

## FORAGE MONITORING IN 2024-25 GROWING SEASONS

In Nova Scotia, extreme weather events are becoming more common and, for cattle producers, this should be a concern, due to the reliance on pasture and stored forage production. These events may not impact all cattle farms the same at each event, but most areas of the province have been impacted by drought or excessive rain at least once in the last five years. Many producers manage this risk by: 1) making more stored feed than they need and putting it aside for later; 2) buying feed from sources within the county, province or region; and/or 3) having additional land to graze. Unfortunately, when these events begin to happen more often and for longer lengths of time, they can put these management strategies at risk.

To better understand and monitor the potential impacts of these events on perennial forage production in the province, Perennia, under the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers, put together a forage yield monitoring program for the 2024 and 2025 growing seasons with a goal of identifying baseline forage production in different counties in the province. The monitoring portion comes from continuing to follow the participating farms and regions in the future. This way, when an extreme event occurs, there would be updated measured yield and quality information in these counties, which could be used as a reference to more accurately measure the impact of the event.

In 2024, eight farms in total agreed to participate in this project, with farms located in Kings, West Hants, Lunenburg, Halifax, Colchester, Cumberland, Pictou and Antigonish counties. Up to three fields were identified on each farm and the yield and quality from each harvest on these fields were identified through measurement and lab testing. In 2025, six farms continued with the project. The 2025 season has provided mixed results for this project, as we were expecting to collect two years of production information to create our baseline for the future. The 2025 season was dominated by drought, which started in early June and impacted forage production for all cuts occurring after this point.

For 2025, dry matter (DM) yields from first cut varied by farm and, when compared to 2024, we saw increases or losses, depending on harvest date and weather conditions in 2024. One farm saw greater first cut yields in 2025, but was potentially under drought stress in 2024 during first cut. Another farm saw gains, but this was due to a change in harvest timing caused by a change in cutting management. For other participating fields, most saw losses compared to 2024, with losses ranging from 4% to 40%, although some farms had fields with gains, ranging from 16% to 29%.

While we had a few exceptions, most of the monitored fields saw seasonal DM losses when accounting for lower yields in later cuts or loss of yield altogether due to a lack of growth. The range of losses for some monitored fields ranged from 1894 kg of DM/acre to 39 kg of DM/acre or the loss of 3 bales/acre to 0.1 bales/acre, depending on farm, bale size and dry matter of the baled material.

On the quality side, for crude protein (CP) as a percentage of DM, most fields saw higher crude protein in first cut of 2025 compared to 2024, a mix of higher and lower CP for second cut, and lower CP for third cut. For neutral detergent fibre (NDF) as a percentage of DM, most fields saw lower NDF values compared to 2024 across all cuts with the exception of one cut on one farm which had similar values to 2024. For total digestible nutrients (TDN), there was a mix of higher or lower TDN values in 2025 compared to 2024 depending on farm, field and cut. Neutral detergent fibre is linked to forage intake and digestibility of forages with lower values having greater digestibility. Total digestible nutrients are a sum total of the digestibility of the organic plant material or seed in a forage and higher values indicate more digestible feeds.

In addition, mineral content of the forages were also reviewed. All tested forages were fed to a model cow weighing ~590 kg (1300 lb) in late gestation with a body condition score of 3/5 to mimic an animal found on most cow-calf farms. The amount of forage fed was based on the recommended dry matter intake. It was found that most forages were deficient in copper and zinc and would be unable to meet a cow's requirements without additional supplementation. Luckily, these can be corrected with a mineral supplementation program. Phosphorus and magnesium content varied across the province, but were often oversupplied or were borderline to oversupply, while potassium was borderline high for most parts of the province. When mineral levels are high in forages, it is difficult to correct, and producers falling into this category should consider their soil amendment program and assess animal performance.

