OUR FARMS
OUR FOOD
OUR FUTURE

Agriculture and Agrifoods Strategy

Newfoundland Labrador
Natural Resources
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Our Farms, Our Food, Our Future is a comprehensive strategy that will help shape the future of the agriculture and agrifoods sector in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The agriculture industry is of vital importance to this province, from the contribution it makes to the economies of rural communities to the fresh local produce it provides for our dinner tables. Our local industry includes 550 farms and 100 manufacturers. We have small organic farms as well as some of the largest poultry and dairy farms in Canada.

Our Provincial Government has set a vision and goal for the development of the agriculture and agrifoods industry that focus on food security, economic advancement and environmental sustainability. To achieve these, we will continue to work with industry to strengthen production and to support the innovative ideas that will lead to economic growth.

The future lies in the many high-quality products our agribusinesses are producing. We will continue to take a strategic approach to the development of this industry by investing in areas that will help it diversify and grow. Our farms, our food, and our future depend on it.

The Honourable Jerome Kennedy
Minister of Natural Resources and
Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency
OUR FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE

The agriculture and agrifoods industry is vital to the economy, culture and the future growth of Newfoundland and Labrador. Agribusinesses throughout the province are producing agricultural products that consumers in this province enjoy everyday - from milk and eggs, to vegetables, chicken, jellies, and jams.

*Our Farms, Our Food, Our Future* is a long-term plan to meet the needs of consumers, farmers, and processors in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This strategy outlines our vision and charts a course for how we get there.

**Our Vision**

To build an innovative, profitable, and sustainable agriculture and agrifoods industry that produces safe, high-quality products for consumers.

**Our Goal**

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency will work with industry to:

- strengthen our agriculture and agrifoods production within the province, by supporting innovation and the economic advancement of agribusinesses; and
- ensure the development of the industry in an environmentally-responsible manner.

**Consulting Our Industry**

This strategy has been developed in consultation with the agriculture and agrifoods industry. Through regional consultation sessions, industry was given the opportunity to provide their input on the issues and areas of importance for their sectors. The Agency has considered all comments in developing this plan. We would like to thank the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture in assisting us throughout this strategy development process.
In addition, a document review was conducted which included the various existing sector specific strategies, federal-provincial cost-shared agreements, industry consultations, previous agriculture strategies, and agriculture strategies from other jurisdictions. The agency also consulted with several Regional Secretariat Regional Councils.

The successful implementation of this strategy will require the participation and support of:

- our agriculture and agrifoods industry (primary producers, processors, and industry associations);
- the research community;
- Federal and Provincial Governments; and
- residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR’S AGRICULTURE AND AGRIFOODS PRODUCTION

Our Agriculture and Agrifoods Industry

The agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador is diverse, from small organic farms to some of the largest dairy and poultry farms in Canada. The province’s farms are dispersed across an area larger than the Maritimes. Farms here must deal with higher import costs from out-of-province suppliers, while at the same time competing with lower priced imported products grown elsewhere.

Farm revenues in this province have consistently increased year over year. In fact, revenues declined only three times in the last 25 years. Farm revenues continued their upward trend in 2009, reaching $110 million. Still, the costs associated with importing livestock feed and fertilizer, as well as wages, are increasing at a faster rate than the returns farmers can get from the marketplace. As a result, farmers are continuously looking for ways to improve production efficiencies to keep the prices of their products competitive.

Agriculture employment is mainly seasonal with peak employment during the harvest season in the fall. Due to the seasonal variations in employment, reliable employment estimates are difficult to calculate. However, tax data shows that total farm wages over 10 years have grown 65 per cent to $21 million in 2009.

The agrifoods processing sector includes food and beverage manufacturers. In 2009, the value of the provincial agrifoods processing sector reached $496 million. Unlike the agriculture sector, the agrifoods processing sector is characterized by relatively stable employment levels. The monthly average employment level for 2009 was 1,100 persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2010, Farm Cash Receipts, Cat.21-011
Adapting to Change

Consolidation is occurring throughout all facets of the agriculture and agrifoods industry in response to market pressures. Smaller farms are disappearing, processors are amalgamating and the food distribution system has become more centralized, putting increased pressure on farmers in terms of food safety and traceability. Farmers have to cope with the added costs of implementing these requirements and dealing with increased transportation costs and logistics.

