



Biting Into Our Strategic Plan

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

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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Agriculture in the Classroom Annual Report 2019-20
Department of Agriculture
June 2020

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Contents

Steering Committee Chair Message	2
Agriculture in Every Classroom, Inspiring Every Student	3
Our Team	4
2019-20 Goals and Progress	5
Chick Hatch	7
Planting a Promise	8
GenAg	9
All Kinds of Apples	10
My Blueprint	11
Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month	12
Agricultural Career Promotion	14
AgZone	15
Program Budget	16



Steering Committee

Chair Message

2019-20 was a year of tremendous growth for Agricultural Education in Nova Scotia. With incredible support from our stakeholders, we developed a new strategic plan. Due to a Branch reorganization, we were also able to double the size of our team and engage Regional Extension staff in program delivery. We jumped right into implementation and exceeded our first-year targets with new and updated programming.

We are committed to collaboration and closely follow guidance from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Communications Nova Scotia, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, and our agricultural industry partners at all stages of development. The time taken to provide suggestions, review concepts, and provide feedback on resources is invaluable to our program and greatly appreciated. We could not do our work without you.

We are excited about the positive feedback we've received from teachers and the smiles we see on students' faces. And we're excited about implementing Year 2 of the strategic plan and building on past successes!

Rebecca Sooksom
Manager, Regional Programming
Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture



Agriculture in Every Classroom, Inspiring Every Student

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C), along with its ten provincial member organizations, believes in the importance of bringing innovative and educational opportunities to students from coast to coast that enhance their understanding and connection to agriculture and food.

AITC-C proudly represents the provincial AITC's, adding a national voice to agriculture education and strengthening members like the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture's capacity to reach more students every year. Last year, Agriculture in the Classroom reached over one million students in Canada and our objective is to far surpass that reach in 2020.

Collectively, we are guided by passion, transparency, empowerment, innovation, inclusion and collaboration to ensure that every Canadian student is inspired to consider the role they can play in our nation's agriculture and food story.

"Every day we are motivated by the amazing work happening through our provincial AITC organizations, including the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. This incredible group, alongside its partners and volunteers, is making a remarkable impact in schools across Nova Scotia! AITC-C will continue to collaborate closely with the provinces to ensure that agriculture education is highlighted in classrooms from coast to coast!"

Johanne Ross
Executive Director, AITC-C

Our Team:

Steering Committee Members

EDUCATION & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Natalie Bakody
- Christine Christensen
- Calvin Gough
- Kathy Greeno
- Jill Piers
- Lael Radkey
- Jennifer Mallette

