



AGRICULTURE

GROW • NURTURE • SHARE • EDUCATE • ENGAGE • INNOVATE



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Message from the Minister

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy, so it is always unfortunate when our farmers and processors have their crops damaged by weather events. We are now in the process of finishing up our evaluation of the damage caused by the significant frost event that occurred in early June. Many of you have been further challenged by early fall frosts and the extremely wet weather during the harvest season.

The Department of Agriculture has a strong relationship with our industry and we will continue to work closely with our growers as we determine the extent of the impacts they are facing and how we can help mitigate those impacts.

The new Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), a partnership between the federal, provincial and territorial governments is well underway and we are still accepting applications for some of the programs under that agreement.

Government is committed to working together with farmers, processors and exporters to ensure that this sector continues to grow and provide good paying jobs and economic opportunities for Nova Scotians.

As we begin the holiday season, I would like to extend my best wishes to you on behalf of government and department staff. I wish you all a successful growing season in 2019.

Honorable Keith Colwell
Minister of Agriculture

Your Regional Agricultural Offices

Extension and Outreach

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Coordinator
Terry McKay - Agricultural Resource
Coordinator
Nicole Burkhard - Agricultural
Transition Officer

Ag Extension Highlights

The Farm Transitioning Process

Like all of Nova Scotia, Cumberland County has an aging farm population. Central Region Staff of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA) realize there is a need for farm transitions to take place and can help their clients with this process. Whether it is from one generation to the next or it's the farm owner transitioning out of farming and allowing someone new to take over the operation there is a lot to consider and put in place for that to happen successfully.

NSDA Staff has organized an afternoon workshop on Farm Transition. The intent of the workshop was to provide information to the participants, so they knew their next steps to make their farm transition as smooth as possible.

An accountant, a lawyer, a realtor and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) were there to discuss their recommendations. The accountant covered topics that would lessen the tax burden associated with passing the farm on. The lawyer spoke about wills, power of attorney and personal directives. If selling the farm, the realtor covered the necessary steps with selling the farm business such as how to value the farm and key points to making the sale happen in a timely manor. The NSFA promoted the use of their newly launched website which covers all the steps involved with farm transition, nsfarmsuccession.ca/transition.

Inspected Abattoir Open for Business in Eastern Nova Scotia



Jim Sinclair has a history of cutting meat but recently completed the final phase of a two-year project to build a provincially inspected abattoir.

He started out cutting meat in his backyard, but knew when he started he wanted an inspected facility. "He has, what I would consider to be, one of the nicest abattoirs in the province," said local Agricultural Resource Coordinator Adam Wile.

Jim began the planning phase of the build in 2016 and worked with many people to design his abattoir. He used engineers with abattoir building experience and hired people to help him with the animal handling component of the plant to reduce stress on livestock. He worked with food safety specialists to help build the carcass handling and ensure workflow was efficient and safe.

Now, he is ready to work with farmers in Eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton to provide custom slaughtering and butchering services. Up to this point farmers have been using inspected

facilities in other locations but for many the travel meant that selling meat products was financially or logistically prohibitive.

In Nova Scotia all meat sold on the farm needs to be slaughtered and processed in an inspected facility. The new abattoir will provide hundreds of livestock producers the opportunity to retail their meat products at farmers markets, farm stands, retail outlets or to wholesale customers.

Exploring the New Farm Dream

Exploring the New Farm Dream: Is Starting an Agricultural Business Right for You? is a course developed by the New England Small Farm Institute (www.smallfarm.org). It is offered in Nova Scotia by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture under license with Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture's Extended Learning unit.

This self-assessment course consists of four weekly 3-hour sessions at which participants will hear from guests speakers and

Jim credits a lot of people in helping him get the abattoir up and running but none more than his wife who's supported the idea the entire way. He hopes to hold an open house in the future. In the meantime if you're looking at booking animals for slaughter Jim can be reached at **902-870-4007** and prefers if you text him the details as he's not always able to answer the phone right away. The abattoir is located at 77 Copper Lake Road, Goshen.

be guided by trained facilitators to assess their farm business idea. The goal is for each participant to be able to make an informed decision about whether starting a farm business is right for them.

If you are interested in participating in this course, please contact your nearest regional office. If there is sufficient interest, a course can be organized.

Our Farms, Our Pride and Joy.

