

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Message from the Chair

We weathered a fairly warm fall this year, delivering a plentiful forage season. Looking ahead to winter, the NSCP will be busy with events such as the Zone and Annual meetings, as well as working towards the completion of ongoing projects.

Throughout the year, the NSCP, Sheep Producers Association of Nova Scotia, Perennia, Nova Scotia's Departments of Agriculture and Environment and Climate Change, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture have been working together to help the cattle and sheep industries prepare for climate change through the province's Climate Adaptation Leadership Program (CALP). A scan team has been developed with representation from across the industry, where input was gathered to aid in preparing and administering a survey for industry responses, with the survey closing in early December. Work within this program is expected to last well into 2022.

As mentioned in our September newsletter, the NSCP are actively working on the On-Farm Cattle Preconditioning Pilot Project. Once available, this project will offer preconditioning services to cattle producers on-farm early 2022, such as handling equipment and help, tagging, age verification, vaccination administration, castration, dehorning and weighing. Additional information will soon be available within future correspondence, and can also be found on www.nscattle.ca/preconditioning.

Earlier this fall, the NSCP and DFNS collaborated on a Cattle Appreciation Day, which was held at the Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. during the Fall Breeding Stock Sale on October 30th. We wish to thank DFNS for teaming up with us on this well-deserved day in celebration for cattle producers in the region.

The NSCP will once again be releasing a monthly virtual farm tour in the monthly update (the last Friday of each month; please contact the office if you do not receive this). This Virtual Farm Tour series allows producers the opportunity to see how other farms are operating, from the comfort of their home! These will begin within the December monthly update, with one video released each month until spring 2022, with a different beef operation showcased each time. These will also be available at www.nscattle.ca/virtual-farm-tours.

On February 16th at 7:30PM, the NSCP are teaming up with Perennia to deliver a "Grazing Cattle on Cover Crops" webinar with Katie Trottier, Ruminant Livestock Specialist, and Jonathan Wort, Manager of Livestock and Field Crops. Please pre-register for this webinar at www.nscattle.ca. Additional information will soon be available on the NSCP website and social media.

A reminder of the Cattle and Sheep Industry Development Program, a Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture CAP Program, which has an application deadline of February 28th, 2022. This program aims to improve industry competitiveness and resilience by providing funding assistance which gives producers the opportunity to make investments that increase livestock numbers. The program helps to address tight cash flow when livestock numbers are increasing. Please visit www.novascotia.ca/programs for a complete listing of all government programs and eligibility.

The 2022 Nova Scotia Ministers Conference for Agriculture will occur February 1st-2nd at the Halifax Convention Centre. I encourage all producers to take this event in. More information is available at www.perennia.ca/agriconference.

On the **blue inserted form**, you will find the 2022 Grower License Application and Verification of Levies Paid for 2021. It is important that this form is completed and sent back to the office each year to ensure that you remain in good standing with NSCP, receive industry updates, have access to industry events and are eligible to cattle specific programs. These forms are due back to the office by January 14th, 2022.

In closing, I would like to wish all producers and their families, as well as all other stakeholders, a happy and safe holiday season. If you have questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact Brad at the office, office@nscattle.ca or 902-893-7455.

Larry Weatherby, Chair

NSCP Seeking Nominations for Producer of the Year Award

The NSCP is now accepting nominations for the Kings Mutual Producer of the Year Award. The objective of the award is to annually recognize a Nova Scotia beef producer or dealer for the outstanding contributions they make to the provincial cattle industry. Nomination forms are available by visiting www.nscattle.ca/awards or by contacting the office at 902-893-7455. Completed nomination forms are due to the NSCP office by January 31st, 2022 and the winner will be announced at the Annual General Meeting on March 12th, 2022. The winner will be presented with a plaque, as well as a NSCP jacket and hat.