Shane Wood, Forage Specialist/Lead Research Coordinator, Perennia & Katie Trotter, Ruminant Livestock (Beef/Sheep) Specialist, Perennia

## CLIMATE ADAPTATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (CALP) REPORT

As we wrap up the winter season, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the webinar series we hosted over the past few months and share a few things to keep on your radar moving forward.

We had a strong turnout across the webinar series and some good discussions around silvopasture, winter feeding strategies, virtual collars and drought management strategies. These are all areas that are becoming more relevant as we deal with more variability in weather, whether that's dry periods, excess moisture, or just trying to make better use of the growing season we're getting. If you missed any of the webinars, or want to go back and take another look, the recordings are all posted online. You can find them at [nscattle.ca/climate](https://nscattle.ca/climate), along with other CALP resources.

We're also looking for your feedback. There's a short survey available on that same page that builds on the initial survey conducted at the start of CALP. It asks about your experience so far, and what tools or resources you've found helpful. If you have a few minutes to fill it out, it would be much appreciated.

Alongside the management practices we've been talking about, there are also some new technologies starting to come into the conversation that are worth paying attention to as they emerge. Tools like Ori cattle tags and Gallagher eShepherd collars are being explored as ways to better monitor animals and manage grazing. Ori tags can give you more real-time insight into animal health and behaviour, which can be useful when dealing with heat stress or catching issues earlier. The eShepherd collars take a different approach by allowing for virtual fencing, giving you more flexibility in how you manage grazing without having to put up physical fence. That kind of flexibility can be valuable in years where pasture conditions are changing quickly.

These tools are still relatively new and won't be the right fit for every operation, but they're a good example of some new and cutting-edge technologies that producers can look too to help with climate change. As conditions continue to shift, having more information and more flexibility in how we respond is only going to become more important.

At the end of the day, adaptation is about staying aware, making small adjustments where it makes sense, and being ready to take advantage of opportunities when they come. If you have feedback on the webinars, ideas for future topics, or you're trying something new on your farm, feel free to reach out anytime.

Feel free to reach out via email at [climate@agricommodity.ca](mailto:climate@agricommodity.ca) to discuss CALP at any time!

Geoff Larkin, CALP Coordinator



Spring has officially arrived across the province, bringing with it welcome warm and mild weather. As the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers gear up for a busy season ahead, I hope this newsletter reaches you and your loved ones in good health.

Thank you to everyone who attended the **2026 Zone Meetings** held in early January. The sessions featured presentations by Dr. Claire Windeyer (Acer Consulting) on maximizing calf value, as well as Jonathan Wort, Manager of Livestock and Field Crops, and Katie Trotter, Ruminant Livestock Specialist (Perennia Food and Agriculture); they provided updates on the Beef Feedlot Pilot Program and Beef Initiative and presented on strategies to set your farm up for success next year, tips for getting pasture and forages off to a strong start, and the use of warm-season grasses as emergency forage. As well, this was an **election year for Zones 3 and 6**. At the January Zone 6 meeting, Jacob Mullen was elected as the new Zone 6 representative. No representative was elected for Zone 3 at its meeting, with Marshall Crowley since appointed to the role.

In early February, Minister of Agriculture Greg Morrow hosted a Nova Scotia Beef Initiative Update Session in Lower Truro, NS. Additional support for the provincial beef sector was announced through new funding programs: Nova Scotia Beef Finishing Equipment Support Program and Nova Scotia Beef Processing Program. More information on the Nova Scotia Beef Initiative is available on Perennia's website at [perennia.ca/the-nova-scotia-beef-initiative/](https://perennia.ca/the-nova-scotia-beef-initiative/).

Our collaboration on the Burger It Forward campaign with Irving Big Stops, Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia, and Canada Beef in February was again a big success! As a part of that effort, the NSCP donated \$4,000 worth of ground beef from Atlantic Beef Products to Feed Nova Scotia. Thank you to everyone that made this possible and supported Burger it Forward this year!

