

Plant Your Roots Interest Rebate Guidelines

2025-2026

Program Objective

The objective of the Plant Your Roots Interest Rebate is to encourage and support new ownership of commercial farms in Nova Scotia. Program funding is intended to improve the financial stability of beginning farmers in the first years of operation, based on a four-year projected calculation of eligible loan interest on new loans only.

Eligible Applicants

Stream 1: Beginning farmers

- New farmers who have owned a farm business for less than five years and have not yet achieved \$30,000 in farm revenue.

Stream 2: Commercial farm purchases

- New farmers who are purchasing their first commercial farm or purchasing at least 25% interest in a commercial farm for the first time.

We support the development of diverse and inclusive industries. We welcome individuals from all equity-deserving communities including but not limited to women, persons with disabilities, Black and African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq, Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQI+ and racialized individuals, to apply to programming.

Program Criteria

Stream 1: Beginning farmers must:

- be starting their first farm business with the goal of reaching a commercial scale level (> \$30,000 gross farm sales) within 5 years.
- work with their local Business Development Officer or Agricultural Representative on their business plan and income projections.
- reach a minimum level of annual gross income by March 2030. The level of annual gross income required will be equivalent to the amount of rebate received.
- be currently registered under the *Farm Registration Act*.
- be actively farming in the program year and applicant must be 19 years of age or older.
- be a resident of Nova Scotia.

Stream 2: New farmers purchasing a commercial farm must:

- be purchasing an existing commercial farm (100% interest) or purchasing interest in a commercial farm (minimum 25% interest) for the first time. The eligible farming income will be based on the Farm Registration income level.
- if purchasing interest in a commercial farm, applicants must have obtained at least 25% ownership of the farm within 6 months of this application AND be borrowing money for one of the following purposes:
 - innovative technologies with a focus on labour efficiencies
 - technologies supporting local food production
 - commercial farm purchases
 - investment in properties to create active farm locations or reactivate viable farmland
- reach a minimum level of annual gross income by March 2030. The level of annual gross income required will be equivalent to the amount of rebate received, proportionate to the ownership percentage in the farm business.
- be currently registered under the *Farm Registration Act*.
- be actively farming in the program year and applicant must be 19 years of age or older.
- be a resident of Nova Scotia.

Financial Assistance

Applicants can apply to receive Program funding to a maximum of \$100,000. Program funding will be determined by a calculation of the projected loan interest over a four-year period.

The following criteria must be met:

- Application must be received **within 6 months of the date the loan offer is accepted by the applicant.**
- The applicant must provide a copy of their loan agreement that includes all the following:
 - loan details (must include loan amount and purpose);
 - loan amortization; and
 - interest rate and interest rate calculation for the four years of the loan duration.
- Qualifying loans must include a fixed interest rate.

Additional Eligibility Requirements

- The program is designed to support new farmers taking out first-time commercial farm loans.
 - If applying to Stream 1: Beginning farmer, a business plan with income projections must be included.
 - If applying to Stream 2: Commercial Farm Purchases, loans from lenders that are not farm-focused may be considered but must be accompanied by a business plan and income projections

Note: This program is anticipated to be offered again in 2026-27 and 2027-28. However, programs may be modified or discontinued based on budget availability, industry feedback, and government priorities.

Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs are costs that will not be compensated under this program and include but are not limited to, the following:

- variable interest rate loans
- refinancing of existing loans
- operating lines of credit
- residential mortgages
- secondary financing (e.g. second mortgages)

Application Process

To apply for the Plant Your Roots Interest Rebate:

- Submit a complete application within 6 months of the date the loan offer is accepted by the applicant and by February 15, 2026.

Application Intake	Activity Period
April 24, 2025 – February 15, 2026	Within 6 months of the accepted loan offer

Note: Applicants may only complete one application for this program. Farms that previously received benefits under FarmNEXT and Plant Your Roots Interest Rebate will not be eligible.

Note 2: Applicants new to Programs since 2023 must complete the Program Funding Registration form. Returning applicants must update the form as needed with any changes to business information including contact information, structure, commodities, environmental farm plan and Premise ID.

Approval Process

1. Applications will be reviewed by the Department of Agriculture.
2. If approved, applicants will receive a **Letter of Agreement (LOA)** that identifies the Program funding offered, and the terms and conditions under which Program funding is approved.
3. The applicant is responsible for reporting any errors in the Program funding amounts provided in the LOA.
4. Review, sign and return the LOA to Programs within **30 days** of the date of the LOA or your Program funding will be forfeited.
5. The Program funding will be issued to the financial institution managing the loan which was applied for.

Note: Approval of applications is subject to availability of Program funding. The total amount of Program funding awarded to each applicant, or to associated applicants, may be limited at the discretion of the Department of Agriculture to ensure opportunities for additional applicants to access Program funding.

Repayment Agreement

The applicant will be required to repay the amount of benefit received through this program if the farm, farmland or assets relating to the eligible loan are sold, or if the farming operation is discontinued for any reason within a **five-year** period from the date of loan/program approval.

Applicants who do not meet their minimum level of gross revenue by March 2030 (determined by their approved Program funding amount) will be required to repay the difference between their Program funding approved and their gross revenue.

- E.g.: Stream 1 applicants receiving \$30,000 from the program must achieve a gross revenue of at least \$30,000 by March 2030. If their gross revenue is \$25,000, they must repay \$5,000.
- E.g.: Stream 2 applicants receiving \$50,000 from the program must achieve a gross revenue of at least \$50,000 by March 2030. If an applicant purchases 25% ownership in a farm business and receives an interest rebate of \$100,000, the applicant will be expected to have an income level of \$400,000 by March 2030.

Authority

The Department of Agriculture shall have the authority to deny an application if the application does not meet the requirements described in these Program Guidelines or there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information.

Evaluation and Audit

Review and evaluation of projects may be carried out by the Department of Agriculture or other parties chosen by the Department of Agriculture for the purpose of audit, analysis, evaluation, program development and determining financial assistance. This review and evaluation process may be conducted prior to project commencement, during work and/or upon project completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

Contact Information

Submit all documents to Programs at the address or email below. For more information, contact Programs or your regional office.

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

Programs Office

74 Research Drive

Bible Hill, Nova Scotia B6L 2R2

Telephone: 902-893-6377

Toll Free: 1-866-844-4276

Email: prm@novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture Regional Offices		
Western (Covering West Hants, Kings, Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, Queens, and Lunenburg counties)	Yarmouth	902-223-8085
	Digby	902-638-2395
	Kentville	902-679-6021
	Lunenburg	902-634-7575
Eastern (Covering Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants, Halifax - including HRM, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, Richmond, Inverness, Cape Breton, and Victoria counties)	Truro	902-893-6575
	Nappan	782-370-2278
	Antigonish	902-863-7180
	Sydney	902-563-2000