



Accountability Report 2019–20

Agriculture

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Accountability Report 2019–2020

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ended March 31, 2020 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Agriculture Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department of Agriculture management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Agriculture management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Agriculture 2019-20 Business Plan.

Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.
Minister of Agriculture

Loretta Robichaud
Deputy Minister

Message from Minister

We continue to collaborate with industry stakeholders and government to achieve progress and build on the strengths Nova Scotia has developed across the agriculture and agri-food sectors.

Agriculture is a strong economic contributor that generated \$605 million in farm cash receipts in 2019. With \$367 million in agriculture exports in 2019, agri-food products are the fourth largest export category in Nova Scotia. We want our high-quality Nova Scotia grown and made products to be found on the tables around the world. This will lead to the creation of more jobs and stronger rural communities.

Producers are benefiting from provincially delivered programs funded under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, which brings \$37 million in provincial and federal support over five years to the sustainable growth of our agriculture and agri-food sectors. As an example, the Small Farm Acceleration Program is helping small farms with a gross income below \$60,000 grow into commercial status, and the Agriculture Business Advancer Program is supporting new technologies, processes, specialized equipment, practices and techniques.

We want to see Nova Scotians consuming more products harvested, grown, and produced by our food industry. That's why the Department has partnered with Taste of Nova Scotia to create Get Your Hands on Local, a buy-local retail program that helps consumers know where to easily find Nova Scotia's locally grown and produced food and beverages. This helps support a stronger economy across the Province and helps us to address our food security.

Our government is a strong supporter of innovation in the agriculture sector and we are helping businesses find new market opportunities and increase the visibility of their products in regions like Asia and Europe. Under the *Building Tomorrow Fund*, we have invested in research and development in the Christmas tree sector and innovative packaging for the wild blueberry sector.

The agriculture sector has been impacted by more frequent severe weather events and other impacts of climate change. With funding assistance from the national Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund, the Department of Agriculture has begun implementing a nine-year, \$50 million project that will protect important agricultural lands and other assets from coastal flooding. The project combines comprehensive site evaluations with leading-edge solutions to upgrade 60 kilometres of dykes and five aboiteaux within our dykeland system.

The first Agriculture Minister's Conference attracted hundreds of farmers, representatives from wine, spirits and brewing industries, food processors, wholesale and retail food companies, equipment manufacturers and others to address opportunities in agriculture. We explored how we will grow and sustain Nova Scotia's agriculture sector and support a stronger economy. I look forward to next year's conference and another year of working with everyone.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.
Minister of Agriculture

Financial Results

	2019-2020 Estimate	2019-2020 Actuals	2019-2020 Variance
Program & Service Area	(\$ thousands)		
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	703	699	(4)
Policy and Corporate Services	31,138	38,132	6,994
Agriculture and Food Operations	14,586	13,393	(1,193)
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	46,427	52,224	5,797
Additional Information:			
Revenues	1,710	428	(1,282)
Fees and Other Charges	1,277	1,402	125
Ordinary Recoveries	6,447	5,091	(1,356)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	9,434	6,921	(2,513)
TCA Purchase Requirements	3,425	873	(2,555)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	169.6	163.2	(6.4)
<u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanations:</u> Increase in allowance for bad debts at the Farm Loan Board and Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board, both of which are administered by Crown Lending Agencies under the Department of Agriculture. Crown Lending Agencies have bad debt allowance of 4.7% of their portfolio, although higher than commercial lenders, they are in line with other developmental lenders.			
<u>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</u> Net variance consists of a decrease in the federal portion of Disaster Mitigation and Adaption Fund (DMAF) revenues due to underspending in TCA, as well as decrease in federal contributions for Value Chain Management.			
<u>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</u> The DMAF Dykeland Upgrade project spans from 2019-2020 to 2027-2028. Being the first year of the project, there had been delays in procuring the necessary resources to begin moving forward.			
<u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u> Miscellaneous vacancies across the department.			

