

Agriculture in the Classroom – Nova Scotia Annual Report 2023-24



**Sustainable Canadian
Agricultural Partnership**
Competitive. Innovative. Resilient.



Canada 

Vision

An agricultural **education** program where **all Nova Scotian students are made aware** of Nova Scotia's agriculture in a **positive, meaningful way** that builds trust in Nova Scotia's **food system**.



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Steering Committee Chair Message

Agriculture in the Classroom Nova Scotia continues to grow and deliver high quality agricultural educational programs and resources throughout the province. Authentic connections, positive memories, meaningful experiences - nothing can replace the value and impact of interactive programming. And last year 61,691 students were reached through programs!

This growth is a testament to the dedication of staff and steering committee members who have invested their time, creativity, and resources because they believe in the importance of educating future generations about food and agriculture. Their dedication is a key reason why teachers continue to use these resources in their classrooms year after year. Their work was recognized this past year when they received the Premier's Award of Excellence which celebrates public servants who go above and beyond to deliver programs and services to Nova Scotians.

In the coming years, we are focused on expanding our reach even further while fostering a meaningful connection between students and agriculture, building trust in agriculture, and supporting our farmers.

Michelle Miller
Steering Committee Chair

Year	Total # of Schools	# of Classrooms	# of Student Experiences
2019-20	138	393	9,261
2020-21	147	409	8,091
2021-22	269	1,581	33,807
2022-23	307	2,179	46,906
2023-24	315	2,762	61,691

Agriculture in the Classroom – Nova Scotia is a Proud Member of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada!

We are proud to be the Nova Scotia voice of Agriculture in the Classroom. Across the country, member organizations of Agriculture in the Classroom are working together to provide engaging, innovative learning experiences that cultivate students’ curiosity and teach them the important role agriculture plays in our everyday lives.

As a result of this collaborative, pan-Canadian effort, agriculture comes to life in classrooms through an extensive network of resources, programs and initiatives delivered at both national and provincial levels, providing over two million unique learning experiences for students each year.

“Agriculture in the Classroom – Nova Scotia plays a key role in building strong, meaningful connections with students and educators to help them foster an understanding of agriculture, linking them with the source of their food, and opening doors to exciting career opportunities within the industry. We take great pride in the collective achievements of our ten provincial Agriculture in the Classroom members, which are a testament to the commitment and enthusiasm of our member organizations. By collaborating, we amplify our reach and enhance our impact throughout the country”

– Luree Williamson,
Acting Executive Director of Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada.



Our Team

Steering Committee Members

Education & Early Childhood Development

- Natalie Bakody, *Active Healthy Living Consultant*
- Kerri MacPherson, *Science Consultant*
- Tara Cormier, *Math & Science Consultant, French Second Language*
- Michelle Colley, *Transition & Community Education Coordinator*
- Kim Duncan, *Career Pathways Special Projects Lead*
- Jill Piers, *Manager, Early Childhood Development and Pre-Primary Operations*
- Nick Baskwill, *ICT Consultant*
- Rod Francis, *Director, Mi'kmaq Services Branch*
- Naomi Pierrard, *Consultant - Etuaptmumk/Two Eyed Seeing Lead, Mi'kmaq Services Branch*
- Jacqueline McNeil, *Communications Officer - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*

Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

- Caitlyn Clements, *Workforce Development Coordinator*
- Janette McDonald, *Public Trust Coordinator*

Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture

- Lauren Peters, *Community Education Manager*

Nourish Nova Scotia

- Aimee Gasparetto, *Executive Director*

Staff

- Michelle Miller, *Manager, Regional Programming*
- Hema Chopra, *Senior Diversity Programming Specialist*
- Dawn Barrington-Hodgson, *Provincial Agricultural Programming Coordinator*
- Jacqueline Hoyt, *Provincial Agricultural Programming Coordinator*
- Moussa Sangaré-Ponce, *Provincial Agricultural Diversity Programming Coordinator*
- Lisa Patton, *Career Promotions Coordinator*
- Nikki Moore, *Administrative Assistant*
- Caitlyn Carroll, *Regional Services Summer Student*
- Alesha Dennis, *Regional Services Summer Student*
- Annalise Robinson, *Grow Where You're Planted Internship*

