

Table of Contents

	Printed Page #'s	Acrobat Reader Page #
Main Newsletter (for all regions)	1-8	2-9
Custom Newsletter Pages (for individual regions)		
West Hants, Kings, Lunenburg and Queens counties	9	10
Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants, and Halifax Regional Municipality	9	12
Cape Breton, Victoria, Inverness and Richmond counties	9	14
Pictou, Antigonish, Inverness and Guysborough counties	9	17
Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne counties	9	18

Agriculture Services

NEWSLETTER



April 2008

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

Volume 9 No. 2



Ag Literacy Day

This spring marked the start of a new educational initiative of the Nova Scotia Agricultural Awareness Committee. Modeled on a highly successful program in the United States, Ag Literacy Day is simply a day when school children are encouraged to celebrate agriculture in our province. Volunteers from agricultural sectors across the province went into schools to read and donate books about farming to school children. The discussions that follow offer opportunities to bridge the gap that exists in the public mind between food and local agriculture.

This divide is hardly surprising, since only about 7500 people work directly in agriculture in Nova Scotia. This represents only about 1.2 per cent of our population. This is one tenth of the representation in Saskatchewan where 12 per cent work on farms, and half the Canadian national average of 2.4 per cent. In Nova Scotia, most families are two to three generations away from the farm.

Does that matter? We think it does. Informed citizens can make healthier

choices about food. Fast food has become such a way of life that one survey in Britain revealed that for people aged 8-14 years, 36 per cent were unable to identify the main ingredient in french fries. We need ways to improve our vision of real food.

As consumers, our personal connection with agriculture can affect our food product selection. Knowledge of local farm communities can help create a population which supports a viable agricultural sector in the province.

As well, a spark of interest in farming might cause a young person to consider agriculture as a career choice. The average age of farmers in Nova Scotia is 54 years. We need new entrants to create a sustainable industry.

In the long run, this project and other agricultural education initiatives in our school system could make a small step toward enhancing the security of agriculture throughout Nova Scotia.

Next year we hope to attract many more readers and create a "buzz" around the event with a media launch and other events.

If you are interested in participating in Ag Literacy Day or any other Ag

Awareness event, please contact:

Judy Grant
Agricultural Awareness Coordinator
Resource Stewardship Division
902-893-6598
grantjd@gov.ns.ca

Calling all Direct Marketers!

We are assembling a listing of all agricultural direct marketers and agri-tourism operators in the province for inclusion in our 2008 edition of *On the Land and Sea: A resource directory of Nova Scotia's agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries destinations and activities*. Categories included in this directory are:

- Farm Accommodations
- Agricultural and Fisheries Education
- Agricultural Exhibitions and Community Fairs
- Agricultural and Fisheries Festivals and Events
- Farm and Agricultural-Based Tours
- Farm Retailers
- Farmers' Markets
- U-Pick Operations
- U-Fish Operations



Back issues of this newsletter are available on-line at
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/rs/fs/arcs/>

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This directory is available on line (www.gov.ns.ca/agri/marketing/contact/landsea/), but it is also printed in the spring. Copies are sent to the participating businesses and to all visitor information centres in the province. Please contact Claire Hanlon Smith, Marketing Services Division, at 902-893-4491 or hanlonca@gov.ns.ca

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The 2008 edition of Food For Thought: A Buyers Guide to Local and Seasonal Nova Scotia Agri-Food Products is now available. This directory is aimed at retail, wholesale, foodservice and specialty food store buyers. Suppliers must request to be included in this publication and should have a good volume of supply for this market.

For more information contact Beth Hingley, Marketing Services Division at 902-893-6386 or hingleba@gov.ns.ca A link to Food For Thought can be found at: www.gov.ns.ca/agri/marketing/contact/agriculture/foodft/index.shtml

Select Nova Scotia 2008



Producers, processors and direct marketers of Nova Scotia food products will want to sign up for the 2008 Select Nova Scotia campaign.

Log onto www.selectnovascotia.ca and click on “industry sign-up” in the top right hand corner.

The Select Nova Scotia web site will provide:

- information for consumers, retail, producers, foodservice and partners;
- opportunities for producers and processors to apply online for participation, collateral materials, graphics, etc.;
- includes recipes, food events, and links to related websites.

Our Select Nova Scotia campaign will:

- increase awareness and knowledge surrounding local produced food;
- help industry with new opportunities;
- promote the benefits of buying Nova Scotia products;
- increase opportunities for agriculture’s growth and development.

The Marketing Services Division has hired a new staff person to head up this exciting endeavour. Please contact Jennifer Reynolds at 902-722-1305 or reynoljm@gov.ns.ca for more information.

Organic Council of Nova Scotia

The newly formed Organic Council of Nova Scotia is looking for members. An industry steering committee was formed in January to work on the structure and start-up of this representative provincial body. The committee has been making great strides and a brochure is available outlining the purpose and structure of this new group. The OCNS was set up, in part, to be the provincial industry body, which will be a member of the Organic Federation of Canada. The OFC is the Canada-wide industry body that provides liaison with the federal government on the new Canadian organic regulation.

The OCNS will provide a leadership role and work in co-operation with all interests of the Nova Scotia organic sector and government to develop the organic sector into a

major component of agriculture in the province.

OCNS will fulfill a unifying role for the province’s organic sector by representing interests of the industry to governments at the federal, provincial and municipal level. OCNS is the only fully representative organic body and includes all interests in the sector - producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, local organic certifiers, organic inspectors, local organizations (NGOs), researchers, educators, consumers and others.