Measuring Our Performance

Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Department completed year two of the five-year Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). CAP is an agriculture policy and priorities multilateral framework agreement that supports the agricultural sector in six priority areas: markets and trade; science, research and innovation; risk management; environmental sustainability and climate change; value-added agriculture and agri-food processing; and public trust. It includes a cost-shared budget of \$37 million over five years in federal and provincial funding and aims to increase competitiveness, productivity and profitability, environmental sustainability of agriculture and agri-food sectors and expand domestic and international markets.

In addition to the full program suite, in 2019-20, the Department introduced new cost-shared programming which included the Agriculture Business Advancer Program, the Agriculture On-Farm Student Bursary Program, the Cattle and Sheep Industry Enhancement Program and the Wildlife Damage Mitigation Program. The Department invested a total of \$6.9 million, broken down by priority areas as follows:

- Markets and Trade: \$1.1 million
- Science, Research, and Innovation: \$1.6 million
- Risk Management: \$532 thousand
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change: \$672 thousand
- Value-Added Agriculture and Agri-Food Processing: \$2.7 million
- Public Trust: \$288 thousand

Pan-Atlantic Agricultural Project Partnership Initiative

Pan-Atlantic projects are funded through CAP in partnership with other provinces for regional benefit. These initiatives can be developed and supported in any of CAP's six priority areas. Nova Scotia is the provincial lead on the following three Pan-Atlantic projects, for which \$418 thousand was invested in 2019-20:

- Atlantic Technology Transfer in Apiculture Project (Perennia Food and Agriculture Limited (Perennia) – project lead)
- Improving the Production and Storage of High-Quality Apple Cultivars (Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association - project lead)
- Advancing Poultry Research in Atlantic Canada (Atlantic Poultry Research Institute – project lead)

Four additional projects with more than \$839 thousand in funding commitments through this Pan Atlantic partnership have been implemented that support an Atlantic-wide approach to developing grain, beef, and dairy initiatives.

Business Risk Management

AgriStability and AgriInvest programs

Business Risk Management programs continued to offer mitigation against producer income losses stemming from production losses, severe market volatility and extreme events or disasters. The Department supported industry with access to the federally delivered AgriInvest

and AgriStability programs. These programs are cost-shared between the Province and the federal government on a 60/40 basis. In 2019-20, \$4.39 million of provincial contributions supported farmers through these programs.

AgrilInsurance

Business Risk Management also includes a robust AgrilInsurance program delivered by the Department through the Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission. It continued to support responsible economic growth in the agricultural industry through its cost-shared crop and livestock insurance plans and a wildlife compensation program. The 2019-20 fiscal year included majority indemnity payments to the tree fruit, blueberry, corn, vegetables, and soybean insured commodities, respectively, in the amount of \$6.32 million for a program total of \$7.65 million.

Building Tomorrow Fund

This fund commits a provincial investment of \$9 million over three years to be split equally between agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture projects. In 2019-20, investments were made for three new projects, including two agricultural projects:

- \$930 thousand was invested over three years in the wild blueberry sector for research and development of fresh blueberry markets and innovative packaging.
- \$1.1 million was invested for a unique Cost of Production project that will use automation, when feasible, to monitor various elements and contributing factors to successful business operations.

Craft Cideries, Distilleries and Breweries

The Department continued to engage with Nova Scotian craft cideries, distilleries, breweries, and intergovernmental stakeholders to identify opportunities for sustainable growth. In response to COVID-19, the Department assisted in promoting and supporting distillers in diverting their product line to produce hand sanitizer products.

Grape and Wine Industry

Nova Scotia continues to build on its long tradition of growing grapes for wine. Varieties such as the white L'Acadie Blanc are known for their flavor contribution to Nova Scotia's signature Tidal Bay appellation wine. In 2019, Tidal Bay held a 15% share of all Nova Scotia wine sales and generated the largest growth in sales of all Nova Scotia wines.