Regional Extension Staff are working on a series of new displays that will showcase our province's agricultural industry. The displays will be housed in the regional offices and will be used at various events. The displays are meant to spread the message that our farms are something all Nova Scotians should be proud of and the province's agricultural industry has a vibrant future.

Each of the six displays features a landscape photo representing the region and three farm family portraits. It was an extremely difficult decision to select only three farms to represent each

region and to find a balance of farm types across the province in terms of commodity, scale, etc. It was even more difficult to match farmer schedules (and school bus schedules) with photographer availability! Thanks very much to all the farmers who participated. And thanks to the thousands of amazing farmers in the province who provide food for us everyday.

Watch for these displays at a farm or community event near you starting in 2019.



Rural Organizations

Partnership Seeks to Expand 4-H Opportunities

For the past three years a formal and informal partnership between St Francis Xavier University and the Antigonish 4-H Leaders Council has provided 4-H opportunities to both existing clubs and membership, and brought awareness of 4-H to those currently not a part of the program.

The StFX 4-H Society has been instrumental in coordinating the annual Leadership Development Conferences reflecting the four pillars of 4-H Canada. In the inaugural year, the conference theme focused on Agriculture Sustainability and Food Security. In 2018, the theme was Communications and Community Engagement, which saw 80 4-H and outside participants from diverse communities come together for a weekend of shared learning exposing them to the 4-H leadership development model. Following a successful 2018 conference, the Antigonish 4-H Leaders Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with St Francis Xavier University to formalize the structure and plan an annual leadership conference.

In 2019, the conference will provide leadership and skill development sessions under the Science and Technology pillar. In addition to the annual conference, the StFX 4-H Society is actively involved in assisting local clubs by being volunteer leaders for club projects, judges for communication competitions, providing assistance and guidance with county judging workshops, woodsman teams, and the Harvest Bash.

Outside of the work of StFX 4-H Society, StFX regularly provides service learning students to the Antigonish 4-H Council. These students, as part of their course work in nutrition, business, computer science, and other disciplines have provided valuable skills from their area of study to the council.

Collaborations like these bring the 4-H program to communities and individuals not currently involved in a 4-H Club. They strengthen local clubs and offer opportunities for current members to give back to the 4-H program through volunteering.

Exhibition Associations of Nova Scotia Plans for the New Year



The Exhibition Association of Nova Scotia (EANS) is the not-for-profit body responsible for the advancement of the thirteen agricultural exhibitions and four fairs in the province. Since its inception in 1973, the focus of the association has evolved. In recent years, the association administered provincial funds to the exhibitions and fairs. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Department of Agriculture and EANS in 2017 and as a result of this EANS undertook the exercise to develop a strategic plan for its activities to help streamline and document its purpose and identify key activities to engage in.

EANS is reviewing their draft plan as written by their consultant. A final version of the EANS strategic plan will be presented at their Annual General Meeting in January 2019

In the fall of 2018, EANS met several times with consultant Yvonne Thyssen-Post of Thyagrissen Consulting Ltd. to develop a strategic plan for the next three to five years. Exhibitions and Fairs were invited to send a representative to participate in the strategic planning process to ensure the final product was representative of its membership.

The group met four times over a two-month period to work on exercises related to identifying their strengths as an association, their vision and mission statement, core values and functions, strategic priorities and to identify priority areas for EANS to begin work on in the new year. At present EANS is reviewing their draft plan as written by their consultant. A final version of the EANS strategic plan will be presented at their Annual General Meeting in **January 2019**.

Research & Innovation

Atlantic Agriculture Research and Innovation Initiative (AARII)

The Atlantic Agriculture Research and Innovation Initiative was established under Growing Forward II as a pilot program to encourage Atlantic Canadian collaboration and provide financial assistance on mutually beneficial research and innovation projects conducted within Atlantic Canada.

The intent of the initiative was to lead to improved profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of the Atlantic Canadian agriculture, agri-food and agri-products sectors. It was also established to provide a common set of Pan-Atlantic Research and Innovation Program guidelines to simplify the application and approval process for interested applicants wishing to undertake research and innovation projects in Atlantic Canada.

A successful outcome that was realized through the Atlantic Agriculture Research and Innovation Initiative (AARII) under Growing Forward II was the soybean seeding rates project conducted by the Atlantic Grains Council. The Atlantic Grains Council regularly engages with the grains and oilseed producers in Atlantic Canada to identify their priority research areas. One area was to examine the yield response to reduced soybean seeding

rates, as soybean seed costs are the largest cost for soybean production in Atlantic Canada.

