



# Business Plan

2021–22

*Agriculture*

**NOVA SCOTIA**

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Departmental Business Plans  
Finance and Treasury Board  
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## Minister's Message

Agriculture is foundational to Nova Scotia's economy. Farmers are feeding our communities, and our government wants to ensure they continue to thrive by growing the industry and making it more competitive, innovative, and profitable.

It's important that we consume more products that are harvested, grown, and produced by our local food industry. Our buy local marketing campaign will make it easier for consumers to find local products and encourage Nova Scotians to buy Nova Scotia grown and produced agri-food, seafood, and beverages. As our government moves forward, we will continue to work together to keep Nova Scotians well-nourished with local foods.

Nova Scotia's dykeland systems protects agricultural land, public infrastructure, cultural assets, and commercial and residential properties throughout the Province. We must ensure the dykeland system can withstand the effects of climate change, which directly affects our daily lives and livelihoods. It is important to the economic, environmental, and social fabric of this region. This year, we will undertake priority upgrades under the federal Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund, focusing on upgrades to 60 kilometres of dykes and five aboiteaux structures along the Bay of Fundy.

We are fortunate to have a unique climate and talented winemakers producing world-class products in Nova Scotia. To build on our success and promote our unique and quality wines; we are establishing a Nova Scotia Wine Authority to administer a Nova Scotia Quality Standard.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) is in its fourth of the five-year agriculture policy and priorities framework. Under CAP, the Department provides financial assistance to improve the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of the agriculture and agri-food sectors.

We proudly support organizations that build up our youth and prepare them for becoming the province's future leaders. We will continue to support the Nova Scotia 4-H Council in creating a sustainable organization that helps connect young people with the agricultural sector and community leaders.

The Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board will implement a marketing plan to ensure that it is the lender of choice among its clientele. With renewed regulations for the Timber Loan Board, the Board will explore opportunities to support the forestry sector during a time of transition. The Board will move toward a renewed Community Pasture Program and vision to ensure that the pastures remain sustainable and accessible into the future.

I look forward to working with industry to see continued growth and economic opportunities for Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,

Original signed by  
Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.

## Mandate

The Department of Agriculture's mandate is the development of competitive, sustainable, and profitable agriculture and agri-business industries that contribute to the economic, environmental and social prosperity of Nova Scotia's rural and urban communities, and all of Nova Scotia.

The Minister is mandated to act on climate change, improve competitiveness, strengthen food security, foster social equity, while advancing the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to support sustainable growth in the agricultural sector and continuing the development of policies and programs that encourage local food consumption, trade, and further growth in the local wine, distilling and craft beer sectors.

The priorities and core functions of the Department of Agriculture are driven by five strategic themes:

- Enabling responsible economic growth
- Supporting research and innovation
- Building public trust and market acceptance
- Increasing trade and market access
- Encouraging quality initiatives and value-added opportunities

## Department Priorities

The Department will undertake the following priority initiatives in 2021-22:

- Support our agriculture industry through strategic buy local communications and marketing, increasing the identification and availability of product through industry partnerships and focusing our efforts on supporting our suppliers through a marketing campaign. The Department will deliver a robust multifaceted promotional campaign to encourage Nova Scotians to buy local. This promotion will include consumer education and outreach, retail and food service promotions, an influencer campaign, content development, advertising and a suite of marketing initiatives to sell more Nova Scotia grown and produced agri-food, seafood and beverages to Nova Scotians.
- Implement the *Clean Agriculture Technology Fund* to reduce emissions and improve competitiveness and lead and coordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Climate Change Adaptation Work Plan previously developed with Nova Scotia Environment's Climate Change Unit. A cross-departmental team will build upon existing activities within the Department to capitalize on potential opportunities of a changing climate, while minimizing the

challenges and economic impacts to the agriculture industry and infrastructure. Working with industry stakeholders, sector specific climate adaptation strategies for the horticulture, cattle (beef and dairy), and Christmas tree industries will be developed.

