

Accountability Report 2022–23

Agriculture



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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ended March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Agriculture outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department of Agriculture management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the 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 2022-2023 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

Honourable Greg Morrow
Minister of Agriculture

Original signed by:

Loretta Robichaud
Deputy Minister

Financial Results

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
	2022-2023 Estimate	2022-2023 Actuals	2022-2023 Variance
<u>Program & Service Area</u>			
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	637	611	(25)
Policy and Corporate Services	3,854	3,892	38
Agriculture Risk Management and Lending	13,488	56,083	42,595
Agriculture and Food Operations	9,963	11,851	1,888
Industry Development	12,557	11,412	(1,145)
Total - Departmental Expenses	40,499	83,849	43,351
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	3,530	1,101	(2,429)
Fees and Other Charges	1,522	1,166	(356)
Ordinary Recoveries	5,640	5,257	(383)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	10,692	7,524	(3,168)
TCA Purchase Requirements	12,280	7,416	(4,864)
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	165.1	154.0	(11.1)
<u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanations:</u>			
Department of Agriculture's expenses were \$43.4 million due to \$18.9 million for hurricane Fiona relief, \$15.0 million for the wine and fruit industry support related to impacts from the polar vortex, \$5.0 million for the Seasonal Extension Program, \$4.3 million for the Food Advancement Program, \$0.9 million for Institutional Procurement Pilots, and \$0.5 million related to meat inspector transfer from Department of Environment and Climate Change. These were partially offset by decreases of \$0.5 million in amortization expenses and \$0.6 million in net operating.			
<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 a decrease in federal contributions related to the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (which was consistent with the decrease in the Canadian Agricultural Partnership expenditures in the final program year, due to increased expenditures in previous years).			
<u>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</u>			
The DMAF Dykeland Upgrade project spans from 2019-2020 to 2027-2028. In the fourth year of the project was underspent as engineering and planning work continues to be completed.			
<u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u>			
Miscellaneous vacancies across the department.			

Measuring our Performance

With the increasing frequency of impacts from climate change events and natural disasters, ensuring that we have a secure food supply is critical. To have a secure food supply, we need a strong agriculture sector. Educating Nova Scotians about the importance of buying locally grown and produced products is very important to this success. Through the development of a Food and Beverage Strategy, the Department of Agriculture (Department) is aiming to make healthy, local food more available to all Nova Scotians, in our schools, long-term care homes, hospitals and homes. The Department also continues to forge partnerships to encourage and promote agricultural careers to underrepresented and underserved communities, and school-aged children to ensure a vibrant sector for the future.

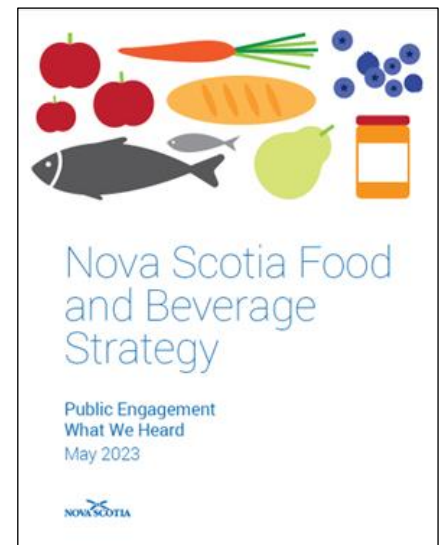
Priority Outcomes That Help Develop Our Agriculture Industries

The Department of Agriculture has undertaken the following priority initiatives in 2022-2023:

Support Local Food

Food and Beverage Strategy

To support Nova Scotians in accessing and choosing locally produced food, the Department is leading the development of the first ever Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy. This strategy will create awareness, improve access, and increase local production of healthy, local food as a key action to meet the [Minister of Agriculture's Mandate](#). The Department, in conjunction with a cross-departmental working group, reviewed over 90 food related initiatives and worked with industry and community partners. A public consultation held in 2022, resulted in over 1900 responses. Feedback from this consultation is captured in the [Food and Beverage Strategy Public Engagement: What We Heard Report](#). The working group is now incorporating feedback to draft the strategy.



One of the pilot programs the Department of Agriculture launched was a fresh, local food pilot in schools in collaboration with the Department of Education. This initiative will bring fresh food carts to Nova Scotia schools. Not only does this support farmers but provides students with greater access to locally grown produce, helps them understand where food comes from, and fuels their learning.

