



BUSINESS PLAN

2024-25

Agriculture

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Budget 2024-25: Business Plan
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Department of Agriculture

2024-25 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

The Department of Agriculture helps develop competitive, sustainable, and profitable agriculture and agri-food industries in Nova Scotia. Growing agriculture in an environmentally sustainable way is key to achieving Government's goals to increase local food consumption and reduce the costs of healthy food for consumers. The Department will undertake the following priority actions in 2024–25:

Support Local Food

The Department will work to raise awareness of and increase the production of healthy local food through new and existing programs and supports to help businesses expand their operations, reduce labour needs, extend growing seasons, and adapt to climate change.

Improve Institutional Procurement

The Department is working with public institutions, including long-term care, hospitals, food hubs, and schools, to develop and implement pilot projects aimed at increasing education and awareness of local food. Pilot project results will be analyzed to help identify challenges and opportunities to maximize the procurement of local food and beverage products in institutions throughout Nova Scotia.

Build Awareness

The Department will promote local food and beverages through province-wide marketing campaigns and targeted events across Nova Scotia. The Department will also develop strategic partnerships with industry, including grocery retailers and restaurants, to align marketing initiatives for maximum impact. The Department will continue to support the Department of Economic Development in the development and implementation of the Nova Scotia Loyal Program.

Deliver Operational Supports

The Department will continue to deliver the Meat Inspection, Farm Animal Welfare, Pest Management, and Dairy and Laboratory Services programs, which provide regulatory oversight and technical expertise to the agri-food industry to ensure that food produced in Nova Scotia meets consumers' expectations.

Monitor Progress

A reliable method to measure consumer perceptions of their spending on local food has been finalized, and the Department will collect data and track annual progress toward our goal to increase the amount of money spent on locally produced food by 2030. A mechanism to measure the proportion of local food products purchased by institutions will also be developed.

Grow and Strengthen Agriculture

This is the second year of the [Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership](#), a five-year (2023-28) cost-shared investment with the Federal government to strengthen and grow our agriculture and agri-

food sector. The Department will continue to deliver funding programs that support economic, environmental, and social sustainability in agriculture.

The Department will support new and traditional agriculture ventures. The [Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board](#) will help finance new farms and help existing farms expand and innovate. The [Plant Your Roots Program](#) will assist new farmers with the increased costs of borrowing to support the financial viability of new farm businesses. The Department worked with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Unamaki Institute of Natural Resources and Ulnooweg Education Centre to co-create a 5-year (2023-2028) project to explore options for the restoration of wild blueberry production practices in Mi'kmaq communities using traditional, sustainable practices that support native pollinator populations.

Increase Environmental Sustainability and Prepare for Climate Change

The second year of the renewed \$5 million [Advancing Clean Technologies for Nova Scotia Program](#) will be delivered to help the agriculture industry adopt clean technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and increase value-added agricultural production.

Programs under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership will also directly support environmental sustainability. The [Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change Program](#) will help the agriculture sector reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The [Resilient Agriculture Landscapes Program](#) will accelerate the adoption of on-farm land use and management practices that maximize benefits for the environment and society.

Foster Partnerships

Working with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change, the Department will support its agricultural related actions identified in the [Nova Scotia Climate Plan](#). This includes working with Perennia Food and Agriculture Corporation to develop and implement sector-specific Climate Adaptation Strategies. The Department will also partner with Dalhousie University's Centre for Sustainable Soil Management to develop soil analysis offerings through the Animal and Plant Lab that help producers better manage nitrogen on farm, reducing greenhouse gas contributions.

The Agriculture Energy Partnership with EfficiencyOne has been successful in helping producers reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and lower their energy costs. This partnership is being expanded to include a second Onsite Energy Manager position that will focus on exhibitions and non-profit agricultural organizations. The partnership will also include a new funding program to provide support for energy-related beneficial management practices.

Prepare for Emergency Events

Extreme weather events, foreign animal disease outbreaks, and other climate-related emergencies can cause devastating impacts for the agriculture sector. The Department will focus on helping businesses prepare for and respond to emergencies by providing extension services and working with federal, provincial, and industry partners on a comprehensive approach to emergency response planning. The [Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission](#) will work with federal partners to deliver business risk management solutions that help farmers manage uncontrollable risks and sustain their operations when facing natural perils.

Departmental Expenses Summary

(\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>	<u>2023-2024 Forecast</u>	<u>2024-2025 Estimate</u>
Senior Management	647	647	670
Policy & Corporate Services	4,544	4,119	5,065
Agriculture Risk Management and Lending	13,233	25,754	14,130
Agriculture Operations	12,674	12,788	9,874
Industry Development	14,252	14,212	16,493
Total - Departmental Expenses	45,350	57,520	46,682
Ordinary Recoveries	6,455	7,835	6,425
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	184.9	170.9	180.9

Note:
 For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book,
 Chapter 1