For more information on how to become a member of the Organic Council of Nova Scotia, please contact Angela Patterson at 902-582-1363 or jangela@angelhoeve.ca or Claire Hanlon Smith, Marketing Services Division, NSDA at 902-893-4491 or hanlonca@gov.ns.ca

Advance Payments Program - SCIANS



Once again the Soil & Crop Improvement Association of Nova Scotia (SCIANS) has applied to the federal government to be administrators for the Advance Payments Program (APP) for 2008/09. The purpose of the program is to improve marketing opportunities for agricultural products to eligible producers by extending to the producers an advance as a means to improve cash-

flow. Any one person or any farm business is limited to an advance of \$100,000 interest free. Producers repay the advance to the administrator by December 31, 2008 or participate in the fall portion of the program, where you must have crops in storage. These advances are then due to be paid off by Sept. 30, 2009. The crops that we have asked to be covered under the program this year are wheat, hay, rye, grain corn, oats, barley and soybeans. Producers must have crop insurance on these crops to be eligible to participate in the spring portion of the program. Also, producers must agree to allow

SCIANS to conduct a credit review. This will be done by a third unrelated party. An administration fee of 1.5 per cent of the total advance is charged for producers to participate in the program. If you are interested in finding out more about the program or if you would like to add your name to the list to have an application sent to you once they become available, please contact Carol Versteeg :902-758-3530 or email carol.versteeg@ns.sympatico.ca

Nova Scotia Crop & Livestock Insurance Commission Production Insurance

2008 Application Deadlines:

Corn - April 30
Soybean- April 30
Weather Based Forage Insurance - April 30
Winter Grain - August 31
Forage Establishment - October 15

Reminder: If you are planning to apply for an advance through the Advance Payments Program (APP), please keep the above application deadlines in mind. The APP requires participation in Production Insurance as a security for the advance.

Weather Based Forage Insurance -

This is the second year for this plan which focuses on crop losses related to weather events. It guarantees 80 per cent of the average long term rainfall(mm) at a designated local weather station over a period of time (May 1 - August 31). An Optional Quality Rider is also available for excessive rainfall in the month of June during prime harvest time. Managed pasture and stored forage acreage can be insured.

Poultry - This new plan was introduced in October 2007. It offers protection against ILT in broiler, layer and breeder flocks. All

producers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to ensure that they are protected against this risk.

Forage Establishment - Farmers may want to consider this plan which covers newly seeded legume and legume- grass mixes against drought, winter damage and other perils. Forage is insured from the time of seeding until May 31 the following year.

For more information on this or any of the other insurance plans, contact us at 1-800-565-6371, Truro or 1-902-679-6015/6028, Kentville.

Canada

NOVA SCOTIA

Programs and Business Risk Management Division

AgriStability Program for 2007

The AgriStability FEE Deadline - APRIL 30, 2008

Most producers have already received their enrolment notice for 2007 AgriStability. The deadline to pay the fee amount was December 31, 2007 or 30 days after the enrolment notice was dated. If you have not yet paid the fee you may still participate, however, a late penalty charge of 20 per cent will be added to the fee. Participants have until April 30, 2008 to pay the fee with penalty. If you haven't received an enrolment notice for 2007 AgriStability and believe you should have please contact the federal administration by calling 1-866-367-8506.

AgriInvest KickStart

The federal government is delivering \$600 million through the new AgriInvest Kickstart Program. Producers participating in the program will have automatically received a letter with information on how to access these funds. If you received a letter, it is very important to respond to the letter by tearing off and mailing in the information at the bottom. You have the choice to withdraw the money or leave it in a government fund. If you choose to withdraw the money, respond to the letter and a check will be sent within 30 to 60 days. The deadline to respond to the letter is June 30, 2008.

2007 Harmonized AgriStability and AgriInvest Tax Form and Application

AgriInvest or AgriStability participants are required to file their 2007 Statement of Farming Activities to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) on the T1273 Statement A - Harmonized AgriStability and AgriInvest Programs Information and Statement of Farming Activities for Individuals or the 2007 Corporation / Co-operative and Special Individual Harmonized Form and Guide for corporations. Forms and guides are available from CRA or on the AgriStability and AgriInvest web sites at: www.agr.gc.ca/AgriStability or www.agr.gc.ca/AgriInvest.

To be eligible for AgriStability and/or AgriInvest, the Application/Tax form must be sent to CRA before September 30, 2008. If you miss the September 30 filing deadline, you can still submit the form until December 31, 2008. However, your benefit will be reduced by \$500 for each month (or each part of the month) your form is submitted late.

For more information on any of the above, contact the AgriStability or AgriInvest toll free line at 1-866-367-8506, or contact Steven Tattrie, Programs and Business Risk Management (NSDA) at 902-893-6374 or toll free 1-866-844-4276.

AgriStability 2008

Enrolment notices for 2008 AgriStability will be sent to producers in April. The deadline to respond and pay the fee is April 30, 2008 or 30 days from the date on the enrolment notice.

Producers who participated in the 2007 program will automatically receive an enrolment notice for 2008 and be enrolled.

Producers who did not participate in 2007 AgriStability or are new to farming must request a New Participant package before April 30 so that an enrolment notice can be sent to them. Producers will have 30 days from the date their notice is issued to respond and pay their fee.

For more information, visit the AgriStability website at: www.agr.gc.ca/agristability or call AgriStability toll free at 1-866-367-8506.