Institutional Procurement

Through the establishment of an Institutional Procurement Working Group, the Department is also leading efforts to increase local food consumption by developing policies and infrastructure that support getting more local, healthy food into our public institutions, including our schools, long-term care homes, correctional facilities, and food hubs. Over the past year, the Department has established several pilot projects across Nova Scotia (NS) totaling \$1 million dollars. These pilot programs will not only support Nova Scotians but change and strengthen the buying patterns and culture within institutions to support NS farmers and producers.

Buy Local

Working with the Department of Economic Development, the Department's Buy Local team is working towards launching an integrated marketing and retail program highlighting Nova Scotia agri-foods and beverages under the Nova Scotia Loyal brand. The Buy Local program continues to support more than 20 associations and local food focused events through a variety of marketing initiatives with partners including the Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia, Wine Growers of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Cider Association, Craft Brewers of Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association.

A consultant has been engaged to develop methodology to measure how much local food is currently being consumed by Nova Scotians. The Department will use this baseline to measure progress on local consumption to compare to the [Minister's mandate](#) to increase local consumption by 20% by 2030.

Enhance Sustainability

The Department continued its partnership with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC) on the Climate Adaptation Leadership Program. Through this program the Department is implementing its Climate Change Adaptation Workplan to address five-outcome areas: climate data access/sharing, programs, staff awareness, service interruptions, and industry preparedness. These initiatives include:

- ▶ An ongoing partnership with CLIMAtlantic, provides access to data and information to support climate change adaptation in Atlantic Canada.
- ▶ A climate lens tool has been applied to our federal-provincial funding programs.
- ▶ An educational module, *Agriculture & Climate Change Adaptation*, was developed to improve awareness of climate change by departmental staff.
- ▶ A risk register has been implemented to identify current climate threats to minimize departmental service interruptions.

Three commodities took part in the Climate Adaptation Leadership Program:

Horticulture, Cattle and Sheep, and Christmas Trees.

These sectors have developed their own Climate Adaptation Strategies, to help them prepare for the impacts of climate change. The Department is working with these sectors and NSECC to support implementation of the strategies.



The Department also funded Climate Change initiatives to assist the agricultural sector including:

- ▶ The Soil and Water Sustainability Program for best management practices that are beneficial for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- ▶ The Nova Scotia Agriculture Clean Technology Program, administered by Dalhousie University, aimed to strengthen provincial food security by increasing year-round food production through the adoption of clean technologies that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, promote sustainable and clean growth and increase value-added agricultural production. After two years of funding, 46 projects have been completed, and additional projects are in development.
- ▶ The Agriculture Energy Partnership with [EfficiencyOne](#) supported an Onsite Energy Manager position for Agriculture. This assisted producers in identifying and achieving energy savings and supporting energy related applications to the Nova Scotia Clean Technology for

Agriculture program. A second Onsite Energy Manager position has been created through the Nova Scotia Climate Plan fund to focus on Exhibitions and non-profit agriculture associations.

2022-2023 Agriculture Energy Partnership resulted in:



63 energy saving projects completed



1,293 tonnes/year of CO₂ reduced



\$276,000/year in energy savings



\$320,000 in incentives provided directly to farmers

Encourage Innovative and Growth



**NOVA SCOTIA
FOOD+BEVERAGE**

 **SMALL PLACE. BIG TASTE.**

Export Brand Development

Following consultations with producers and agri-businesses across the province, the Department, in collaboration with Invest Nova Scotia, developed a new [Nova Scotia Food + Beverage brand](#) and has launched an [online directory](#) to promote food and beverage products to national and international buyers.

The new export brand was launched at the 2023 Nova Scotia Horticulture Congress and used internationally for the first time at FoodEx Japan 2023, the largest annual food trade show in Asia. The brand will play an important role in helping differentiate and promote Nova Scotia's food and beverage products outside of the province.

Through the Department's continued efforts to share targeted resources, initiatives, and information, our aim is to support the agriculture industry in pursuing new market development opportunities. In 2022-2023, the Department supported provincial agricultural industries participation in trade shows and promotional events in Canada, the United States, Europe and Asia.

Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board

Additionally, through the [Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board](#) (Farm Loan Board), the Department continues to support farmers and processors in the agriculture industry to further establish themselves in the province, scale-up their business, or increase their exports through direct lending opportunities. In 2022-2023, the Farm Loan Board built upon recent successes and attained record levels of achievement by advancing \$59 million in new loans to farmers and processors, bringing the Farm Loan Board's total portfolio to \$237 million. The Farm Loan Board also saw a record year for new approvals, with over \$87 million provided for new lending.

