



ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

2024-25

Agriculture

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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Contents

Accountability Statement	1
Measuring Performance	2
Support Local Food.....	2
Improve Institutional Procurement	2
Build Awareness	2
Deliver Operational Supports.....	3
Grow and Strengthen Agriculture.....	3
Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership	3
Provincial Programming	4
Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board.....	4
Increase Environmental Sustainability and Prepare for Climate Change.....	5
Prepare for Emergency Events	5
Business Risk Management	6
Agriculture Industry Performance	7
Financial Results	8
Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act	9
Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act	9

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Agriculture outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department of Agriculture management.

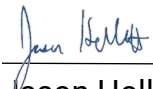
We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Agriculture 2024-2025 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Morrow", is written over a horizontal line.

Honourable Greg Morrow
Minister of Agriculture

Original signed by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Hollett", is written over a horizontal line.

Jason Hollett
Deputy Minister

Measuring Performance

A strong and resilient agriculture sector is essential to advancing Nova Scotia's self-sufficiency and promoting economic growth across rural communities. In 2024-25, the Department of Agriculture continued to support the agriculture and agri-food industries through local food initiatives, programming such as the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, and by enhancing environmental sustainability and emergency preparedness.

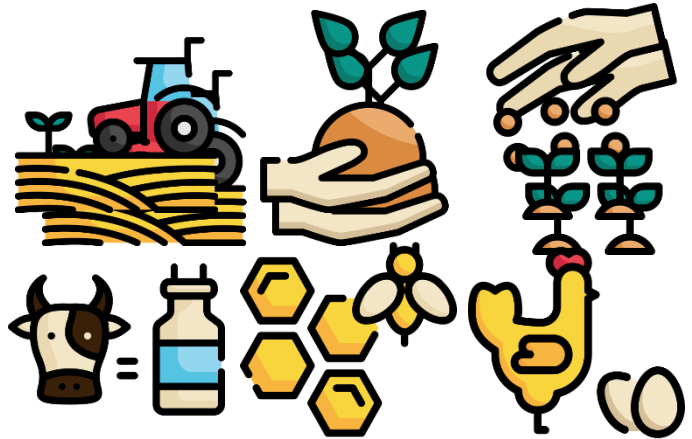
The Department of Agriculture undertook the following priority initiatives in 2024-2025:

Support Local Food

Improve Institutional Procurement

The Department promoted local food consumption through projects aimed at increasing access and awareness in public institutions. In 2024–25, three projects were completed in partnership with organizations across the province:

- ▶ Organic Nova Scotia: Raised awareness of organic products, reaching over 650 post-secondary students at Acadia University.
- ▶ Cape Breton Food Hub: Developed Individually Quick Frozen products, expanded its distribution network, and achieved a 73% increase in local food sales.
- ▶ Halifax Regional Centre for Education: Launched Fresh Food Carts in six underserved schools, serving 8,282 meals to over 1,400 students during a 12-week pilot.



To help local suppliers scale up to meet institutional demand, the Department launched the Institutional Supplier Investment Program. Funding supported Nova Scotia businesses to fulfill contracts with institutions including Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health, and Dalhousie University.

A province-wide measurement initiative was introduced in 2024-25 to track institutional food spending. With participation from 78 facilities across six departments and collaboration with 18 vendors, analysis of over 86,000 transactions showed that 18% of food purchases were sourced from Nova Scotia.

Build Awareness

The Department launched several promotional campaigns and supported key events, including:

- ▶ Two promotional videos spotlighting local agriculture:
 - [Fields to Forks](#), created in partnership with Horticulture Nova Scotia, showcased local horticulture and reached over 623,000 impressions across TV and online platforms
 - A second video, produced with the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia, highlighted the province's Christmas tree farming industry and opportunities for new entrants
- ▶ Three campaigns under the Nova Scotia Beef Initiative, including:
 - A partnership with a local chef at the Nova Scotia Stampede
 - A Dine Around event with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia

- Support for the Annapolis Valley Burger Wars

The Department supported 11 signature food and beverage events and hosted the second *Digital Harvest* conference, drawing over 140 attendees. Additionally, 12 rural community events that showcased local food received a combined \$16,000 in funding through the Rural Community Events Initiative.