In 2019-20, Nova Scotia wine sales grew by 8% to \$12.5 million through Nova Scotia Liquor Commission retail outlets. This reflects an annual growth of 7% over last year through this sales channel. The Department's second annual Minister's Grape and Wine Networking Conference was held in May 2019 and hosted 159 participants. The Conference was for growers, wineries, researchers and other stakeholders to engage on industry opportunities and challenges.

In 2019-20, the Department invested \$1.74 million in Nova Scotia's grape and wine industry through the *Vineyard and Wineries Investment Program* which was the final year of this four-year, \$12 million program to support improved efficiency and expansion of vineyards and wineries, innovation through targeted research projects, development of export market opportunities and quality enhancement. In 2019, industry applied to purchase and plant 208

acres of new vineyard and the Department continued dialogue with the industry on establishing wine quality standards for Nova Scotia.

The Minister's Wine Development Board continued its work in the areas of market development, research and development, and wine quality standards development. A highlight of their work included a wine tour on August 6, 2019 which was jointly planned by industry, the Department of Finance and the Department of Agriculture. The Nova Scotia Liquor Commission Board of Directors toured several wineries in the Valley region where Nova Scotia produced wines were showcased. Another highlight included the first Nova Scotia Wine Festival on October 5, 2019 at the Wolfville Farmers' Market. Planning for a second annual wine festival began in 2019-20, with more events and wider participation expected.

In 2019-20, the Department also supported several key international initiatives promoting Nova Scotia wine and wild blueberry wine. The Department chaired the Wild Blueberry Wine Market Committee which assisted in delivering the following initiatives, many in partnership with Taste of Nova Scotia:

- SIAL China Food & Beverage Show - May 2019
- Wild Blueberry Wine Incoming Buyers Mission - August 2019
- Food Hotel China – November 2019
- Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Expo – November 2019
- Featured wine at the Canadian Food and Beverage Reception – November 2019

Wild Blueberry Industry

In 2019-20, based on industry recovery and success, the Minister's Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Advisory Board completed their objectives. This Board was designed to provide a regular forum for government and industry to identify development opportunities and guide growth initiatives. Wild blueberries were Nova Scotia's largest agricultural export at \$140 million, representing an increase of 34% from 2018.

In 2019-20, following the success of the Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Solutions Project in partnership with the Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Producers Association, the Department shared best practices and supported the Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Producers Association in launching a Wild Blueberry Innovation Challenge. The Department also continued to make connections on behalf of Nova Scotia companies regarding the introduction of their wild blueberry products into the Nova Scotia school system. However, the March 2020 closure of schools due to the impact of COVID-19, delayed the launch of these products in schools.

In 2019-20, wild blueberry initiatives were supported by a series of market development activities internationally, including:

- Organized/hosted a Nova Scotia wild blueberry booth in the Canadian Pavilion at SIAL Expo in Shanghai (May 2019) and Food Hotel China (November 2019). Several Nova Scotia agri-food and beverage companies participated in each of the trade shows, showcasing their value-added wild blueberry products in addition to other offerings.
- Worked with Nova Scotia companies to establish new distribution channels while supporting in-store promotions at key retail supermarkets and on e-commerce platforms.

- Participated in business-to-business meetings to introduce and support Nova Scotia companies make key buyer connections in the marketplace.
- In August 2019, supported the development and execution of an inbound mission of prospective wild blueberry importers from China and organized a small trade show where Nova Scotia wild blueberry value-added companies networked and showcased their products to buyers.

Apple Industry

The value of Nova Scotia's apple industry was \$17.3 million in 2019 with fresh apple international exports totalling \$10.8 million. The *Apple Industry Growth & Efficiency Program* was a partnership between the Department and Nova Scotia apple growers that encourages innovation through orchard renewal. In 2019-20, the program completed its final year of the six-year, \$2.6 million agreement with an investment of \$375 thousand. This program assisted apple growers with the initial capital investment to plant their orchards with new, higher value varieties, such as Honeycrisp, Ambrosia and Gala, to help the industry expand and be more profitable. A total of 158,621 trees of higher value varieties were planted in 2019 with 744,729 trees of higher value were planted over the life of the program.

