



NOVA SCOTIA
Agriculture



BUSINESS PLAN 2009–2010

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Message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the 2009-2010 business plan for the Department of Agriculture. We are committed to providing the support needed to meet the priorities set out in this plan.

Agriculture is an important contributor to the economic and social fabric of Nova Scotia. In 2008, farm cash receipts in Nova Scotia were \$474 million. The industry reaches well beyond our provincial borders, with many of our products exported throughout the world.

The Department of Agriculture is committed to helping Nova Scotia's agricultural industry become sustainable and profitable for the long term. In 2009-2010, the department is committed to implementing a Competitive Transition Framework to transition the agriculture industry toward self-sufficiency and independence. The new federal / provincial / territorial Growing Forward agreement came into effect and the department will implement the programs and initiatives identified. As well, we will continue to move forward with the revised governance structure at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College which will benefit the province's agricultural industry for years to come. Work this year will also begin on a ten-year agriculture strategy for long-term prosperity in the industry.

I encourage everyone to visit the department's website at www.gov.ns.ca/agri for more information on the full range of programs and services.

Sincerely,

Honourable John MacDonell
Minister of Agriculture

Mission

To foster prosperous and sustainable agriculture and food industries through the delivery of quality public services for the betterment of rural communities and all Nova Scotians.

Organizational Structure

The Department of Agriculture has a legislated mandate to promote, support and develop the agriculture and food industries. The department also delivers services to Nova Scotia's fisheries and aquaculture industries on behalf of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Department of Agriculture is organized according to the following units:

Agriculture Services provides regional extension services, land protection, environmental management, 4-H and support for rural organizations, agricultural awareness, industry development programs, business risk management and crop and livestock insurance. The branch also oversees the administration of the Competitive Transition Framework.

Legislation and Compliance Services licenses retail food outlets and restaurants, meat processing and food and game farms, and oversees activities related to food and consumer safety, farm animal welfare, animal health and laboratory services, and on-farm quality evaluation. The branch supports the orderly production and supply of major farm products and the Nova Scotia harness horse racing industry. The branch is also responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with regulations under the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act*.

Industry Development and Business Services integrates marketing, product and quality development, and business development and economic services. These services are provided to both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The branch also oversees the operations of the Farm Loan Board.

Policy and Planning provides corporate support for policy and planning activities, including legislative and regulatory development. The division is also responsible for the administration of the *Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act*, and Occupational Health and Safety services. Divisional services are provided to both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Communications provides government partners, industry clients and the general public with up-to-date, timely information on issues involving the department. These services are provided to both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) provides education and training related to agriculture, aquaculture, and the agri-food industries. NSAC works in cooperation with industry and government, and is the centre of agricultural expertise for Atlantic Canada.

The Atlantic BioVenture Centre at NSAC supports value-chain development, research commercialization, and technology transfer. NSAC assumed ownership of AgraPoint International in 2009 to better integrate applied training, research and development and extension services.

Planning Context

Farm cash receipts in Nova Scotia amounted to \$474¹ million in 2007. Together, Nova Scotia's supply managed sectors² – dairy, poultry and eggs – accounted for close to half of all production in the province. Dairy is the single biggest sector, at roughly a quarter of the overall industry. Horticulture – covering a wide range of products including apples, wild and high bush blueberries, cranberries, greenhouse and nursery products, potatoes, vegetables, and honey – combines to make up a significant part of the industry as well. Fur, mainly from mink farming, is one of the fastest growing agricultural sectors in Nova Scotia, and currently represents approximately \$64 million in farm cash receipts.

Agriculture is undergoing major shifts worldwide, characterized by an opening up of markets, increasing linkages between producers and consumers, and new demands for food safety and environmental protection, among other factors. Nova Scotia's farm community – and farmers throughout the world – need to respond to these challenges and seize opportunities for long-term sustainable prosperity.

