

# Atlantic Agrology Network Newsletter

This newsletter is a joint effort from all four Atlantic Provinces Institute of Agrologists organizations. This quarterly distributed newsletter will keep all Agrologists updated on Council reports, upcoming events and job postings within the Atlantic Region. A trending topic will be highlighted in each edition, with provinces rotating in writing this segment.

## Council Updates



**NBIA:**

[nbia@nbagrologists.nb.ca](mailto:nbia@nbagrologists.nb.ca)

The New Brunswick Institute of Agrologists is an active organization which currently has 182 members registered. Of these, 111 are Professional Agrologists with an additional 39 retired and 12 honorary members. We have 14 Agrologists in Training (AIT) working their way to becoming a P.Ag and 6 inactive members.

Over the past year, Council and various Committees have focused in upgrading the website, reviewing the NB of Agrologist Manual, Act and by-laws, revision of the exam process and organizing professional development sessions.

We are currently processing annual member invoices and sending reminders to members to complete their Professional Development reports.

Nicole Williams, P.Ag.  
President



**NLIA:**

[NLAgrologists@gmail.com](mailto:NLAgrologists@gmail.com)

The Newfoundland and Labrador Institute of Agrologists has 23 Professional Agrologists (including 7 retired members) and 2 Agrologists in Training, with a total of 25 members.

Our first member application which fully meets the guidelines of the National Entrance Standard is being processed. This education review was completed by NSIA.

We are currently processing annual member dues invoices.

Charles Kelsey, P.Ag.  
President



**NSIA:**

[info@nsagrologists.ca](mailto:info@nsagrologists.ca)

The Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists has 235 overall members. This includes 177 Professional Agrologists, 45 Retired Members, 10 Articling Agrologists and 3 Associate Members.

Many outreach activities are being planned for this winter including two Pizza, Policy and a Pint information sessions, Meet the Professional Agrologists at the Dal-AC with current students, as well as a greenhouse focused student tour.

NSIA is also keeping informed about the National Education Standard and has passed the T.Ag. Designation.

Jonathan Wort, P.Ag.  
President

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## Council Updates



The PEI Institute of Agrologists is a small but active organization, and currently has 92 members. Of these, 61 are Professional Agrologists with an additional 8 retired or honorary members (P.Ag.) We have 10 members practicing under the Permit to Practice (PPA) and an additional 13 Agrologists in Training (AIT) working their way to become a P.Ag.

Over the past year or so, Council and Committees have focused their priorities in several areas including: 1) promotion of the Institute within the province, 2) recruitment of new members, and 3) providing network opportunities in the form of interesting presentations and programs for members to participate in.

In terms of promotional activities, the PEIIA recently launched a new website ([www.peiia.ca](http://www.peiia.ca)) in summer 2019, which includes profiles on some of our members. In addition, we have invested in new promotional brochures and banners to display at various meetings and workshops throughout the province.

With respect to recruitment of new members, the PEIIA is re-offering a one-time fee reduction during January and February of 2020 to provide added incentive for new members to join. Moving forward, we'll be focusing on engaging employers of Agrologists in the province to be more aware of the benefits of membership. PEIIA will be sending letters to various agri-businesses who have Professional Agrologists on staff, thanking them for their encouragement and support of P.Ag.'s. In addition, we plan to get involved in some career days at various educational institutions to look for opportunities to engage potential future P.Ag.'s and create some awareness of the Institute and the P.Ag. designation.

The PEIIA Program Committee has been very active over the past number of years and has organized many interesting activities and presentations for our members. These have included presentations at our annual and semi-annual meetings, Lunch and Learn events and tours. In addition to these major member-focused activities, Council has also been participating in Agrologists Canada and Atlantic Agrology initiatives.

Moving forward the PEIIA expects to continue to focus our efforts in these areas, primarily providing opportunities for us to attract new members and ensuring our current members have regular opportunity to participate in learning and networking activities.

Dan MacEachern, P.Ag.  
President

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## Job Postings

### **NLIA:**

Job postings are available at: <https://www.hiring.gov.nl.ca/Jobs.aspx/Public>.



### **NSIA:**

No current job postings are available, however, please keep checking: <http://nsagrologists.ca/job-postings/>

### **PEIIA:**

No current job postings, but please keep checking: <https://peiia.ca/careers/>

## Upcoming Events

### **NBIA:**

- ♦ New Brunswick Potato Conference and Trade Show 2020 February 6, 2020
- ♦ New Brunswick Soil and Crop AGM February 20-21, 2020
- ♦ Grape and Apple Management Session March 18, 2020
- ♦ Atlantic Canada Cranberry Management Conference March 19-20, 2020
- ♦ Maritime Beef Conference March 20-21, 2020
- ♦ Bleuets NB Blueberry Tech Talk and AGM March 27-28, 2020
- ♦ Tentative NBIA AGM April 24, 2020

### **NLIA:**

- ♦ NLIA Annual General Meeting April 29, 2020
- ♦ Agriculture Symposium November 3-5, 2020

