



2-150, allée Woodside Lane  
Fredericton (NB) E3C 2R9  
506-452-8101  
[alliance@fermeNBfarm.ca](mailto:alliance@fermeNBfarm.ca)  
[www.fermenbfarm.ca](http://www.fermenbfarm.ca)

## January 2018- eActivity Report

### Rapport d'activité électronique– janvier 2018

*To promote a sustainable and prosperous  
agriculture industry  
Favoriser une industrie de l'agriculture  
durable et rentable*

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## January 2018 eActivity Report

### 1) 2018 Annual General Meeting- Agriculture & Food Evolution

#### **Press Release**

At the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick (AANB), held on January 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, delegates and guests gathered in great numbers to review the AANB's 2017 accomplishments, identify future challenges facing New Brunswick agriculture and to hear what lies ahead in 2018 for the AANB.

“2017 has been a very interesting and challenging year for agriculture, we were called to protect the interest of our members on multiple fronts at both federal and provincial levels in addition to fronts and acted proactively on key policies and programs. We are pleased that we were successful in convincing government on keeping the existing motive fuel taxation exemption that will minimize the financial impacts of the Climate Change Act and regulations. However, we are certainly very disappointed to not have made headways on agricultural land protection”, said Christian Michaud, AANB President.

President Michaud particularly noted that during the meeting, Hon. Andrew Harvey recognized the economic importance of our sector to the province and as a major employment creator. The Minister provided a brief overview of the upcoming Canadian Agriculture Partnership Framework that will be in place in April 2018, highlighted key initiatives than took place in 2017 such as the new Ag in the Classroom Program and the establishment of the Cooperation Agri-Food in NB cooperative and committed to continuing working toward the implementation of the Agriculture Land Policy. Michaud said delegates were especially pleased that Minister Harvey joined them for the majority of the meeting in addition to attending the banquet.

Lance Stockbrugger provided the delegates and other guests a better understanding of the taxation changes being contemplated by the Federal government and how these changes will impact producers.

Faith Matchett, Farm Credit Canada, once again, left the audience with great information and provided an overview of food trends, consumer preferences, technology changes and how the agricultural industry can adapt to meet these.

An update from several of our industry partners was received throughout the meeting on the following topics: Environmental Farm Plan, Sunrise Partnership for Agriculture Development and Education, Provincial Climate Change Act, Canadian Agriculture Partnership Framework and many other topics. Delegates also discussed and approved a number of resolutions that will

give direction to the Board on issues and challenges the AANB should address in the year ahead.

A number of producers and individuals were recognized for their contribution to New Brunswick Agriculture.



James Robb Award Gaëtan Chiasson presented by Ag Alliance President Mike Bouma



New Entrant Award Steve & Madison Bates presented by Emily Simms from Farm Credit Canada



Innovation Award Jacques Laviolette presented by Jay Labonte from Farm Credit Canada



Cyndy Jewett Crowne Plaza Hospitality Ambassador Award presented by  
Ag Alliance President Mike Bouma



Agriculture Education Ambassador Award Sue Rickards Presented by Ag Alliance President Mike Bouma

Christian Michaud was elected as President of the Alliance. Also on the Alliance Executive:

- Lisa Ashworth, First Vice-President
- Dwayne Perry, Second Vice-President
- Marc Ouellet, Secretary; and
- Mike Slocum, Treasurer.

The complete list of Directors is enclosed.

## **2) Meeting between Alliance's Executive and Hon. Gilles LePage, Minister of Labour, Employment and Population Growth**

The Alliance executive met with Minister LePage in January to discuss the employment standards disparities with other provinces and the workmen's compensation rate increases over the last years. The meeting gave us the opportunity to explain the unique circumstances with the agricultural industry versus other industries when it comes to over time for short periods of the year. In order to measure the extent of the situation, the Alliance will work with the department staff to develop a survey that will be circulated in our next eActivity report. Further discussions with the department will take place once the survey is completed.

As a next step to address the issues surrounding the workmen's compensation rates will be to request a meeting with Worksafe NB's Board of Directors.

We were also informed that employers can contact the Issues Resolution Office (IRO) to request assistance if there is a disagreement with a WorkSafe NB claim decision or the service received. Click [here](#) for more information.

## **3) After Climate Change Act - Column**

December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Agriculture holds great promise for the Atlantic region. It is a pivotal economic sector, the foundation which will anchor us throughout the onslaught of climate change. A longer growing season and sufficient precipitation, along with active stewardship of the land, place Atlantic agriculture at the forefront of future development. Farmers, accustomed to the vagaries of weather and markets, tend to adapt to change because it is a fact of daily life, so their interests are often subordinated to other sectors whose resistance to change is more tenacious and whose voices are more strident.