Partners

- Agriculture in the Classroom - Canada
- Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture
- Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

Pictured: Premiers Award of Excellence Recipients Front L:

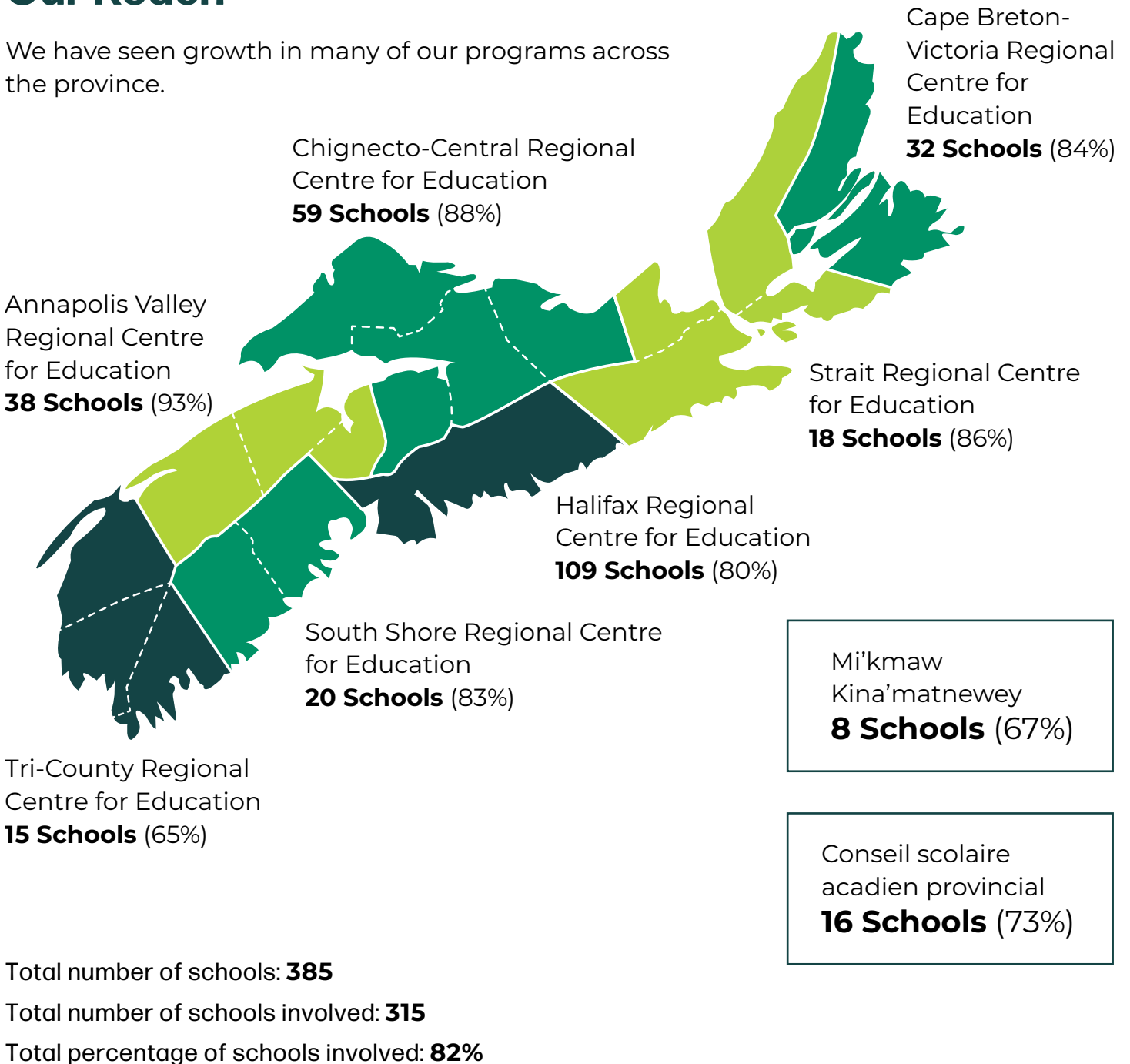
Rebecca Sooksom, Naomi Pierrard, Marie Williams, Jacqueline Hoyt, Nick Baskwill, Deputy Minister Loretta Robichaud **Middle L:** Deputy Minister Laura-Lee Langley, Helen Desmond-Morris, Dawn Barrington-Hodgson, Natalie Bakody, Kim Duncan, Tara Cormier **Back L:** Jill Piers, Deputy Minister Elwin Leroux, Wes LeBlanc, Rod Francis, Brian Mrezar, Moussa Sangare-Ponce.