The **NSCP's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting** occurred on March 7, 2026, at the Salmon River Fire Hall. The well-attended day included special presentations on *Ticks on the Farm: What's Here, What's Coming, and How to Manage Them* – Nicoletta Faroane (Acadia University) and the *Impact of Parasite Treatments on Dung Beetles* – Paul Manning (Dalhousie University). We also awarded Teresa Speelman and Dave MacHattie of Speelmac Farms as the 2026 Cattle Producer of the Year. At the meeting, Susan Hamilton was elected as Director at Large; after the meeting, the Board Executive was determined to be Larry Weatherby as Chair, Bert Meyer as Vice Chair and Dean Manning as Secretary-Treasurer.

**A complete list of the current board is as follows:**

<b>Zone 1 (2027)</b>	Danford Murphy	<b>At Large (2029)</b>	Susan Hamilton
<b>Zone 2, Vice Chair, Check-Off Rep. (2028)</b>	Bert Meyer	<b>At Large (2028)</b>	Larry Weatherby, Jr.
<b>Zone 3 (2029)</b>	Marshall Crowley	<b>Dealer Director, Chair (2027)</b>	Larry Weatherby
<b>Zone 4, CCA Rep. (2027)</b>	Chris Sears	<b>Past Chair</b>	Vacant
<b>Zone 5, Secretary-Treasurer (2028)</b>	Dean Manning	<b>DFNS Rep.</b>	David Grant
<b>Zone 6 (2029)</b>	Jacob Mullen	<b>NPMC Rep.</b>	Brian Hirtle

Congratulations to Joe Cooper of Balamore Farm Ltd., Laura Parsons of Windy Knoll Farm, and the Maritime Beef Testing Society on another year of successful breeding stock sales this spring. It is encouraging to see breeding stock sales occurring locally!

NSCP continues to offer two key funding programs for producers: the Nova Scotia Beef Herd Renewal Improvement Program and the Nova Scotia Soil, Pasture & Forage Management Program. Full program details, including eligibility criteria and payment information, are available on the NSCP website under Cattle Programs.

The Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off Agency scholarship is open again this year, with an application deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>. Check out their website for complete details: [cdnbeefcheckoff.ca/scholarship](https://cdnbeefcheckoff.ca/scholarship).

We continue to offer On-Farm Cattle Preconditioning and Beef Carcass Ultrasound services. If you would like to use either service on your farm or are interested in more information, such as pricing, visit [nscattle.ca/preconditioning](https://nscattle.ca/preconditioning) or [nscattle.ca/ultrasound](https://nscattle.ca/ultrasound) or contact the NSCP office.

**Your 2026 NSCP Grower License card was included in this envelope** if you submitted a 2026 Grower License Application. A reminder that completing the Grower License Application, paying any associated levies and submitting to the NSCP office each year keeps you in good standing, so you can participate in the various programs and services we offer, as well as receive industry updates through our newsletters (printed, and electronic). Please keep an eye on your electronic newsletter, sent on the last Friday of each month, as this is our primary method of communication for updates as they arise. If you have questions relating to levy or NSCP membership, please reach out to Managing Director Kara Chisholm at 902-957-2699.

Sincerely,

*Larry Weatherby*

Larry Weatherby, Chair

## MARITIME BEEF COUNCIL UPDATE

**Atlantic Beef School** was offered again in Winter 2026, featuring two in-person, well-attended modules. The Marketing and Value Chain session occurred February 28 in Nappan, NS, with guest speakers Jill Renton (Gone West Media), Jaclyn Wilson (Flying Diamond Beef), and Bruce Andrews (Atlantic Beef Products Inc.). The Feedlot Management module followed on March 28 in Woodstock, NB, with guest speakers Dr. Andy Harding (Telus Agriculture) and Katie Trottier (Perennia).

### Upcoming 2026 events include:

- **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Atlantic Forage Field Day:** August 5<sup>th</sup> in Cumberland County, NS
- **Maritime Beef Conference:** November 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> at the Delta Beausejour in Moncton, NB

Additional information on both above events will be available soon!