Today's farmers are facing a tsunami of fiscal and regulatory challenges while trying to remain competitive, grow their operations, create further employment, innovate and invest in their businesses to ensure sustainability and meet market demands. The province of New Brunswick recently introduced its Climate Change Act that will come into force on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Before its introduction, the provincial government had revealed no plan for carbon pricing mechanism, creating concerns over its mystery and its potential immediate and damaging impacts on all sectors. Agriculture especially, needs ample time to make structural changes due to the unpredictability of its primary partner, Mother Nature. As we understand, the focus will be toward large emitters, with the goal of minimizing impacts on consumers.

Our organization is pleased that there is recognition for our sector and that Registered Professional Agricultural Producers (RPAP) will continue to benefit from the existing taxation exemptions for marked and regular fuel. It is important to note that marked fuel (e.g. tax exempt diesel) must not be used in vehicles registered for highway use as this will result in fines and/or penalties of \$1000 for the first offence. More information can be found on our website [www.fermeNBfarm.ca](http://www.fermeNBfarm.ca) under the Gasoline and Motive Fuel section.

However, many uncertainties remains, the Alliance wants to make it clear to government that meaningful consultations must take place while developing regulations, the terms of the climate change fund and whether the federal government will deem the province's proposed climate change plan acceptable. There is worry that beyond international competitiveness concerns, there may not be a level playing field interprovincially when comes the time to develop regulations and the terms of reference to the Climate Change Fund.

Over the last few years, the Agricultural Alliance has made presentations to the provincial Legislative Committee on Climate Change and the Senate Standing Committee to express our concerns and offer recommendations for carbon pricing, Although representatives from the Department of Environment and Local Government have engaged with our organization, it is not entirely clear how the Climate Change Action Plan will take advantage of how agriculture could contribute to the achievement of climate change goals, such as carbon sequestration or adapting through implementations of beneficial management practices.

Regardless of the regulations being contemplated, actions envisioned by government to achieve its emissions reduction goals and the final back stop regulations implemented by the federal government, we should be provided with details and allowed an opportunity to actively participate in its development. By keeping us in the dark, government runs the risk of designing a mechanism that will result in unintended harmful consequences to the agriculture sector.

Agriculture is an essential economic sector in New Brunswick, providing raw product for consumption and value-added processing. Strategic investment is required in order to achieve our full potential for providing low-carbon food and agricultural products to an expanding global population. Better management of the known risks, the promotion of research and innovation and the implementation of measures for adaptation will generate the resilient agriculture industry of the future. Communication and cooperation must pave the way forward.

#### **4) Snowmobile and Trespassing - Column**

January 10<sup>th</sup> 2018

Snowmobiles roaring across a frozen landscape of field and forest is a classic image of the joy of a Maritime winter. But what offers pleasure to the snowmobilers, and photo ops to the promoters of seasonal tourism, brings frustration, anger and expense to the farmers over whose land they are skimming. This is not a harmless sport. In most cases, it's probably not deliberately destructive; it is a combination of ignorance of its impact and/or thoughtless disregard for its consequences.

The list of what snowmobilers don't know, or choose not to consider, is long. First, trespassing on farm land is illegal. It is specifically prohibited by the *Trespass Act* and punishable by fines, but it is not enforced with sufficient vigour to alter the behaviour of oblivious snowmobilers.

Second, NB Power right-of-ways are not public trails. They are negotiated with farmers who have permitted the power lines to cross their land. Trespassing restrictions apply here as well as to all private land.

Third, snowmobilers may believe they are doing no harm because the farmland is shielded by the snow cover. While undisturbed snow provides insulation to the underlying crops, snow packed down by tracks loses its protective power, resulting in the death of plants by freezing. Two other unrecognized hazards are litter, which can break farm equipment driving over it or kill livestock which ingests it, and the threat of spreading diseases from farm to farm on the tracks of the snow machine. Preventing and addressing biosecurity issues are priorities for producers, as they can incur significant expense, but they are invisible issues to the casual snowmobiler.

Finally, snowmobilers assume that farmers are not at work outdoors during the winter, so it is safe to proceed without caution. But farmers busy with maintenance and daily chores must be alert to the danger of a high-speed machine, especially in driveways or around sharp turns, whose driver is unaware of their presence.

How can farmers effectively address these challenges? There are two primary tools for this purpose, enforcement and education. The first step is to activate the current trespassing legislation with sufficiently serious penalties to encourage compliance. Unfortunately, the government's Off-Road Vehicle Enforcement Unit is woefully undermanned to deal with the number of complaints from farmers. More resources are needed.

In addition, the Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick is advocating for the requirement that written consent from the producer or landowner must be obtained before entering private farmland. Since trespassing continues to increase while prohibition remains unenforced, AANB has also recommended that farmers should not have to pay property tax, in order to offset crop losses and property damage due to trespassing activity.

Other AANB recommendations to government are related to education. One seeks to improve efforts to increase public awareness of the private nature of power line right-of-ways to eliminate unintentional trespassers who believe that these areas permit public access. One suggestion is the promotion of signs which prohibit access; government can help to raise awareness but farmers need to display the signs prominently.

Another recommendation refers to the need for government staff to be fully and accurately informed about the trespassing and damage issue. Inconsistent information transmitted to the public serves only to create confusion without discouraging trespassing. Snowmobilers should know the law, and farmers should ensure that their lands are clearly posted. These two steps would greatly reduce damage to farmland.