Missing from Photo: Hema Chopra



Our Reach

We have seen growth in many of our programs across the province.



———— RCE Boundaries
 - - - - - County Boundaries

Resource	# of Schools	# of Classrooms**	# of Students**
Simple Machines	24	34	773
AgZone	16	62	1,260
Grow Where You're Planted	N/A	N/A	19
All Kinds of Apples	208	891	19,525
Little Green Sprouts	82	206	3,383
Chick Hatch	94	188	3,937
Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month	147	241	5,634
Great Canadian Farm Tour	106	186	4,265
The Quest for the Perfect Strawberry	22	55	1,369
Digging Deeper	27	85	1,973
Pkwiman Wild Blueberry	22	57	1,355
Weather on the Farm	68	131	2,971
Renewable Energy	30	55	1,252
Care Storybook	85	118	2,572
Pre-Primary Activities	48	85	1,692
Printed Resources	83	138	3,015
Agriculture 11	8	9	217
Working with the Sea	5	7	116
Look for Local	22	73	1,467
Math on the Farm	13	37	795
Awiket Camp	N/A	N/A	13
Career Case	2	3	60
Career Fairs	18	0	1,874
Cheese Resources	39	97	2,075
Other	2	4	79
Total	315*	2,762	61,691

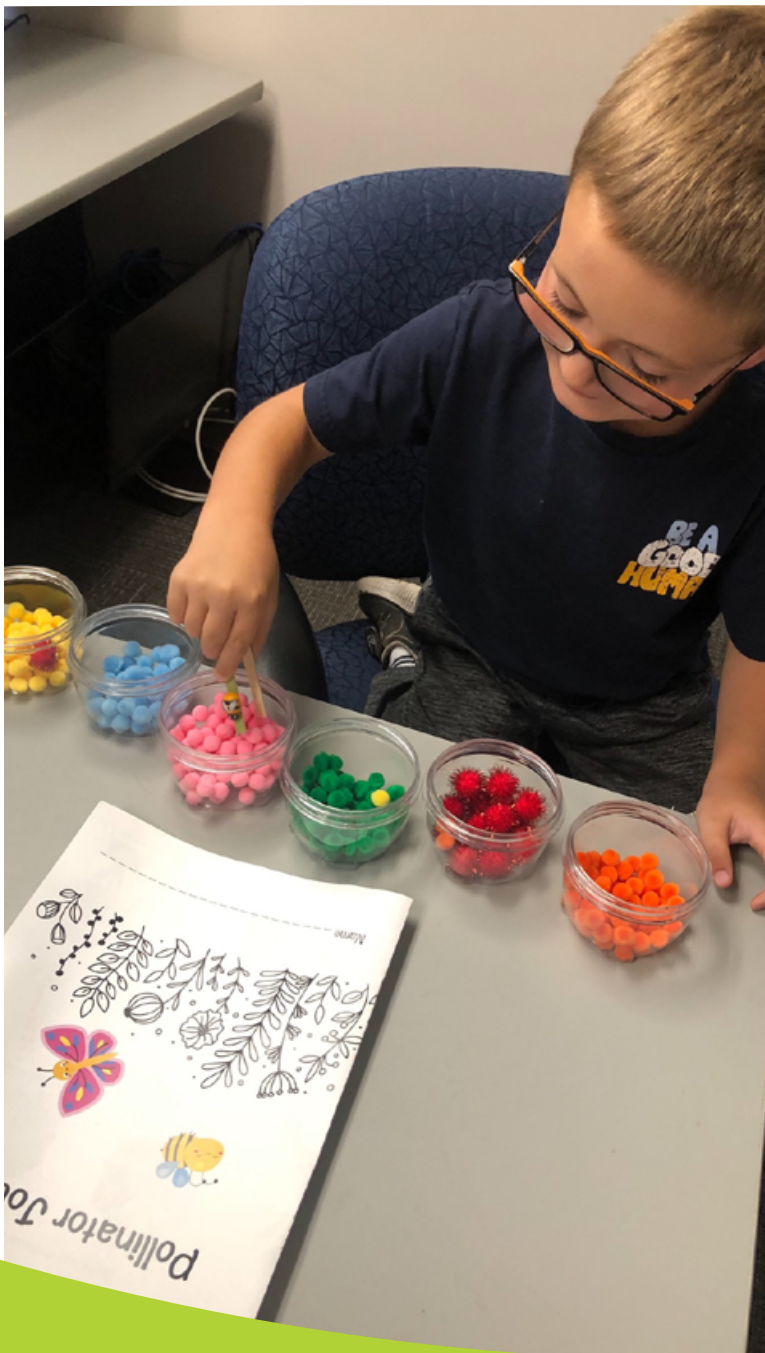
*Schools may have participated in more than one program but were only counted once.