LABOUR & ADVANCED EDUCATION

- Greg Ells

NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

- Carolyn Van Den Heuval
- Lauren Park

DALHOUSIE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

- Lauren Peters
- Colette Wyllie

Staff

- Rebecca Sooksom
- Dawn Barrington-Hodgson
- Jacqueline Hoyt
- Shakara Paris

Partners

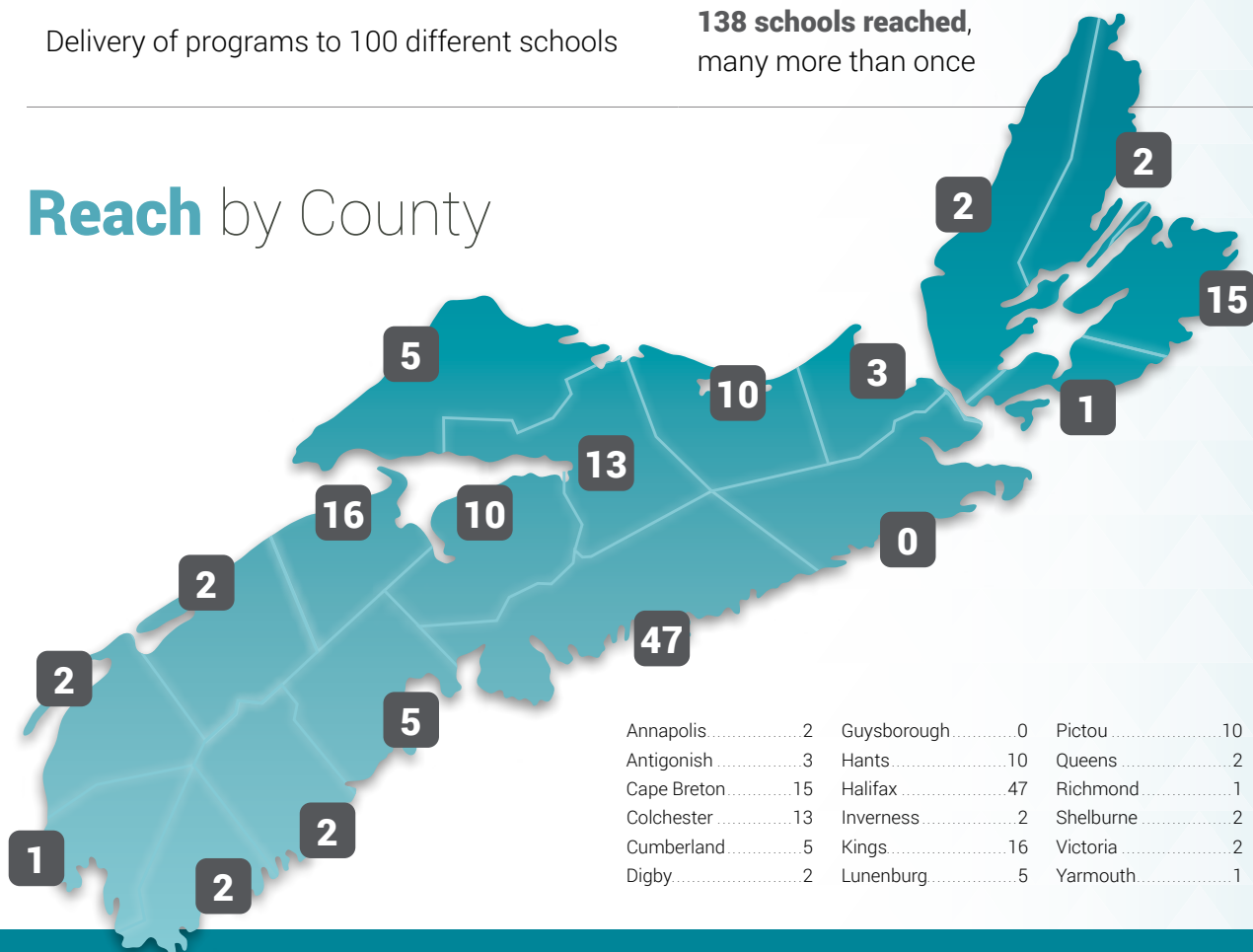
- Agriculture in the Classroom - Canada
- Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture
- Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture
- St. Francis Xavier University

2019-20

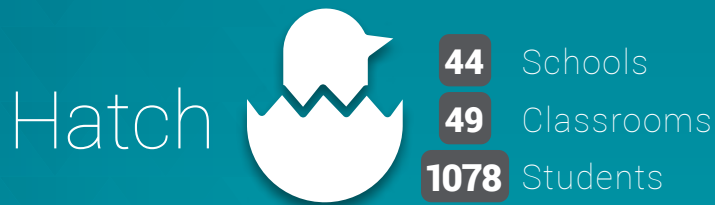
Goals and Progress

COMMITMENT	DELIVERY
20 farmer and agricultural professional volunteers recruited and trained	Consultant engaged to develop training program. Final delivery canceled due to COVID-19
Communication plan for teachers and school staff developed and deployed	Communication plan developed , website updates including online registration portal in progress
Department of Agriculture resources reviewed and an updated schedule developed	Completed
My Blueprint resource reviewed to ensure agricultural careers are accurately represented	National working group formed. First steps completed
Delivery of programs to 100 different schools	138 schools reached , many more than once

Reach by County



Reach by Resource



150*
Schools

393*
Classrooms

9261*
Students

* Some schools/classrooms accessed more than one resource.



Chick Hatch

In the spring of 2019, the Agricultural Education team launched its first ever province-wide chick hatch program! In the 2018-19 fiscal year, the team had purchased three incubators for each of the Sydney, Antigonish, Kentville, Lunenburg and Cornwallis regional offices. The team also developed a video series in English and French that provided incubator set up and management instructions, and virtual visits to poultry farms in the province.