The Department continued its close collaboration with the Department of Growth and Development to advance the Nova Scotia Loyal brand. Key achievements in 2024–25 included:

- ▶ Developing a comprehensive resource guide to help public institutions increase their use of local food
- ▶ Hosting 12 in-store tastings at grocery retailers to promote local food and beverage producers
- ▶ Transitioning the Buy Local Directory to the Nova Scotia Loyal website to improve accessibility
- ▶ Registering over 1,000 local businesses under the Nova Scotia Loyal brand

Deliver Operational Supports

The Department continued to deliver key programs to ensure that food produced in Nova Scotia meets consumers’ expectations, including Meat Inspection, Farm Animal Welfare, Pest Management, and Dairy and Laboratory Services. These programs are essential to protecting both farm animal and human health and safety.

In 2024-25, the following key milestones were achieved:



102,629 Farm Animal Carcasses Inspected



Over 60,000 Animal and Plant Lab Samples Tested



Responded to 200 Farm Animal Welfare Complaints



Participated in 6 pesticide emergency use registrations and 95 pesticide label expansions, enabling more cost-effective pest control options.



116 Dairy Farms Inspected

Grow and Strengthen Agriculture

The Department provided a variety of funding programs and financing to support the agriculture sector in 2024-25.

Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership

The [Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership](#) (Sustainable CAP) is a five-year, \$3.5 billion investment by federal, provincial, and territorial governments that aims to support continued innovation, growth, and resiliency in the agriculture sector.

In the second year of Sustainable CAP, the Department invested \$9.25 million to support farmers and agri-businesses across the province. In 2024–25, funding supported the following programs and initiatives:

- ▶ The Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change Program helped 32 farms accelerate the adoption of priority Business Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce environmental risks, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and build climate resilience.
- ▶ The Resilient Agricultural Landscapes Program supported 43 projects, resulting in an estimated reduction of 672.4 tonnes of CO₂ emissions through improved land use and management practices.
- ▶ Direct funding to farms and agri-businesses through seventeen other application-based programs, including Agricultural Research and Innovation, On-Farm Water Management, and Value-Adding Equipment.
- ▶ Partnerships with Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities to support new and traditional agriculture ventures and provide educational events.
- ▶ Additional funding for third-party program delivery by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA), Perennia, and Efficiency Nova Scotia.

Provincial Programming

In addition to Sustainable CAP programming, the Department invested nearly \$4 million through Provincial funding streams in 2024–25 to support Nova Scotia’s agriculture and agri-food sector. This funding supported several multi-year and strategic initiatives, including:

- ▶ The Advancing Clean Technologies for Nova Scotia Program, which helps farmers adopt clean technologies that boost climate resilience and cut greenhouse gas emissions.
- ▶ The Plant Your Roots Interest Rebate Program, designed to encourage and support new ownership of commercial farms in Nova Scotia.
- ▶ The Wine and Grape Industry Development Program, which assists grape growers and farm wineries in adapting to climate change and advancing marketing and training efforts.
- ▶ The Limestone Trucking Assistance Program, which helps farmers offset transportation costs for limestone to improve soil quality and boost productivity.
- ▶ The Wild Blueberry and Apple Harvest Efficiency Program, which provided producers with funding to purchase more efficient harvest equipment.
- ▶ The School Milk Program, which promotes the local dairy industry while supporting the health and education of Nova Scotian children.

Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board

The [Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board](#) (FLB) continues to actively support agriculture and agri-food businesses by offering responsible, flexible lending solutions that drive growth, innovation, and sustainability in the industry. The recently completed economic impact study shows that in 2022-2023, the FLB (including Timber) loan portfolio supported 3,180 full time equivalent employees, \$191.6 million in total provincial GDP, and \$35.8 million in provincial tax revenue.

In 2024-25, the FLB achieved the following milestones:



Approved \$58.3 million in
new lending



Modern record low of
arrears (0.7 per cent)



Total portfolio grew
to over \$312 million

More information on FLB outcomes in 2024-25 can be found in [FLB’s Annual Report](#).