Every year in this province and across the country, the number of farms is decreasing while the remaining farms grow larger to remain competitive. In the last 10 years, the number of farms in this province has declined 25 per cent, with the greatest decline in the small farm category. At the same time, the land in production has increased by 10 per cent.
Industry Opportunity

The portion of the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture and agrifood market that our farmers supply varies depending on the sector. Local farmers supply the vast majority of fluid milk, chicken, eggs, and turf grass sold in this province.

Local farmers also supply turnips, cabbage, carrots, beets, and potatoes, accounting for over 11 per cent of the wholesale market for those products. For other vegetables as well as some berry crops, including strawberries and raspberries, local production accounts for less than 10 per cent of the market. In the case of red meats, beef and lamb, that drops to less than five per cent.

Our farmers also export products to other provinces and countries. Exports include milk, eggs, chicken, blueberries, furs, ice cream, butter, cheese, jams, cranberries, and wines.

Opportunities exist within the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture and agrifoods industry to increase production levels of almost all agricultural products. Therefore it is essential for us to increase our research capacity, value-added production and local market share so local farms can supply a greater portion of the provincial market and expand into export markets.

Our Role in Food Security

Consumers expect a readily available supply of safe, healthy, and affordable food choices. To meet those expectations now and into the future, we must ensure that the food security interests of consumers in this province are protected. The world is changing in many ways that have long-term impacts on our food supply. A growing global population, climate change, bio-security risks, and consolidation in the food industry are issues that need to be considered and addressed in ensuring an adequate food supply for the future.

Newfoundland and Labrador is particularly vulnerable to world events given that we currently import approximately 90 per cent of our food requirements and we rely heavily on a marine transportation system for food shipments.
We import food from around the world — lamb from New Zealand, berries from Chile and peppers from Mexico. We expect these products to always be available and at reasonable prices. However, recent food scares (E. Coli in spinach in the United States) and catastrophic weather events (frosts in Florida) have demonstrated how dependant we are on food imports.

World demand for food is expected to increase 70 per cent by 2050 as the population grows by another two billion, for a total global population of 9.1 billion people. The demand on the world’s food supply will shift and increase significantly, particularly in Asia and the Middle East where population booms are expected. It is imperative as a province and as a country that we recognize these challenges and plan now to ensure a reliable and sustainable supply of healthy food products for future generations. With global warming, it is anticipated that the bread baskets of the world will be further stressed and, as a result, less food produced.

The Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture and agrifoods industry has a critical role in attaining our food security goals. The industry continues to grow and diversify, and we must identify areas of the industry where significant investments are needed to meet long-term goals. In the supply-managed sectors of milk, eggs, and chicken, we have invested in innovation and consolidation in order to remain competitive. These sectors, however, currently rely heavily on imported feed where a disruption of supply is always a risk and the higher costs a challenge to competitiveness. The more traditional fruit and vegetable sectors struggle with issues of labour, access to capital and economies of scale. Producers are pressured to produce high-quality products in a very competitive environment in which fuel prices are escalating, production costs are rising and labour is disappearing. We understand that the industry needs to have the proper supports in place to move beyond current levels of production and towards self sufficiency.

Our Farms, Our Food, Our Future outlines the actions we believe need to take place in the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture and agrifoods industry to achieve our vision of a safe, secure, and reliable food supply for consumers in this province, while at the same time supporting a profitable and sustainable industry that continues to employ Newfoundlanders and Labradorians into the future.
AGRICULTURE AND AGRIFOODS ACTION PLAN

PLANNING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

ADDRESS NEW ENTRANT ISSUES IN THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

If we want to produce more local food, then we need more local farms and agribusinesses. We need to invest in attracting people to this industry and promote it as a potential career to future generations. The average age of farmers continues to increase, not just in Newfoundland and Labrador, but across the country. Currently, 6 per cent of the province’s farmers are under the age of 35 compared to 19 per cent twenty years ago.

In 1951, there were 19,975 persons, or 5.5 per cent, of the provincial population living on farms. In 2006, there were 1,170 persons or 0.2 per cent of the population.

- 2006 Census of Agriculture

The Provincial Government is committed to attracting new entrants to the agriculture sector and providing the necessary support and advisory services required to establish new farm operations. Attracting beginning farmers to the industry is not only crucial for the success of the agriculture sector, but it will ensure the continued supply of locally produced safe food for our people. Working with agricultural organizations, such as the Young Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador, we will assist new and upcoming farmers who are entering and working in this industry.

