stronger engagement with local producers.

To support accurate evaluation, participating farms are required to track CSA transactions using an online sales platform capable of recording sales, linking payments to customers, and exporting data for reporting purposes.

The program encourages participants to adopt Local Line, an online sales platform that supports CSA sales, administration, and reporting. In addition, Local Line functions as a connected marketplace, enabling product distribution through multiple storefronts and allowing farms to act as aggregators selling on behalf of other producers. **A fully subsidized one-year Local Line subscription is provided to all eligible participants.**

Farms wishing to use an alternative online platform may do so, provided it offers equivalent functionality for CSA tracking and reporting.

This pilot applies to CSA shares committed to and sold from **January 1, 2026, to November 30, 2026.**



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Defining Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership between farmers and consumers. Customers commit in advance to receive regular shares of farm products over a defined period of time.

For the purposes of this program:

- CSAs may offer different subscription lengths (e.g., 10-week, 20-week, full-year).
- CSAs may accept full payment upfront or installment payments.
- Customers must commit in advance to the full subscription period.

CSAs differ from general food box programs because payments and commitments are made upfront, whereas food box programs typically allow customers to place orders as needed.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants

To participate in the CSA Incentive Pilot Program, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. **Registered Farms**
 - Applicants must be a registered farm in Nova Scotia.
 - Applicants must also be a Nova Scotia Loyal registered business.
2. **Farm Co-operatives**
 - Farm Co-operatives are eligible to participate if all member farms meet the eligibility criteria above.

All registered farms in Nova Scotia are eligible to register with Nova Scotia Loyal. Farms that are not yet registered must complete registration prior to approval into the program. Please [click here to sign up](#).

Eligible CSA Programs

CSA programs must:

- Be actively operating during the pilot period, offering regular member shares (e.g., vegetables, meat, or mixed products).
- Require upfront customer commitment. CSA subscriptions may be paid through either:
 - **Upfront payments:** Customers pay full share value at the time of registration.
 - **Installment payments:** Customers pay over multiple agreed-upon installments.
- Shares must contain at least 90% Nova Scotia-produced products.
- Farms must be able to provide baseline CSA sales data for the 2025 season, if they operated a CSA during that year.

Program Criteria

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To participate in the CSA Incentive Pilot Program, farms must meet the following criteria:

3. Submission of Baseline CSA Data (2025 Season)

- Baseline data will measure changes in CSA participation and sales.
- Farms must submit the following information:
- Total gross CSA sales (2025)
- Number of CSA shares sold (2025)
- Share type and share value
- Customer ID
- Proof of payment for baseline data is not required.
- Previous use of an online sales platform is not required.

**Note: New CSA Programs are eligible to apply. Because these programs do not have historical sales data, baseline data is not required as part of their application.*

4. Use of an Online Sales Platform for 2026 Season

- Record all CSA sales using Local Line or an approved equivalent online sales platform.
- Farms transitioning to Local Line are eligible for a fully subsidized one-year Local Line subscription*.

**See Appendix B.*

5. Letter of Agreement

- All participating farms must sign a Letter of Agreement (LOA) before approval of program entry.

6. Application of the 10% Incentive

- Offer a 10% discount to all eligible CSA shares using the standardized discount code NSLOYAL10.
- The incentive must reflect consumer-directed participation and must not be automatically applied or built into CSA pricing.
- For online purchases, customers must enter **NSLOYAL10** at checkout. For in-person or manual payments, the code must be applied by the farm only after the customer requests or confirms use of the incentive.
- Customers must be able to access the code at the point of purchase.

**Note: The use of the code supports tracking consumer uptake, evaluating marketing effectiveness, and encouraging new participation. Automatic discounts or pre-discounted CSA pricing are not permitted under the program.*

7. Reporting Requirements for Reimbursement

- Farms must submit required reporting and documentation in accordance with program claiming procedures.
- The approved online sales platform is used to record and export CSA sales data for reimbursement, auditing, and evaluation purposes.



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Program Timeline

Application Intake	Activity Period	Claim Deadline
January 1, 2026 – February 27, 2026	January 1, 2026 – November 30, 2026	December 30, 2026

Approval Process

- Applications will be reviewed by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.
- Approved applicants will receive a Letter of Agreement (LOA) that identifies the program funding offered, and the terms and conditions under which program funding is approved.
- Review, sign, and return the LOA to the program contact within 30 days of the date of the LOA or your program funding will be forfeited.
- Claim forms will be provided after the signed LOA has been received and confirmed.

Online Platform Requirements

All CSA transactions claimed under the program must be entered into an online platform capable of:

- Recording CSA sales
- Exporting transaction data
- Linking payments to customers
- Supporting anonymized customer identification
- Providing proof of payment for online and POS sales
- Customers can manually enter discount code

Local Line (Preferred Platform)

The program encourages farms to adopt Local Line because it:

- Meets program reporting requirements
- Supports CSA management tools
- Reduces manual administration
- Simplifies reporting and claims
- Supports alignment with long-term digital adoption goals

Alternative Platforms*

A farm may use an approved alternative platform if it:

- Offers equivalent functionality
- Can generate required data exports
- Can anonymize customer identities

*See Appendix C



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How to Offer the 10% Discount

The 10% consumer incentive is intended to measure deliberate customer participation in the Program. Across all payment methods, the discount must reflect a customer's active decision to use the incentive and must not be automatically applied to CSA subscriptions.