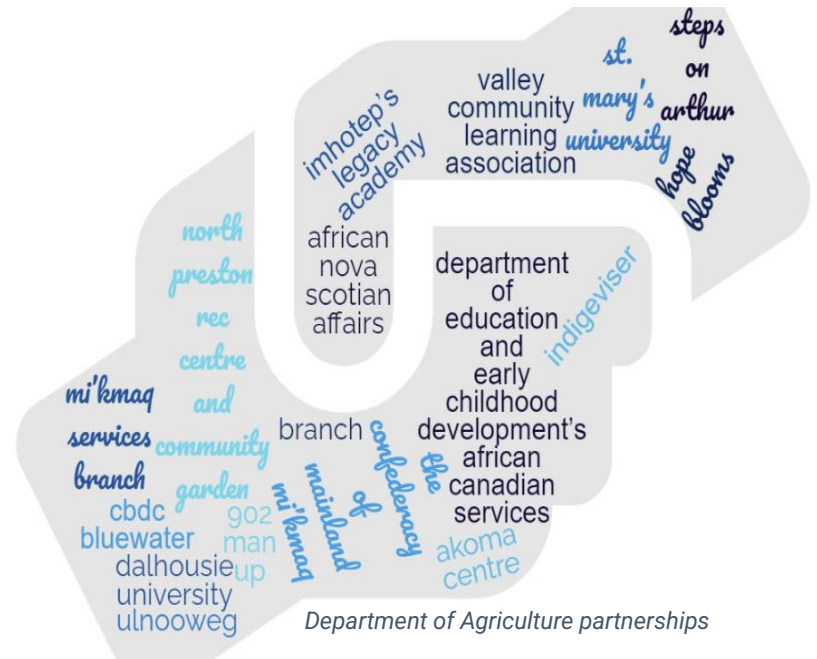


Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

The Department continues to work to forge partnerships across government, industry, and community organizations to identify and address barriers to participation from underrepresented and underserved communities in the agricultural industry. Through these collaborations the Department

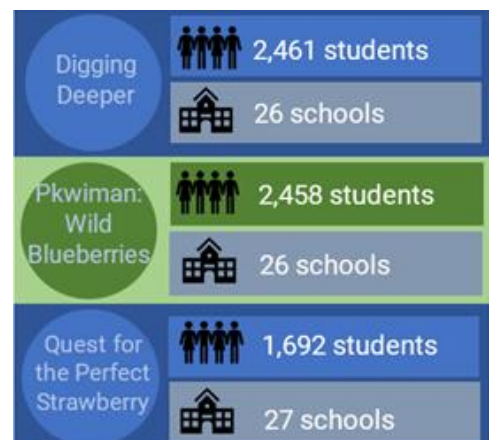
has worked with multiple organizations to provide and support learning initiatives and access to financing, including:

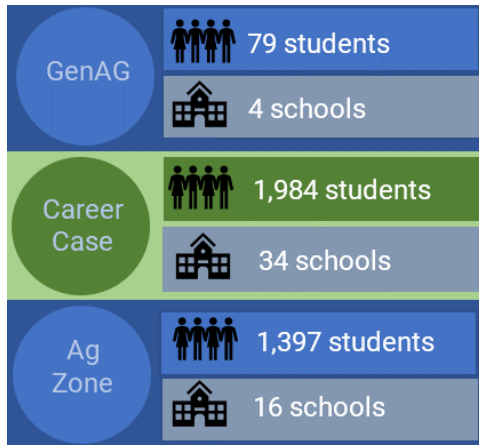
- ▶ Continued the success of the Bridge into Agriculture program, a horticultural training program for African Nova Scotian adults, through a partnership with African Nova Scotian Affairs, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.
- ▶ Hosted the Grow Where You're Planted event for African Nova Scotian high school students held in partnership with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's African Canadian Services Branch and the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus.
- ▶ Awarded a Grow Where You're Planted scholarship awarded to an African Nova Scotian student pursuing their first year of an agricultural degree.
- ▶ Distributed Hope Blooms home garden and art kits were delivered to 50 African Nova Scotian youth in the summer of 2022.
- ▶ Supported the Imhotep's Legacy Academy was supported to develop and deliver an agriculture-themed after-school program for African Nova Scotian junior high and high school students.
- ▶ Supported the Black Youth Development and Mentorship Program supported seven summer employment opportunities to youth of African Descent across three departments. The program supports youth who will be attending university or college after high school. Successful applicants benefited from paid work placements, hands on work experience in government, industry insight, mentorship, training, skill development and exploring career interests.