We also realize the challenges our producers face to get people to work on their farms. In the long term, we must support the development of programs to encourage careers in agriculture. However, in the short term, we need to look at what options are out there to overcome the hurdle of attracting people to work on farms and in the industry overall.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Work with the Young Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop new entrant initiatives such as a formal mentoring program, scholarship programs and agriculture career days within the agriculture industry.
- Develop an Interest Rebate Program for new entrants.
- Reimburse legal land surveys for new entrants to reduce the cost of land acquisition.
- Partner with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, and relevant Provincial Government departments to develop and implement a strategy to address the issues of labour attraction and retention.

Currently 6 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador’s farmers are under the age of 35; down 13 per cent from 20 years ago.

- 2006 Census of Agriculture
DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY THROUGH IMPROVED FARM PRACTICES

Sustainability is achieved when current and future consumer demands can be met without unnecessarily compromising economic, ecological and social needs. The ecological concerns of agriculture include soil degradation, water resource management, biodiversity, and impacts on climate change.

For agricultural growth to keep pace with future demands, significant investments in infrastructure, technologies, and improved farm practices are required. The Agency will work with industry to ensure that our province’s agribusinesses have environmental farm plans in place and updated as change is happening on-farm. This will be instrumental to strengthen the awareness within industry of the requirements and improvements needed at the farm level to achieve environmental sustainability. We will also work with other Provincial Government departments and industry to ensure that proven environmentally sound activities that meet current regulations are being utilized on farming operations within the province.

The Agency also supports the development of on-farm alternative energy technology, such as in-floor heating systems, wind energy in nursery operations, and other practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Working together, the Agency and industry will build upon current farm practices to protect our resources and to ensure sustainability for future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

PLANS FOR ACTION

- **Ensure all farms have Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs) and monitor EFPs on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date as change occurs with the agribusinesses.**

- **Work proactively with industry and other Provincial Government departments to ensure the use of Beneficial Management Practices (proven environmentally sound activities) that meet or exceed current regulations.**

- **Support the development of on-farm alternative energy technology and other practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**
PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND

The agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador has significant potential for expansion. Only a small percentage of the province’s land base is suited for large scale commercial agriculture, making the preservation of these lands critical for future industry growth and sustainability. The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency is committed to protecting agriculturally-suitable land by designating agriculture development areas, berry management units, and lands for community pastures. The Provincial Government also supports the continuation of the Land Consolidation Program that sees the purchase of agriculturally-suitable land that can then be offered to industry for future development.

The Provincial Government’s current Agricultural Land Lease policy was introduced in 1976 in response to the large amount of agricultural land grants that were not being farmed or owned by non-farmers. Its purpose was to ensure agricultural lands would remain available to farmers. The policy was last reviewed in 2004. We believe that this policy has been successful in keeping arable lands in the hands of farmers. It is also important to ensure we protect and buffer farms, notably livestock and poultry, to reduce land-use conflicts and mitigate complaints from neighbours regarding farm odour, flies or noise. We will work with relevant departments and agencies to address land use issues and continually assess the land identified for agriculture use.

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency will create an inventory of the peat land resources in the province that may be suitable for growing alternative crops, such as cranberries and vegetables, or for forage production. We will work with industry to pursue opportunities for expansion associated with native berries, such as blueberries, bakeapples, and lingonberries, commonly referred to as partridgeberries, to increase current levels of production.

A crucial part of ensuring a secure supply of healthy, safe food for consumers in this province is preserving and developing our agricultural land for increased food production.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Work with relevant departments and agencies to assess land identified for agricultural purposes to ensure its continued protection is appropriate, as well as address competing land use issues that may arise.

- Create an inventory of available peatland in the province that is suitable for growing alternative crops.

- Work with industry to identify native berry lands and other native species suitable for expansion and diversification.
FOCUSING ON CONSUMERS

SUPPORTING THE PRODUCTION OF A HIGH-QUALITY, SAFE FOOD SUPPLY

The growth and success of the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture industry depends largely on its ability to meet the needs and expectations of consumers. Producers and processors must continue to place the greatest priority on ensuring the production of safe, quality food products.