Use of the incentive must be clearly recorded through application of the standardized discount code **NSLOYAL10**. Participating farms must offer a 10% discount to the full value of each eligible CSA share.

Eligible Expenses

The discount applies to:

- CSA share cost
- Administrative fees
- Delivery fees

Ineligible Expenses

The discount does not apply to:

- Production-related costs
- Labour costs
- GST/HST
- Other discounts funded by external sources (unless pre-approved)

Discount Application by Payment Method

8. Online Orders (Local Line Storefront or approved online platform)

- Customers must enter the discount code **NSLOYAL10** during checkout to receive the 10% discount.
- The discount must not be automatically applied or pre-built into CSA pricing.
- The discount must appear on invoice and platform-generated reports.

9. POS Transactions (In-Person Sales)

- Customers must be informed of the incentive at the point of sale (e.g., signage, verbal prompt, printed materials)
- The discount code **NSLOYAL10** may be applied by the farm only after the customer requests or confirms use of the incentive.
- When an integrated POS system is used (e.g., Local Line with Square), the discount code must be applied at the time of sale.
- If the POS system is not integrated with the online platform being used, sales and discounts must be manually entered into the online sales platform after the transaction.

10. Cash, Cheque, and E-transfer Payments



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- Customers must be informed of the incentive and must request or confirm use of the discount code NSLOYAL10.
- Farms must manually enter the sale into their online platform and apply the discount code to reflect customer-directed use.
- Supplemental proof of payment (e.g., redacted e-transfer receipt, redacted image of cheque, or cash receipt) is required for reimbursement.

Standardized Discount Code Requirement

All participating farms must use the standardized discount code NSLOYAL10 for all eligible CSA sales submitted for reimbursement.

Farms are responsible for ensuring that:

- The discount is applied accurately to all eligible CSA shares, only when the customer has actively chosen to use the incentive.
- Discounted transactions appear clearly in platform-generated sales reports.
- The discount code remains active for the full duration of program participation.

Recommendations

To support accurate tracking of consumer uptake and streamlined reimbursement, farms are strongly encouraged to promote **online CSA purchases** for more streamlined processes whenever possible.

Reporting Requirements

To receive reimbursement, participating farms must submit complete and accurate documentation that verifies eligible CSA sales and confirms that discounts have been applied in accordance with program rules.

Required Reporting Documentation

All claim submissions must include the following documentation:

11. Platform-Generated Sales Report

Reports must show:

- Number of CSA shares sold
- Purchase date(s)
- Anonymous customer ID
- Share type and share value
- Payment status and verification
- Discount amounts

12. Proof of Payment

Only required for:

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- Cash
- Cheque
- E-transfer
- Non-integrated POS system transactions

Acceptable proof of payment includes:

- Platform payment confirmation
- POS receipt
- Redacted e-transfer confirmation
- Redacted cheque image
- Accounting or bank system record showing payment received

Not Accepted:

- Handwritten notes
- Unverifiable tally sheets
- Screenshots lacking payment details

Reporting Frequency Options

Participating farms may choose one or both options based on their payment model(s).

13. Rolling Reporting

- Claims submitted periodically (e.g., biweekly, or monthly)
- No more than one claim per week
- Recommended for installment payment models

14. Consolidated Reporting

- One claim submitted after all payments for the subscription are received
- Recommended for upfront payment models

Installment Payment Rules

- Reimbursement for discount may be claimed once an installment is fully paid.
- Unpaid installments are not eligible.
- Farms may submit additional claims as installments are completed.
- Mixed claims (installments + full payments) are permitted.

Refunds and Cancellations

If a customer cancels or defaults:

- Only fully paid installments are eligible for reimbursement.
- Refunds must be reflected in platform records.
- Refund amounts may reduce claim totals.



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Claiming Process

Farms will receive a claim form **after signing the Letter of Agreement.**

Claim Submissions Must Include

- Completed claim form
- Platform-generated reports
- Proof of payment for manual transactions (if applicable)

Additional guidelines:

- Claims must be submitted by email to csaincentive@nsfa-fane.ca
- Multiple claims may be submitted over the pilot period.
- A separate claim form must be used for each submission.

Reimbursement Timeline

- Reimbursements will be processed within 30 days of complete submission.
- Processing times may be longer during peak CSA periods.
- Incomplete submissions will delay processing.

Authority

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture shall have the authority to deny an application if the application does not meet the requirements described in these Program Guidelines or there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information.

Evaluation and Audit

Review and evaluation of the project may be carried out by the Department of Growth and Development, or other parties chosen by the Department for the purpose of audit, analysis, evaluation, and program development. This review and evaluation process may be conducted prior to program commencement, during work and/or upon program completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

Program results will be evaluated based on:

- Increase in new CSA customers.
- Year-over-year change in total CSA sales.
- Sales growth among returning customers.
- Farmer feedback and experience.