Programs Update:

Farm Investment Fund

The Farm Investment Fund (FIF) for the 2008/09 program year opened April 1, 2008. Most producers should have already received the guidelines and application form. We are currently accepting applications. The sooner we receive your application, the earlier your projects will be approved and project work can begin.

New this year, you need to be involved in the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program to be eligible for the funding through the Farm Investment Fund. As in previous years, to access federal BMP funding you need to have

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a completed EFP at the time of application. For all other projects, you need to be signed up to have an EFP completed for your farm.

Anyone wishing to sign up for the EFP program should contact an EFP coordinator at the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture 902-893-2293.

Agri-Food Industry Development Fund

The Agri-Food Industry Development Fund (AFIDF) new program year opened April 1, 2008. The program categories are unchanged from last year. Funding is offered for traditional AFIDF projects, as well as categories for Specified Risk Material (SRM) Preparedness and the Strategic Infrastructure Investment Fund. The deadline for proposals accepted under the Strategic Infrastructure Investment Fund category is **July 2, 2008**.

Additional information on the programs offered can be accessed through our web site: www.gov.ns.ca/agri/prm/ .
Questions? Contact: Programs and Business Risk Management office at 902-893-6510 or toll free 1-866-844-4276.

NSAC Update

Graduate Student Profile: Brent Jackson - Greening a Retired Mine Site

Imagine doing research that could help companies make a smaller ecological footprint. For Brent Jackson, a graduate student at Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC), that is a reality. As his graduate studies project, Brent is looking at ways to re-establish the natural vegetation on a retired section of a mine site.

Brent's graduate research program is funded by the Graduate Research Training Initiative Scholarship Program (GRTI). The GRTI program is an initiative under the federal-provincial-territorial Agricultural Policy Framework (2003-2008), funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

This exciting project began when Brent's supervisor, Dr. Nancy McLean, a Plant Breeder at NSAC, was approached by Lafarge Canada Inc. to evaluate native trees and shrubs along a constructed stream bank on a retired section of their limestone quarry in Brookfield, Nova Scotia. In order for the mine to continue operation, a stream had to be re-routed along the retired section of the mine.

While there are strict environmental regulations in place to ensure minimal disruption to natural vegetation, re-establishing native plant populations is important to maintain wildlife and fish habitats on constructed sites. One of the problems with this stream bank is that due to poor soil quality and limited nutrients, re-establishing

trees and shrubs can be difficult and costly.

In order to determine which plants can grow in these soil conditions, Brent did a soil analysis on the area. Based on the results, he selected suitable species and planted a total of 500 different native trees and shrubs along the stream bank. He will measure their suitability by their survival, growth and susceptibility to insects and other herbivores.

Brent also is looking at different amendments such as compost and mulch to determine which amendments will allow the trees and shrubs to perform best along the stream bank.

In addition to providing the foundation for the research project, Lafarge Canada Inc. provided financial support for travel and provided all the items used in the project, including plant material and soil amendments.

Brent came to NSAC as an undergraduate student interested in agriculture and the Environmental Science program. After working with Dr. McLean for a few summers, she approached him about this project and he enrolled in the M.Sc. program.

In addition to full time studies, Brent holds the position of Vice-President Communications on the NSAC Association of Graduate Students Council and is Assistant Coach for the Woodsmen team.

The Graduate Research Training Initiative Fellowship Program at NSAC

– Four years later

The first round of students who have received Graduate Research Training Initiative (GRTI) Fellowships at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) are making a significant contribution to the local agriculture industry.

Since the start of this program in 2004, 19 NSAC graduate students from Nova Scotia have been awarded GRTI fellowships. Students are conducting research in areas such as manure management, alternative feeds, managing agricultural impacts on air and water quality, reproductive performance of mink, discovering local alternative calcium sources for laying hens, alternatives to antibiotic use in dairy cows and wastewater treatment methods, among others.

So far, five of these students have graduated and are either employed in the agricultural industry or are pursuing doctoral studies. In addition, several students who are still completing their studies have secured full-time employment in the province. The remaining students are still enrolled in the program.

The GRTI Fellowship is a prestigious scholarship and is an initiative under the Canada-Nova Scotia Agricultural Policy Framework through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

The fellowship program provides financial support to NSAC graduate students whose research will benefit the Nova Scotia agriculture and agri-food sector. The fellowships are intended to encourage qualified students to undertake graduate studies, thus building a professional capacity to meet the future needs of Nova Scotia's agri-food industry.

The \$500,000 fellowship program for M.Sc. students at NSAC has provided financial support funding for up to 20 scholarships for four years. The awards are \$30,000 for full-time students and \$15,000 for part-time students.

Criteria for the GRTI fellowship is partially based on academic excellence, leadership abilities and significance of the proposed research in relation to its benefit to the agriculture sector in Nova Scotia.

One of the benefits of the scholarship program is that students may be employed full-time and pursue part-time studies. This also includes full-time employees of provincial and federal government departments of agriculture, farmers and Nova Scotia agri-food companies. Several GRTI recipients have taken advantage of this professional development opportunity.

It is anticipated that funding for this program will be renewed when a new generation of agriculture and agri-food policy is created.



**Nova Scotia
Agricultural
College**

NSAC. Embrace Your World.

Your Agricultural Resource Coordinators

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2008 Rural Leaders Conference - A Success!

The bi-annual 2008 Rural Leaders Conference held February 7-9 in Halifax brought together 75 delegates from a variety of rural organizations and government departments to network and discuss what is essential to creating vibrant and productive communities. Delegates at the conference were able to attend sessions on leadership, communications, being a success at home, small business development, voluntarism, maintaining vibrant rural communities and buying local foods.