We must work together to ensure the livestock on our farms are healthy and we have the ability to identify existing or emerging diseases that might enter the province, either through the normal movement of livestock or as a result of climate change. Animal diseases pose a risk to animals and humans, either through direct infection or the consumption of contaminated foods, and can threaten the viability of infected farms.

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency is working to address these emerging issues by assisting with the implementation of food safety and food quality programs, supporting research in areas of food safety, animal disease, and supporting surveillance activities to anticipate and prevent food safety risks and diseases that could threaten livestock. The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency is responsible under provincial legislation for animal diseases of economic importance to the livestock and poultry industries as well as having a threat to public health and safety.

The Provincial and Federal Governments are investing in a foreign animal disease laboratory, which will be paramount in managing the risk of potential diseases that could pose an economic and public health threat. We are investigating the opportunities to further cooperate with our partners and relevant Provincial Government departments to expand our activities in the protection from potential food borne illnesses.

We will continue to support food safety on farms through required training for producers, advisory services, and investigating the Continuous Quality Improvement Program (CQIP) to assess its use within the agriculture industry. The CQIP incorporates both food safety and food quality programs, thereby better serving the interests of farmers, processors and consumers.

The Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture industry must position itself as a leader in securing a safe and healthy food supply for our citizens. We must adapt to changing expectations and standards, plan for future needs, and support our producers by providing necessary services and infrastructure.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Support the construction of a $3.9 million foreign animal disease laboratory to be cost-shared 60/40 with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. This laboratory will provide services to manage the risks associated with diseases that pose an economic and public health threat. The provincial portion of this initiative is $1.6 million.

- Investigate the expansion of activities designed to protect the public from potential food-borne illnesses, in consultation with the Departments of Health and Community Services and Service NL.

- Provide food safety training/advisory services to developing commodities that have specific challenges in meeting today’s regulatory requirements. These include pork, beef, lamb, and the fruit and vegetable sectors.

- Work with relevant sectors to evaluate the possible introduction of a Continuous Quality Improvement Program to better serve industry needs.
**IDENTIFYING MARKET CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Research is necessary to assist industry and Provincial Government to understand current and future market trends so potential issues can be identified and addressed. Understanding consumers and the market assists in making informed decisions about new products and emerging markets, and in developing sound marketing strategies.

Newfoundland and Labrador produces a range of agricultural products that are sold locally and exported to outside markets. Local production currently consists largely of traditional varieties; however, consumers are now demanding greater variety in their food choices. Changes in consumer buying behavior presents opportunities for diversification and new product development. Market research will help identify current and future trends and how to capture more of the local market. The province’s growing fur sector and the creation of a commercial cranberry sector are examples of the potential for industry diversification, export development, and new opportunities for economic growth.

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency will work with industry to assess markets and diversification opportunities for our agribusinesses. We will engage industry participants in the formulation of future marketing plans and strategies.
**PLANS FOR ACTION**

- Assist agriculture sectors in formulating marketing plans by establishing formal working groups in the horticulture sector. Working groups will include wholesalers, retailers, processors and producers.

- Assess the provincial marketplace to determine the demand for local agricultural products, any product gaps and potential opportunities for diversification.
RAISING INDUSTRY AWARENESS

At one time the majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were involved in some form of food production, be it the fishery, agriculture or subsistence farming. With the changing economy and the movement of people from rural areas to more urban centres, people have become increasingly disconnected from their food. We need to do a better job of educating consumers about where their food comes from, and the economic, social, and health benefits of supporting local producers and processors. Our promotional efforts focus on increasing consumer awareness of our local industry and the products that are grown and produced here.

It is imperative that consumers are educated on the importance of our food system and engaged as we move forward with our vision of a sustainable agriculture and agrifoods industry that provides a reliable, safe supply of food products for the people of the province. It is important for consumers to understand that a local supply of a diverse array of food products is dependant on a strong and vibrant industry that needs their support.

We need to make consumers aware of our current reliance on imported products and the importance of thinking about our ability to independently feed ourselves. An adequate local food network can only be attained through industry expansion, diversification, and consumer buy-in.

Agriculture awareness is also about the potential for economic growth and employment opportunities.

