

# Member Communication

## Message from the President

With summer upon us, I'm sure we are all excited to get outside and take advantage of some COVID-19 easing of restrictions in our province, after such a long, and challenging spring.

Generally, our industry is used to meeting in person, this has not been possible for the last few months. We are accustomed to regularly having face-to-face meetings, events, workshops, etc., with this past spring as an exception. The industry seemed to have adapted well (and quickly) to virtual meetings, making completing everyday tasks a bit easier given the circumstances.

While the COVID-19 pandemic may have interrupted the chance to obtain some Professional Development (PD) hours, I encourage those who may be struggling to find sources to check out the [NSIA PD Resources webpage](#). This is updated frequently and I ask for anyone who knows of resources to be added to please contact NSIA Administrators with full details.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions the NSIA Annual Meeting scheduled for April had to be postponed, with the new date being November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Therefore, **the Semi-Annual Meeting will now become the Annual Meeting**, as long as we are able to have an increased number of people by this point. A decision will be made by Council in September about the form of the meeting: in person or virtual. At that point, membership will be updated in the September Member Communication.

The Programs Committee is in the beginning stages of planning virtual options to obtain PD hours and learn within our industry. They are in the process of preparing a couple webinars for late summer/early fall releases. A benefit to these is to allow members to listen to/view the material afterwards, if not able to make schedules work for the original time and/or date. Additionally, while the idea of a fall tour remains in question, the Committee is hopeful to be able to plan a Pizza, Pint and Policy later this year. More information will be released to membership as it is scheduled. I encourage members to attend these events (even if virtually), since I'm sure we are all missing networking opportunities as well as learning what is going on within our industry.

As we progress through summer and we see the various restrictions from COVID-19 evolve I hope that NSIA will be able to return to a more normal activity level. Having said that, I also hope that we will be able to provide more outreach through other communication channels. I believe that we can learn a lot from the last few months, with the primary learning that as individuals and associations we are very adaptable and able to respond to any challenge that we face. I hope that we will continue to utilize the communication tools that we have become more adapted to using and build on this to better serve our clients and membership.

In closing, I want to encourage everyone to take time this summer; enjoy the opportunities that our province provides. As restrictions ease and we can travel a bit more, take the time to look around the province and see how significant and diverse our industry is. Enjoy the exceptional products that our industry produces with such care and pride, support our local producers. There are countless products and experiences around every bend in the road all over the province to seek out. At this time, there has never been more interest in local products or more need for each of us to support these local entrepreneurs.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Wort, P.Ag.  
President, NSIA

## Programs Committee Update

Both Pizza, Pint & Policy's from earlier this year saw great engagement from the participants, with all speakers delivering fantastic presentations. This year's theme was "technologies within agriculture".

The Truro PPP in January had 12 attendees, hearing presentations from Craig MacEachern and Brandon Heung, both from Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture.

Wolfville's PPP, occurring in February, had ten in attendance. Ian Manning, Centre of Geographic Sciences, Brian Newcombe, Cornwallis Farms and Marcel Kolb, Lockett Vineyards delivered different perspectives, as they applied to their operations.

Due to the COVID-19 meeting regulations, a spring tour was unable to occur this year. The Programs Committee is hoping for a fall tour to be able to happen, with a final decision to be made later this summer (based on COVID-19 meeting regulations). The Committee is currently planning for upcoming webinars, to be released later this summer/early fall. These will also be recorded for the option to playback at your convenience. Additional information will be released to membership as it is planned.

# Government of Canada – COVID-19 Financial Programs

Please see the below Federal Programs, which you or your clients may be eligible for.

## **Agriculture Response Program**

This program is designed to help Nova Scotia's agriculture industry mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry's competitiveness, productivity and profitability.

There are four streams for funding under the COVID-19 Response and Mitigation Program:

### *Stream 1: COVID-19 Mitigation and Adaptation for Health Protocol*

Applicants are eligible for 75% funding assistance on total eligible project costs to a maximum of \$50,000 per program year, to help applicants comply with recommended health protocols.