Increase Environmental Sustainability and Prepare for Climate Change

The Department collaborated with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change to advance agriculture-related objectives outlined in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* and the Climate Plan. The following achievements were made in 2024–25:

- Developed the [Nova Scotia Climate Smart Funding webpage](#) with Perennia to provide centralized access to climate-related funding opportunities for the agricultural sector.
- Hosted a Climate Adaptation Panel at the 2025 Ministers Conference: *Innovations in Agriculture, fostering dialogue on building resilience across the sector*.
- Implemented climate adaptation measures across the Christmas tree, horticulture, cattle, and sheep industries.
- Supported the development of new, sector-specific Climate Adaptation Strategies for the wild blueberry, fruit, and bee industries.
- Installed 24 new weather stations as part of the two-year Weather Station Network expansion, enhancing farms' access to accurate weather data, models, and tools to support climate adaptation.
- Helped producers reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and lower their energy costs through the Agriculture Energy Partnership with EfficiencyOne. The program expanded to include a second Onsite Energy Manager, focusing on exhibitions and non-profit agricultural organizations.

Key Achievements in 2024-25 through Agriculture's Onsite Energy Managers:



64 energy saving projects completed



1,786 tonnes/year of CO2 reduced



\$624,000/year in energy savings



\$690,000 in additional incentives provided directly to farmers



Over \$1.1 Million in funding leveraged

Prepare for Emergency Events

In 2024-25, the Department took proactive measures to prepare for extreme weather events, foreign animal disease outbreaks, and other climate-related emergencies, which can cause devastating impacts for the agriculture sector.

In 2024–25, the Department continued to support the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in developing proactive, coordinated responses to disease outbreaks, with a focus on African Swine Fever, Avian Influenza, and Foot and Mouth Disease. The Department's Chief Veterinary Officer led the development of a comprehensive Avian Influenza response plan in collaboration with CFIA, NSFA, Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia, Health and Wellness, and private veterinarians.

The Department worked closely with the NSFA to develop a communications plan and clarify roles and responsibilities leading up to and following emergency events and supported NSFA in hiring an Emergency Response Coordinator. An online Geographic Information System based mapping application was developed to capture post-emergency farm data to track trends and impacts.

Business Risk Management

AgriStability

- Provides support when producers experience large margin declines

AgriInvest

- Provides cash flow to help producers manage income declines

AgriInsurance

- Offers cost-shared insurance against natural hazards

AgriRecovery

- Disaster relief framework to help producers recover after a disaster

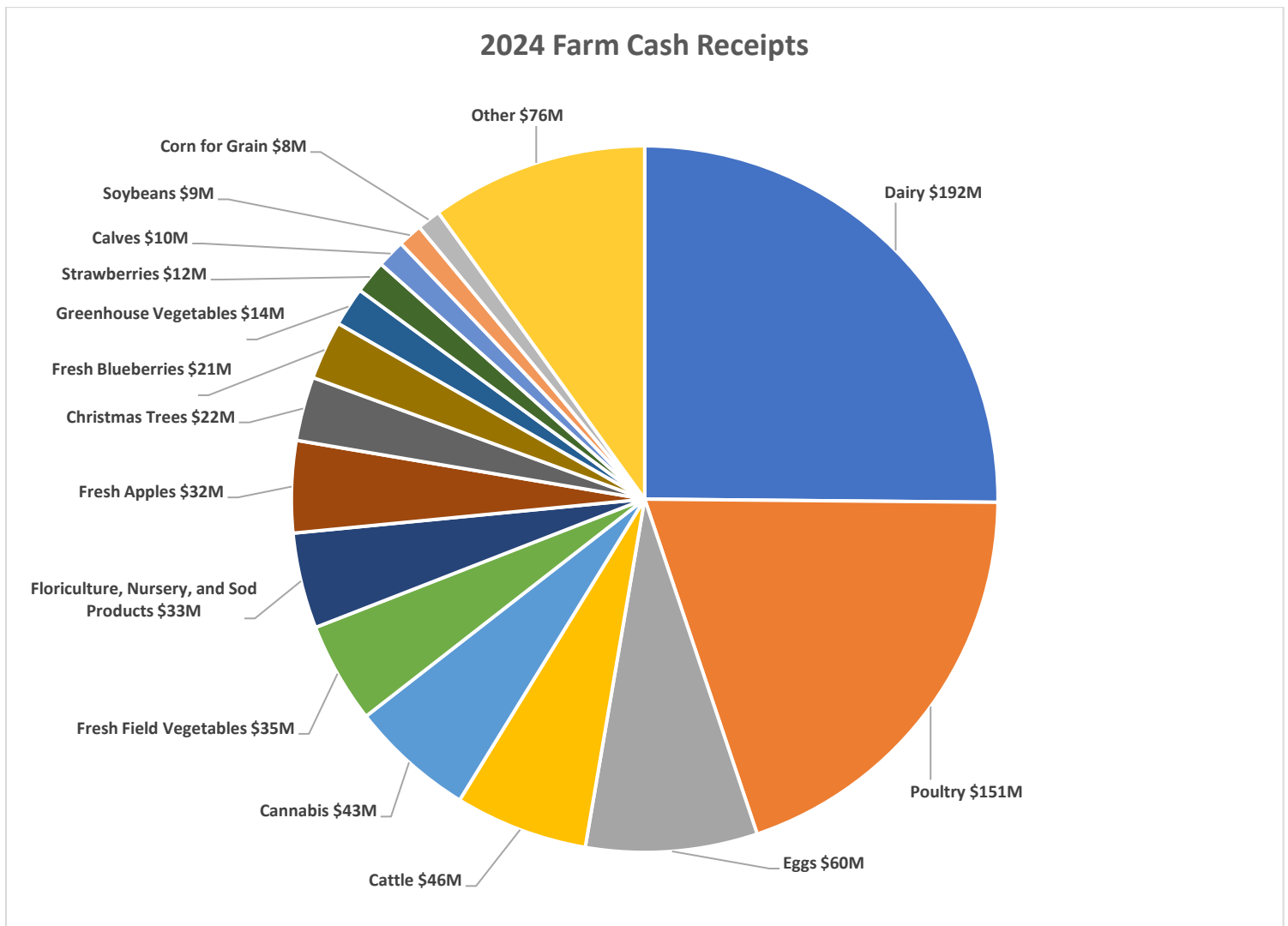
Through Sustainable CAP, BRM programs are available to provide agricultural producers with protection against income and production losses, helping them manage risks that threaten the viability of their farms.