Globalization

Globalization in food has fundamentally impacted the domestic arena as borders open wider and competition intensifies. On the one hand, farmers throughout the world have new export markets for their products. On the other hand, producers – even those who do not export – face increased competition. Nova Scotia's supply managed sectors have seen Canadian tariff rates weaken in recent years, and these tariffs could fall even further. If this happens, these sectors could face more direct competition from foreign producers.

The department continues to work with federal and provincial government partners to maximize access to trade markets without disrupting Nova Scotia's supply-managed systems. The department will implement year two of a three-year trade plan in 2009 focusing on market development and diversification, product branding, strategic alliances, core markets, and targeted market research and information. The German market will also be a focus for value-added opportunities, functional foods and nutraceuticals, mirroring the successful Japanese market development project from recent years.

¹ Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue Number 21-011-X. Accessed September 2009.

² Supply-managed systems use quotas to match domestic supply with domestic market demand.

Economic trends

The worldwide trend in agriculture is towards consolidation, meaning fewer but larger farms. The department recognizes the need for greater strategic partnerships and innovative thinking to deal with the increasingly complex challenges in the global economy. This includes strategic planning encompassing supply-chain linkages. A greater focus on product differentiation and value-adding will also help soften the impacts of global currency fluctuations. Improved business risk management options as a part of the new federal / provincial / territorial Growing Forward agreement will help farmers respond to sudden economic downturns and become more competitive.

Consumer trends

In today's global environment, consumers have an extraordinary amount of choice and are willing to pay price premiums for products that fit their unique needs. Nova Scotia's farm community is focusing on being in tune with shifting consumer demands and tastes. This means not only identifying potential markets, but also identifying the right products at the right prices, and using the right distribution channels and promotion methods. These business models need to be flexible enough to cater to today's market demands while preparing and adapting to meet future needs.

Many farmers in Nova Scotia who are not competing in a protected market or without price input advantages are transitioning away from a production and commodity-centered orientation toward a customer and product-centered one. Improved competitiveness will stem from developing strategies and implementing plans that identify and address consumer needs and wants, and that attract and develop highly skilled people, better information, more efficient government processes, improved infrastructure and production methods, better suppliers, more advanced research institutions, and more intensive competitive pressure.

Food safety and animal health

Food safety issues have received considerable attention in recent years, particularly with several reported cases of food borne illness in the United States and the listeria outbreak in Ontario during the summer of 2008. A single food-borne illness can have serious impacts on producers whose products are recalled, causing disruptions and problems throughout the value chain. Even the threat of illness can be enough to cause serious disruptions to the system. The discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in a limited event in western Canada in 2003 demonstrated the extent to which a single incident can affect farmers throughout Canada.

The department continues to expand food safety programming by working with federal, provincial and municipal government partners. This includes working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to implement national programs to provide traceability for farm products and expanded animal health surveillance services. CFIA's investigation into the causes of the 2008 listeria outbreak could also lead to new

compliance measures nationally. The department also continues to work with the Departments of Health Promotion and Protection and Environment around education, recruitment and regulatory reform to improve overall environmental public health in Nova Scotia.

The department hired two additional inspectors in 2008 to help Nova Scotia's food service industry, including the processing, retail and restaurant sectors comply with provisions of the new *Health Act*. Emphasis in 2009 will be on increasing regulatory compliance through education, such as partnering with the Nova Scotia Community College for food handler training. In addition, the new online food safety database creates efficiencies both for staff and for consumers accessing reports. Ensuring reliability, credibility and adherence to the highest food quality standards also remains a focus, requiring ongoing effort and investment to maintain laboratory accreditations.

The department will seek proclamation of the new *Animal Protection Act* in 2009, which gives government a greater role in responding to allegations of mistreatment or abuse of farm animals. Recruiting and retaining large animal veterinarians remains a challenge throughout Canada.