Several out-of-province speakers addressed key issues at the conference. Michelle Payn Knoper,

Cause Matters Corporation, spoke on Celebrating Agriculture and Creative Community Networks. Kevin Stewart, AG Vision INC., Ontario discussed What is the Cost of Doing Nothing? Joanne Ross from Manitoba offered unique ideas for bringing agriculture to the classroom that work well in her province. All three speakers recently spoke at the 2007 National Agriculture Awareness in London, Ontario.

Closing off the conference, Eleanor Wood from Troy Ontario presented her hilarious and entertaining view of the world from her experiences as a dairy farmer, wife and mother. Her positive attitude, sense of humour and infectious energy ended the conference on an enthusiastic note.

Royal Bank to Host 46th 4-H Interprovincial Exchange Program



Five Nova Scotia 4-H members will experience customs and lifestyles in other provinces as they travel on the 46th annual Royal Bank of Canada 4-H Interprovincial Exchange, beginning July 16. While on this two-week national program, 4-H members also have the opportunity to exchange ideas and information on agriculture with other rural youth.

The Nova Scotia delegates winning this travel award were selected through an interview process which was based on 4-H and community involvement. The Atlantic 4-H delegates travelling to the various parts of Canada celebrate their achievement at a send off banquet hosted by the Royal Bank.

The 4-H members participating in the 4-H exchange program are: Caitlyn Schnaffner - Annapolis County; Kim Walters - Lunenburg County; Gillian George - Richmond County; Sara Payzant - Hants County and Allison Cole - Halifax County.

Nova Scotia 4-H members will host a reciprocal two-week exchange with their billets in their home communities beginning August 13.

4-H Members to Showcase Communication Skills at Annual 4-H Weekend

Teachers and employers have often said they can recognize 4-H alumni by their strong communication skills. The 4-H program is proud to be able to teach youth exceptional speaking skills at an early age and in the process build self confidence, develop leadership skills and poise.

On May 9 - 10, 2008 4-H members from across Nova Scotia will compete in provincial public speaking and demonstration competitions at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Bible Hill.

The event will host 250 4-H members and families from across the province. In addition to

communication contests, 4-H members will compete in the woodsman competition and the Nova Scotia Horse Classic. On Saturday May 10, the NSAC Alumni Theatre will be the venue for 4-H Night in Nova Scotia, a finale that showcases talented 4-H members and presents the top overall communication winners and county entertainment as part of the evenings program. 4-H members and leaders who have won National 4-H Travel Awards and the winners of the provincial competitions are recognized. The public is welcome to attend all the weekend events and view the 4-H members in action.

4-H Members to Meet at Atlantic EBI Showcase

Seventy 4-H members from Atlantic Canada will participate in the annual Eastern Breeders 4-H Showcase June 25 - 27, 2008 at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. For the past 18 years, Eastern Breeders Incorporated has sponsored the training event with the goal of providing intensive training in the most current livestock techniques for 4-H beef and dairy members from Atlantic Canada. Along with financial assistance, they provide the Atlantic event with highly qualified staff to ensure 4-H members learn proper animal management and preparation skills for showing cattle, which will prepare them to be better contenders in the show ring and leaders in the agricultural industry. Department of Agriculture 4-H staff partner with EBI to provide organizational skills on behalf of the Atlantic 4-H Committee.

During the two-day workshop, specialists from Eastern Breeders Incorporated will teach the finer points of show preparation to the participants. The members will then prepare their own cattle for the beef and dairy show on June 27 at the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Grounds in Bible Hill. Awards will be presented to the winners in each class at that event. The public is welcome to attend the cattle show to see the skills these young people have learned.



4-H Rural Employment and Life Skills Program

4-H staff in the South Shore and Western Region are coordinating and piloting the REAL Skills - 4-H project. The Rural Employment and Life Skills Program (REAL Skills) pilot provides an opportunity for 4-H youth to learn practical farm, leadership and communications skills through a 4-H project. When they apply for employment they will have training in many important aspects and be job ready. 4-H staff

working in partnership with organizations and government departments have provided 4-H members with courses in food handling and WHIMS. Students in business facilitation have completed sessions on business planning and marketing. St. John Ambulance staff have certified the participants in a CPR/ First Aid course. The pilot project will be completed by the summer.

Your 4-H and Rural Organizations Staff

Senior 4-H Program Coordinator:

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grantjd@gov.ns.ca

Annapolis County Federation Livestock Sales

Cattle sales at the Lawrencetown Exhibition Grounds will be held on the following dates this spring: April 19, May 3, May 17, May 31. Selling of miscellaneous items will begin at 11 a.m. Selling of livestock begins at 1 p.m.

Lunenburg Queens Federation of Agriculture Cattle Sale

The cattle sale at the South Shore Exhibition Grounds will be held on May 24 at 12:30 p.m. There will also be a machinery auction. Contact Peter Morine, Dave Moore, Tom Frail, Wayne Slauenwhite or Wayne Silver for booking.

Equipment for Rent

The Lunenburg Queens Federation of Agriculture has a lime spreader for rent. Contact Wayne Silver for information. There is also a no-till seeder available for rent. Contact Wayne Slauenwhite for more information.

Hants Co. Farm Women's Day

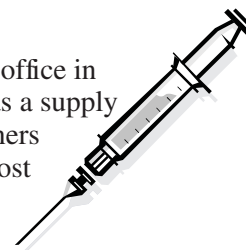
Hants Co. Farm Women's Day will be held on April 26 at the Three Mill Plains Community Hall. For more information and to register, contact Catherine Manning at 902-798-4541.