In 2024-25:

- The Department initiated a comprehensive review of BRM tools and engaged in targeted consultations with industry and commodity groups.
- A new BRM Advisor position was established, enabling the expansion and extension of a pilot program that supports Nova Scotia producers in accessing AgriStability through to the end of fiscal year 2027–28.
- The BRM Advisor engaged directly with producers, delivered presentations to commodity and industry organizations, and developed new resources to help producers navigate and make effective use of BRM programs.
- Maritime Livestock Price Insurance Pilot Program was launched, offering price protection to Beef Producers. This is the first price protection insurance offered by the Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission.

Agriculture Industry Performance

Farm cash receipts represent the cash income received from the sale of agricultural commodities as well as direct program payments made to support the agricultural sector. Nova Scotia farm cash receipts increased by 3 per cent in 2024 to \$764 million. Dairy continues to be the top revenue-generating sector at \$192 million, and total receipts for the supply-managed industries, such as dairy, poultry, and eggs, account for just over half of all farm cash receipts in the province. Major contributors to farm cash receipts include:



*The "Other" category consists of commodities that make up less than 1 per cent of total farm cash receipts as well as direct program payments as defined by Statistics Canada.

Financial Results

Departmental Expense Summary (\$ thousands)	2024-2025 Estimate	2024-2025 Actuals	2024-2025 Variance
Program & Service Area			
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	670	630	(40)
Policy and Corporate Services	13,961	13,241	(720)
Agriculture Risk Management and Lending	14,130	25,614	11,484
Agriculture and Food Operations	9,874	10,210	336
Industry Development	8,047	7,963	(84)
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	46,682	57,658	10,976
Additional Information:			
Revenues	4,202	1,494	(2,708)
Fees and Other Charges	1,522	1,252	(270)
Ordinary Recoveries	6,425	5,109	(1,316)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	12,149	7,855	(4,294)
TCA Purchase Requirements	8,343	5,323	(3,020)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	180.9	172.2	(8.7)
<u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanations:</u>			
The Department of Agriculture's expenses were \$11 million or 23.5 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to \$5 million for Innovation Adoption Program, \$5 million for NS beef initiatives and \$1 million for Institutional procurement.			
<u>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</u>			
Net variance consists of a decrease in the federal portion of Disaster Mitigation and Adaption Fund (DMAF) revenues due to underspending in TCA.			
<u>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</u>			
The DMAF Dykeland Upgrade project spans from 2019-2020 to 2027-2028. In the sixth year of the project there continued to be underspending as engineering and planning work continues to be completed.			
<u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u>			
Miscellaneous vacancies across the department.			

Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act

Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Agriculture:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-2025
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A