Climate change

Climate change could have several implications for agriculture in Nova Scotia. It could lead to longer and warmer growing seasons. It could also lead to an increase in the number of incidents of invasive species and rising sea levels. Rising sea levels are a particular concern for Nova Scotia as a coastal province. Much of the province's most productive agricultural land is low-lying, protected by a tradition of dyke maintenance stretching back 400 years. The department will work with government partners in 2009 to examine opportunities for Maritime-wide cooperation on a long-term dyke and coastal flooding strategy.

The *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* commits the province to having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by 2020. The act recognizes energy use, particularly electricity from coal, as one of the key challenges in addressing climate change. The department continues to work with industry and government partners to encourage farmers to reduce greenhouse gases through on-farm energy conservation. Beginning in 2009 farmers will be able to access an energy audit process tailored specifically to their sector, and incentives to implement energy saving initiatives. The department also continues to support the development of alternate and renewable energy technologies. The focus on alternative fuels may offer opportunities for agriculture-based energy suppliers.

Job creation and youth

Nova Scotia's farm population is one of the oldest in Canada. In 2006, more than 45 percent of Nova Scotia's agricultural labour force was over the age of 55, compared to roughly 40 percent for Canada overall. Nova Scotia's farmers were the second oldest in

the country, with an average age of 53.2 years, compared to the national average of 52 years. Only British Columbia's farmers were older.

The next 10 to 15 years could provide significant restructuring opportunities in agriculture, and room for new entrants to bring new perspectives. The department continues to encourage and recruit new entrants to the industry through outreach and education, business development supports and financial assistance, and will develop a committee this year to improve the delivery of programs and services to new entrants.

Environmental management

Healthy soil is a fundamental building block for sustainable agriculture, with plants and animals relying on it for productivity. The department continues to invest in the Environmental Farm Planning Program. This program identifies and prioritizes beneficial management practices, such as support for natural protective barriers to soil erosion, utilization of cover crops and nutrient management planning to help ensure soil remains healthy for future generations.

There are increased pressures in Nova Scotia for non-farm development in agricultural areas, particularly from residential, industrial and commercial uses, which can be more profitable than agriculture in the short-term. An agricultural land review committee has been established to advise the minister on issues surrounding the use of prime agricultural land. The department will also continue to lead a review of land use planning and development initiatives in 2009, develop a tool to help planners evaluate the importance of agricultural land, and support the work of the agricultural land review committee.

The agriculture industry has a role to play in water management. As a natural buffer and filter, agriculture plays a major role in providing high quality water recharge for provincial aquifers. Quality water is a key factor in agricultural productivity, and farmers have a vested interest in ensuring it is protected in the long term. The department continues to work with industry and government partners to improve access to high-quality water resources, namely through the Nova Scotia Farm Stewardship Program.

Technology and innovation

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) is the centre for agricultural research and innovation in Atlantic Canada, and in recent years has positioned itself to play a lead role in the development of Atlantic Canada's bio-economy. Agriculture has the potential to provide the economic basis for a bio-economy that reinvigorates rural communities and helps reverse trends in rural population decline. To do this, the industry needs to attract qualified people from around the world to ensure the diversity of training, perspective, intellectual capacity and entrepreneurial confidence needed for vigorous economic growth.

The Atlantic BioVenture Centre (ABVC) at NSAC has been highly successful in attracting research funding, securing nearly \$9.5 million in industry-led initiatives since

its inception in 2005. The ABVC focuses on the development and commercialization of value-added products including food and feed supplements, nutraceuticals and functional foods. The department also continues to provide support and services to encourage an increase in the production of new, value-added and higher quality products.

Policy Initiatives

The department continues to work with industry and government partners to help Nova Scotia's farm community seize new opportunities and move forward. Programs and services focus on four core business areas: sustainable resource management; industry growth and development; responsible governance; and education and life-long learning. Several department initiatives will help meet the objectives of these core business areas.

