



Business Plan

2023-24

Agriculture

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Department of Agriculture

2023-24 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

The Department of Agriculture helps develop 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. Clean, sustainable growth in the agriculture industry will help ensure all Nova Scotians have access to healthy local food. The Department will undertake the following priority actions in 2023–24.

Support Local Food

Government departments, industry, and community partners are working together to begin implementation of a multi-year Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy to raise awareness of, improve access to, and increase the production of healthy local food.

The Department will support the growth of key agricultural sectors in the province so that more local food reaches consumers. The Department invest in a variety of programming to support equipment and technology to help Nova Scotia producers, processors and agri-businesses grow and make more healthy local food by expanding operations, reducing labour needs, extending growing seasons, and adapting to climate change.

Improve Institutional Procurement

Opportunities to increase healthy local food in institutional facilities such as hospitals, schools, and nursing homes are being identified. The Department, including a dedicated institutional procurement specialist, will help develop and strengthen relations with producers, food hubs and distributors to build their capacity to supply local food to institutions.

Monitor Progress

A reliable method to measure provincial spending on local food is being established. This data will help track annual progress toward our goal that 20 per cent of money spent on food by Nova Scotians is spent on locally produced food by 2030. Measuring spending on local food in institutional environments will help identify opportunities to further expand local food options.

Meat and Farm Animal Welfare

The Department is re-integrating meat, fur, and farm animal welfare inspection which was transferred back from the Department of Environment and Climate Change in January 2023. This aligns the compliance and enforcement responsibilities with the Department's legislative oversight – the people who enforce the laws around meat, fur, and farm animal safety will once again be in the department responsible for those laws.

Establish the Nova Scotia Quality Wine Standards Program

Implementation of the Nova Scotia Quality Wine Strategy will continue to help our winemakers grow and prosper. The Department will be consulting industry on the establishment of the Nova Scotia Quality Wine Standards Certification program to ensure that our locally produced wine is a premium

product that is 100 per cent Nova Scotian. The program will align with international standards, help Nova Scotia wines be further recognized in new markets, and increase consumer confidence.

Launch Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership Funding

The next agricultural policy framework, the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, is a five-year (2023–28) investment by federal, provincial, and territorial governments to strengthen and grow Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. The new agreement will support the Minister's mandate to encourage local food consumption through a new series of funding programs and more effective Business Risk Management tools for producers. The Department will launch and deliver the first year of funding in 2023-24 to provide support in the following areas:

- Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness
- Climate Change and Environment
- Science, Research, and Innovation
- Market Development and Trade
- Resiliency and Public Trust

Increase Environmental Sustainability and Prepare for Climate Change

The Department will continue to support the agriculture sector with mitigation and adaptation. The new Resilient Agricultural Landscapes program under the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership will support carbon sequestration and other environmental co-benefits in the agriculture industry. The Department will also continue to support actions identified in the Nova Scotia Climate Change Plan to:

- Allow farmers to adopt clean technologies that support more sustainable farming by extending the Clean Technology for Agriculture program;
- Help producers further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by expanding our partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia; and
- Improve industry capacity to adapt to climate change by implementing sector-specific climate adaptation strategies.

Protect Agricultural Land from Climate Change Impacts

The Department will continue with year five of the nine-year, almost \$50 million dykeland system Upgrade Project, which is 50 per cent funded under the Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund. Improvements to the provincial dykeland system will strengthen the resilience of dykes and reduce disaster risks. The 16 sites being upgraded are in different stages of investigation, design, and construction; Capital upgrades are planned to continue at Round Marsh and begin at Allain River marsh, Isgonish aboiteau, and Nappan Dam aboiteau.

Tidal wetland restoration and managed realignment projects will continue to be piloted on marshland sites in Nova Scotia in collaboration with academic and private sector partners under the Federal Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund. Tidal wetland restoration and managed realignment are both nature-based solutions that can protect infrastructure from sea level rise and storm surge, increase biodiversity, improve water quality, and sequester carbon to help mitigate climate change.

Departmental Expenses Summary

(\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2022-23 Estimate</u>	<u>2022-23 Forecast</u>	<u>2023-24 Estimate</u>
Senior Management	637	637	647
Policy and Corporate Services	3,854	3,909	4,544
Agriculture Risk Management and Lending	13,488	56,787	13,233
Agriculture Operations	9,963	10,512	12,674
Industry Development	12,557	12,138	14,252
Total - Departmental Expenses	40,499	83,983	45,350
Ordinary Recoveries	5,640	5,373	6,455
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	165.1	154.0	184.9

Note:

For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2

For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1