**VBP+ FREE training** is available through the Canadian Cattle Learning Centre in both French and English, online and on-demand. Registration details can be found at the QR code to the left.

A reminder that **Maritime Livestock Price Insurance (LPI)** is available to Maritime cattle producers, offering protection against unexpected market price drops. Visit [maritimebeef.ca](http://maritimebeef.ca) and scroll down to "Sign up! Maritime Livestock Price Insurance" to subscribe to the LPI newsletter, sent most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Please ensure you like the MBC Facebook page (@maritimebeef) and/or frequently visit the website ([maritimebeef.ca/events](http://maritimebeef.ca/events)) to stay up to date with all upcoming events.

Lastly, if you haven't yet seen the Winter 2025-26 *Raising the Steaks* publication, check it out at [maritimebeef.ca](http://maritimebeef.ca).

## TEST STATION - SALE SUMMARY

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Maritime Beef Testing Society Breeding Stock Sale was held as a hybrid auction again this year on April 4<sup>th</sup>. There were 53 bulls offered, averaging \$9,292.00, and 23 heifers offered, averaging \$5,467.00.

The top-selling bull was a Percentage Simmental, purchased by Frank Friars for \$13,250.00, consigned by Orchard Hill Farm.

The top-selling heifer was a Hereford Cross, purchased by Richard Culberson & Son for \$7,100.00, consigned by Oulton Farms.

For a complete sale summary, please visit the Maritime Beef Testing Society's website at [maritimebeefeststation.ca/mbts-sale/](http://maritimebeefeststation.ca/mbts-sale/).

## ATLANTIC STOCKYARDS LTD. SPRING FEEDER SALE DATES

- Beginning at 10:00 AM:**
- **May 5 & May 19, 2026**
- Special Sale - Breeding Stock:**
- **Saturday, May 9 (12:00 PM)**

Producers are encouraged to pre-book all feeder cattle as early as possible. Pre-registered cattle will be listed on their website.

Vaccinated cattle must be accompanied by a vaccination declaration and a receipt for the vaccine used. Vaccinated cattle will be uniquely identified.

For future sales, please visit [atlanticstockyards.com/sale-dates](http://atlanticstockyards.com/sale-dates).

## NOVA SCOTIA CATTLE PRODUCERS

7 Atlantic Central Drive, East Mountain, Nova Scotia B6L 2Z2

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## 2026 NSCP PROGRAMS

### Nova Scotia Beef Herd Renewal and Improvement Program\*

Funding support for elite sires, heifer retention, seed stock development, herd health initiatives, preconditioning services, VBP+ audits, and surveillance systems.

Application Deadline: February 15, 2027



\*Program funding provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

### Nova Scotia Soil, Pasture & Forage Management Program

A funding program for lime purchases, and/or soil, manure and feed analyses.

Application Deadline: June 30, 2026 & November 30, 2026



For payment details and program criteria, scan the QR code to the left or visit: [nscattle.ca/members/programs](http://nscattle.ca/members/programs)

Programs from the NS Dept. of Ag. are available at [novascotia.ca/programs](http://novascotia.ca/programs)



## ADVANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM

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Repay as you market product

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THE ADVANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM IS A FEDERAL PROGRAM, ADMINISTERED BY THE ACMA.



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Advance Payments Program

Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada  
Programme de paiements anticipés

## FEEDBACK WANTED ON THE BEEF CATTLE CODE OF PRACTICE

The public comment period for the Beef Cattle Code of Practice (Beef Code or the Code) is open April 13<sup>th</sup> through June 12<sup>th</sup> at [nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle](http://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle). The Beef Code outlines expected and recommended animal care practices for beef cattle and is subject to a regular review process. The public comment period is an opportunity for anyone who has an interest in how beef cattle are raised in Canada, including consumers, veterinarians, food service professionals, and producers, to review the draft content and share feedback.