Dykeland Renewal and Marshland Conservation

The Department's application through the federal Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund was approved in principal in April 2019. During 2019-20, implementation of the nine-year, \$50 million cost-shared *Dykeland System Upgrades Project* between the Province of Nova Scotia and Infrastructure Canada entailed comprehensive site evaluations through technical data collection and strategic planning for fifteen potential sites. Site-specific projects are expected to begin shortly.

Agricultural Climate Change Lens

The Department's Agricultural Champions for Environmental Sustainability team initiated the implementation of the Agriculture Climate Readiness workplan to help the Department effectively address risk and opportunities associated with climate change. In 2019-20, five project teams were established to address the five workplan outcomes. One highlight was the creation of a program to support two agriculture commodity associations in developing their own climate change adaptation strategies utilizing a collaborative value chain approach.

Client Relationship Management System and Compatible Grants Management System

In 2019-20, the Department continued to build and improve its Client Relationship Management System and Compatible Grants Management System. These systems helped streamline the delivery of programs and interactions with our clients by improving the client experience with faster turnaround times and enhancing performance reporting of programs.

Farm Loan Board Loan Management System

The Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board continued to work on the implementation of a new loan management system to improve client services and meet government requirements to protect its multi-million dollar portfolio.

Labour Issues

The Department continued to champion labour issues in 2019-20 by working with other provincial departments, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the federal government to address persistent workforce challenges facing our provincial agriculture industry.

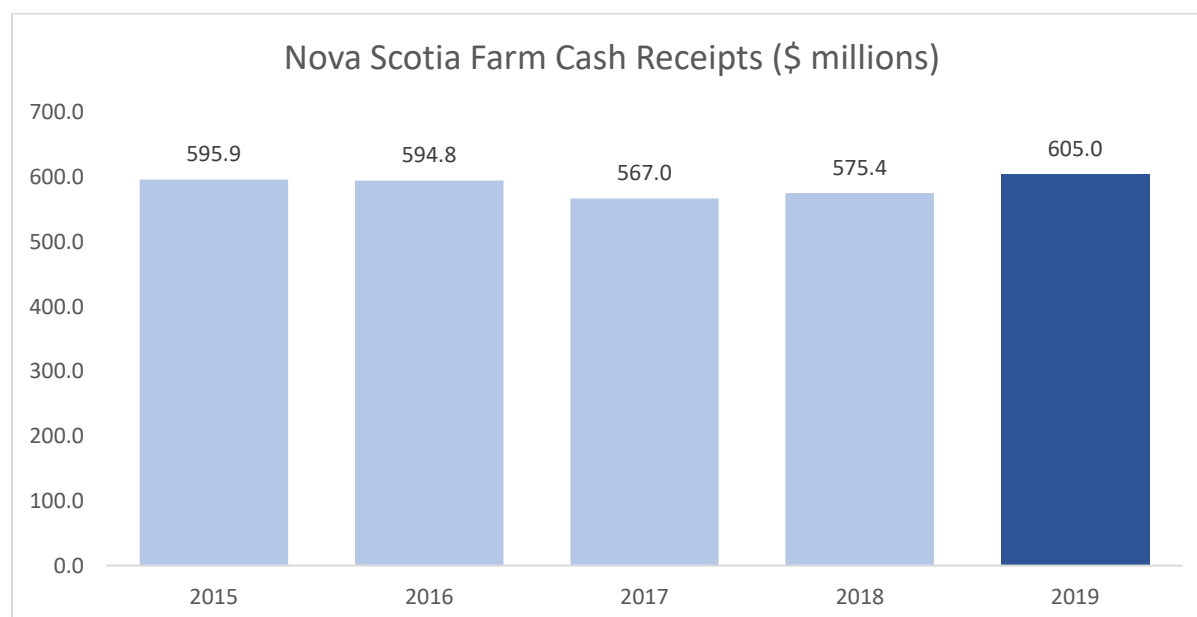
Under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Department launched the Agriculture On-Farm Student Bursary program to support efforts to address immediate labour shortages, with a longer-term goal of influencing future recruitment of young workers into the agriculture industry. In 2019-20, ninety-nine students participated in the program receiving a total of \$75,500 in bursaries.