Traditionally soybeans are seeded at 180,000-200,000 seeds per acre. In 2015 and 2016, soybean yield response to lower seeding rates were trialed at seven farm locations in Nova Scotia. For the trials, soybean seeding rates of 190,000, 160,000 and 130,000 seeds per acre were examined.

As reported by the Atlantic Grains Council, the traditional seeding rate given by the three participating Nova Scotia soybean producers at seven farm locations was 195,000 seeds per acre and the lowest seeds per acre rate trialed was 135,000 seeds per acre. From the trials, they found that there was no significant difference in the yield, harvest moisture, test weight and crude protein when adjusting the plantings from 195,000 seeds per acre down to 135,000 seeds per acre.

By adopting the lower soybean seeding rate of 135,000 seeds per acre, the seed cost savings to Nova Scotia soybean producers could collectively be up to \$348,193 annually.

Agriculture Labour Symposium

An Agriculture Labour Symposium will be held in Truro in early 2019. The symposium is part of a larger joint effort to address labour issues in the province among several Nova Scotia departments, industry, educational institutions and other partners.

Topics include

skills training, attraction and retention, productivity, automation and more.

Over the course of the day we will hear about resources and programs available, discuss labour issues facing the Nova Scotia agriculture industry and work collaboratively to find solutions.

The symposium is being hosted by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Labour and Advanced Education and Office of Immigration. Watch for an official announcement with RSVP information early in January. **Registration is free** and a complimentary lunch is provided. We hope you can join us.

For more information please contact Marie Williams, 902-893-6575, marie.williams@novascotia.ca



The best Christmas trees are local!

Nothing makes the festive season more festive than a real Nova Scotia Christmas tree. Christmas tree farming has been a tradition here for generations. This holiday season, make buying a local tree part of your tradition, and support an industry that contributes millions of dollars every year to the local economy and provides full and part-time jobs to about 4,000 people in Nova Scotia (the equivalent of 800 full-time jobs).



Did you know?

- The majority of trees harvested in Nova Scotia are Balsam Fir – **trees that grow naturally in our climate.**
- There are roughly **1,200 families producing trees** on their land in Nova Scotia.
- **For every harvested tree, one to three new trees are cultivated in its place.** Cultivation of natural stands and integrated pest management make Nova Scotia Christmas trees one of the most environmentally friendly crops around.
- Every acre of Christmas **trees produces enough oxygen for 18 people.**

For more information, visit ilovealrealtrees.com

And trees are for more than just decoration!

Try this unique new Kilted Chef recipe developed for the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia in partnership with Select Nova Scotia.

Balsam Fir Jelly Recipe



- 1 cup balsam fir needles stripped from the tip, middle and base of branch, rinsed
- 5 cups water
- ½ tsp lemon juice
- 1 package No Sugar needed pectin
- 3 cups sugar

PHOTO & RECIPE: Chef Alain Bossé

Place needles on a cutting board and use the top of a large knife to bruise the needles, they are not meant to be chopped only “bruised” to release more essence from the needle. Place prepared needles into a cheesecloth and tie securely with twine. Place in a pot with 5 cups of cold water. Bring to a boil, reduce and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to steep overnight.

Remove the cheesecloth and measure four cups of liquid, add clear water if needed. Return liquid to pot, add the lemon juice and pectin, bring to a boil. Allow to boil for 1 minute. Add sugar and return to boil, boil for an additional minute. Remove from heat and skim off foam. Pour into hot, sterilized jars. Process jars in a water bath for 10 minutes.

For an added twist, before processing add 1 tsp of locally made gin for each 4 ounces of jelly.

To create your own business listing for free on the Select Nova Scotia website,

Contact Select Nova Scotia at select@novascotia.ca or 902-893-4491

Programs and Business Risk Management

At Programs and Business Risk Management (PBRM) many programs have closed and most Letters of Agreement have been issued. To be valid, Letters of Agreement must be signed and returned within 60 days of the date on the agreement.

Since the fall of 2017, the PBRM area have been working on the development of a Grants Management System. Phase 1 of the system was implemented in September and staff have been busy getting trained and entering client information.

The Grants Management System is directly connected with the finance system and will allow claims to be paid at a faster rate. Approved program claim payments will be electronically transferred every evening at 11 p.m. to the financial department and if the client is on direct deposit, they will receive their funds

that next day by 3 p.m. If the client is not on direct deposit, the payment will be issued on the weekly batch of cheques. We are encouraging all PBRM clients to get set up on direct deposit.

