

Wild Blueberry and Apple
Harvest Efficiency Program
2024- 2025

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Wild Blueberry and Apple Harvest Efficiency Program supports the modernization of wild blueberry and apple harvesting equipment for growers to reduce labour requirements, increase productivity, and improve profitability.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Registered Farms

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

Farms must:

- be currently registered in the correct income level under the *Farm Registration Act*.
- be actively farming in the program year and applicant must be 19 years of age or older.
- be a wild blueberry and/or apple producer.
- generate an annual eligible gross farming income of \$30,000 or more.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Applicants can apply to receive Program funding up to **30%** of eligible expenses, to a maximum of:

- \$50,000 for harvest assist platforms
- \$27,000 for 60" harvester heads
- \$15,000 for 48" harvester heads and front-mounted push rakes

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Degree of Impact** – Describe how the new equipment will financially impact your business (i.e. reduce costs, increase revenue, improve fruit quality, improve harvested yield, etc.) (50 points)
- **Labour Impact** – Describe how the new equipment will change your labour requirements (25 points)
- **Industry Impact** - Describe the degree to which the new equipment reaches the wider Nova Scotia wild blueberry and/or apple industry (25 points)

Successful applicants must purchase the equipment and submit a claim before March 28, 2025. If the equipment cannot be delivered by March 28, 2025, the applicant can order the equipment, pay a minimum 25% deposit, and submit a claim by March 28, 2025. They will receive half of the approved funding after the first claim. Once the equipment arrives, the applicant can submit a second claim to receive the remaining half of the funding. The second claim must be submitted by September 30, 2025.

Note 1: No more than 100% of non-repayable funding can be received for any eligible project cost incurred and paid for by the applicant. This applies to all Department of Agriculture Programs.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2024-25

Note 2: Applicants who received funding for 48” harvester heads under the 2018-2020 Wild Blueberry Harvest Efficiency Program are only eligible to apply for 60” harvester heads under this Program. Priority will be given to applicants who have not received Program funding under the previous program.

Note 3: 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.

ELIGIBLE EQUIPMENT

Eligible expenses are expenses that will be compensated up to the set percentage rate of 30% of the maximum program funding are as follows:

- 60” and 48” harvester heads for wild blueberries
- Tractor-mounted push rakes for wild blueberries
- Harvest assist platforms for apples

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

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

- Administrative/general overhead
- In-kind contributions
- Used equipment purchases
- Leased equipment
- Operating expenses/existing staff salaries
- Travel
- HST

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the Wild Blueberry and Apple Harvest Efficiency Program:

1. Submit a complete application with all supporting project quotes by **February 19, 2025**.

Application Intake Period	Activity Period	Claiming Deadline
January 24 – February 19, 2025	April 1, 2024- March 28, 2025 – full purchase or deposit	March 28, 2025 – full purchase or deposit
	April 1 – September 30, 2025 – second claim	September 30, 2025 – second claim

Note 1: An applicant may only complete one application per year.

Note 2: Clients new to Programs since 2023 must complete the Program Funding Registration form. Returning clients 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. Review, sign and return the LOA to Programs within **14 days** of the date of the letter or your Program funding will be forfeited.

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 **March 28, 2025**.
3. Attach copies of all invoices for eligible project costs that you have incurred.
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. After Programs receives the first claim, a second **Program Claim Form** will be sent to you.
6. Complete and sign the second Program Claim Form by September 30, 2025 with the same supporting documentation, showing that the equipment has been paid in full.

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

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 Nova Scotia 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please submit all documents to Programs at the address, email or fax number below. For more information, please 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

Fax: 902-893-7579

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