**Classrooms and students may have participated in more than one program.

New Programs and Resource Expansion

A Pollinator's Habitat and its Connection to Agriculture

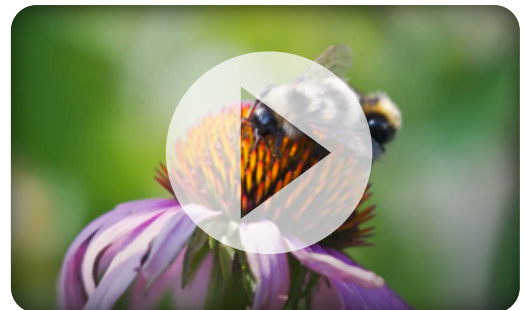
A learning experience for Grade 4 students exploring the importance of pollinators to crops in Nova Scotia and how they can help farmers to protect native pollinator habitats. Background information is provided on pollinators including what fruits and vegetables require pollination to flourish as well as habitats for different pollinators. The learning experience includes a video on Nova Scotia pollination and a student habitat journal.



Pollinators (youtube.com)



Pollinators (Français) (youtube.com)



How to Harness the Power of Enzymes to Make the Best Cheese

A learning experience exploring the biology of cheese making, for Biology 11 and 12 classrooms and Food Science 12. This resource explores the biology of cheesemaking, how enzymes react to changes in temperature and pH, and how this interacts with bacterial cultures. This hand-on learning experience allows students to make cheese and includes a video to allow learners to see how cheese is made in Nova Scotia.

Cheesemaking (youtube.com)



Cheesemaking (Français) (youtube.com)



Teacher Quote:

“ They had never made cheese so actually just the act of making it was fascinating for them. We then made sourdough mozzarella pesto grilled cheese sandwiches and a salad (marinated cherry tomato, mozzarella and basil salad). Delicious.”



Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher Tour

An inaugural teacher tour was held on August 9 and 10, 2023. The goal of the tour was to educate teachers on the range of careers available in the sector, the resources our program offers, and to connect them to trusted sources of information about agriculture and see with their own eyes what agriculture offers to our province!

Twenty-seven teachers from across Nova Scotia spent time learning about and touring various agribusinesses including Taproot Farm, a certified organic mixed farming operation, Cornwallis Farms, a dairy, layer and broiler operation, Noggins Farm Market and cidery, a local apple business, and Country Magic, a berry business. They also visited the Kentville Research and Development Centre, to learn about agriculture and agri-food research being conducted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientists in the province.

Teachers were very satisfied with the tour and said they would recommend it to their colleagues.

Teacher Quote:

“ I will make sure to highlight the many different types of jobs/careers in agriculture and the importance of buying local. I will also spend more time discussing the many different types of farms we have here in Nova Scotia.”



Grow Where You're Planted and Harvesting the Future Conferences

We held two in person events focused on Black and African Nova Scotian youth. The second edition of Grow Where You're Planted, a partnership between Dalhousie Agriculture Campus and African Canadian Services Branch, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development took place on May 26 and 27 at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. This overnight event was designed to inspire students with the latest in agricultural research and technology development by the Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture and showcase postsecondary pathways to agricultural careers using an Afrocentric approach. Throughout a jam packed 24 hours fourteen Black and African Nova Scotian students learned about agricultural engineering, careers, and participated in hands on activities and workshops.