Kings Co. Farm and Rural Women's Day

Unfortunately the Kings Co. Farm and Rural Women have not set a date for their spring session. They need volunteers to help organize and plan future events. If you want to become involved, please contact Ann Palmeter at 902-542-3204. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Disposal of Used Farm Sharps

The Agriculture office in Kentville still has a supply of sharps containers available at no cost for producers. Remember, sharps must not be discarded in regular household garbage. Sharps should be collected on farms in rigid, puncture resistant containers with tightly secured lids. Drop in to pick up your containers.



Valley Region 4-H Activities and Announcements

- April 25: Valley Region 4-H Weekend Residence Applications Due
- April 27: Kings County Woodsman Competition, 1 p.m., Harmony Hall
- May 1: Camp Rankin Applications Due
- May 5: Kings Co. Council Mtg. (7:30 p.m.), Judges Mtg.(6:30 p.m.), Joint Achievement Day Mtg.(6:45 p.m.), Kentville Agricultural Centre
- May 9-10: 4-H Weekend, Bible Hill
- May 12: Hants County Council Meeting, 7 p.m., West Hants Middle School
- May 16-18: Fluff-n-Buff, Lawrencetown
- May 21: Kings County Provincial Show Hosting Committee Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Kentville Agricultural Center
- May 22: 4-H Judging Day, Hants Co., Exhibition Grounds, Windsor
- May 27: 4-H Judging Day, Kings Co., Sweets Horse Center, Billtown

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2008 Hants Royalty Night Results

Congratulations to all 4-H members who participated in the 2008 Hants County Royalty Night. The following are the 2008 results:

Miss

1st Place, Aiden Wallebeck. Club: Rawdon 2 Way.

2nd Place, Jessica Swinamer Club: Avon

Master

1st Place, Wyatt Oulton Club: Avon

2nd Place, Simon Greenough Club: Newport

Host

1st Place, Justin Clark Club: Newport

2nd Place, Kevin Brown Club: Avon

Hostess

1st Place, Chantel O'Brien Club: 3-Cornered

2nd Place, Amanda Morris Club: Burlington Workers

Provincial Show Hosting Committee 2008 Windsor, Nova Scotia September 26 - 28, 2008

Kings County is hosting the 31st Nova Scotia 4-H Show. The hosting committee would like to invite all current and past leaders, members and 4-H volunteers out to the meetings. If you are interested in

volunteering on a committee for Provincial Show, please attend the next meeting or call the 4-H office, 902-679-6027.

Next Meeting: April 16, 2008, 7:30 p.m., Kentville Agricultural Centre

4-H Weekend

This year 4-H weekend will be held May 9 and 10 at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Bible Hill. Woodsman competition, horse classic, demonstrations and public speaking are a few of the events taking place. To apply to stay in residence you can find an application online or contact the 4-H office. Members can stay in residence for \$30. Valley Region applications are due April 25 at the Kentville 4-H office.

Horse Classic 2008

Horse Classic will be offered at the 2008 4-H Weekend, May 9-10, Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Bible Hill. Teams enrolled in the light horse, miniature horse, draft horse, driving or horse basics projects have been invited to participate in a variety of horse events. If you would like more information about Horse Classic please call 902-679-6027 or email maclarjc@gov.ns.ca.

Growing Opportunities

Are you looking for opportunities to increase your direct market sales? Certainly there are advantages to be gained. At the recent Growing Opportunities conference, producers, retailers and restaurant owners came together to explore the opportunities that exist between businesses.

One of the challenges presented at the conference was for producers to make the connection between themselves and restaurant owners. An easy way for farmers to get information in the hands of those who need it is through the Food for Thought listing of farmers/processors and what they have to offer.

An important point to consider when selling direct is your price. When selling your product to local consumers, the price point you start at should at least be local retail price. Remember, for you to get your product in the hands of the consumer, you are the producer, processor, packer, truck driver, warehouse, shelf stocker and cashier! You need to be compensated properly for everything you have invested in your product.

It may also be useful to keep in mind that the following points of advice are taken from "Sustainable Food Systems - Notes from a Chef to a Farmer":

1. Commitment: Restaurants, for cost control, need to be somewhat automated in their purchasing patterns. When a chef commits to buying a certain amount from the farm, the chef anticipates it to be delivered accordingly.
2. Delivery Schedule: Chefs depend on the arriving product. Work with your chef so the restaurant can have a steady stream of fresh produce during the week from your farm. Try to establish a delivery system that works for both the kitchen and your schedule. Know your restaurant's busy times and plan your calls and visits around these times, not in the middle of them.
3. Sell What You Can Deliver: Don't short the kitchen; the chef is expecting a certain quantity. If the product is different than what you offered, call the chef and ask if they still want it.
4. Sell Your Product: Chefs love free samples. Be generous with your prized produce when you first stop by the restaurant (do call in advance!) On that first delivery day encourage them to try and taste the difference. Offer samples at farmer's markets where chefs are known to cruise and taste.
5. Get to Know Your Customers: Eat in the restaurants where you deliver. Lunch is a cheaper alternative if offered. Just as important as having a chef visit your farm, you'll see how your product is used. You'll be inspired.
6. Reinforce My Loyalty: Part patience and part diligence—remember to be consistent in your work and with your produce. Assist the person receiving the delivery by collecting your boxes, be on time, courteous, and prepare invoices ahead. Call if you will be late.
7. Billing: Like any other businessperson you have a right to be paid on time. First time deliveries may be paid in cash, but it is far more efficient for everyone to establish an account.
8. Specialize and Diversify: Diversify the produce that you offer and make yourself unique. Research the market so you know what others are growing and where the holes are. Talk to your chef about what they would like to see on their menus in the future. Sell flowers and vegetables offering them both to the same restaurant. Be creative.