NSCP Zone Meeting Notice

Zone meetings are currently scheduled as in-person, however, may require to be held virtually depending on Public Health guidelines in place for early January. Updates will be posted to the NSCP website as they become available. **Full proof of vaccination will be required for all meetings.**

This is an election year in Zone 2 (Derek Gladney) and Zone 5 (Dean Manning). A Director at Large will be elected to the Board at the Annual Meeting. Members are reminded that they can attend any of the Zone Meetings but will only be able to vote (where applicable) in their Zone. Annual Zone Meetings have been booked as described below:

Zone	Date	Time	Town	Location
1	January 10, 2022	1:00PM	Whycocomagh	Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre
2	January 10, 2022	7:00PM	New Glasgow	Holiday Inn Express Stellarton-New Glasgow
3	January 11, 2022	7:00PM	Wentworth	Wentworth Learning Centre
4	January 11, 2022	1:00PM	Truro	NSFA Conference Room
5	January 12, 2022	1:00PM	Kentville	Celtic Hall (Paddy's Pub)
6	January 12, 2022	7:00PM	New Ross	Forties Community Centre
Dealer	January 14, 2022	12:00PM	Truro	NSFA Conference Room

The 2022 Zone Meetings will feature a pre-recorded presentation from a local veterinarian, focusing on new and novel health management products and procedures for cattle. Perennia Extension staff will also be present for introductions and brief questions.

Note: If Public Health guidelines or weather require changes to the proposed times and dates, Zone Meetings will be scheduled for the week of January 17th. A final notice related to the Zone Meetings will be issued no later than January 8th. Full proof of vaccination is required for all meetings.

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NSCP Annual Meeting Notice

The NSCP Annual General Meeting will be held Saturday, March 12th, 2022, beginning at 10:00AM at the Inn on Prince in Truro. Registration will begin at 9:30AM. Full proof of vaccination will be required.

Note: If Public Health guidelines or weather require changes to the proposed time and date, the secondary date for a virtual Annual Meeting is March 15th at 7:30PM. Full proof of vaccination is required for this in-person meeting.

Commit to Local for the Holidays

The holidays are upon us and we are again issuing our annual challenge - give a gift that gives back to the whole province by committing to spending some of your holiday shopping budget locally. Many local businesses are still recovering from the financial impacts of COVID-19 and could use your help now more than ever. You will benefit from a unique shopping experience as you help support local businesses, local jobs and the local economy by spending locally!

Local gifts have a richer story and are often one-of-a-kind and made by talented and creative Nova Scotians who love what they do. When you shop at local businesses or buy from local craftspeople, or food and beverage producers, you can't beat the customer service. They know their products like nobody else and are more than happy to spend the time making sure you find the ideal gift.

This holiday season, commit to local in your community. Start with one gift or one business at a time! Don't forget that it's not just about gifting; you can also shift your holiday spending to local meats, produce, preserves, baked goods, even local Christmas trees and other holiday décor. You'll be surprised by how many local choices you can make once you start looking.

Happy local holidays!

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Planning Ahead Reminder

As cattle producers, we are setting into the winter routine of chores and other winter activities. Aside from the thoughts and planning for Christmas and New Years, we should be thinking about the spring and any plans to do land improvement and plans to seed. If you are planning on seeding any hay or pastures fields in the coming year, you should seriously consider purchasing your seed early. Your seed dealers will appreciate your orders, and securing your seed early should ensure that you get a variety that you want and is suited to our region. The weather in the regions where most of our seed is grown was not particularly good this past season. Check with your seed supplier to make sure that you can get the seed that you want and get your order in early so you are not disappointed.

The decision to reseed a forage field is a big decision and a significant investment. The choice of the right seed is critical to the success of the establishment and long-term return from the investment in that field.

Jonathon Wort, Manager of Livestock and Field Crops, Perennia

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Upcoming Important Dates

- **NSCP 2022 Zone Meetings:**
 - January 10th Zones 1 & 2
 - January 11th Zones 3 & 4
 - January 12th Zones 5 & 6
 - January 14th Dealer Meeting
- **Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. Winter & Spring 2022 Feeder Sales:**
 - January 20th
 - February 17th
 - March 17th
 - April 12th
 - April 26th
 - May 10th
 - May 24th
- February 16th **Grazing Cattle on Cover Crops Webinar**
- March 12th **NSCP Annual General Meeting**
- March 19th **Balamore Farm “Thickness Sells” Bull & Female Sale**
- April 2nd **Nappan Spring Breeding Stock Sale**
- April 23rd **Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. Spring Equipment Sale**
- May 24th **Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. Spring Breeding Stock Sale**

Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. November Feeder Sale Results

November 9th, 2021 Sale Summary:

663 head 605 lb average 173 cents per lb average Gross Return \$1047/hd
332 steers (\$185 @ 629lbs), 288 heifers (\$159 @ 599lbs), 43 bulls and stags (\$177 @ 519lbs)
151 unvaccinated cattle sold for 160 cents per lb at 573lbs for a gross return of \$917/hd
512 vaccinated cattle sold for 177 cents per lb at 617lbs for a gross return of \$1092 (\$175 premium)

November 23rd, 2021 Sale Summary:

301 head 611 lb average 158 cents per lb average Gross Return \$965/hd
148 steers (\$166 @ 650lbs), 122 heifers (\$154 @ 566lbs), 31 bulls and stags (\$140 @ 610lbs)
105 unvaccinated cattle sold for 150 cents per lb at 587 lbs for a gross return of \$881
196 vaccinated cattle sold for 158 cents per lb at 630 lbs for a gross return of \$995 (\$114 premium)

Winter and Spring Feeder Sale Dates

Thursday, January 20th
Thursday, February 17th
Thursday, March 17th
Tuesday, April 12th
Tuesday, April 26th

Producers are encouraged to pre-book all feeder cattle as early as possible. The Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. will be listing pre-registered cattle on their website. Vaccinated cattle must be accompanied by a vaccination declaration and a receipt for the vaccine used. Additionally, vaccinated cattle will be uniquely identified. All cattle will be sold by order of arrival.

Special Winter/Spring Sales:

- **Saturday, March 19th: Balamore Farm Ltd. “Thickness Sells” Bull & Heifer Sale**
- **Saturday, April 23rd: Equipment Sale**



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A Good Time for Atlantic Beef Farmers to Buy Western Stock

*Farm Focus – October 20, 2021
Amy Higgins, Maritime Beef Council*

It's hard to believe it's September already. If there was ever a time to be grateful for rain in our region, this summer would be it. Western farmers are in dire need of precipitation.

You may be familiar with the "Hay West" initiative that's been undertaken in previous years of drought and has been launched again this year by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. The program has a specific purpose of getting hay from farmers in the East who've had a bumper crop to farmers in the West who don't have enough hay to feed their animals due to drought. However, the initiative has some fairly significant gaps that have been identified since it was last undertaken. For instance, there have been concerns about the quality of the forage being shipped, fumigation requirements, and increased transportation costs.

Those who transport forage are not keen to put anything other than large square hay bales on their trailers. However, it's been such a wet summer here that dry hay is a bit of an anomaly. In order to beat the rain this year, much forage has been put up as silage and haylage. Transporting silage is more costly because of the increased risk of spoilage and the fact that you're transporting a lot of water weight, which is not ideal.

The average pregnant cow requires 4.5 tonnes of hay, along with some supplements, to get through the winter. A 30-tonne trailer load of hay might be stretched to feed seven cows.

It would be more efficient to transport cattle east to the source of the hay and board the animals on Maritime farms until farmers in other provinces have enough hay to feed their cattle again. Cedric MacLeod, opportunities coordinator with the New Brunswick Cattle Producers Association, suggested such a "Cow East" initiative in August. However, there would also be logistical issues with that undertaking. For instance, at the time of writing this column, it wasn't determined whether such an initiative would be covered under provincial support programs.

What should not be overlooked in our region is the potential to take advantage of genetics and quality that comes with western producers in a position to make some hard cuts. Seedstock producers would rather see their replacement heifers go into breeding herds than to the feeder market, so there are potentially plenty of producers interested in getting you something to fit your needs.

Such purchases may be covered under current genetic enhancement programs in each province, so speak with your local provincial extension agent about specific programs. If you need help connecting with a seedstock/purebred producer in Western Canada, reach out to your provincial cattle producer organization. They can attempt to connect buyers and sellers.

The Maritime Beef Sector Development and Expansion Strategy has outlined the potential for increasing our region's cow herd. Our access to grass and forage is strong and we have a regional beef plant and a local abattoir system that could handle additional local capacity.