Expand Education in Healthy Eating, Environmental Stewardship and Agriculture Careers

The Department continued to provide in-classroom resources that explore **environmental sustainability in the agriculture industry**, including the Digging Deeper soil conservation module and Pkwiman: Wild Blueberries in Mi'kma'ki and a Wabanaki module on environmental stewardship. The Quest for the Perfect Strawberry helped students learn about plant reproduction, while a new resource called Working with the Sea: Nova Scotia Dykelands and Climate Change was developed for Grade 12 students.

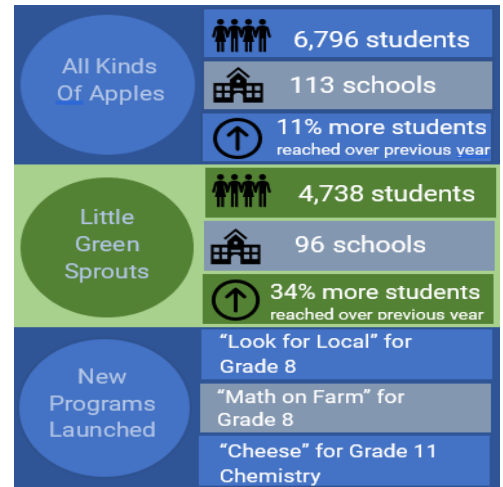




The Department continues to look for ways to encourage and increase awareness of **careers in agriculture** through programs and partnerships. Career Case, provided by [Agriculture in the Classroom](#), is replacing [GenAg](#), as an interactive presentation style program to highlight agricultural careers. AgZone continues to provide students with information about agricultural research, technology, and careers with in-person sessions held at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, and virtual sessions offered to expand its reach to rural classrooms.

The Department also promoted teaching youth the **linkages between healthy eating and local agriculture** through classroom programs such as All Kinds of Apples and Little Green Sprouts and explored opportunities for new programming.

March was Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month, with the theme “Our Food, Our Story”. This initiative connected 4,452 students in 122 schools with farmer volunteers and a Mystery Seeds planting activity.



In total, the Agriculture in the Classroom Program reached **307** of the Province’s 378 public schools and provided **46,906 student experiences**.