Tractor Safety Days:

The Halifax East Hants Federation of Agriculture will be holding a Tractor Safety Day for youth on Saturday, April 26, 2008. This program will be held at the Streach's (Granview Farms) in Elderbank and begins at 9 a.m. The cost for this program is \$10, which includes your lunch.

All youth are welcome to attend, however, only those 12 and older will be permitted to operate tractors.

For more information and to register contact:

Barb Macdonald - (902) 758-3583
RJ Dillman - (902) 384-2264



St. John Ambulance Canada

First Aid Training

St. John Ambulance offers several first aid courses throughout the province. Obtaining more information on first aid training or to register for a course, can easily be done on their web site <http://www.sja.ca/splash.aspx> , or toll free at: 1-800-565-5056

They offer many courses designed to meet industry and business requirements. Emergency level first aid is a state-of-the-art, modular, course of basic first aid skills and other select subjects needed to sustain life and manage the scene of an injury. Emergency First Aid is recommended for work sites with 1-19 employees per shift.

Emergency First Aid + CPR Level A
Time: 8 hours (1 day)
Fee: \$65 per person

Coming Emergency First Aid courses in Truro:

Tuesday, April 22
Monday, May 12
Saturday, May 24

Upcoming 4-H Clinics and Public Speaking Rallies

Central Regional Rally, Saturday April 19, Old Barns Elementary School
Dog Clinic, Saturday April 26 and Sunday April 27, NSPE grounds

Upcoming 4-H Meetings

Colchester County 4-H Leaders Council Meetings:

April 28, May 26, June 16 at the Farm Loan boardroom, NSAC campus at 7 p.m.

Colchester County Exhibition Committee Meetings:

April 14, May 12, June 9 at the Farm Loan boardroom, NSAC campus at 7 p.m.

Cumberland County 4-H Leaders Council and Exhibition Committee meetings: May 6 and June 3 at the Shinimicas Fire Hall at 8 p.m.

Halifax County 4-H Leaders Council Meetings:

April 9 (Forestry Complex), May 13 (Campbell Hall), June 10 (Hardwoodlands) at 7 p.m.

For further information on any of these events or the 4-H program, please contact Jacqueline Hoyt, 4-H Specialist for Central Region at (902) 893-6586 or hoytjm@gov.ns.ca .

Pesticide Certification Course

ProAgri Consulting will present a Pesticide Certification Course in Sydney's Civic Centre on May 1 and 2, 2008.

Certification is designed for those individuals who do not have a license, whose license has expired or is about to expire. This course covers a broad range of pesticide safety topics for land applicators and is designed to assist in preparation to

write the NSDEL pesticide certification exam, as ongoing training, and a refresher course on the basics of pesticide safety. Cost of this course is \$185 (includes manual and HST). The exam will be offered on the second day of the course.

For more information or to register, contact ProAgri Consulting at (902) 798-2114 or the NSDA office at (902) 563-2000.

Community Pastures

Community Pastures will be starting up for this pasture season. Most pastures can always use additional cattle numbers to help keep the pastures viable operations. As the summer continues and you find you need extra feed or pasture, consider placing cattle on a community pasture. The following are community pasture contacts for Cape Breton.

Cape Mabou	Anne VandenHeuvel	(902) 945-2039
Mira	John MacPhee	(902) 727-2542
Maplebrook	John P. MacDonald	(902) 756-2671
Little Harbor (L'Ardoise)	Arthur Sampson	(902) 587-2276
Cheticamp Island	Eli Joe Chaisson	(902) 224-2417

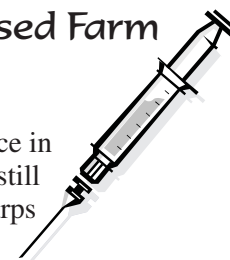
2008 Cape Breton Community Fairs

The season for Community Fairs and Exhibitions is fast approaching. The following are the fairs scheduled for Cape Breton Island. Now is a good time to reserve the date on your calendar or to plan your entry for the fair.

FAIR	DATE	CONTACT	PHONE
Mira Ferry	Sept. 6	Gladys Lever	(902) 562-6310
		Cheryl MacIntyre	(902) 562-2089
		Florence MacIntyre	(902) 562-1056
Christmas Island	Sept. 13	Kevin MacKenzie	(902) 622-2667
Port Morien	Sept. 13	Margie MacQueen	(902) 737-2478
Baddeck	Sept. 6	Wendell MacPhee	(902) 295-2494

Community Fairs are excellent opportunities for rural communities to get together for a fun and entertaining day and to show off their talent. Anyone can enter articles, from homemaking, garden, woodworking to livestock (check with fair for specifics). If you have never been to a fair, why not plan to attend this year.

Disposal of Used Farm Sharps



The Agriculture office in Sydney and Mabou still have a supply of sharps containers available at no cost for producers.

Remember sharps must not be discarded in regular household garbage. Sharps should be collected on farms in rigid, puncture resistant containers with tightly secured lids. Drop in to pick up your containers during regular office hours or for more info contact (902) 563-2000.