The new federal / provincial / territorial Growing Forward³ agreement came into effect in April 2009, committing \$14.74 million in federal funding and \$9.83 million in provincial funding to Nova Scotia's agriculture industry throughout the next five years. The agreement outlines three overarching strategic outcomes: a competitive and innovative agriculture and agri-food sector; a sector that contributes to society's priorities; and a sector that is proactive in managing risk.

The department is committed to working with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to implement a Competitive Transition Framework to transition the agriculture industry towards self-sufficiency, independence and sustainability. The guiding principles of the framework are: transitional support; strategic public investment; and public goods and services. Nova Scotia's Growing Forward programs and initiatives are aligned with and complement the three guiding economic principles of competitive transition. Work will also begin on a ten year agriculture strategy for long-term prosperity.

The department is also active in the government's Better Regulation Initiative to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, and the service standards commitment to meet a level of excellence in responding to licence and permit approvals.

Core Business One: Sustainable Resource Management

Programs and Services

- Agriculture resource management and land protection

Goal: Environmentally and socially responsible development of the agriculture and food industries.

What it means

The department is committed to achieving a balance between long-term agricultural growth and environmental responsibility, and provides leadership to help the industry realize the benefits of good environmental stewardship.

³ Growing Forward is the next generation agreement to the Agricultural Policy Framework.

Priority # 1 – Implement strategic environmental programming to support competitive transition in the agriculture industry.

Strategies & Actions

- Initiate an on-farm energy conservation program and work with industry to explore opportunities in alternative energy.
- Conduct farm energy assessments and recommend energy conservation options for farmers.
- Collaborate in assessing the merits of an ecological goods and services program to protect natural capital.

Performance Measure:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Environmental sustainability	Percentage of registered farms with an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)	27% (2004-05) 35% (2005-06) 40% (2006-07) 50% (2007-08) 60% (2008-09)	Increase the number of registered farms participating in the EFP	Continued increase in the number of registered farms participating in the EFP	Expand the EFP to include energy audits and a farm safety component Continue to deliver the National Farm Stewardship Program

Priority # 2 – Improve agricultural land use planning in the province.

Strategies & Actions

- Increase the profile of dykeland maintenance and explore community partnership opportunities.
- Explore land-use planning and preservation options for farmland.
- Produce a risk assessment model handbook to aid municipal planners and provincial policy makers with agricultural land use planning.

Core Business Two: Industry Growth and Development

Programs and Services

- Business risk management
- Agricultural lending services
- Business development and economics
- Product and quality development
- Market services
- Agriculture development, research, regional and extension services

Goal: Competitive agriculture and food businesses that create economic growth and employment in rural communities.

What it means

The agriculture and agri-product industries are the economic engines of many of Nova Scotia’s rural communities. Strategic initiatives such as Growing Forward and the Competitive Transition Framework, together with ongoing market development activities, will better position the industry towards long-term prosperity.

Priority # 3 – Promote transition in the agriculture industry towards improved competitiveness and self-sufficiency.

Strategies & Actions

- Renew existing programs to meet client needs and better align with the three principles of competitive transition: transitional support; strategic public investment; and public goods and services.
- Develop a ten-year strategy for improved prosperity in the agriculture industry.
- Develop and implement a strategic initiative to support innovation and encourage the assessment, adoption and transfer of on-farm technologies.
- Develop and implement a strategy to support innovation and commercialization of new opportunities to increase industry competitiveness.
- Promote greater understanding and participation in business risk management programs.
- Include production insurance as part of the AgriInsurance initiative under Growing Forward.
- Strengthen provincial production insurance products and develop new plans for maple, horticulture acreage loss, and stone fruit.

Performance Measures:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Competitive agricultural economy	Number of farms with reference margin protected by AgriStability ⁴	810 (2007-08)	900	A majority of farms participating in AgriStability	Promotion and awareness
Competitive agricultural economy	Number of farms with allowable net sales covered by AgriInvest ⁵	1225 (2007-08)	1300	A majority of farms participating in AgriInvest	Promotion and awareness

⁴ This replaces the previous measure, ‘Percentage of provincial farm reference margin covered by AgriStability’.