Governments, farmers and communities have been good to snowmobilers, promoting the enjoyment of this unique and popular winter sport. It is important to note that many farmers are providing opportunities for snowmobile trails on their property and these are a privilege. We appreciate respect and staying on trails is crucial for these to be kept open. Equal support

should be given to farmers who are vulnerable to the snowmobilers' sense of entitlement. Encouraging a recreational luxury should not take precedence over protecting a basic need.

### **5) NEW!- Watercourses and Wetlands and Agricultural Activities Fact Sheet**

Watercourses and regulated wetlands can be found throughout New Brunswick, including on agricultural lands. The Clean Water Act defines a watercourse as the full width and length, including the bed, banks, sides and shoreline, or any part of a river, creek, stream, spring, brook, lake, reservoir, channel, ditch or other natural or artificial channel open to the atmosphere, the primary function of which is the conveyance or containment of water, whether the flow be continuous or not. Regulated wetlands are characterized by areas that are saturated with water either permanently or seasonally and have soils and vegetation which have adapted to wet conditions. Regulated wetlands are an important part of an agricultural landscape because they perform important ecological functions, such as habitat for pollinating insects, flood buffering, erosion control, water storage and filtering of surface runoff while maintaining or enhancing biodiversity.

As per the Clean Water Act: Wetland means land that:

- (a) either periodically or permanently, has a water table at, near or above the land's surface or that is saturated with water, and (b) sustains aquatic processes as indicated by the presence of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation and biological activities adapted to wet conditions.

This fact sheet offers information on watercourses and regulated wetlands and how to best manage proposed new and existing agricultural activities located in proximity to a water course or regulated wetland. Click [here](#) to continue reading.

### **6) Plastic Mulch Bulk Program**

As a service to its registered paid members, the Agricultural Alliance of N.B. is offering a bulk purchase program for plastic mulch. Once all orders are in, six drop off points nearest to your destination will be decided. For more information and obtain the price list please call Pamela at the office (506-452-8101) or [alliance@fermeNBfarm.ca](mailto:alliance@fermeNBfarm.ca)

### **7) Environmental Farm Plan**

Friendly reminder that EFPs are "living documents" and should be updated every five years, or sooner to integrate new developments (e.g. construction of a new barn) or technologies, or to make adjustments as conditions change in your enterprise. John Russell will also be in the following areas updating Environmental Farm Plans. If you wish to update your plan, or if you are new to the Environmental Farm Plan, please contact Camille Coulombe at 506-452-8101 or [efp-pfe@fermenbfarm.ca](mailto:efp-pfe@fermenbfarm.ca).

1 (North-West) Two first weeks of February 2018
6 (Centre-West/ Wicklow) Two last weeks of February 2018
4 (Centre-South/ Sussex) First two weeks of March 2018

## 8) Notices

**Atlantic Canada Tractor Safety Survey** - Please see the attached recruitment email and tractor safety survey.

# SURVEYING FARMERS ABOUT TRACTOR SAFETY



Researchers with Memorial University's SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Research are working in partnership with the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute of Agrivita Canada Inc. and Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada to understand **tractor use, tractor safety, and the use of Rollover Protection Structures (ROPS)** on farms in Atlantic Canada (see attached flyer).

A short (10-15 minute) online survey for farmers with tractors in Atlantic Canada is available at [http://survey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9vP6ffENadG5SoB](http://survey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vP6ffENadG5SoB)

**For more information contact:**

Elise Thorburn, Coordinator

[ethorburn@mun.ca](mailto:ethorburn@mun.ca)

1-709-864-7249 or 1-866-672-3389 (toll free)



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada



## 9) UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Good Agriculture and Collection Practices (GACP) Training Workshops**  
Do you grow or process specialty agriculture products? Do you collect wild products from the forest? If so, then this program may be of interest to you!

### **What are GACPs?**

Good Agriculture Collection Practices (GACPs) is a set of tools to help you “prove” that you grow, collect, process and / or sell any number of plants and plant products safely and PROVE that you did so, using a nationally recognized program. Developed **specifically for small scale producers**, this system was built using HACCP (Hazard Analysis, Critical Control Points) and is recognized by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). See poster enclosed for more information. The workshops will be held in English only.

- **Potatoes NB – NB Potato Conference and Trade Show – February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 – E. & P. S n chal Centre, Grand Falls, NB** – Please see the poster attached for further details.
- **Agricultural Night- Moncton Wildcats - February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** Please see poster attached for further details.
- **IGNITE- FCC Young Farmer Summit – February 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 - Truro, NS** – Please see the attached agenda. To register for this event, click [here](#).
- **Maritime Beef Conference – March 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – Delta Beausejour, Moncton, NB** – Please see the attached poster for the conference agenda and registration form.
- **Food Automation Atlantic – March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 – Charlottetown, PEI** – For more information and to register please see the attached poster.