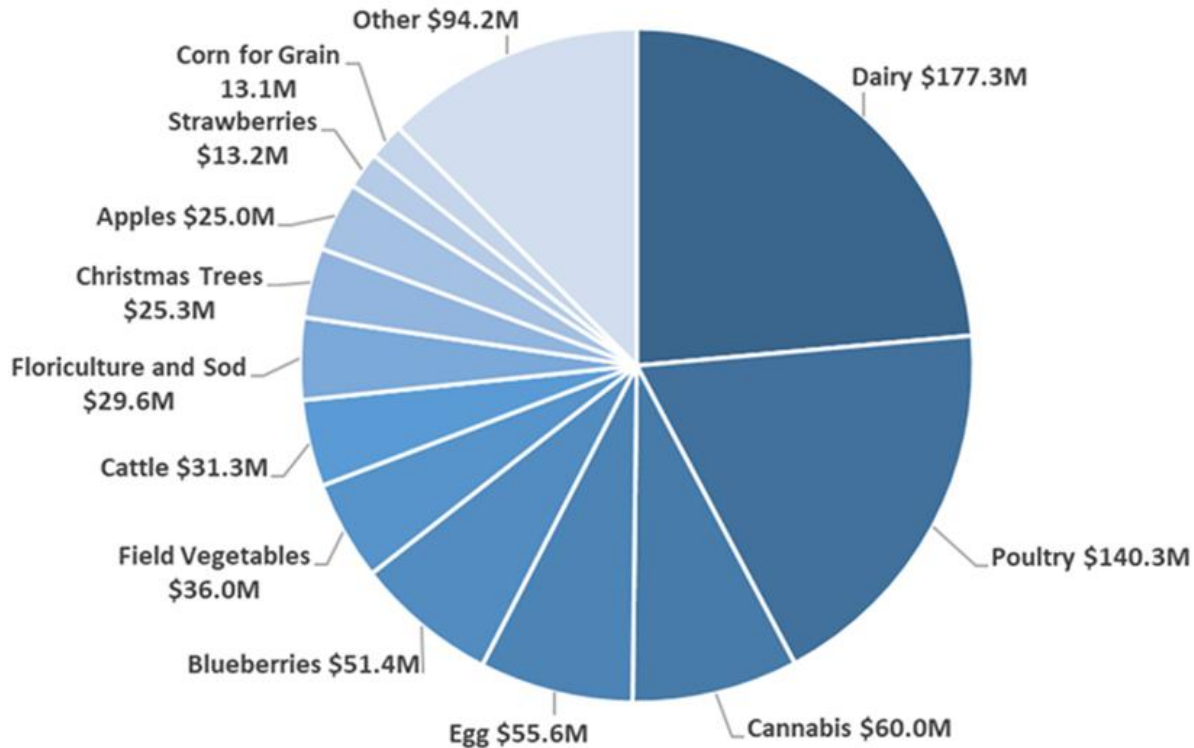


Honourable Greg Morrow, Minister of Agriculture for Agriculture Literacy month

Agriculture Industry Performance

This chart shows the combined cash receipts for all farming operations in Nova Scotia, excluding 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 by 12% in 2022 to \$752 million. Dairy continues to be the top revenue-generating sector at \$177 million, and total receipts for the supply-managed industries account for approximately half of all farm cash receipts. Other contributors to farm cash receipts (in millions) include:

2022 Farm Cash Receipts (\$Millions)



Key Core Functions That Support Our Sectors

In 2022-2023, central functions that supported the Department's mandate, strategic themes and overall government priorities included:

Hurricane Fiona Support

On September 23 and 24, 2022 Hurricane Fiona landed in our province, impacting crops, buildings and other significant infrastructure. Fiona was the costliest weather event to ever hit Atlantic Canada. The Province and Department worked to support Nova Scotia farmers through extension services and emergency response funding. Various provincial relief programs were put in place to help the agriculture sector recover and rebuild, including:

- ▶ Immediately providing a one-time grant through the Farm Emergency Response Grant Program of \$2,500, sent automatically to all registered farms in central, northern and eastern Nova

Scotia who experienced financial losses due to the hurricane, such as infrastructure or crop damage, livestock loss or extended power outages.