⁵ This replaces the previous measure, ‘Percentage of provincial farm allowable net sales protected by AgriInvest’.

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Competitive agricultural economy	Total Production Insurance coverage (millions)	\$52.5 (2004-05) \$51.3 (2005-06) \$56.4 (2006-07) \$71.0 (2007-08) \$120 (2008-09)	\$122 million	Increase the number of participants and the associated value of production protected by Production Insurance	Expand insurance product line Provide new features on existing products

Priority # 4 – Expand and re-align service capacity to better meet client needs and facilitate competitive transition in the agriculture industry.

Strategies & Actions

- Finalize the integration of AgraPoint with the applied research and training activities of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College.
- Develop and implement an enhanced customer service approach, such as single-window access, online applications, and new entrants’ needs surveys.
- Develop a regional approach to the delivery of extension services.
- Establish a minister’s advisory committee on extension services.

Priority # 5 – Attract new entrants to the agriculture and agri-product industries.

Strategies & Actions

- Work with producers, educators, and volunteers in rural and urban areas to promote careers in the agriculture and agri-product industry.
- Formalize a working committee to develop and implement a strategy for new entrants and coordinate new entrant activities within the department.
- Enhance investment attraction and immigration outreach activities.
- Continue to administer the New Entrants to Agriculture Program through the Farm Loan Board.

Priority # 6 – Expand investment in the agriculture and agri-product industries to capture growth opportunities.

Strategies & Actions

- Promote value-adding and quality development, with a focus on innovative products, services and technologies, including health and wellness products.
- Implement year two of a three-year trade plan focusing on market development and diversification, product branding, strategic alliances, maintaining core markets, and targeted market research and information.
- Develop tools and tactics to encourage entrepreneurship and business skills development.
- Encourage industry diversification through new investment in the grape, wine, tree fruit and organic sectors.

Performance Measures⁶:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Competitive agricultural economy	Ratio of Product and Quality Development (PQD) Program funding invested to total R&D invested through PQD projects ^{7*}	43% (2004-05) 32% (2005-06) 19% (2006-07) 17% (2007-08) 11% (2008-09)	Increase funding from other sources	Increase funding from other sources	Develop new partnerships Expand support to industry-wide and individual business initiatives
Competitive agricultural economy	Value of new investment in the agri-food and seafood sectors directly attributable to investment recruitment efforts (millions)*	\$1.5 (2006-07) \$1.5 (2007-08) \$1.1 (2008-09)	Increase new investment over time	Increase new investment over time	Operationalize the investment plan
Competitive agricultural economy	Percentage of Farm Loan Board principal in arrears ⁸	3.6% (2007-08) 4.4% (2008-09)	4.4% or less	4.4% or less	Monitor the status of accounts Contact clients in arrears and refer to industry resources where appropriate
Competitive agricultural economy	Dollar value of total capital and repair expenditures in crop and animal agriculture (millions) ⁹	\$86.0 (2005) \$80.7 (2006) \$88.4 (2007)	Increase in capital expenditures	Continued increase in capital expenditures	Focused lending through the Farm Loan Board Support industry growth
Integrity and security of the food system	Percentage of commercial livestock facilities identified for premise identification	10% (2007-08) 20% (2008-09)	35%	100% of all commercial livestock sites	Partner with commodity groups

⁶ Measures identified with an asterisk (*) refer to activities on behalf of the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture industries.

⁷ Increased participation and funding from other sources results in a decrease in the overall percentage invested by the department.

⁸ This measure has been revised slightly from previous years to include all loans in arrears, including those classified as 'in default'.

⁹ Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 029-0005

Priority # 7 – Increase the international competitiveness of Nova Scotia’s agriculture and agri-product industries.