With support from Regional Extension staff and summer assistants, incubators and hatching eggs were delivered in two rounds to 49 elementary school classrooms in every Regional Centre for Education. Staff picked up the incubators and the chicks after hatching and placed them with homes that were vetted to ensure they were capable of caring for the chicks properly.

“ We were the most popular class in the whole school for those days after the chicks hatched! ”

“ This was an amazing program! The coordinator was so helpful, answered all my questions and offered support. I would do the program again! ”

- Teacher



Planting a Promise

The British Columbia Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation announced at the annual Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada Conference in June 2019 that they were receiving a donation of tulip bulbs to be planted this fall to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Europe in May 2020.

The Agricultural Education team requested 200 boxes of 75 tulip bulbs. BC provided a lesson plan targeted at elementary schools that focused on science, social studies, math and citizenship curriculum outcomes.

The Agricultural Education team requested a review of the lesson plan by Education and Early Childhood Development staff, who recommended that the focus be changed to Grade 8 Social Studies and Grade 9 Science. Grade 8 Social Studies is when Nova Scotian students learn about World War 2 and the Grade 9 Science curriculum has outcomes related to plant reproduction. A new lesson plan was developed, largely written by Education and Early Childhood Development staff, and a supplementary resource on plant reproduction was also developed.

Emails offering the tulip bulbs were sent to all junior high schools in the province with some uptake. Some bulb packages were mailed to schools via Canada Post, but many were distributed at the Provincial Science Teachers Conference in late October.

With insufficient uptake from Grade 8 and 9 teachers, the Agricultural Education team emailed teachers and principals who had accessed other Agricultural Education resources and homes were found for all of the bulbs.

Many participating schools created very meaningful planting ceremonies with veterans. Ecole de Rose Vents, a Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial Pre-Primary-12 school located in Greenwood requested one bulb for each of their students. Their planting ceremony on November 6, 2019 was attended by Hon. Leo Glavine, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage on behalf of Premier Stephen McNeil.



genAg

GenAg is an initiative of Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada that was piloted in Nova Scotia for the first time in 2019-20. Participating classes research agricultural careers and then develop projects to market agricultural careers to their peers.

The initiative was initially targeted at classes participating in the high school Options & Opportunities program. However, issues with recruitment exacerbated by Hurricane Dorian-related school closures in early September led to the decision to pilot the initiative with two Grade 9 Developing Opportunities classrooms: Graham Creighton Junior High School in Cole Harbour and Riverview High School in Coxheath.

The initiative culminates in a provincial competition where student teams present on what they learned. It was initially planned that the provincial competition would take place at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in November. However, the participating classes required more time to complete the material and so the provincial competition was rescheduled for February and then canceled due to poor weather conditions. Graham Creighton Junior High School was able to attend the Agricultural Campus in February to learn about post-secondary programs in agriculture and other career opportunities.

Positive feedback was received from teachers and students and a condensed version of the program will be offered to Discovering Opportunities and other Grade 9 classes in Nova Scotia in the fall of 2020. A video documenting one class's journey through the initiative was developed and will be used to aid in recruitment.

Video link:

“Food scarcity is a growing social problem and young people need to become more aware and active in addressing this. This project allows them to do that AND it allows them insight into potential career paths. Win win.”

