

# Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Competitive. Innovative. Resilient.

## Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program Guidelines

2025-2026



## Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a 5-year, \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency 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% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

In Nova Scotia, \$46 million will be invested through a federal-provincial partnership that is linked to five program streams: 1) Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness; 2) Climate Change and Environment; 3) Market Development and Trade; 4) Science, Research, and Innovation; and 5) Resiliency and Public Trust.

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 Objective

The objective of the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program is to increase the environmental resiliency of agricultural landscapes by accelerating the adoption of on-farm land use and management practices that maximize provisions of multiple ecological goods and services. Ecological goods and services are the benefits society derives from healthy functioning ecosystems. This includes the maintenance and provision of healthy soil and water resources, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, as well as adapting to the impacts of climate change (e.g. increasing carbon storage and resilience to floods and droughts).

Specific outcomes for this program include:

- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions
- Improved soil health
- Increased conservation and restoration of critical wildlife habitat
- Strengthened resilience of agricultural lands
- Improved water quality

Projects must provide an incremental benefit in ecological goods and services.

## Eligible Applicants

- Farms
- Mi'kmaq conducting farming activities in Mi'kmaq communities
- Agricultural industry organizations

## Program Criteria

**Farms must:**

- 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.

- have a completed and current (within five years) Environmental Farm Plan (EFP).
  - Schedule A and Schedule B of the Environmental Farm Plan (certain projects applied for must be listed on these)
- indicate their Parcel Identification Number (PID) for their project location. For help with finding your PID, you can contact your regional office or visit: <https://nsfa-fane.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Where-to-Find-Your-Land-PID.pdf>

**Note:** The Nova Scotia Environmental Farm Plan website at <http://www.nsfa-fane.ca/efp/> contains a number of tools, factsheets, and other resources to assist producers in incorporating these and other environmental considerations into their everyday business decisions.

#### Eligible lands must:

- be privately owned farmland, including all managed lands for agricultural production (e.g., crop land, grazing, orchards, etc.), as well as associated wetlands, woodlots, yard sites, associated with farm entities/operations.
- be rented for agricultural production from another private third party.
- be Federal, Provincial, Municipal, or Territorial Crown Land, under lease for the purpose of agricultural practices.
- be Indigenous lands being managed for the purpose of agricultural production.

## Financial Assistance

Program funding will be allocated according to each stream. All payments will be made in the 2025–2026 fiscal unless specified in the program agreement. See detailed streams below.

#### Stream 1: Reduced Tillage

Equipment	Maximum Funding
\$200/acre <b>OR</b> 50% cost share up to the maximum*	\$30,000
\$40/acre for limestone up to the maximum (with equipment purchase)	\$4,000

\*Projects will be approved on the lesser of \$200/acre that is converted to reduced tillage or at 50% cost share up to \$30,000.

#### Stream 2: Pollinator Habitat

On Cropland only	Maximum Funding
\$600/acre for areas over 0.5 acres  Payment will be split with half (\$300/acre) provided initially for project establishment and \$300/acre paid in a future year of the program for maintenance (year 4 or 5).	\$10,000

**Stream 3: Buffers and Shelterbelts**

Reviewed on a case-by-case basis	Maximum Funding
100% of the establishment costs for creating or widening of buffers 100% of the costs of remote watering (nose pumps, solar pump) if installed at the same time as the riparian zone	\$1,500/acre \$1,500/remote watering project
For riparian areas only, \$5,000/acre of crop land taken out of production. A 10-year conservation agreement will be required, and the land-rent payment will be made in one payment in year 4 or 5 of Sustainable CAP.  For example, a 10m wide buffer project in 2025 along a 300m stretch of river would yield a \$3,700 payment in 2027.	\$5,000/acre

**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.

**Note 2:** Quotes are required for equipment and must be provided with the application.

**Note 3:** Applications will be evaluated on GHG emissions reduction and prior Program funding awarded to the applicant.