A final report will be shared with participating farms at the end of the pilot.



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Additional Notes

- Farms may be required to acknowledge the program in promotional materials.
- Farms operating subsidized CSA programs may require customized reporting procedures.
 - Approval will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Information

Submit all documents to the email below. For more information, questions, or onboarding support, please contact:

Hannah Moore – Project Coordinator, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

csaincentive@nsfa-fane.ca



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Appendix A: Eligible Marketing Expenses

Targeted Marketing & Advertising Support

Participating farms may access up to \$2,000 in targeted marketing and advertising support to promote their CSA program, complementing the broader provincial campaign led by Nova Scotia Loyal.

Eligible expenses:

- Paid social media advertisements (Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- Google ads / search engine marketing.
- Boosted posts or sponsored content promoting the CSA program.
- Print materials such as posters, flyers, and signage specifically promoting the CSA program.
- Website updates or online promotional placement.
- Local radio or community newspaper advertisements.
- Photography or videography services to support CSA promotion.

Non-eligible expenses:

- Website hosting or domain fees not tied to CSA promotion.
- Regular business advertising not linked to CSA program.
- Print or online ads for general farm sales unrelated to CSA program.
- Equipment and capital purchases.
- Production and farm operation costs.
- Unrelated training or professional development.
- Non-transparent or non-verifiable costs.

Receipts or invoices must be submitted with reimbursement claims to access this funding.



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Appendix B: Local Line Adoption & Support

Book a Demo

Interested in learning more about how Local Line can work for your farm? Local Line offers free demos to walk you through the platform and answer your questions.

Contact: Andrew Meehan, Farm Outreach

Email: ameehan@localline.ca

Book a free call: <https://meetings.hubspot.com/andrew-meehan>

Subscription Services

The program will subsidize Local Line's Core Plan (excluding HTS) for participating farms for the first year of use. The subsidized package includes all features required for CSA administration and reporting:

- Core Plan – \$950
- Store Credit Add-On – \$86
- Subscriptions Add-On – \$278

Total first-year value: \$1,314 + HST

**Note: HST is not an eligible expense under the Program and remains the responsibility of the farm.*

At the end of the pilot period, farms may continue using Local Line at their own expense. Local Line will offer a ~20% discount on the first year of renewal, reducing the cost to \$1,036 + HST.

Farms must purchase their Local Line subscription upfront and submit a claim with proof of payment for reimbursement.

1:1 Onboarding & Support

Local Line provides onboarding and technical support, including:

- Personalized 1:1 onboarding
- Assistance with product lists, pricing, inventory, and payment setup
- Fulfillment option configuration (delivery/pickup)
- Storefront branding and customization
- Support with anonymizing customer IDs

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Appendix C: Approved Alternative Online Sales Platforms

Farms may request approval to use an online sales platform other than Local Line. Alternative platforms must offer equivalent functionality to support accurate CSA tracking, reporting, and reimbursement.

Approval must be requested in the application form, and written confirmation must be received before participation is approved.

Minimum Platform Requirements

The platform must be able to:

- Record CSA sales as individual transactions
- Export data showing:
 - Number of CSA shares sold
 - Purchase date(s)
 - Share type and share value
 - Customer identifier (anonymized before submission)
 - Payment status and verification
- Link payments to customers (either automatically or through manual entry)
- Apply discount codes for online checkout
- Generate receipts or proof-of-payment records
- Document manual payments (cash, cheque, e-transfer) within the platform
- Support accurate reporting for program audits and evaluation

Platforms that do not allow farms to export complete, verifiable transaction data will not be approved.

Examples of Alternative Platforms

The following commonly used platforms may meet program requirements. Inclusion on this list **does not guarantee approval**, as individual configurations may vary.

15. WooCommerce (WordPress-Based Storefront)

- Detailed CSV exports of order data
- Customer profiles (can be anonymized)
- Discount codes supported
- Installment options with extensions (e.g., WooCommerce Subscriptions)
- Manual payment entry
- Receipt and invoice generation via plugins

16. Square Online

- Exportable orders with payment status
- Customer records that can be anonymized
- Discount code functionality
- Automatic receipts

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- Manual entry for cash/e-transfer/cheque
- Recurring invoices for installment payments

17. Shopify

- Comprehensive order exports
- Discount code support
- Subscription tools available via apps
- POS integration
- Automated receipts

18. Local Food Marketplace

- Order exports with required data fields
- Discount support
- Customer and payment tracking

19. Wix (Wix Stores with Wix Payments)

- Exportable CSV order reports showing dates, items, values, and payment status
- Customer-linked payments through Wix Payments
- Discount code support for checkout
- Automatic order confirmations and receipts
- Manual order creation for cash, cheque, or e-transfer
- Ability to anonymize customer data prior to reporting

**Note: Farms must ensure exported data includes all required reporting fields.*

Approval Process

Farms wishing to use an alternative platform must indicate this in the program application. Approval will be provided in writing after review. Farms may be asked to demonstrate that the platform can generate required reports.

The NSFA may decline platforms that cannot support complete, accurate reporting.