The Wild Blueberry Harvest Efficiency Program has been updated to now include a 48 inch head upgrade. As a result, the application intake period and claim deadline have been extended to **February 1, 2019**.

Also extended is the claim deadline for the Bee Biosecurity Program. The application intake period is now closed, however the claim deadline has been extended to **February 1, 2019**.

All claims are to be submitted to the programs office by mail, email, or fax. If there are any questions, please contact the office toll free at **1-866-844-4276**.

Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission News

Early Potato Insurance Available in 2019

In the 2019 crop year, the Commission will be offering insurance coverage for potato growers who grow early season potatoes for the fresh market. This coverage will be offered under the Acreage Loss Insurance Plan. Acreage Loss is a non yield based plan which insures a wide range of crops based on the cost of producing the

crop (COP) rather than the yield and market price received for the crop. This plan is available to large and small producers as well as both traditional and organic growers. For a complete list of vegetable crops covered under this plan, please visit our website novascotia.ca/agri/cropinsurance.

Dairy Cattle Insurance

The Commission can accept dairy and livestock for insurance coverage at any time of the year. The Dairy Plan covers losses due to disease. This includes federally reportable diseases as well as shipping fever and IBR but not BSE or Foot and Mouth Disease. The Dairy Plan also insures against loss of income for up to 4 months due to the above diseases, as well as barn fire and building collapse due to ice, snow or wind.

The cost for this insurance ranges from 50¢ to \$5.00 for a producer's choice of animal values of \$200 to \$2,000 per animal.

For clients raising replacement dairy heifers and calves, but who do not have quota, animals can be insured for losses due to the above named diseases only.



Application Deadlines for the 2019 Spring Seeded Crops

March 14 Spring Grain (Oats, Barley, Wheat), Processing Carrots

March 30 Day Neutral Strawberry

March 31 Acreage Loss, Vegetable Plan

April 19 Potato

April 30 Corn, Maple Syrup, Weather Derivative (Forages)

May 11 Soybean (Canola & Sunflower)

Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board

Interest Rates

As of October 1, 2018 (applicable to loans approved on or after this date while these rates remain in effect)

Length (years)	Full Term	*10-Yr. Term	*5-Yr. Term	*3-Yr. Term
1-5	4.40%	--	4.40%	4.10%
6-10	4.70%	4.70%	4.60%	4.15%
11-15	5.15%	4.95%	4.65%	4.45%
16-20	5.40%	5.20%	4.70%	4.45%
21-25	5.60%	5.20%	4.70%	4.45%
26-30	5.80%	5.25%	4.75%	4.50%

*3, 5 and 10 year term rates available to clients meeting risk, cashflow, and collateral requirements.

The Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board supports agricultural development such as: property purchase / improvements, construction, machinery / quota / stock purchase, financial restructure, and farm transition. The Board is committed to helping you with your individual financial needs.

A Loan Officer will also have information concerning programs and other services offered by Nova Scotia Agriculture.

Call or visit a Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board office:

Truro 902-893-6506
74 Research Drive, Bible Hill

Kentville 902-679-6009
Kentville Agricultural Centre,
32 Main Street

New regulations have been announced for the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board that increase the Board's lending authority to \$5,000,000. Please contact our offices for details.

Need more information?

Visit us at novascotia.ca/agri

News and Events:

Telling the Agriculture Story



Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month happens each March and is a great opportunity for producers and those who work in the agriculture sector to share the story of what they do in their day to day work. Volunteers are paired with a classroom teacher in their area. Visits are set up at a time that is convenient for the teacher and volunteer. Each volunteer is asked to share a little bit about what they do on their farm, the more interactive the classroom visit is the better! You can bring tools, photos and videos of your farm to share. You can make a smoothie, plant some seeds, make some butter or any other activity that fits well with what your farm produces. The interactions with these young students will help them to see Nova Scotia Agriculture first hand. If you are interested in visiting a classroom in your area please contact the Agriculture Education Liaison at Ag.Education@novascotia.ca.

Canada's Agriculture Day

February 12

Small Steps Great Distance – Junior 4-H Member Workshop

March 6, YMCA, Sydney

March 19, Civic Center, Port Hawkesbury

Canadian Ag Safety Week

March 10-16

Kevin Grant Rural Youth Leadership Tour

March 18-20, South Shore

Atlantic 4-H Senior Members Conference

March 29 - 31, Debert