The Agriculture Symposium is held every second year to foster innovation and collaboration to facilitate discussion across a continuum of disciplines related to agriculture, contributing to building a sustainable, robust food system that will enhance food security in Newfoundland and Labrador. Partners include the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources, Agriculture Production and Research Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Grenfell Campus of Memorial University, Food First NL and The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture

### **NSIA:**

- ♦ Pizza, Policy and a Pint (Truro) January 30, 2020
- ♦ Dal-AC Student Tour January 31, 2020
- ♦ Pizza, Policy and a Pint (Wolfville) February 18, 2020
- ♦ NSIA Annual General Meeting April 29, 2020

### **PEIIA:**

- ♦ International Potato Technology Expo February 21-22, 2020
- ♦ FCC Young Farmer Summit and Atlantic Young Farmers' Gala February 22, 2020  
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/fcc-young-farmer-summit-ignite-charlottetown-registration-72179463719>
- ♦ Cereals and Oilseeds Workshop March 4, 2020
- ♦ PEI Soil & Crop Conference March 4-5, 2020
- ♦ Northeast Potato Tech Forum March 17-18, 2020

## Trending Topic

The “Trending Topic” is a current, hot topic within the agriculture industry. This will alternate between the provinces each edition.

### **Friendly competition to improve wheat yields in PEI**

With increasing costs of inputs combined with decreasing returns on grains, pulses and oilseeds, farmers everywhere are pressured more than ever to achieve higher yields. The single number that tends to influence management decisions and cultural practices, is the number that farmers use as a benchmark of either success or failure for any given crop in any given growing season. The drive to achieve a higher yield is what contributes to innovative thinking at the farm level. As agrologists, it is important to recognize these innovations as a learning opportunity and to share this knowledge with our stakeholders.

An initiative between the Atlantic Grains Council (AGC), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and ADAS (UK), is working to create a cereal yield competition to drive on-farm innovation. This project will allow farmers to tap into a peer-to-peer knowledge sharing network, and it will allow researchers access to real world data to validate growth models and to look at the influence that environment and cultural practices have on yields in the region.

The “Yield Enhancement Network” (YEN) is an approach currently being employed by ADAS in the UK. Roger Sylvester-Bradley and Ruth Wade (ADAS) have been running the yield competition there and are working with Aaron Mills and Dan MacEachern (AAFC) to evaluate the model in Prince Edward Island. The driving philosophy behind the YEN is to capture the on-farm innovations for higher yields and to use those data as a powerful tech transfer tool.

In the UK, farmers enter their fields in the competition, and they have to submit their management plans for the fields. At the end of the growing season, each participant submits a “grab sample” of 100 plants randomly selected from the field, a grain sample taken from the combine, and their tickets from the grain elevator to validate their yields. The grab samples and the combine samples are used to calculate test weight, thousand kernel weight, as well as some grain chemistry.

At the end of the growing season, a report is generated for each field and an awards ceremony is held where gold, silver and bronze are awarded for the top yields as well as the greatest proportion of the calculated yield potential for each field. Potential yield calculations are based on a plant growth model and take into account the soil available water based on soil textures, precipitation, and the amount of light intercepted through the growing season.

For the PEI-YEN, a slightly different approach has been taken. As the growth models from the UK are based primarily on winter crops and do not account for things like snow, ice and soil pH below 6.0, the pilot project here is a data-heavy endeavour that is designed to capture as much information as possible from each field. As there is a smaller number of fields in the PEI-YEN (40 entries vs. 350), with the help of an able summer student we are able to collect much more field data than would normally be collected in the UK. The greater the resolution in the dataset, the more likely it will be that we can identify what is driving yields in the region.

Funding for the project comes from farmer check-off dollars administered by the AGC and matched by AAFC under the current Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). In the UK, farmers are sponsored by a chemical, seed or agronomy company to enter a field into the YEN competition. The project will run for two more growing seasons, and there is growing interest from New Brunswick in participating in future years. It is unknown how this project will be funded in future years, but it appears that the corporate funding model may be the best approach.



The top winter wheat yield in the UK for 2019 was 16.3 t/ha with a potential yield calculated as 19.2 t/ha (85%). The top yield for spring wheat on PEI was 6.2 t/ha with a potential yield calculated as 9.93 t/ha (63 %). The most interesting part of the project is working out the yield potentials for each field, and growers will be surprised what the yield potentials could be for their respective fields, based on what they have to work with.

Although participation in the competition makes this project interesting for farmers, how those yields are achieved might not be applicable to every field for every farmer. It is one thing to “throw the groceries” at a single field for the sake of competition, but if environmental conditions are not conducive to efficiently moving nutrients into the plant in order to realize the yield potential of the crop, then it is likely that the farmer will lose money on that field. The goal of higher yields at any cost is not realistic and can have major negative economic and environmental impacts.

The real power in this project is the tech transfer potential that it holds as a farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange network. With a little bit of oversight and facilitation from the scientific community, farmers will benefit from sharing data and the industry will be one step closer to improved production efficiencies in the region.

Submitted By

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YEN wheat field 2019