Think Safety

Spring is a busy time on many farms. With the many tasks that have to be done, the opportunity for accidents increases. In addition to the many spring jobs that have to be done, be sure to make time to ensure your farm is safe for you and your family. Now is a good time to:

- Check fencing around ponds and manure storages.
- Ensure PTO guards are in place.
- Take extra precautions to guard against manure gas in liquid manure storages.
- Check your farm first aid kit(s) to ensure they are fully stocked and ready for use.
- Make sure your fire extinguishers are full and in place on machinery and in buildings.
- Make sure your slow moving vehicle signs are on equipment and can be seen.

For more information, check the Farm Safety Standards of Practice booklet available from the Agriculture office.

4H News

Welcome back to another busy 4-H year. Workshops, project meetings and many other activities are under way in our region. A special welcome is extended to our 4-H clubs and, in particular, our new clubs in 2008. Leaders, members and 4-H families are encouraged to contact the 4-H office in the upcoming months for any resource materials or program considerations.

4-H: Strong in Cape Breton

The 4-H program is strong and growing in the Cape Breton region. This year the Cape Breton regional program boasted 144 leaders (an increase of 10.5 per cent), 384 active members and 49 clover buds. Leader tenure in Cape Breton stands at 9.4 years and member tenure is

2.8 years. The average club size for the 18 clubs was 24.3 members/ club which is an increase of 12 per cent in membership from last year. This growth is exciting for Island youth as new clubs and project areas are explored.

The 4-H members on Cape Breton Island continue to participate in programs at club, county, regional, provincial and national levels. Both leaders and members continue to represent 4-H at all levels and are strong ambassadors for Nova Scotia and the 4-H program wherever they travel. Regional clubs continue to work hard to promote 4-H and continue to make community service activities a priority in their club programs.

4-H Horse Clinic

Horse members, leaders, parents and horse enthusiasts are invited to a fun filled day, with hands on activities, and lots of opportunities to learn about horse maintenance, nutrition, conformation and judging. Various guest speakers will be addressing these topics. The workshop will be held Saturday, April 26 starting at the Point Edwards WWI Hall and then moving to the Twin Lighthouse Farm just down the road. Special thanks to the Co-op for sponsorship of our guest speakers. For more information, please contact Marina at (902) 563-2001, or Rhonda at (902) 945-2901. In case of cancellation, it will be aired on local radio stations.

Provincial 4-H Weekend

Every year 4-H members get an opportunity to work on their public speaking and demonstration skills. These are skills that will serve them well in school, university, interviews, community volunteer organizations and their careers. At these events, members will participate in public speaking, demonstrations, poster competitions and/or Host and Hostess Competitions. 4-H members are divided into categories based on age. Score sheets and guidelines for participating members are available in the general leader kit or on the NS 4-H website at:

www.gov.ns.ca/agri/4h/ .

All events are open to the general public and 4-H families are encouraged to promote these events. After competing at club and county levels members head to the Provincial 4-H Weekend. 4-H Weekend will be held on May 9-10, at the Agricultural College in Truro. All applications are due to the 4-H office in Sydney by April 21. Good luck to our regional competitors.

Upcoming Food Handler Courses 2008

Food safety courses are scheduled for 4-H leaders parents and members who are encouraged to take these programs as they become available in your areas. Food handling and preparation plays a big role in many of our 4-H meetings and functions. Here are some upcoming dates to keep in mind.

Apr. 23	Mike	Marconi Campus
Apr. 30	Cheryl	Clansman Motel (N. Sydney)
May 7	Carrie	NSCC - Port Hawkesbury
May 28	Mike	Marconi Campus

To register, please contact Catherine Plumridge at the Dept of Agriculture office in Sydney at (902) 563-2000.

Food Handler course registration forms can be downloaded and printed from the website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/foodsafety/pdfs/FoodHandlerSyd.pdf>

Upcoming course schedules can be viewed on this web site:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/foodsafety/courses_neast.shtml

Cape Breton Regional Judging Days 2008

May is when many 4-H members across the region look at the judging component to the 4-H program. Members place and give reasons for four items in a project area from best to worst. Oral reasons are given to a judge comparing project standards.

Tips to remember are:

- be confident
- compare not describe
- know project standards
- make good eye contact
- speak clearly and concisely
- know judging format

Judging is a major portion of your Achievement Day completion for our members. Each member in Cape Breton County must complete the judging component of their project areas. Leaders are encouraged to practice judging with project members to build confidence.

Grand Champion Judging	Saturday, May 17 Skyeglen Hall, 3-7 p.m.
Cape Breton Co. Judging Day <i>(all projects to be judged except horse project)</i>	Tuesday, May 20 N. Sydney Exhibition
Cape Breton Co. Horse Judging <i>(please be on time)</i>	Wednesday, May 21 Mountain Crest Stable, 5:30 p.m.
Inverness Co. Judging Day	Wednesday, May 28 Dalbrae Academy, 3-6 p.m.
Inverness Co. Livestock Judging Day	Wednesday, May 28 Lake Mabou Farms (Cox's), 6:30-7 p.m.
Richmond Co. Judging Day	Thursday, May 29 Lakeside Community Hall, Sampsonville
Victoria Co. Judging Day	Tuesday, June 2 Baddeck Forks Hall, 4:30- 6 p.m.
Make up Judging Dates:	
Cape Breton Co. <i>(by appointment only)</i>	Wednesday, June 4 4-H office Sydney, 3:30 - 5 p.m.
Victoria Co.	Tuesday, June 10 Baddeck Forks Hall, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Inverness. Co.	Monday, June 2 Mabou 4-H office, 3-4:30 p.m.
Richmond Co.	Thursday, June 12 Camp Rankin, 5:30 p.m.