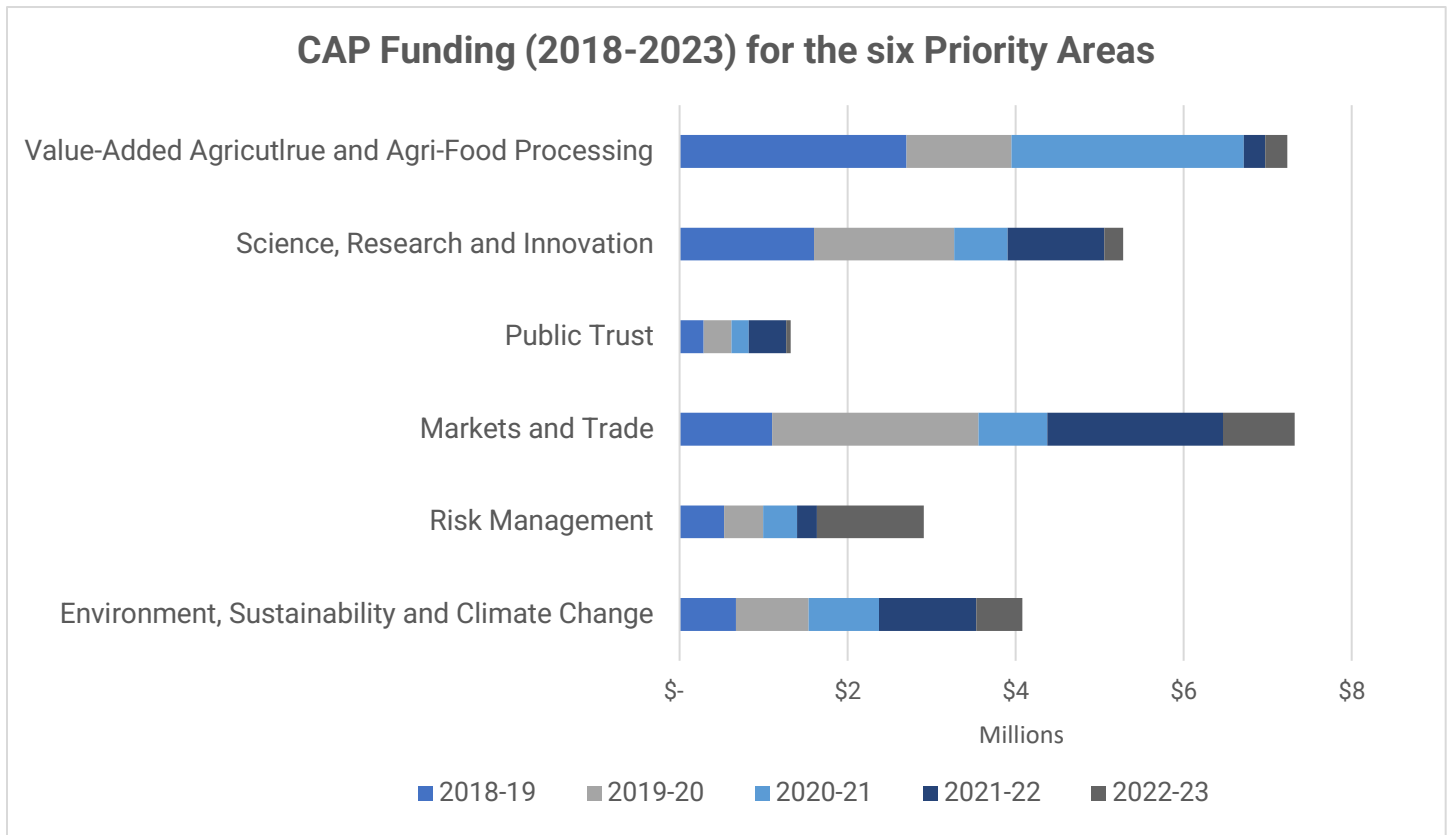
- ▶ Provincial insurance and loan programs also offered farmers relief. The Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission waived interest on overdue accounts, and the Farm Loan Board offered clients deferrals on payments and provided working capital loans with lower interest.
- ▶ To further support producers impacted by Hurricane Fiona, the Department and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) offered late participation in the AgriStability program to farmers who did not enroll in 2022. This allowed the industry to take advantage of this important income support. As well, the deadline to submit claims without penalty was extended.
- ▶ The Department implemented the Nova Scotia Fiona Agricultural Disaster Assistance (FADA) program to support farmers recovering from the hurricane. The emergency funding program provided financial assistance to farm businesses to provide additional support for damage and costs not covered by insurance or through other available programming.
 - To further support the agriculture industry in the aftermath of the hurricane, the Department developed a one window financial response. The FADA one window approach also provided assistance for DFAA and any new federal or provincial assistance programs that were released.
 - On behalf of the Government of Canada, the Department administered the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) program for the agricultural sector. This program provides financial support to provincial and territorial governments in the event of a large-scale natural disaster.
 - A \$3-million Fiona Agriculture Response Gap Funding program assisted farmers with a gross farm income of \$10,000 or more who were not eligible for the federal DFAA program. Farmers could receive up to \$400,000 in assistance.
 - A \$3-million Fiona Greenhouse Replacement Program helped registered farm owners build or buy new greenhouses, grow tunnels and other related infrastructure damaged during Hurricane Fiona.
 - An On-Farm Electrical Interruption Program, provided \$1.266 million in federal and provincial funding available through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). It helped offset costs to farm owners who installed a backup electrical generator immediately before hurricane Fiona or during the extended power outages that it caused. The program covered up to 100% of the cost of purchasing and installing a generator for on-farm use.



Hurricane Fiona damage to barn.

Federal-Provincial Funding Partnership

The Department completed year five of the five-year CAP in March 2023. CAP is an agriculture policy and priorities multilateral framework agreement supporting the agricultural sector. It was a cost-shared program between the federal and provincial governments with a budget of \$37 million. This federal and provincial funding aimed to increase the competitiveness, productivity, profitability, and environmental sustainability of agriculture and agri-food sectors, as well as expand domestic and international markets. Over the five-year span of the CAP program (2018-2023) the Department invested in six designated priority areas:



In February 2023, the Department completed negotiations on the new multilateral framework agreement with AAFC and the other provinces and territories to strengthen and grow Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) is a five-year federal, provincial, territorial agreement that details priority areas as well as funding and reporting requirements. The Sustainable CAP replaces the CAP agreement. In Nova Scotia, \$9.25 million will be invested per year, for five-years, for a total program cost of \$46.25 million. This funding will be cost-shared on a 60:40 federal/provincial funding ratio.