Strategies & Actions

- Partner with the Atlantic BioVenture Centre to explore new opportunities for business development through science and innovation.
- Work with industry and government partners to improve transportation and distribution efficiencies.
- Identify additional market diversification tools and strategies, focusing in particular on the German market.
- Pursue international competitiveness capacity-building in horticulture.
- Build the department’s statistical, analytical and information capacity to support industry development.
- Finalize the development of a strategic plan to grow Nova Scotia’s beef sector.
- Deliver entrepreneurial and business skills development training.

Performance Measure:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Competitive agricultural economy	Total agri-food exports (less seafood products and fishing, millions) ¹⁰	\$272.2 (2004) \$273.7 (2005) \$263.9 (2006) \$255.0 (2007) \$215.8 (2008)	Increase in exports	Continued increase in exports	Focused market development activities

Priority # 8 – Increase the value of Nova Scotia’s agriculture sector.

Strategies & Actions

- Participate on the Council of Atlantic Premier’s Agri-Food Action Team to address distribution and retail challenges facing small and medium sized food businesses.
- Organize Meet Your Match events to bring together food sellers, food buyers and chefs to create value-chain linkages in Nova Scotia’s food chain.
- Continue working with Taste of Nova Scotia to expand culinary and agri-tourism opportunities in the province and in the export arena.
- Continue implementing the Select Nova Scotia buy local campaign to increase awareness and purchases of Nova Scotia agri-food products in the province.

¹⁰ Source: Industry Canada Trade Data Online, Accessed March 17, 2009

Performance Measures:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Competitive agricultural economy	Value of agricultural production (farm cash receipts, millions) ¹¹	\$456.7 (2004) \$467.5 (2005) \$473.5 (2006) \$457.8 (2007) \$474.2 (2008)	Growth in the agriculture sector	Continued growth in the agriculture sector	Provide business risk management and development programs, and product development support Focused market and business development activities Deliver Growing Forward programming
Competitive agricultural economy	Value of sales resulting from market development projects and tactics (millions)*	\$4.5 (2004-05) \$5.5 (2005-06) \$9.4 (2006-07) \$16 (2008-09)	Increase sales	Increase industry sales	Focus market development activities on priority markets
Competitive agricultural economy	Consumer awareness of Select Nova Scotia campaign*	6% (2007-08)	Increase consumer awareness	15% by 2012	Recruit additional industry partners Ongoing promotions

Core Business Three: Responsible Governance

Programs and Services

- Food safety
- Animal health
- Laboratory services
- Enabling / guiding legislation and regulations
- Licensing and enforcement

Goal: Orderly development of the agriculture and agri-product industries.

What it means

Nova Scotia's regulatory framework for agriculture and agri-products establishes standards for food safety and animal health and welfare, quality control and evaluation, and the orderly production and supply of major farm products. This helps to safeguard public health and maintain a level playing field for industry, while supporting a competitive business climate.

¹¹ Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue Number 21-011-X. Accessed September 20, 2009.

Priority # 9 – Enter into the new federal / provincial / territorial Growing Forward framework agreement.

Strategies & Actions

- Implement the Canada-Nova Scotia Bilateral Agreement and Consolidated Contribution Agreement under Growing Forward.
- Maximize federal contributions, national coordination and development initiatives under the Growing Forward agreement.

Priority # 10 – Increase regulatory compliance.

Strategies & Actions

- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Nova Scotia Community College to provide food handler training courses to for-profit food services businesses.
- Deliver a new in-depth meat processing course to industry.
- Work with the Departments of Health Promotion and Protection and Environment to address overarching environmental public health issues.
- Maximize the effectiveness and utilization of the food safety data base and online reporting system.