There is no judging for Heritage, Vet Science, and Junior Leader.

Exploring 4-H members can judge any project and must note that they are in exploring 4-H on their judging card.

Livestock class, with the exception of horse, will be a quiz.

Junior Camp Scholarship Winners!

4-H members from all over the province attend Camp Rankin located in Richmond County. All Counties can send deserving junior members to camp, some for the very first time. Scholarship winners to date are:

Cape Breton Co.	to be announced
Victoria Co.	Bryan Berk
Inverness Co.	Jamie Phillips
Richmond Co.	to be announced

Dates to Mark on the Calendar

- Cape Breton Co. Council Meeting -first Tuesday of every month, Civic Center at 7:30 p.m.
- Poster deadline - April 21, Truro
- Summer Assistant - tentative chick delivery in Truro for poultry members, April 29-30
- 4-H Camp Rankin application deadline, May 1
- 4-H Weekend, May 9-10, Agricultural College, Bible Hill - application due April 21
- Richmond Co. 4-H Show
June 12 - drop projects off
June 13 - 4-H Staff Judge
June 14 - County Competitions/Awards
- Richmond Co. Livestock Show - August 6 at Adrienne and Scott Smith's
- Cape Breton 4-H Day - August 11
- Inverness Co. Show - August 21-23
- Victoria Co. Day - September 6, Baddeck Forks Hall

Feel free to contact your local 4-H offices if you have any concerns or questions. Your 4-H Specialists can be reached through the Mabou office at (902) 945-2901 (Rhonda) or the Sydney office (902) 563-2000 (Marina).

Spring Reminders

As the spring farming season quickly approaches let's review some important tips;

- Review your manure management by ensuring to implement proper setbacks for spreading along rivers, streams, brooks and wells.
- Do you have an environmental farm plan? What does it say? Are you addressing the issues?
- Regulatory training - is your first aid up to date? Have you given training to any new employees regarding safety? Are there first aid kits available on your farm?
- Pesticide certification - is your card up to date and are you taking updates?
- Do you live along a major river or brook? If so, is there any bank

erosion protection required? Funding is available under the Farm Investment Fund.

- Do you have a farm remote plan? ie could an ambulance or fire fighter locate you or the hazards on your farm?

As you are busy working, don't forget the most important thing, give yourself a pat on the back for producing Nova Scotia food. Remember there is a lot of interest in local food and you are the only qualified people who can meet the demand.

Wanted: more produce for the Antigonish Farmers Market. Be innovative, plant some variety and have some fun talking with real consumers.

Reminder of Upcoming Meeting

Pictou-North Colchester Federation of Agriculture: Tuesday, April 22, 2008 - Semi Annual Meeting - West River Fire Hall - Meet and Greet at 6 p.m., with a cash bar. Complimentary roast beef dinner served at 7 p.m. A presentation from guest speakers will follow.

Guest Speakers:

Mr. Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister of Agriculture
Sandy Hines, Second Source Power (wind power)

If you plan to attend the dinner you must reserve your meal by calling either Joe at 902-657-2122 or Bill at 902-925-2057 before April 10, only meals reserved will be ordered, **No Extras**

Upcoming 4-H Events:

Antigonish

- May 9 -10 Nova Scotia 4-H Weekend, Bible Hill
- May 13 Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
- May 20 Ant/Guys. Judging Days, 2:30 - 4 and 6 - 8 p.m.
- May 27 CACL Collection Evening (or during week of May 27)

Pictou

- April 29 Council Meeting, 7 Northumberland
- April 29 4-H Weekend Meeting, 7 Northumberland
- May 9 -10 Nova Scotia 4-H Weekend, Bible Hill
- May 28 Skills Day, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- May 29 Council Meeting, 7 p.m 4-H office
- June 7 Ice cream pick up - times TBA

Attention

All Livestock Producers: Cape John Community Pasture Co-op

The Cape John Community Pasture has been providing pasture services to livestock producers for many years and it is an important part of rural infrastructure for many producers. The Cape John Community Pasture currently has vacancies for the coming season. If you are interested in placing cattle on the pasture and would like an application, please call Tony Corsten at 902-863-4429.

First Aid Course

The Department of Agriculture in Antigonish will be offering a first aid course for all farmers, family members and hired help. The course that was scheduled for April has been postponed until the fall. Registered farmers are eligible to apply for safety training, at 50 per cent assistance, under category D of the Farm Investment Fund (Page nine in your booklet). Consider applying for first aid training when filling out your 2008-2009 FIF application. Please call the Agriculture office at (902) 863-4705 to have your name added to the list of participants.

The Antigonish Farmers' Market Association

All past, present and potential vendors are welcome to attend our AGM.

Time: 7 p.m. Date: Wednesday April 30 Place: Superstore Community room (upstairs), Market Street, Antigonish

Opening day for the Farmers' Market is Saturday, May 24. New vendors with their own products are always welcome. It is the perfect venue to gain valuable consumer feedback about your new product. For inquiries or to receive a vendor package, contact the market at (902) 867-7479.

Bridgetown Farmer's Market 2008

The Bridgetown Market will be held this year on every Tuesday from 3:30-7 p.m. beginning on May 13, 2008. The Market is held at the old Co-Op building (Young Bro.'s property) at 160 South Street, just over the bridge in Bridgetown. All vendors are welcome, from farmers

and gardeners to crafters, artists, bakers and yard salers. Spaces are free for now but there is a small charge for table rental. Reservations are encouraged for tables. Call Lewis Falls at (902) 665-2029 for more information, or stop by Endless Shores Books in Bridgetown.