- Build on the success of the Vineyard and Wineries Investment Program to promote the unique quality wines of our regions through a three-prong Nova Scotia Wine Quality Strategy that focuses on the establishment of a NS Wine Authority to administer a NS Quality Standard, increase production of quality, high-value grapes, and supporting industry through the export process as the next step of sector development. The Department will also continue to work with industry stakeholders to increase tourism and employment opportunities in rural Nova Scotia and to advance direct-to-consumer agreements to enable Nova Scotia wine producers to remove unnecessary interprovincial trade barriers and sell their world-class products across Canada.
- Implement year four of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), the five-year agriculture policy and priorities framework. This multilateral agreement includes all provinces and territories and supports the agricultural sector in six priority areas: markets and trade; science, research and innovation; environmental sustainability and climate change; risk management; value-added agriculture and agri-food processing; and public trust. Under CAP, the Department participates in several pan-Atlantic collaborations, providing financial assistance for projects of regional benefit to improve the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of the agriculture and agri-food sectors. Participate in the federal-provincial-territorial process to strategically review business risk management programs available to farmers focusing on improvements to the AgriStability program.
- Undertake priority upgrades of the Provincial dykeland system under the federal Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund. Over this nine-year program, the Department will focus on strategic engineering upgrades to 60 kilometers of dykes and five aboiteaux structures in the Bay of Fundy dykeland system. These regions are vulnerable to increasing coastal hazards such as storm surge, coastal flooding and erosion brought on by climate change and an associated rise in sea level. In 2021-2022 the Department will start construction in the Round Marsh and Isgonish Aboiteau in Colchester County, the Nappan Dam Aboiteau in Cumberland County, and the Allain River Marsh in Annapolis County.
- Continue supporting the Nova Scotia 4-H Council, as full owners of their programs, to build capacity and an evidence-based planning framework to create a sustainable organization that has strong partnerships, a competent and diverse staff, engaged communities and a diverse revenue base.

- Develop and implement a formal marketing plan for the Farm Loan Board in 2021-22 to ensure that it is a lender of choice among its target clientele. With renewed regulations for the Timber Loan Board, the Board will explore opportunities to support the forestry sector during a time of transition. The Board has also undertaken a review of the Community Pasture Program and will move toward a renewed vision to ensure that the pastures remain sustainable and accessible into the future.

## Core Functions

Highlights of the Department's core functions and programs supporting its mandate, strategic themes and government priorities include:

- Implementing business risk management programs to mitigate producer income losses stemming from production losses, severe market volatility, and extreme events or disasters. This includes a robust Crop and Livestock Insurance Program, delivered by the Department through the Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission. The Department also supports industry with access to the federally delivered programs, AgriInvest, AgriStability, and AgriRecovery.
- Through an operation agreement working with Perennia 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.
- Focusing efforts on innovative, value-added strategies that will increase the value and competitiveness of Nova Scotia's agri-food sector. Working with Perennia, universities and other partners within the agri-food ecosystem, the Department will participate in industry-led research discussions and the development of initiatives that respond to the market demand for new and innovative products.
- Working collaboratively with all stakeholders involved in knowledge and technology transfer to increase the impact of research investments on farm and agri-business performance. Through special projects in Christmas trees, wild blueberries, pork, beef, wine, craft beverages and other sectors, the Department will build on the strengths of new and established industries while building industry capacity to access new resources.
- Continued work on the Client Relationship Management System and Grants Management System. The Department will focus on continuous improvement to

data collection and analysis to improve the performance reporting of programs and system enhancements to implement new functionality as a client portal.