Our agricultural promotion and awareness campaigns will focus on:
- the economic opportunities associated with this industry,
- the importance of ensuring we have a safe reliable supply of food to feed the people of the province, and
- reorienting consumers with where their food comes from.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Partner with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture to identify initiatives for increasing agriculture awareness in the province. Initiatives will focus on the importance of securing a reliable local food supply, and engaging youth through the development of an Agriculture in the Classroom Program.

- Support the development of marketing material that includes information brochures on the economic opportunities that exist in the agriculture industry, as well as current and emerging consumer trends.
SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

INNOVATION

Innovation, diversification, expanding markets, and research and development will all be the catalysts for future growth in our agriculture and agrifoods industry. We help foster this growth by providing advice and services to farmers in the areas of soils management, crop and livestock production, animal health, and business management. We will ensure our staff is trained and knowledgeable in the latest innovation technologies and production practices to assist in supporting industry growth.

Innovation goes hand in hand with research and development and is critical in helping farmers and producers overcome challenges to becoming competitive and profitable. Transportation costs, reliance on outside sources for grains, feeds, and fertilizers, as well as the availability of a workforce are challenges industry is trying to resolve.

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency has been heavily involved in research and development, with the key to our success stories largely being partnerships with industry, other government agencies and educational institutions. Our research and development initiatives have resulted in the introduction of corn production in the province and the recent expansion into the cranberry industry. Industry participation in piloting and testing new products and technologies ensures the science can be adapted and used effectively on a working farm.

Our research and development funding supports projects that:

- demonstrate innovative approaches to the industry;
- show potential for broad-reaching benefits across the industry;
- improve productivity;
- reduce farm production costs; and
- develop value-added opportunities.

In the future, we will take a more formalized approach through the establishment of a Research Advisory Committee consisting of experts in research and development. This will help broaden the expertise involved in research and development initiatives. We will also work with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to increase research and development funding to provide even greater opportunities to expand the work being done in this field.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Establish a Research Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from the agriculture industry, the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Newfoundland and Labrador Research Development Corporation, research institutions and academia.

- Increase the level of Provincial and Federal support for agriculture and agrifoods research and development from the current $1 million to $2.5 million annually through a 60/40, Federal-Provincial, cost-shared arrangement.
ASSISTING AGribUSINESS MANAGEMENT

A profitable, competitive and sustainable agriculture industry depends upon solid management of agribusinesses, as well as continued growth and diversification of these operations. We recognize that assisting in business management, human resource development, and enhancing the knowledge and skills of those in the industry and the Agency is vital to keeping our agribusinesses strong.

Agriculture is a highly-competitive sector with farmers in Newfoundland and Labrador competing with farmers from all over the world for equipment, supplies and markets. Combined with the need for good growing conditions this creates a level of risk that is beyond the control of the farmer. To ensure the sustainability of Canadian farms, the Provincial and Federal Governments offer business risk management programs designed to stabilize fluctuations that may threaten the viability of farm operations in any given year.

We realize the risk our producers face and we support programs that assist in mitigating that risk. Risk management programs provide coverage against production losses for specified perils (including drought, excessive moisture, wind, disease, and pests); provide income stability in times of market fluctuations, and, in general, support the long-term stabilization of the industry. In turn, this means a stable food supply and fair food prices for consumers. We will continue to work with industry and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to investigate options for future business-risk management programming.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Develop business models based on current cost of production information to create business profiles for agricultural sectors. This will increase the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency’s ability to produce key agribusiness information for new entrants and existing producers who are exploring diversification opportunities, as well as assess industry opportunities that could have significant positive impacts for the agriculture industry overall and provide consumers with a wider range of products.

- Work with industry and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to support further business-risk management programs designed to mitigate the risk involved in agriculture production.

- Enhance resources to meet future training needs of the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency staff and industry. Investment in skill sets is core to maintaining an innovative and competitive industry.
STRENGTHENING LOCAL PRODUCTION

PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY PRODUCTION

In order to increase our food security, we need to produce more food on our farms. One of the biggest issues identified by industry during our consultation process was in the area of land and its acquisition, usage, and preservation. We recognize the importance and value of land for our industry.

It is the aim of the Agency to facilitate farm expansion through the identification of lands suitable for agriculture. The Agency supports the development of the land base in an efficient, responsible manner from an economic, agronomic, and environmental perspective. The Provincial Government has committed $6 million to develop larger acreages of land for increased forage production in the dairy industry. The Agency is currently proposing a $4 million program to address large scale land development projects which will increase our food production capacity in the vegetable and berry industry.