In 2019-20, labour was one of the four key pillars supporting the overarching theme of 'Quality' at the first Agriculture Minister's Conference held in March 2020. This two-day event brought together over 720 participants from industry, government, academic partners and businesses serving the agriculture sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated labour challenges in March 2020 with the delay in arrivals of Temporary Foreign Workers and the threat to food security. The Department began collaborative work with Perennia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to assist producers in meeting requirements of the Federal *Quarantine Act* and Provincial Public Health Order to successfully bring Temporary Foreign Workers into the Province for the 2020 growing season.

Nova Scotia Farm Cash Receipts

This metric shows the combined cash receipts for all farming operations in Nova Scotia, excluding various government payments.



Values can vary based on several factors, including the growing and economic conditions of a given year and the value of the Canadian dollar. Farm cash receipts increased just under \$30 million, or 5.2 per cent, in 2019 to \$605 million, nearly matching the record high 2013 receipts of \$605.8 million. The increase in farm cash receipts can be largely attributed to cannabis receipts.

Dairy continues to be the top revenue-generating sector at \$149 million. Total receipts for the supply managed industries combined account for half of all farm cash receipts. Other major contributors to farm cash receipts include field vegetables excluding potatoes (\$33.1 million), cattle (\$24.1 million), floriculture and nursery products and sod (\$23.5 million), and fresh blueberries, wild and cultivated (\$21.6 million). Apple farm cash receipts were \$17.3 million in 2019.

Key core functions

Central Departmental functions advanced in 2019-20 that supported its mandate, strategic themes and overall government priorities include the following:

Perennia Partnership

The Department provided an operating budget of \$2.5 million in 2019-20 to Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. (Perennia) to support its mandate to help farmers, fishers and food processors be more competitive and profitable by offering services in the field, in quality and food safety and in product development and commercialization.

In 2019-20, Perennia continued to deliver the province's Agricultural Production Extension Program, which it has been doing since 2001. This program supports the sustainability and growth of farms in the Province through advice, education, and information from Perennia's specialized agricultural professionals. Perennia also undertook thousands of contacts in-person and virtually with Nova Scotia farmers and agri-businesses, creating fact sheets and production guides, podcasts and by also holding field sessions, workshops, and webinars.

The Department's partnership with Perennia also supported an accelerator program in agriculture that focused on increasing market access through food safety certifications and diversification through product development.

In this final year of Vineyard Expansion funding, Perennia completed a three-year Terroir Project that assessed the special characteristics and production practices that Nova Scotia vineyards can use to enhance and implement grapes grown in the province to make Nova Scotia wines even more distinct in international markets. Perennia also completed the final phase in developing a Nova Scotia Wine Quality Standard for consideration by government and industry.

Trade Development

In 2019-20, the Department worked with industry, other Provincial Departments and Agencies, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and other Canadian provinces to promote market access and trade diversification of Canadian agri-food and beverage products. We supported several initiatives through the International Market Engagement Team to assist Nova Scotia companies during retail and e-commerce promotions in China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Europe. In April 2019,

the Premier of Nova Scotia launched the Canada – European Engagement Strategy, aimed at fostering stronger connections and promoting our top-quality products, including agri-food and beverages.

The Department continued to actively work to ensure international trade issues and market access opportunities were pursued in alignment with industry priorities. In addition to the wine and wild blueberry market access opportunities, the Corporate Gift Research Project sought to aid Nova Scotia food and beverage companies to enter the highly competitive Chinese marketplace. Completed in 2019-20, this research project is the first step in understanding the corporate gift market in China with the goal to assist Nova Scotia companies to tap into the corporate gift channel to increase their export sales opportunities.