The inaugural Harvesting the Future: A Black Youth Conference was held on March 21 in Debert in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Imhotep's Legacy Academy, Culture of Growing Program. More than 40 youth participated in the event from Preston, Sydney, Truro, and Digby. The conference was an interactive gathering with a diverse range of workshops, tradeshow participants and keynote speakers that encouraged students to connect with influential Black leaders from Nova Scotia and cultivate a sense of curiosity in agriculture and leadership opportunities.



Agricultural Career Promotion

There is a need to raise awareness about the diverse career opportunities in agriculture, from farming and agribusiness to research and environmental management. Promoting these careers can help guide students toward fulfilling roles in the sector. In July 2023 we hired an Agricultural Career Promotions Coordinator to focus on career awareness and education, marketing and promotional materials and to identify partnerships and collaboration opportunities.

The Ag Career Promotions Coordinator attended various events and career fairs to engage teachers and students in conversations about the wide range of possible careers in this industry. A “behind the scenes” tour was also organized for local “take your child to work day” where grade 9 students visited 3 local farms and had the opportunity to hear their stories and see what a typical day on their farms looks like.

Information and promotional materials were developed for use by teachers, youth pathway coordinators and as handouts at conferences. An exciting new tool in use is a virtual reality unit with a farming component as well as other related trades for students to have a virtual hands-on experience.

Informed, inspired youth are key to developing the workforce we need, and the public trust required, to maintain our competitiveness in the global market. Our programs and resources inspire students to see themselves in agriculture and all the promising career opportunities it brings!



All Kinds Of Apples - Significant Program Growth

The All Kinds of Apples resource was designed for early elementary students with curriculum connections in Sciences, Healthy Living and Mathematics. Classrooms are provided with a selection of apple varieties to compare and a video series that shows how apples are grown in Nova Scotia and highlights some apple research being done at the Kentville Research and Development Centre. The program has always had a large waitlist of teachers and because of this interest we increased the amount of funding budgeted and there was an almost 200% increase in student experiences with the program being delivered in 891 classrooms.

Where do apples come from? (video 3) (youtube.com)



Teacher Quote:

“I just wanted to send a quick email to say THANK YOU for our apples. Once again, a fabulous day of learning and fun with this opportunity. We literally spent our whole day engaging in activities around the apples. In particular, I really appreciate that the videos and supporting documents are provided in French for my French Immersion class.”



Program Budget

Revenue

Funding Source	\$ Amount
Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership*	324,245.94
Agriculture in the Classroom - Canada	8,570.93
Regional Services Operating Budget	5,505.86
Total	\$338,322.73

Expenses

Category	\$ Amount
Career Promotion	\$70,830.12
Career Coordinator	59,621.19
Travel/Events	1,085.70
Resources/Campaign	10,123.23
Capacity Building of Teachers	\$11,712.67
School Programs	\$118,513.33
Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month	24,730.73
Little Green Sprouts	15,177.14
All Kinds of Apples	34,095.15
The Quest for the Perfect Strawberry	6,291.76
Care Book	906.31
Digging Deeper Resource	3,707.47
Science of Cheesemaking	4,467.13
Pollinators	4,473.11
Agriculture 11 Resource Development	2,476.76
Printed Resources	326.00
Pre-Primary Resources (Root Viewers and Story Blocks)	7,522.05
Nourish - Fresh Story Sheets	2,000
Great Canadian Farm Tour	14.44
Chick Hatch	5,970.38
Ag Zone	6,354.90

Category	\$ Amount
New Resource Development	\$80,574.17
Video Production	53,960.90
Lesson Plan Development	16,212.61
Design	6,605.25
Translation	3,795.41
Work with Equity-Deserving Communities	\$40,979.66
Mi'kmaw Resources-Paq'nkek school greenhouse	10,000.00
Learning Centre	5,000.00
Grow Where You're Planted	5,979.66
Imhotep's Legacy Academy EANSY Project	20,000.00
Communications and Program Supports	\$15,712.78
Annual Report	2,960.00
Photography	1,916.00
Promotion to Teachers and Industry	6,228.94
STEPS on Arthur, including storage, inventory and packing of supplies	407.84
Operations Management System Development Contribution	4,200.00
Total	\$338,322.73

*The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5-billion investment by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation and resilience of Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5-billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for agricultural programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

Agriculture in the Classroom – Nova Scotia

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