Assistance will be targeted to increase infrastructure capacity on the farm to help farmers achieve greater economies of scale.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our industry in assessing future needs. It is crucial to build the capacity to expand local food production and reduce our dependence on imported feeds for our livestock industries.

Photo courtesy of Country Ribbon Inc.
PLANS FOR ACTION

- Propose to develop a $4 million program focused on large-scale land development projects.
- Target assistance to support infrastructure requirements to grow farms and achieve economies of scale.
DEVELOPING VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION

Many of the primary products produced in Newfoundland and Labrador are exported for additional processing or sold in bulk to wholesalers outside the province. Encouraging the development of secondary-processing facilities to process our products within the province will provide additional financial and employment benefits to the agricultural industry and the province.

Successful secondary processing operations require capital for infrastructure and technical expertise to develop and market new competitive products. Some of our value-added exports, including jam, syrup, cheese, ice cream, and wine; have achieved success in outside markets. To continue to grow a sustainable secondary-processing sector, we must examine new ways to further add value to our existing raw materials and develop new product lines.

PLANS FOR ACTION

- Enhance resources to assist industry in developing new products and expertise in marketing and packaging.
- Explore partnerships with the College of the North Atlantic, the Marine Institute and the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development to facilitate and enhance product development opportunities.
- Support the development of processing facilities to encourage production of value-added products.
CAPACITY BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

GROWING THE INDUSTRY TO FEED OUR PEOPLE

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency is one of many partners within the agriculture industry which all share the same goal — a profitable and successful agriculture industry that produces healthy, quality food products for the people of the province. We will continue to work with our partners to enhance our local food production and educate the people of the province on the importance of a sustainable industry to our communities.

We will work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture and engage various regional organizations to address concerns specific to different regions of the province and to increase our agricultural production and economic benefits throughout the province.

PLANS FOR ACTION

- **Partner with other relevant provincial departments on a Food Security Interdepartmental Working Group. The group will come together in recognition of the social and economic issues related to food security and work cooperatively and collectively to increase the province’s capacity to provide a secure, reliable supply of healthy food products for the people of the province.**

- **Work with agriculture industry organizations and regional economic development boards to support regional efforts and assist in the development and implementation of their respective agrifood strategies.**
BUILDING A STRONGER INDUSTRY

The agriculture and agrifoods industry is changing; global populations are growing, climate change is presenting new challenges, and consumers needs are more demanding. We must do our part to ensure that we meet those challenges and address the growing demands on our world food supply in a sustainable manner.

The Agency has consulted with industry and recognizes the untapped potential, the challenges and the opportunities of the agriculture and agrifoods industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Farms, Our Food, Our Future outlines a series of strategic directions that build on our strengths, acknowledges our weaknesses and provides future direction for an industry that is vital to Newfoundland and Labrador. Our Farms, Our Food, Our Future is an action plan that supports innovation, expansion, economic development, and a brighter future for our families, our farmers, and our processors.

We will focus on our agribusinesses and our consumers. We will be taking an integrated approach that looks at many aspects of the industry including our marketplace, our production, the needs of our agribusiness, and our land.

Food security is a complex issue. Even though the challenges may be great, so are the opportunities. There is an abundance of land suitable for expansion, including peatland for cranberry, sod, forage, and vegetable production. New technologies and farming methods are available to improve competitiveness and consumers are becoming more aware of where imported food comes from and how it affects food quality and the environment. There is a growing preference for local foods. Working with industry and other stakeholders, our plan is achievable.

Together, we will achieve a sustainable and stronger industry for generations to come.
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PLANNING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

ADDRESS NEW ENTRANT ISSUES IN THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

- Work with the Young Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop new entrant initiatives such as a formal mentoring program, scholarship programs and agriculture career days within the agriculture industry.
- Develop an Interest Rebate Program for new entrants.
- Reimburse legal land surveys for new entrants to reduce the cost of land acquisition.
- Partner with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, and relevant Provincial Government departments to develop and implement a strategy to address the issues of labour attraction and retention.

DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY THROUGH IMPROVED FARM PRACTICES

- Ensure all farms have Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs) and monitor EFPs on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date as change occurs with the agribusinesses.
- Work proactively with industry and other Provincial Government departments to ensure the use of Beneficial Management Practices (proven environmental sound activities) that meet or exceed current regulations.
- Support the development of on-farm alternative energy technology and other practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
**PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND**

- Work with relevant departments and agencies to assess land identified for agricultural purposes to ensure its continued protection is appropriate, as well as address competing land use issues that may arise.

- Create an inventory of available peatland in the province that is suitable for growing alternative crops.

- Work with industry to identify native berry lands and other native species suitable for expansion and diversification.

**FOCUSING ON CONSUMERS**

**SUPPORTING THE PRODUCTION OF A HIGH-QUALITY, SAFE FOOD SUPPLY**

- Support the construction of a $3.9 million foreign animal disease laboratory to be cost-shared 60/40 with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. This laboratory will provide services to manage the risks associated with diseases that pose an economic and public health threat. The provincial portion of this initiative is $1.6 million.

- Investigate the expansion of activities designed to protect the public from potential food-borne illnesses, in consultation with the Departments of Health and Community Services and Service NL.

- Provide food safety training/advisory services to developing commodities that have specific challenges in meeting today's regulatory requirements. These include pork, beef, lamb, and the fruit and vegetable sectors.

- Work with relevant sectors to evaluate the possible introduction of a Continuous Quality Improvement Program to better serve industry needs.
APPENDIX A
Implementation Plan

IDENTIFYING MARKET CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Assist agriculture sectors in formulating marketing plans by establishing formal working groups in the horticulture sector. Working groups will include wholesalers, retailers, processors and producers.

- Assess the provincial marketplace to determine the demand for local agricultural products, any product gaps and potential opportunities for diversification.

RAISING INDUSTRY AWARENESS

- Partner with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture to identify initiatives for increasing agriculture awareness in the province. Initiatives will focus on the importance of securing a reliable local food supply, and engaging youth through the development of an Agriculture in the Classroom Program.

- Support the development of marketing material that includes information brochures on the economic opportunities that exist in the agriculture industry, as well as current and emerging consumer trends.

SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

INNOVATION

- Establish a Research Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from the agriculture industry, the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Newfoundland and Labrador Research Development Corporation, research institutions and academia.

- Increase the level of Provincial and Federal support for agriculture and agrifoods research and development from the current $1 million to $2.5 million annually through a 60/40, Federal-Provincial, cost-shared arrangement.
ASSISTING AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- Develop business models based on current cost of production information to create business profiles for agricultural sectors. This will increase the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency’s ability to produce key agribusiness information for new entrants and existing producers who are exploring diversification opportunities, as well as assess industry opportunities that could have significant positive impacts for the agriculture industry overall and provide consumers with a wider range of products.

- Work with industry and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to support further business-risk management programs designed to mitigate the risk involved in agriculture production.

- Enhance resources to meet future training needs of the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency staff and industry. Investment in skill sets is core to maintaining an innovative and competitive industry.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL PRODUCTION

PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY PRODUCTION

- Propose to develop a $4 million program focused on large-scale land development projects.

- Target assistance to support infrastructure requirements to grow farms and achieve economies of scale.
DEVELOPING VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION

- Enhance resources to assist industry in developing new products and expertise in marketing and packaging.

- Explore partnerships with College of the North Atlantic, the Marine Institute and the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development to facilitate and enhance product development opportunities.

- Support the development of processing facilities to encourage production of value-added products.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

GROWING THE INDUSTRY TO FEED OUR PEOPLE

- Partner with other relevant provincial departments on a Food Security Interdepartmental Working Group. The group will come together in recognition of the social and economic issues related to food security and work cooperatively and collectively to increase the province’s capacity to provide a secure, reliable supply of healthy food products for the people of the province.

- Work with agriculture industry organizations and regional economic development boards, to support regional efforts and assist in the development and implementation of their respective agrifood strategies.
Appendix B: Maps of Farm Locations

Overview of Agricultural Land Use on the Island of Newfoundland

Legend
- Pastures (17,666 ha)
- Farm Property Locations
- Agricultural Development Area (345,584 ha)
- Blueberry Management Units (7,579 ha)

Department of Natural Resources
Land Resource Stewardship Division
Soils and Mapping Services, October 2010
PHOTO CREDITS

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