Feedback gathered through the public comment period is critical in the code development process and helps determine the direction set in the final document. Strong producer feedback from all regions of Canada is an important step in this process.

The Beef Code is meant to drive continuous improvement in animal welfare and is built to be scientifically informed, practical, and reflect societal expectations for responsible farm animal care. The Code uses an outcome-based approach that focuses on achieving successful standards while allowing for flexibility in how these outcomes are met rather than dictating the exact processes or methods to be used.

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC, [nfacc.ca](http://nfacc.ca)) oversees Code of Practice development and review through a structured, multi-stakeholder process that includes producers, veterinarians, scientists, transporters, processors, retailers, government, and animal welfare representatives. CCA is a member of NFACC and serves as the national commodity organization responsible for initiating the code review process for its sector. Decisions are science-informed and consensus-based.

The review process involves two committees: the Code Development Committee and Scientific Committee. The Code Development Committee updates the Code if required and the Scientific Committee reviews literature to determine priority welfare issues and summarizes available research for the Code Committee. Science-informed, industry leadership on code development, reviews, and revisions ensures a code that reflects an animal care standard that is grounded in practicality while considering the diversity of Canadian beef cattle producers.

Maintaining an up-to-date Code informs potential policy conversations with industry expertise backed by science and prevents rules written by people far from primary production. A current Code can help inform policy by showing what's workable and already in place, providing helpful context and a frame of reference on acceptable practices and standards of care in Canada.

The content and layout of the draft code available for public comment remains largely consistent with the current Beef Code, which can be viewed at [nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle](http://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle). The proposed draft incorporates new scientific evidence and updated practices in beef cattle care.

There are six sections or "chapters" in the Code: Animal Environment; Feed and Water; Animal Health; Animal Husbandry; Transportation; On-Farm Euthanasia. Visit the CCA website, [cattle.ca](http://cattle.ca), for a broad overview of content in the draft Code content that differs from the current code.

The finalized Code is expected to be released in the second quarter of 2027.

Producers, please visit [nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle](http://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle) before June 12 to ensure your feedback and opinions are considered!

Tyler Fulton, CCA President

## 2026 PRODUCER OF THE YEAR: SPEELMAC FARMS

Dave MacHattie of Speelmac Farms in the western Annapolis Valley, has been involved in the beef industry for more than 30 years and veterinary industry for more than 40 years. He is honoured to be named the Producer of the Year. Together with his wife Teresa, Dave has built Speelmac Farms into a successful and innovative operation.

Over the years, Dave has been known not only for raising decent quality calves, but for decent quality large calves, and for his willingness to share ideas and learn alongside other producers.

Mixing his career as a Farm Animal Vet and hobby of raising large market calves, allowed opportunities to gain from other farmers experiences and experiment and share new innovative methods and ideas.

Their farm has welcomed farmers, veterinarians, and industry groups to exchange knowledge and promote strong farming and environmental practices.

With only 25 cows, or with as many as 25 cows, Speelmac Farms can experiment new veterinary ideas for feasibility, new environmental methods, animal welfare issues and new farming practices. The best thing about this is sharing and collaborating with other beef farmers.

The Veterinary side of the equation allows problems and procedures seen in the dairy, horse, sheep, and beef industries to share solutions to common concerns.

Dave's commitment to collaboration, improvement, and supporting fellow producers has made him a respected leader in Nova Scotia's Veterinary Industry as well as Nova Scotia's beef industry.

Dave really appreciates the recognition of the association of Large Animal Veterinarians working with beef farmers to a mutually beneficial goal of raising cattle in an environmentally sound way, a humane way and a profitable way for all. There is a lot of work to get "a steak on a plate" and the two industries are working together to do this well.



Photo (left to right): Teresa Speelman and Dave MacHattie, Speelmac Farms; Larry Weatherby, Nova Scotia Cattle Producers Chair.