- Teacher

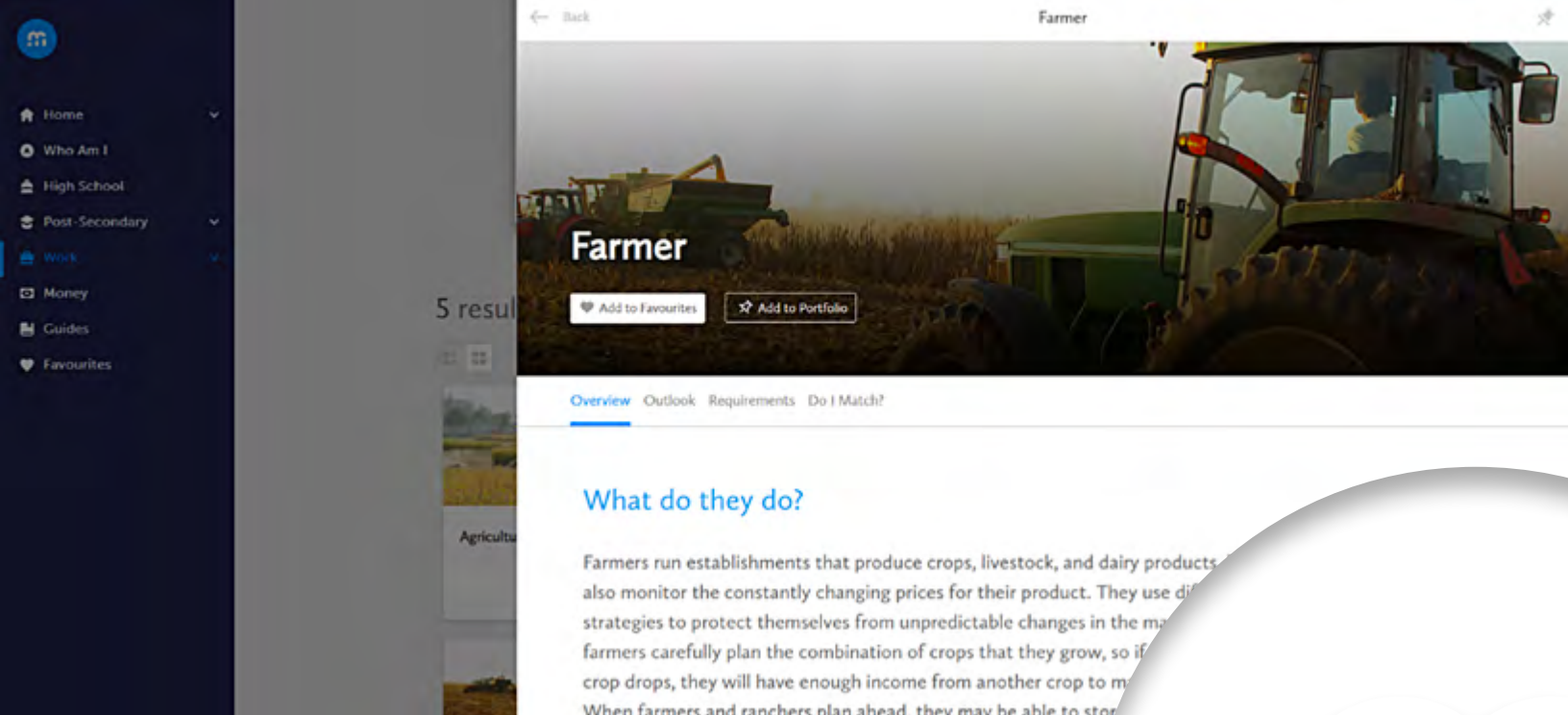


All Kinds of Apples

All Kinds of Apples was a new resource developed this year for early elementary students, with curriculum connections in Science, 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.

Initial plans to roll out the resource were scaled back due to damage to apple orchards caused by Hurricane Dorian in early September. Video production was delayed as a result. A smaller pilot was made available to schools in January 2020 and 20 schools, 110 classrooms and 2355 students participated.

"It was very nice to meet you today and I want to thank you for the videos and the bags of apples. We dropped everything and watched and discussed 3 of the videos so far, we checked out the nice poster, and then we laid out a banquet and we tasted each variety, discussing the qualities of each (colour, crunch, sweetness and set up a "browning" test). The 3 red varieties we have set up for a "which is which?" challenge, which will make us really examine the particular colouring, patterns and size to help identify the variety. Tomorrow we will do some writing about apples and I have collected apple buds to demonstrate how to graft, even though this is Primary/One. They were amazed that a seed will not necessarily be the same kind of apple as the tree that it came from. We have more ideas and learning to do, plus experimenting with the best for sauce, pie or juice. Thank you again for the delivery. Even the one child who said he didn't like apples, tried every kind!"



My Blueprint

My Blueprint is a web-based resource with a vision of “empowering students to make informed decisions about their future.” The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Nova Scotia has a licence for My Blueprint and the resource is available for use by Nova Scotian students from Grades 4-12. The resource is used in several other provinces and has over a million users across Canada.