In 2022, consultation sessions were held throughout Nova Scotia with producers, processors, and service providers, and written submissions were received from sector organizations. This wide range of input is informing new program development under the new Sustainable CAP framework to help increase sector capacity and competitiveness, as well as address labour challenges, and provide funding for new equipment and technology that will help the industry grow and sell more locally produced products. Additional program funding information is available [here](#).

Business Risk Management

Sustainable CAP also includes federal and provincial funding to continue the four agricultural business risk management programs. The AgriStability, AgriInsurance, AgriInvest and AgriRecovery programs will help producers manage against producer income losses stemming from production losses, severe market volatility and extreme events or disasters that threaten the viability of their farms.

AgriStability	AgriInvest	AgriInsurance	AgriRecovery
• Provides support when producers experience a large margin decline	• Provides cash flow to help producers manage income declines	• Offers cost-shared insurance against natural hazards to reduce the financial impact of production or asset losses	• A disaster relief framework to help producers recover from natural disaster events

In partnership with AAFC, the Department continued to pilot the AgriStability Advisor position to support industry with education and access to all Business Risk Management programs.

The federally delivered AgriInvest and AgriStability programs are cost-shared with the provinces. In 2022-2023, the province contributed \$808,505 in AgriStability and \$999,447 in AgriInvest to support farmers. Under Sustainable CAP, AgriStability's compensation rate was raised from 70% to 80% to further support the agricultural industry.

Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission

The AgriInsurance program is delivered on behalf of the Department through the Nova Scotia [Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission](#) (NSCLIC). This program supports income stability in the agriculture sector through cost-shared crop and livestock insurance plans and a wildlife compensation program. In 2022-2023, the Province provided an additional 10% reduction in the producer's share of premiums for crop insurance (a total of \$145,644) to help offset increased costs.

Hurricane damage is an insured event for those enrolled in the program. Causing significant damage in the northern and eastern zones of the province, Hurricane Fiona resulted in numerous claims. However, many crops like lowbush blueberries and tree fruits were either already harvested or not located in the heavily impacted areas. NSCLIC collected a total of \$3.8 million in premiums and paid out \$2.7 million in claims in 2022-2023. Under the Wildlife Compensation program, 63 claims were made for a total of \$103,376. The majority of these claims were for bears in corn (~\$21,000) or birds in grapes (~\$31,000).

Community Pastures

The Farm Loan Board continues to guide and manage the community pastures into the future, through the implementation of recommendations from a consultant's review and the Community Pasture Action Committee (CPAC). CPAC consists of a subcommittee chaired by the Farm Loan Board. Support teams have also been put in place within the Department to assist both the CPAC and

the community pastures. During 2022-2023, the Loan Board also undertook several initiatives to continue revitalizing the Community Pasture Program:

- ▶ Invested over \$400,000 in fertility and pasture infrastructure through the Community Pasture Support Program.
- ▶ Continued to work on the CPAC recommendations.
- ▶ Planned for the return of Cape Mabou Community Pasture to community operation.
- ▶ Expansion of Cape John Community Pasture through purchase a 308-acre parcel of adjacent farmland.
- ▶ Renewed operations for the Manchester Community Pasture.