Performance Measures:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Public health protection Integrity and security of the food system	Volunteer food handlers trained in safe food handling*	469 (2004) 394 (2005) 1,192 (2006) 646 (2007) 940 (2008)	700 ¹²	All volunteers involved in food preparation trained in safe food handling techniques	Contact volunteer groups Continue to offer food handling courses
Public health protection Integrity and security of the food system	Number of food safety concerns reported*	324 (2004) 278 (2005) 325 (2006) 275 (2007) 336 (2008)	400 ¹³	No repeat public complaints about the same facility	Investigate public complaints
Public health protection Integrity and security of the food system	Number of suspected food poisoning cases reported*	66 (2004) 69 (2005) 75 (2006) 47 (2007) 68 (2008)	75	No confirmed food-borne illnesses from Nova Scotia eating establishments	Increase food handling training Enhance enforcement

¹² This measure refers to the number of food handlers trained in a given year. The anticipated decrease is a result of having already trained a large number of food handlers.

¹³ An increase in the number of food safety concerns reported and suspected food poisoning cases reported is anticipated as a result of a larger number of reporting mechanisms being made available to the public.

Priority # 11 – Maintain and improve legislative authority for industry supply and development.

Strategies & Actions

- Enhance resource capacity for timely regulatory and policy development.
- Review and improve legislation that supports the orderly production and supply of major farm products in Nova Scotia.
- Integrate Natural Products Marketing Council oversight and services into the department's Legislation and Compliance branch.
- Integrate strategic planning and policy-based legislative and regulatory development.

Priority # 12 – Enhance animal health and welfare services.

Strategies & Actions

- Examine the Livestock Health Services and Herd Health Programs and develop strategies to ensure farm animal veterinarian service will be available long-term throughout the province.
- Implement the *Animal Protection Act*, investigate allegations of farm animal neglect or abuse, and assist in capacity-building at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty.
- Evaluate first-response services in support of the *Animal Protection Act* and the Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to assess whether services need to be expanded or improved.

Priority # 13 – Develop new legislation and regulations to address emerging issues.

Strategies & Actions

- Work with industry to explore options for legislation to develop the fur industry.
- Work with industry to explore legislative approaches and options for traceability of farm products.

Priority # 14 – Implement a new governance structure at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College.

Strategies & Actions

- Work with the transitional Board of Governors to develop and implement the requirements for establishing the Nova Scotia Agricultural College as a board-governed Crown corporation.

Priority # 15 – Reduce the administrative paperwork burden on industry and turn-around times for permits and approvals.

Strategies & Actions

- Continue to participate in the government’s Better Regulation Initiative to track the number of business days required to process permits and approvals, and set targets to reduce the number of days, if required.
- Work with the Emergency Management Office and other provincial partners to develop a crisis management strategy focused on natural disasters and disease outbreaks.

Core Business Four: Education and Life-Long Learning

Programs and services

- Agriculture outreach and youth
- Continuing and post-secondary education and research

Goal: Increased expertise and excellence in Nova Scotia’s agriculture and agri-product industries through teaching, research, community services and youth development.

What it means

Education and life-long learning are important for agricultural renewal and long-term viability, helping to foster new ideas and technologies, and developing future leaders for the industry.

Priority # 16 – Increase student enrollment at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC).

Strategies & Actions

- Adapt and develop new academic and post-baccalaureate programs that respond to and target NSAC’s priority markets and address industry needs.
- Work collaboratively with other faculties of agriculture to address common recruitment issues at the market research level.
- Increase activity for targeted international student recruitment and student exchange.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for student residence renewal to bring NSAC’s residence accommodation up to modern standards.
- Increase the number of partnership agreements and articulation arrangements with other universities and colleges to improve the flexibility of student learning experiences.
- Review student service programs and structure to ensure services are coordinated, optimized and appropriate to student cohort requirements.

Priority # 17 – Increase NSAC research capacity.

Strategies & Actions

- Seek external approvals for and implement the Ph.D. program in agriculture and recruit several new doctoral candidates.
- Recruit a Vice President, Research, Extension and Outreach to lead and coordinate research, development and commercialization and outreach efforts.
- Establish new faculty positions and parallel research programs in bioproducts development, farm energy conservation, fruit horticulture, management of landscapes, as well as agricultural resource and watershed management.
- Create a collaboration framework for enhanced cooperation between NSAC and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientists located at NSAC.
- Strengthen ties to AgraPoint International at both administrative and operational levels to facilitate integration of research and extension where appropriate.