Staff at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development invited the Agricultural Education team to review the career profiles related to agriculture. The team identified some areas for improvement, including incorrect National Occupation Codes assigned to some of the profiles, meaning that the job prospect and average salary data was incorrect. Additionally, the set of agricultural career profiles did not accurately capture the opportunities available and some of the photos also did not provide the best portrayal of agricultural careers in Canada.

A national working group was struck, with representatives from Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada, Agriculture in the Classroom – Saskatchewan, British Columbia Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council. At the end of March 2020, the list of agricultural careers had been revised, new profiles written, photos identified, and correct National Occupation Codes assigned. In 2020-21, the profiles will be reviewed by working group members and educators, and then the information will be sent to My Blueprint so they can update their resource.



Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month

Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month (CALM) is a national initiative organized by Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada. The Agricultural Education team was proud to join with the other nine provinces to deliver this program in Nova Scotia once again.

CALM's goal is to connect farmers and students, and is delivered differently in each province. In Nova Scotia, the focus is on Grade 3 because of curriculum connections with plants and soil. This year, a number of supports were created to recruit and equip farmer and agricultural professional volunteers. These supports included a colourful recruitment graphic and a PowerPoint template, as well as a Mystery Seed planting activity and lesson plan that was developed in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

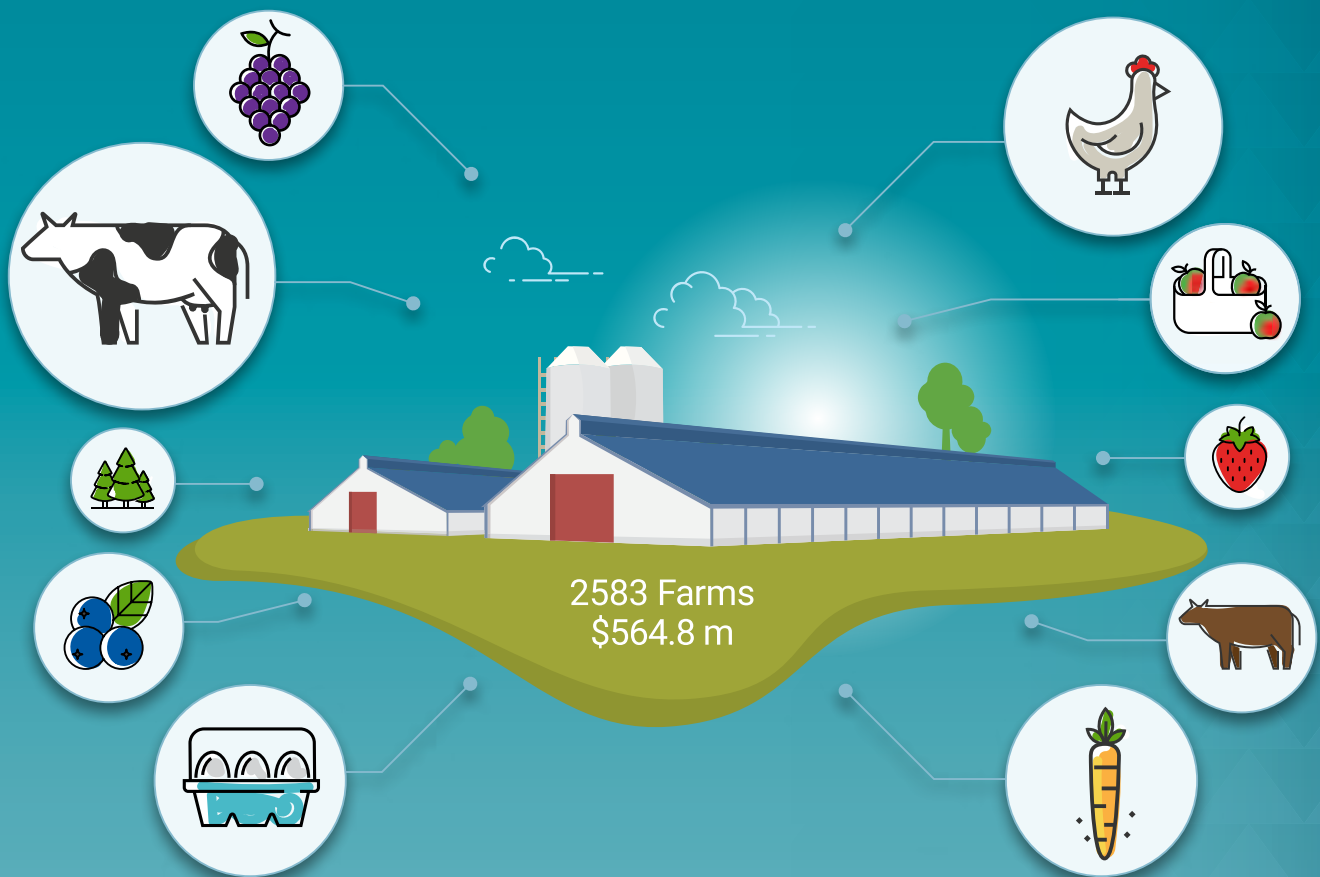
This year, 58 schools, 134 classrooms and 70 farmers/agricultural professionals registered to participate in CALM. Unfortunately, not all classes were able to be visited due to the sudden school closure during March break.