### *Stream 2: COVID-19 Marketing, Product Movement and Distribution*

Agriculture companies and registered Nova Scotia farms as applicants are eligible for 50% funding assistance on total eligible project costs to a maximum of \$20,000 per project.

### *Stream 3: COVID-19 Strategic Projects*

Initiatives at a sector or industry level will be reviewed for funding on an individual basis. If they're deemed to meet the objectives of the Program, they will be assessed on an individual merit, impact and reach basis.

### *Stream 4: COVID-19 Abattoir Efficiency and Development*

Applicants are eligible for 75% funding assistance on total eligible project costs to a maximum of \$50,000 per program year.

Additional information, such as eligibility and the application form, can be found on the [Government of Nova Scotia webpage](#).

## **AgriStability**

AgriStability has extended their enrolment deadline for the 2020 program year from April 30, 2020 to July 3, 2020. Additionally, the interim payment rate has increased from 50% to 75%. More information, including the AgriStability Benefit Estimator, applications forms, and others, can be found [here](#).

## **Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)**

To ensure small businesses have access to required capital to see them through the current challenges, the Government of Canada has launched the new CERB.

This \$25 billion program provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits, to aid in covering operating costs during the economic impacts of the COVID-19 virus. Additional information can be found [here](#).

## **Emergency Processing Fund**

Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. is pleased to be delivering the Emergency Processing Fund: Atlantic Canada for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for the Agriculture Processing Sector.

The Emergency Processing Fund aims to incent strategic investments to maintain and increase domestic food production and processing critical to domestic food security and the domestic food supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Atlantic Canadian agriculture processing companies, please refer to the [online documents](#) for Atlantic Canada Program information.

Please start by reading the Program Applicant Guide and completing the Pre-Screening Checklist to determine eligibility. Perennia can be contacted at [programs@perennia.ca](mailto:programs@perennia.ca) or at 1-877-710-5210 toll-free or 902-678-7722.

## **Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP)**

This AAFC wage subsidy is available to producers and industry associations hiring youth aged 15-30. The YESP will provide agriculture employers up to 50% of the cost of hiring a Canadian youth up to \$14,000. Indigenous applicants and those applicants hiring a youth facing barriers are eligible for funding of up to 80% of their costs. More information can be found [here](#).

## Notes from NSIA Administrators

➤ COVID-19 Update:

We continue to be available for members during regular work hours from Monday to Friday. We will continue to have limited office hours but can be contacted for an appointment if you need to meet in person.

➤ Nominations are being accepted until October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 for the following NSIA Awards:

- Distinguished Agrologist
- Distinguished Life Member
- Honorary Member
- Distinguished Farm
- Outstanding Young Agrologist

Please submit completed nomination forms to [info@nsagrologist.ca](mailto:info@nsagrologist.ca). For further explanation of these awards, as well as nomination forms, please visit the [NSIA website](#).

**Awards are anticipated to be presented to recipients the evening of the NSIA Annual Meeting, scheduled for November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Truro, NS. This date is tentative and may be adjusted if the provincial meeting regulations number has not increased to allow membership to attend. In this instance, the Annual Meeting will be held virtually. Members will be informed of Council's decision of this in September 2020.**

- We are issuing a call for any members who would like to join one of NSIA's committees. We are late announcing this due to COVID-19 resulting in a later Annual Meeting date than usual, which is when the normal call would be issued.
- Since the COVID-19 meeting regulations greatly decreased the permissance of in-person meetings and events, we would like to remind everyone of the potential PD resources, such as webinars and other virtual meetings, which can be found on the [NSIA website](#). If you know of anything which could be added to this list, please email all required information to [info@nsagrologists.ca](mailto:info@nsagrologists.ca).
- A reminder for anyone requiring insurance that members have ENCON coverage available to them through HUB International Insurance Brokers. If you are interested in applying or buying coverage, please visit the [HUB International webpage](#).

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If you have questions or concerns, please contact NSIA directly at:

**902-893-7455**  
[info@nsagrologists.ca](mailto:info@nsagrologists.ca)

**7 Atlantic Central Drive**  
**East Mountain, NS B6L 2Z2**

**\*The next Application Intake deadline is August 31, 2020\***

For more information, please visit NSIA's [Becoming a Member webpage](#).