Priority # 18 – Increase NSAC technology transfer and commercialization capability.

Strategies & Actions

- Support the expansion of the Atlantic BioVenture Centre as the regional innovation centre for new product development from agri-based and marine-based resources.
- Enhance communication of research results to the industry by leveraging AgraPoint resources.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to employ research results across Nova Scotia and the wider Atlantic region to foster economic development.

Performance Measures:

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Ultimate Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
High quality agricultural research and education	Total value of research and infrastructure grants awarded to NSAC researchers (millions)	\$5.74 (2004-05) \$5.79 (2005-06) \$6.49 (2006-07) \$8.50 (2007-08) \$9.50 (2008-09)	\$9.3 million	\$10 million by 2011	Facilitate professional proposal development Recruit new faculty
Skilled agricultural workforce	Number of students enrolled at NSAC	753 (2004-05) 758 (2005-06) 793 (2006-07) 789 (2007-08) 832 (2008-09)	855	1000 students by 2013	Recruitment drives Improve campus facilities
Skilled agricultural workforce	Number of international students enrolled at NSAC	26 (2004-05) 26 (2005-06) 47 (2006-07) 57 (2007-08) 79 (2008-09)	85	100 international students by 2013	International recruitment drives Improve campus facilities

Corporate Services

Programs and services

- Business planning and accountability
- Legislative and policy services
- Communications
- Employee safety, wellness and health
- Information management
- Human resources
- Information technology

Goal: To ensure the effective delivery of a suite of corporate and administrative services for the benefit of the executive offices, operational units and the Government of Nova Scotia.

What it means

Corporate services are delivered through the offices of the Minister and Deputy Minister, the Policy and Planning and Communications divisions, and Resources Corporate Service Units¹⁴.

Human Resource Strategy

Priority # 19 – Address priority areas identified in the Corporate Human Resource Strategy¹⁵.

Strategies & Actions

- Host an orientation day to welcome new staff to the department, including an overview of departmental functions, an introduction to senior management, and information on employee services, GoverNEXT, Occupational Health and Safety, and ethics in government.
- Hold a two-day staff conference focusing on issues of work / life balance, stress in the workplace, career development, personal financial management in difficult times, and intergenerational diversity.
- Provide career coaching training to help managers guide employees interested in making decisions about their work / life future.

¹⁴ Resources Corporate Service Units provide financial, human resources, and information technology services to the department.

¹⁵ The Government of Nova Scotia's Corporate Human Resources Plan 2005-2010 identifies five goals to guide development of the provincial public sector workforce: To make a difference, through a skilled, committed, and accountable public service; To be a preferred employer; To be a safe and supportive workplace; To be a diverse workforce; To be a learning organization.

Budget Context

Agriculture			
	2008-2009 Estimate	2008-2009 Actual	2009-2010 Estimate
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Total Department Expenses:			
Senior Management	828	960	710
Policy, Planning, Comm.	815	670	811
Agricultural Services	23,750	24,907	24,577
Legislation and Compliance	8,846	9,085	9,468
Industry Development and Business	5,890	11,333	7,093
N. S. Agricultural College	19,434	19,029	19,027
Total Departmental Expenses	59,563	65,984	61,686
TCA Purchase Requirements	360	338	350
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	467	466	477

Rounding

Estimates/Forecasts:

Departments/PSV's

- All estimates/forecasts should be rounded to the nearest thousand.

FTE's:

FTE's for departments

- Rounding should follow what appears in 1.17 of the Estimates book.

FTE's for Public Service Entities (PSV's)

- In accordance with what appears in the Nova Scotia Estimates Supplementary Detail all FTE information should be rounded to the nearest tenth.