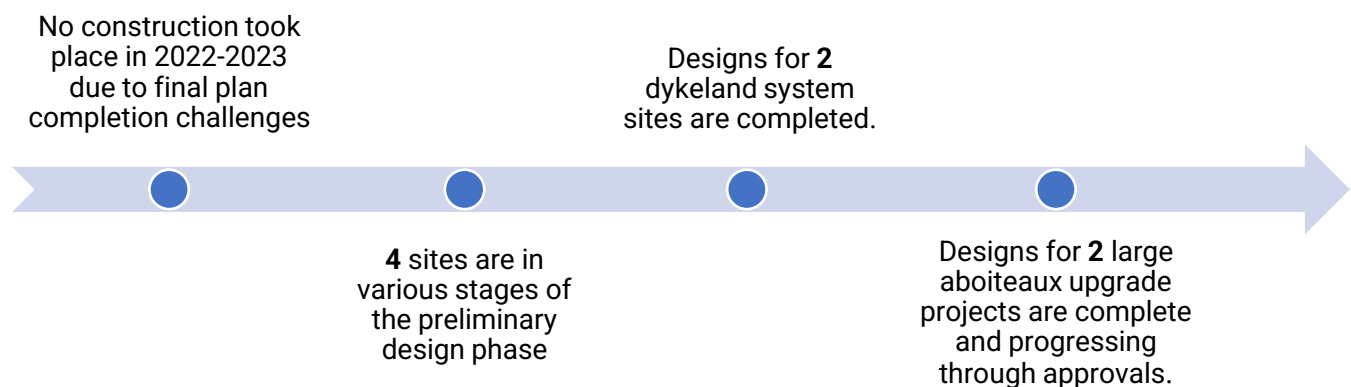
Agricultural Dykeland Improvement

In 2022-2023, the Department continued with year five of the nine-year, almost \$50 million Dykeland System Upgrade Project, which is 50% funded under the Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund.

The dykeland upgrades will improve more than 25% of Nova Scotia's 241 kilometres of dykeland along the Bay of Fundy. These sites provide flood protection to tens of thousands of residents and businesses, historical and world heritage sites, Mi'kmaq communities and more than 20,000 hectares of farmland.

The Department continues to work closely with Public Works on capital projects, L'Nu Affairs regarding consultation, and Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage regarding archaeology permitting.

Of the 16 sites currently identified in the Dykeland Systems Upgrade Project, progress for 2021-2022 included:



For more information on the agricultural Dykeland improvements, visit the project website "[Working with the Tides](#)". This website was created to meet accessibility requirements.

Nova Scotia Quality Wine Strategy

The Department completed the second year of a five-year Nova Scotia Quality Wine Strategy to support the Nova Scotia wine and grape sectors. In 2022, the [Nova Scotia Wine Authority Act](#) was

passed, establishing a regulatory body to administer a quality wine standards program for 100% Nova Scotia wine.

A three-year export strategy was developed to provide a route to marketing through messaging and identifying target markets (international and interprovincial). Initiatives that have occurred include:

- ▶ The Department continued to support the Wine Growers of Nova Scotia through funding to hire a Wine Navigator to coordinate export activities.
- ▶ The Department partnered with a consultant to conduct direct to consumer sales and interprovincial trade research, including the potential feasibility of an Atlantic trade bubble.
- ▶ Assisted wine producers participating in New Brunswick's World Wine and Food Expo.
- ▶ A delegation of Nova Scotia farm wineries participated on an outgoing export mission to London and provided a Wines of Nova Scotia Masterclass.
- ▶ Participated in Taste Canada Denmark, an event organized by Global Affairs Canada in conjunction with the Canadian Embassy in Denmark.

Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness

The Department continues to support the livestock industry in emergency preparedness for responding to animal-health issues. The Department provided funding and assistance to the Poultry Emergency Response Committee for the development of a new Emergency Response Plan, which it transitioned to in 2023. This is in conjunction with the Avian Influenza preparedness planning, which is ongoing, but encompasses the response to poultry emergency events.

Preparedness planning for the Emergency Response Plan for Pork NS is occurring through Animal Health Canada's African Swine Fever- Executive Management Board. Provincial and industry emergency response plans are being prepared in case of an African Swine Fever outbreak. This ensures safeguards are in place and producers are prepared before an animal health emergency occurs.

Perennia Partnership

In 2022, the Province announced changes to streamline, modernize and improve accountability of several organizations, including [Perennia Food and Agriculture Incorporation](#) (Perennia). Perennia now operates as a Crown Corporation under the Department of Agriculture, continuing to provide services to the agriculture, seafood, and food and beverage industries. This move will strengthen Perennia's alignment with the government's mandate, and enhanced reporting requirements for improved effectiveness and accountability to Nova Scotians through the [Perennia Food and Agriculture Corporation Act](#).

Overall, the Department provided an operating budget of \$2.5 million in 2022-2023 and additional program-based funding to Perennia. These funds support Perennia in helping Nova Scotia farmers develop the understanding and skills essential to solve agricultural-related problems, and to create new opportunities to support sustainability and profitability. The Department worked with Perennia to develop and deliver programs including the Vineyard Replant, Food and Beverage Business Accelerator, Buy local, and Ag Weather Intelligence.

Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act

Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of 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 Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes 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 counselling 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 2022-2023
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	0
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	0