## Eligible Expenses

The following items are eligible for this program:

Stream 1: Reduced Tillage
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>An agricultural management approach that aims to minimize the frequency or intensity of tillage operations to promote economic and environmental benefits. This can include zero tillage, reduced tillage and strip tillage.</p> <p>The objective of the reduced tillage stream includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved soil and water quality, carbon sequestration, climate change adaptation, biodiversity, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>• increased crop yield associated with moisture conservation, reduced erosion, improved soil organic matter, and better management of nutrients, crop residue, and pests.</li> <li>• reduced labour and equipment costs associated with doing less tillage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Eligible Expenses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment: Seeding and post seeding implements for low disturbance placement of seed and fertilizer for transition to reduced or zero tillage.</li> <li>• Limestone as a one-time support payment to help establish a reduced tillage system. This is only eligible if you are purchasing a piece of equipment for transition to reduced or zero tillage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producers must show a 3-year cropping plan indicating reduced tillage.</li> <li>• Limestone funding is contingent on implementation of reduced till practices and the number of acres reported that were converted to reduced till.</li> <li>• Cover crop rotation must be implemented to support reduced tillage.</li> <li>• Equipment or items funded or eligible to be funded under On-Farm Climate Action Fund will not be eligible.</li> </ul>

## Stream 2: Pollinator Habitat

### Description

Promoting pollinator habitat supports climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity.

The objective of the pollinator habitat stream includes:

- improved pollination service provided by wild (unmanaged) and managed bees by: a) increasing floral diversity and ensuring continuous and diverse bloom; b) increasing undisturbed habitat/ground; c) increasing nesting opportunities for tunnel-nesting bees; and d) providing pollinator refugia.
- increased abundance of beneficial insects and host plants important for pest management.
- improved cost efficiency (e.g., removal of marginal crop land from production and/or improvement of produce quality from enhanced pollination).
- improve wildlife habitat.

### Eligible Expenses

- Establishment of pollinator strips or other perennial cover for pollinator habitat or other biodiversity purposes in fields or in field margins of existing cropland.
- Purchases of pollinator seed mix:
  - Seeding mixes should target multiple different species of pollinator-friendly flowering plants, including wildflowers, legumes, and/or trees and shrubs with bloom times throughout the season. More than 6 species is encouraged.
- In-kind or contract labour for planting and maintenance of pollinator habitat.

### Additional Requirements

- The pollinator habitat must be created on cropland that was planted or considered to be planted to an agricultural commodity in four of the previous six crop years from 2019-2024. Grassland is not eligible.
- Acres selected for pollinator habitat must be at least 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres).
- The pollinator habitat must be maintained for the duration of the contract.
- Only 30% of the pollinator habitat can be mowed per year and should not be mowed until the end of the season to maximize habitat potential.
- Any seed mix used must not contain species listed in the *Nova Scotia Agricultural Weed Control Act* as a Noxious Weed.
- Pollinator habitat installations over 20 acres will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### Stream 3: Buffers and Shelterbelts

#### Description

Buffers support climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, water quality, and biodiversity. Buffers and shelterbelts can also provide improved habitat on highly sensitive areas of the landscape.

The objective of the buffers and shelterbelts stream includes:

- protection of aquatic life.
- maintaining the quality of the surface water supply.
- providing habitat for biodiversity.
- providing extensive upland ecosystems.
- protection of soil, crops, livestock (including bees), and infrastructure from climatic conditions.

#### Eligible Expenses

- Creation or widening of buffers (grasses, trees or shrubs) in agricultural fields adjacent to surface water sources, as well as other actions to protect existing riparian areas such as reshaping of edges and fields.
  - Grass, plant, shrub and tree establishment costs (requires a 5-year conservation agreement).
  - Material costs, arms-length labour, and contractor costs are eligible.
  - Livestock fencing along the field/riparian edge (must be suitable to exclude livestock from the riparian area and only the length of the riparian area would be covered).
  - Species providing an agricultural value are not eligible.
  - Payment will be made in the year of project completion.
- Establishment of shelterbelts or tree buffers for farmyards, livestock facilities, and fields as well as intercropping with trees on annual cropland.
  - Eligible activities can include maintenance of existing windbreaks/shelterbelts that improve/maintain function.
  - Replacement of old shelterbelts is eligible where the current shelterbelt in place is unhealthy.

\*Riparian area pertains to the area along the edges of a river, stream, or other watercourse.