Implementation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Partnership has created opportunities in the Asia Pacific Region, specifically in Japan and Vietnam, through tariff reduction for Nova Scotia agri-food and beverage products.

Nova Scotia's international agriculture and agri-food exports increased slightly in 2019 to \$367 million. Agri-food products were Nova Scotia's fourth largest export category, accounting for 5% of international exports in 2019. Wild blueberry exports continued to be Nova Scotia's largest valued agriculture and agri-food export, totalling \$140 million in 2019, an increase of 34% over 2018. Fresh apple exports totalled \$10.8 million in 2019. Nova Scotia exported agriculture and agri-food products to 78 countries in 2019, with almost half of Nova Scotia's agriculture and agri-food exports destined to the United States (46%). Other significant destinations were Germany (10%), Netherlands (9%), and China (5%).



Buy Local Market Development

In an effort to increase purchasing of locally produced food, the Department worked to increase the identification and availability of products where Nova Scotians shop. We focused on building strong partnerships with major and independent retailers, creating a suite of in-store signage and point-of-sale material, producing strong provincial advertising outreach, and engaging webpage and social media content.

In 2019-20, the Department partnered with Taste of Nova Scotia to create the retail program, *Get Your Hands on Local*, marketed under the Taste of Nova Scotia brand. By focusing marketing initiatives and dissolving *Select Nova Scotia*, we reduced brand confusion, helped leverage existing resources, and eliminated duplication of buy local efforts. Using the Taste of Nova Scotia brand to highlight local food at retail created more exposure for Nova Scotia producers, while allowing the Province to leverage their well-established standards for local product.

Get Your Hands on Local was launched in retail stores across the province in February 2020, including Sobeys, Loblaws, Walmart, Masstown Market, and many farm and farmers markets. Merchandisers were hired to place Point-of-Sales material on local products in these stores. A robust media presence corresponded with the launch activity and included billboard, transit, print, radio, television, and digital advertising.

Sector Development and Innovation

The Sector Development and Innovation unit continued to provide business advisory services to support industry development and competitive transition. Staff facilitated access to federal and provincial resources for clients across the agri-food value chain. The focus of these activities is to mitigate business risk, build industry capacity, support business growth and create new sector opportunities that capitalize on emerging trends.

In 2019-20, the Knowledge and Technology Transfer Working Group was established with membership from the Department, Perennia, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus to create a community of practice and improve coordination of research and extension activities.

Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board

The Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board, a Crown Lending Agency, continued to provide support to agriculture in Nova Scotia through financing and credit counselling. The Board invested over \$30 million into growing the rural economy throughout the Province through flexible, long-term lending programs. As at March 31, 2020, the Board had a total investment of \$176 million and is proud to continue to support all agriculture commodities, agri-food and agritourism. Supported by updated regulations, the Board was able to improve service times for loans between \$2 to \$5 million. Projects large and small were supported in 2019-20, with the Board investing over \$211,000 into its microloan program, supporting new farmers, innovative ideas and minor farm upgrades.

The Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board supported industry through the onset of COVID-19 by providing flexibility to individual clients who were financially impacted by the pandemic. In March 2020, the Board supported clients through payment deferral options such as interest-only payments and full principal and interest deferrals.

Leadership and 4-H

The Department supports long-term community sustainability by building leadership capacity that empowers skilled, engaged, and responsible youth, adult volunteers and organizations through partnerships with groups like 4-H Nova Scotia. In 2019-20, the Department engaged in the following:

- 4-H Nova Scotia MOU to assist in the transition plan to deliver the 4-H program in the province. In addition, staff worked with 4-H members, leaders, and councils to provide development opportunities for members and adult volunteers associated with the program.
- provided regular updates to local Federations of Agriculture on industry issues being worked on by government.