“ The presentation was the perfect length; presenter was very casual and relaxed making for a positive learning experience. Students felt comfortable answering his questions and asking their own. Hands on aspect of passing around the silage was great. They loved smelling it! Allowing them to do the planting themselves was very empowering. After they left student spoke about never having planted anything before. Wonderful to be given all the supplies needed and not just seeds. Overall, it was a terrific experience. ”

- Teacher

Recruitment graphic

Top image: used in the PowerPoint presentation. **Bottom image:** used in the recruitment email.



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL LITERACY MONTH

MARCH 2020



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

CANADIAN Agriculture Literacy MONTH

NOVA SCOTIA

Canada

OUR FARMS

Our Pride

in Our Industry



Agricultural Career Promotion

The Agricultural Education team identified a need for farmers and agricultural professionals to be better equipped to present about their careers at school and community career events. Materials were developed to enhance the existing agricultural displays housed with regional offices for use at these events. These materials include:

- A video describing career opportunities and different pathways to agricultural careers in Nova Scotia [visit –or click– to watch: vimeo.com/440404105]
- mini prize wheel with questions related to agricultural careers
- display stand
- Copies of the What's Your Something agricultural career rack card, developed by Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada
- A branded tablecloth

These materials will be available as a package at each of the Department of Agriculture's six regional offices where they can be signed out for use at school and community events by staff, farmers, and other agricultural professionals beginning in fall 2020.

This package will allow agriculture as a career to compete with other industries in presenting a modern and professional look to students.



AgZone

AgZone 2019 was held in partnership with the Dalhousie

Agricultural Campus in early June, as it has been for over ten years. Grade 7 students from nearby schools were invited to spend a day at campus learning about agricultural careers and cutting-edge agricultural research and technology in a series of short, hands-on sessions.

A total of 390 students from five schools attended the event, which was offered on three days. Pre- and post-surveys showed that AgZone positively influenced students' perceptions of agriculture and their interest in pursuing a degree or diploma in agriculture after finishing high school. For the great majority of students, it was their first time visiting the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus.

The Agricultural Education team is planning to expand AgZone's geographical reach in 2020-21 through partnerships with other post-secondary institutions in the province.

“ This was a fantastic presentation – the students were motivated and interested in all the talks and activities. I'd love to continue bringing students here each year! ”

- Teacher

Program Budget

Revenue

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
Canadian Agricultural Partnership	\$97,158.14
Agriculture in the Classroom – Canada	\$7,265.00
Total	\$104,423.14

Expenses

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Training	\$15,238.51
Capacity Building of Teachers and School Staff	\$651.51
Farmer/Agricultural Professional Communications Training	\$14,587.52
Career Promotion	\$16,326.41
AgZone	\$3,201.20
Career Video	\$8,950.60
Career Fair Kit Materials	\$4,082.61
Resources for Schools	\$92.00
School Programs	\$62,916.14
Chick Hatch	\$14,056.60
Indoor School Gardens	\$20,426.48
All Kinds of Apples	\$9,273.34
Planting a Promise	\$2,530.17
Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month	\$15,879.55
Other	\$750.00
Work with Under-Represented Communities	\$2,677.08
French Translation	\$2,277.08
Other Initiatives	\$400.00
GenAg	\$8,287.25
Total	\$105,445.39



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