

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Competitive. Innovative. Resilient.

Wild Blueberry Equipment Efficiency Program Guidelines

2023-2024



Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) is a five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5-billion investment by federal-provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and \$2.5 billion in cost-shared programs and activities by federal, provincial and territorial governments.

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 Objectives

The Wild Blueberry Equipment Efficiency Program is to enable producers to invest in equipment and processes that provide labour efficiencies, reduce cost of production, increase yields, and support more efficient use of inputs. Specific outcomes for this program include:

- improve productivity through the development and adoption of technology, digitization, and artificial intelligence.
- enhance labour efficiencies and automation.

Eligible Applicants

- Nova Scotia wild blueberry producers
- Mi'kmaq conducting commercial wild blueberry production in Mi'kmaw Communities

Program Criteria

- currently registered in the correct income category under the Farm Registration Act or you are a Mi'kmaq conducting farming activities in Mi'kmaw Communities.
- applicant is at least 19 years of age and actively farming in the program year
- generates an annual eligible gross farm income of \$30,000, including wild blueberry income. The eligible commodity income will be based on the Farm Registration annual income.

Financial Assistance

Applicants can apply for a maximum of **50%** assistance to a maximum of **\$15,000** per year in the Wild Blueberry Equipment Efficiency Program.

Note 1: All program funding is subject to funding availability.

Note 2: 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 Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture Programs.

Note 3: Applicants who applied for auto steer or GPS equipment and installation under the On-Farm Technology Adoption Program cannot apply for the same items under this program.

Eligible Expenses

- Auto steer equipment
- High precision GPS, including upgrades
- Efficient sprayer technology
 - Individual nozzle control
 - Pulse-width modulation upgrade
 - Systems that allow for precision map input
 - Boom width increase with automated boom height and levelling upgrades or retro-fitting booms with automated boom height and levelling upgrades.
- Contractor installation fees

Ineligible Expenses

These include but are not limited to:

- administrative / general overhead
- buildings / building modifications
- small construction tools
- in-kind labour
- multiple pieces of equipment with the same function (e.g. two specialized sprayers)
- ongoing software licensing costs or fees
- computers, tablets
- operating expenses / existing staff salaries
- HST
- travel

Application Process

To apply for the Wild Blueberry Equipment Efficiency Program:

1. Submit a complete application with all supporting documentation by **January 31, 2024**.
2. Eligible project expenses will be recognized within the Activity Period stated in the table below. Please refrain from making purchases before receiving a Letter of Agreement (LOA) from the Programs Office.

| Application Intake | Activity Period | Claim Deadline |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| December 21, 2023 – January 31, 2024 | April 1, 2023 – February 29, 2024 | February 29, 2024 |

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 Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA).
2. If approved, applicants will receive a LOA which identifies the eligible project activities, program funding offered and the terms and conditions under which program funding is approved.
3. Review, sign, and return the LOA to the Programs office within 30 days of the date of the letter or your program funding will be forfeited.

Claiming Process

1. After the Programs office receives your signed Letter of Agreement, a **Program Claim Form** will be sent to you.
2. Complete and sign the Program Claim Form by **February 29, 2024**.
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 the claim deadline.

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

Leased Land

Eligible projects must be directly applicable to the registered farm qualifying for assistance on agricultural land owned or leased. A copy of the long-term lease (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. 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).

Arm's Length Transactions

Program funding will only be offered on transactions (invoices) that involve a supplier/service provider with an arm's-length relationship to the applicant for approved projects. For the purposes of programs, arm's length is defined as individuals who are NOT connected by blood relationship, marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption.

Authority

NSDA shall have the authority to deny an application if there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information or if NSDA believes that an application does not conform to the spirit of the Program.

Evaluation and Audit

Review and evaluation of projects may be carried out by NSDA, Government of Canada or other parties chosen by NSDA 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 or upon project completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

Confidentiality

Applicants consent to the release of their name and the amount of support received under the Program. This specific information is deemed to be public information, to be actively disseminated by NSDA. NSDA may provide any information from an applicant to another public body or a law-enforcement agency in Canada to assist in an investigation, undertaken with a view to a law-enforcement proceeding or from which a law-enforcement proceeding is likely to result. Any other information provided, unless disclosed in the manner and for the purposes stated above, will be subject to the confidentiality and disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act.

Contact Information

Please submit all documents to the Programs office at the address, email or fax number below. For more information, please contact the Programs office 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 | Yarmouth | 902-223-8085 |
| | Digby | 902-638-2395 |
| | Kentville | 902-679-6021 |
| | Lunenburg | 902-634-7575 |
| Eastern | Truro | 902-893-6575 |
| | Nappan | 782-370-2278 |
| | Antigonish | 902-863-7180 |
| | Sydney | 902-563-2000 |