As much as we wish our friends in the West had received timely rain, this may be the opportunity to buy while the supply and demand charts are a bit wonky. I'm not a professional market analyst, but it seems like a good opportunity for those who are able to take advantage.



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Protect Your Precious Topsoil by Planting Cover Crops

Farm Focus – October 20, 2021

Thomas Harrington, Perennia

As many producers are in the midst of the busy fall harvest season, it could be nearing the last opportunity to establish a cover crop before winter. August and September are the safest times to reliably establish a cover crop, but if weather conditions are favourable, there may still be a few opportunities for late fall plantings.

As the term suggests, a cover crop is any crop planted with the purpose of providing protection to the soil. Cover crops are often not harvested as cash crops, although some winter-hardy species such as Winter wheat and rye may function as a cover crop during the fall and winter and can be harvested as a cash crop the following summer.

Keeping soils covered, particularly over winter, is one of the best ways to protect your land from degradation. When soils are left bare during winter, they are particularly susceptible to soil erosion by wind and water. Eroded soils are unhealthy soils, as the top few inches of a soil profile are the most productive and the movement of soil and nutrients from fields into watercourses poses numerous environmental concerns. Sedimentation in watercourses can degrade aquatic habitat, and nutrients or pesticides carried with soil particles reduce water quality.

Cover crops can prevent water erosion by several processes. Surface vegetation provides a physical barrier that slows down the speed of water droplets and scatters them before they contact the soil surface. This reduces splashing and displacement of soil particles, reducing the volume susceptible to transportation by surface water. A cover crop's root network acts as an anchor to bind soil in place, and roots help increase the porosity of the soil so it can act more like a sponge and absorb water. Additionally, cover crops roughen the soil surface, so the speed of water moving across the soil surface is reduced and water has more opportunity to infiltrate the soil. Soil erosion caused by wind is also significantly reduced by cover crops due to their ability to hold soil in place.

Long-term use of cover crops can increase soil organic matter, improve soil structure, and generally improve soil health parameters. While growing into the late fall and early spring, they can facilitate the uptake of excess nutrients in the soil remaining from the previous crop and reduce over-winter losses. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agri-Environmental Indicator Report Series (2011) estimated that in Nova Scotia, 84 percent of nitrogen losses from cropland occurs during the non-growing season.

Having a successful cover crop depends on proper management and planning. When thinking about planting a cover crop, it's important to identify your primary goals, how the cover crop will be terminated, and how it will fit into your crop rotation. An excellent online cover crop selection tool for Eastern Canada is available at decision-tool.incovercrops.ca to help producers decide which crop will best fit their goals and planting windows.

Cover crops are commonly seeded following the harvest of a cash crop, but this can pose a challenge when the previous crop is harvested late in the season. Seeding can be done by broadcast or drilling, but there are other opportunities that can help with early establishment. Techniques such as under-seeding or inter-seeding can be used to help establish a cover crop earlier in the season, prior to harvesting the cash crop. This can give the cover crop a head start and reduce the risk associated with a fall seeding. However, proper management is essential to ensure the cover crop does not impede the growth of the cash crop.

While, ideally, every field will have a cover crop, sometimes a cash crop may be harvested too late for cover crop establishment. If it's not possible to establish a crop before winter, it's advisable to mulch fields that are at high risk of soil erosion. This can be accomplished using a bale processor to spread a layer of straw or hay over a field. This will help provide some protection to reduce the velocity of raindrops and slow water movement on the soil surface. Pay special attention to sloped areas of a field as these will be at higher risk of soil erosion.

There is some assistance available to help producers with the costs of establishing cover crops. In Nova Scotia, a new funding opportunity that's part of the Agricultural Clean Technology Program will provide eligible producers \$35 per acre (to \$5,000 per applicant) for planting cover crops. Note that cover crop species must be recommended by a seed provider or a Perennia extension specialist. Perennia also has a no-till seeder that Nova Scotia producers can rent that's suitable for seeding fall cover crops. Contact your Perennia extension specialist for more advice on incorporating cover crops into your rotation.

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