- Developing an operational and maintenance dykeland system program to target the protection of highly productive agricultural lands. This work also provides additional protection for valued heritage sites, Mi'kmaq and Acadian cultural sites, businesses, and homes that lie behind the 240 kilometers of agricultural dykes. The Department will develop and implement a Nova Scotia Provincial Dykeland System Atlas on a geographic information system platform that will allow efficient collection and management of datasets used for informed decision-making development of a robust baseline of dykeland system information.
- Championing labour issues in partnership with other provincial departments and the federal government to address persistent workforce challenges facing the agriculture industry. The Department will promote and support innovation and automation initiatives that reduce labour costs for producers and processors.
- As a follow-up to the inaugural Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture's Minister's Conference in 2020, the Department will host a virtual web-series in partnership with Perennia in 2021. The five-part digital series will provide stakeholders with key insights into the connection between labour innovations and automation, consumer and retail trends, climate change adaptation opportunities and business resilience in the wake of COVID 19 and will lead to the renewal of a live Minister's Conference in 2022.
- Supporting long-term community sustainability through building leadership capacity that empowers skilled, engaged, and responsible volunteers, youth, and adults. This work is done through partnerships with rural organizations and working to create an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment for underrepresented groups in the agriculture industry through designated staff positions and targeted outreach.
- Working with stakeholders such as high-schools, Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus, and Agriculture in the Classroom Canada to provide an array of information and outreach events focused on youth awareness of agriculture and agricultural careers like GenAg and Careers in Agriculture and Food.
- Supporting industry-led initiatives relating to building public trust and confidence in the agriculture sector to meet the growing consumer demands for transparency in food production.



- Through a coordinated approach of six regional offices, delivering services to agriculture clients and rural organizations that are focused on making our rural communities and agricultural producers more sustainable and profitable across the Province. The regional offices work directly with producers, rural organizations, agri-food businesses, and educational facilities to provide information and assistance on government programs and regulations, coordinate educational events and assist in forming strategic partnerships to strengthen their industries.
- Continuing to provide ISO accredited laboratory testing to support public and animal health and to inform industry on production management decisions. The laboratory will work with clients to improve client services and ensure that those services meet industry needs.
- Offering veterinary services in animal diagnostics and disease surveillance and administering the Livestock Health Services and Herd Health Services programs to support healthy livestock management in the Province.
- Working with industry and federal-provincial-territorial partners to ensure livestock emergency preparedness plans are in place for foreign animal diseases such as African Swine Fever, market interruptions, and other emergencies threatening the health and welfare of animals.
- Supporting the safety and security of food production through the delivery of traceability and biosecurity programs, dairy extension and compliance programming, the sustainability of the blueberry and honeybee industries and other initiatives related to agriculture pests and pest management issues.
- Assisting the Province in addressing and responding to existing and emerging opportunities related to environmental management and climate change. Supporting environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation for the agriculture sector.
- Championing industry interests in domestic and international market development and trade issues and support efforts to ensure Nova Scotia businesses are prepared to take advantage of increasing market access opportunities due to reduced tariffs through free trade agreements. The Department will work with industry stakeholders to increase consumer awareness and engage consumers through e-commerce and retail channels to reflect purchasing behaviours.
- Through the Natural Products Marketing Council (Council), regulating the production and marketing of pork, cattle and potatoes and manage the effective

functioning of the supply managed sector in Nova Scotia which includes dairy, eggs, hatching eggs, chicken and turkey. This sector represents approximately 50% of Nova Scotia's farm gate value. Significant regulatory changes will occur throughout the year, strengthening the legislative framework to support the commodity groups under the Council's jurisdiction.

- Continuing to focus on the processing sector and renewed commitment to developmental lending through the Farm Loan Board by designating a portion of the portfolio toward programs for on-farm innovation and value-added opportunities.

## Departmental Expenses Summary

<b>(\$ thousands)</b>			
<b><u>Programs and Services</u></b>	<b><u>2020-2021 Estimate</u></b>	<b><u>2020-2021 Forecast</u></b>	<b><u>2021-2022 Estimate</u></b>
Senior Management	726	702	726
Policy & Corporate Services	26,913	32,248	25,649
Agriculture & Food Operations	14,436	13,739	14,238
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>42,075</b>	<b>46,689</b>	<b>40,613</b>
<b>Ordinary Recoveries</b>	<b>6,403</b>	<b>6,742</b>	<b>5,122</b>
<b><u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u></b>			
<b>Department Funded Staff</b>	<b>169.6</b>	<b>151.8</b>	<b>169.9</b>

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