Agriculture Awareness and Building Public Trust

The Department provided a range of information and outreach events focused on youth awareness of agriculture and agricultural careers. The Department also supported industry-led initiatives related to encouraging public trust. In 2019-20:

- 138 schools across the province were reached with hands-on, inquiry-based resources such as Chick Hatch, All Kinds of Apples, Planting a Promise, Mystery Seeds and Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month.
- Activities for junior high students such as AgZone, GenAg and career fairs exposed youth to a range of agricultural careers.
- Agricultural education and public trust work were enhanced through the Department's memberships in national organizations including Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada and the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity.
- Funding was provided to the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture for public trust work. In 2019-20, they conducted industry-wide consultations to develop a new strategic plan, held many Meet Your Farmer events and updated online resources for consumers.

Natural Products Marketing Council

The Natural Products Marketing Council regulates the production and marketing of pork, beef and potatoes and oversees all supply-managed commodities in Nova Scotia, including dairy, eggs, hatching eggs, chicken, and turkey. The Council completed 16 regulatory amendments in 2019-20, with many more nearing completion. This included a large overhaul and consolidation of dairy regulations. The Council also completed a lengthy licensing renewal project in 2019, updating all existing licences for processors and distributors of dairy products and all producer licences for non-cow's milk. The Council also hosted a workshop on good governance which was well-attended by each provincial commodity board. As the need arose, the Council engaged with many commodity boards throughout the past year by inviting the various commodities to present industry updates to the Council with the goal of strengthening the legislative framework to support these commodity groups. The Council also assisted several boards in developing an emergency response to extraordinary circumstances, as necessitated by the impacts of COVID-19.

Regional Services

The Department provides regional services to agriculture clients and rural organizations that are focused on industry competitiveness delivered through a coordinated approach across the province. Key objectives include outstanding client service, partnerships, leadership development, public trust, cooperation and collaboration with the goal of growing the industry, strengthening communities and creating a sustainable and profitable agricultural industry. In 2019-20:

- The Department provided extension services to primary producers and agribusinesses through the six Regional Offices across the Province.
- Department staff assisted clients in accessing information from industry stakeholders such as Perennia and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, and hosted field days with industry specialists providing opportunities for transfer of knowledge to primary producers.
- Department staff worked closely with several industry groups to assist them with developing strategies for growth and development of commodities within the Province, such as sheep and maple.
- The Department worked closely with commodity groups to assist them with emergency management planning related to COVID-19 impacts.

Laboratory Services

The Department's laboratory services provide ISO accredited laboratory testing to support public and animal health and inform industry on production management decisions. Fifty-one clients responded to a client satisfaction survey which Laboratory Services conducted in February 2019. Respondents indicated a high satisfaction of the services provided and support for ISO17025 accreditation. Opportunities identified include lab promotion and client outreach with a focus to have clients better understand the services, accreditation and turn around times.

Animal and Crop Services

The Department's Animal and Crop Services continued to support and offer services related to the safety and security of food production through the delivery of traceability and biosecurity programs and initiatives related to agriculture pests and by supporting the sustainability of the honeybee and blueberry industries. In 2019-20:

- 690 beekeeper registrations and 1,052 premise identification numbers were issued.
- 822 domestic colonies and the 4,556 queens imported into Nova Scotia were inspected to support pollination, industry growth, sales, and disease surveillance.
- 97 beekeepers attended our Annual Beekeeper Symposium which also included seventeen guests and nine Departmental staff.
- The Bee Biosecurity Program provided \$32.5 thousand to 20 applicants.

Veterinary Services

The Department offers veterinary services in animal diagnostics and disease surveillance and administers the Livestock Health Services and Herd Health Services programs to support healthy livestock management in the province.

Veterinary services provided diagnostic services to agricultural clients, veterinarians and members of the public. In 2019-20, the Pathology Lab completed 477 post-mortems on several

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different species. Laboratory outreach continued with pathologists involved in training and providing presentations to stakeholders. The Animal Health Laboratory also participated in a national disease surveillance initiative focused on sharing of disease incidences and other information directly relevant to our region.

Livestock Health Services Program spent \$1 million in 2019-20 to support veterinarians providing Herd Health and Livestock Health Services to registered farms.

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act*

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purpose of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Agriculture:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2019-20
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A