#### Additional Requirements

- Projects on land without a riparian buffer must have a minimum of 5 metres of new buffer.
- Trees and shrubs cannot be planted on agricultural marshland.
- Tree/shrub species should remain on the landscape for their natural lifespan (i.e. not harvested). Coppicing or pollarding can be permitted if appropriate (but not funded). Species should also be native to the area.
- Projects should be greater than 0.5 acres, smaller projects may be eligible on a case-by-case basis
- Watershed based projects representing larger acreages may receive priority.



### Additional Expense Eligibility Requirements

- Used equipment must be purchased from a recognized dealer and be in good condition. Applicants must identify at time of application if they are purchasing used equipment, and these applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Program funding will only be offered on transactions (invoices) that do not involve a supplier/service provider that is associated with the applicant, unless it is proven that an associated supplier/service provider is the only registered company providing that service in the area. In such cases that it is necessary to proceed with an associated supplier/service provider, the applicant must apply for a pre-approval before proceeding or submitting a claim to ensure that the associated costs will be approved for reimbursement.

### Ineligible Expenses

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

- travel expenses
- administrative/general overhead
- buildings/building modifications/sea containers
- production expansion activities
- in-kind contributions
- multiple pieces of equipment per applicant with the same function
- purchase of ongoing software licensing costs or fees
- purchase of standard software programs
- operating expenses/existing staff wages/salaries
- small hand tools
- HST

### Application Process

To apply for the Resilient Agricultural Landscape program:

- Submit a complete application by May 31, 2025.

Application Intake	Activity Period	Claim Deadline
April 24, 2025 - May 31, 2025	April 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	January 31, 2026

**Note:** An applicant may only complete one application for this program per year.

**Note 2:** Applicants new to Programs since 2023 must complete the Program Funding Registration (PFR) 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 **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.

**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.

## Claiming Process

1. After Programs receives your signed LOA, a **Program Claim Form** will be sent to you.
2. Complete and sign the Program Claim Form by **January 31, 2026**.
3. Attach copies of all invoices for eligible project costs incurred and paid for by the applicant.
4. Attach proof of payment for each invoice – e-transfer confirmation, debit slips, cleared cheques, or credit card/bank statements. (Invoices marked paid and signed by the supplier are not accepted).
5. Submit your claim with the required supporting documentation to the Programs office by January 31, 2026.

**Note:** No payment will be made for claims under \$20.00.

## Carbon Offsets

Activities funded under Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program will not be entitled to carbon credits/GHG offsets for the duration of the agreed upon land use agreements, after which, producers may be eligible for the Federal and Provincial GHG Offset Systems.

## Land Use Agreement

The Land Use Agreement will identify the agreed upon lands and activities to be undertaken, as well as identify the payment/compensation method and details. For Nova Scotia producers, a Land Use Agreement will be issued for a minimum of five years and in some cases ten years from the date on the signed agreement. Activities undertaken on rented lands should include acknowledgement by landowners, while compensation payments can be delivered to land renters implementing and maintaining the project or the landowner, depending on specific arrangements between land manager and owner.

## Leased Land

Eligible projects must be directly applicable to the registered farm qualifying for Program funding on agricultural land owned or leased. A copy of the long-term lease of at least 10 years or rental agreement must accompany the application for all physical projects applicable to the leased/rented land. It is a condition of approval that the lease be of at least 10 years duration and must last for at least 5 years after the project funding has been received. You must advise us immediately, in writing, if the lease is terminated, if the term of the lease changes or if the identity of the lessor changes in any way (for example, if the lessor assigns the lease or if the lease changes in composition).

## 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, Government of Canada, 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.

## Conflict of Interest

No current or former Federal public servant or public office holders will receive benefits from this funding except in compliance with Conflicts of Interest Act (Canada), the Conflicts of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, or the Federal “Values and Ethics Code” for the public sector and the Federal “Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Post-Employment”. No MP or Senator will be allowed to obtain financial benefit from this funding except in accordance with the Parliament of Canada Act.

## Contact Information

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

**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](mailto:prm@novascotia.ca)

**RALP Coordinator**

Telephone: 902-824-0924  
Email: [Jeff.Wentzell@novascotia.ca](mailto:Jeff.Wentzell@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