

LOBBYING

Monthly meetings with various Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries (DAAF) representatives to discuss ongoing and new projects.

Regular meetings with Minister Johnson (DAAF) and other agricultural stakeholders to discuss issues of importance.

Met with Federal Minister MacAulay (AAFC) as part of our Future of Ag NB and Food Sustainability Committee's mandate.

The AANB is part of a Power Rate Design working group along with representatives from DAAF, DNRED, and NB Power. A survey was sent to members asking questions about their electricity usage on their farm. This information was submitted to NB Power in order for them to see how different commodities have different peak usage times and also the overall usage.

A working group on wild parsnip was convened with a representative of DAAF, DTI, and the AANB in order to discuss what can be done with wild parsnip growing along roads adjacent to farm fields. A survey was sent to the members asking if they have wild parsnip growing and what roads it is growing alongside of. The results were sent to DTI's mowing division in order for them to see the areas and increase their mowing budget accordingly.

A meeting was held with NB Housing Corporation, PETL and DAAF in order to put forth the issue of housing temporary and seasonal workers on the farm. It is an issue that even prevents farmers from hiring workers because of the housing issue. The Departments wanted more information, and so a survey was sent to members in order to gather information on the housing issues affecting them. A report has been finalized and will be sent to the Departments, at the same time asking for a follow-up meeting with NB Housing and PETL.

Worked with the Department of Transportation & Infrastructure (DTI) to implement the Designated Roads Program and Non-Designated Roads Program.

A letter was sent to Federal Minister Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance), asking to keep the interest-free portion of the Advanced Payment Program to \$350,000, when it was announced that it would go down to \$100,000. In March, the level was set at \$250,000.

The AANB was part of the industry led, government funded Savor/Saveur NB branding committee. Now that Savor NB is an incorporated not-for profit corporation, the AANB, now a Board member, fully supports this initiative and encourages members to go on their website and become a free member in order to use the logos on their NB produced foods.

PETL sent out a proposed amendment to the Minimum Wage Regulation, where employers would need to pay their employees time and a half their regular wage if they work more than 44 hours/week. At the moment, employers must pay their employees at the rate of time and a half of the minimum wage. We are the only province not to have exemptions for agricultural workers. We have sent in our recommendation, which is to follow the rest of Canada in having exemptions, and more specifically Nova Scotia was cited in our recommendations, as they have the most thorough list of the agricultural activities that are exempt from overtime pay. After meeting with PETL, they understand our concerns and will take them into consideration if they change the Regulation.

MEMBER SERVICES / PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The AANB applied for funding for a Strategic Plan for the advancement of the agriculture sector on behalf of the Future of Ag NB and Food Sustainability committee (which has AANB and the Community of Creative Citizens representatives). Consultations were done with the AANB Board, the committee, and many stakeholders in the agricultural industry. The Plan will be finalized by the Spring of 2025.

Several websites stemming from AANB Programs such as Ag in the Classroom - NB, Environmental Farm Plan, AgriNB (Workforce Development), and Farm Talk Care (Mental Health and Farm Safety), and Living Labs New Brunswick

The Farm Talk Care (mental health and farm safety program) hosted a number of webinars and workshops about mental health in agriculture. A peer support program is being developed for farmers helping farmers with mental health struggles. A Farmer Wellness program is being developed for NB, still in early stages. Our coordinator also sits as a director on the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association. The website Farm Talk Care features resources and self-assessment tools for mental health, along with available workshops and helplines.

The Agriculture Workforce Development Program is still ongoing. The program continues to work with producers and stakeholders to address the labor shortage in agriculture. There is a job bank on the AgriNB website, and many resources for both farmers and those looking to work in agriculture. The coordinator also worked with CCNB, NBCC and UNB to help develop agricultural programming. A workshop on Digital Agriculture was held in March, and from that a report was produced. From the report, a Digital Ag Strategy is ongoing, and a second workshop was held in November with industry partners and representatives from the school system from K-12, Ag in the Classroom, NBCC, CCNB, UNB, Université de Moncton, and Dal Agricultural campus.

Agriculture in the Classroom-NB (AITC-NB) – programs delivered by AITC to thousands of students across the Province include Spuds in the tubs, Little Green Sprouts, Little Green Thumbs, Hydroponics with Cove, Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month, Career Case, and 3,2,1 AGtion. On the website, there is also a resource library for teachers, Think Ag for students, and Connect with a Farmer and snapAG, which explores hot topics affecting agriculture today. AITC -NB also helps coordinate the Great Canadian Farm Tour for the NB portion, and is present at agricultural fairs and expositions throughout the summer. Our AITC-NB coordinator also sits as a director on the Board of AITC-Canada.

The Shared Workforce Program has been very successful at matching employees with employers for seasonal work. In it's second year it has expanded from the Fredericton area into the Moncton/Woodstock area. Feedback has been very positive from businesses the Shared Workforce Program has provided workers, often after their own recruitment efforts resulted in limited to no responses. The program has allowed them to gain access to workers in New Brunswick, without who would have meant produce would have remained in the field. Approximately 40 farms are now registered with the Program.

AANB administers the Agricultural Climate Solutions – Living Labs federal project. Cedric McLeod is the coordinator for this 5-year, province-wide project. There are 25 test sites on farms throughout the province, with the objectives being to reduce greenhouse gas and sequester carbon.

The AANB continues to deliver the Environmental Farm Plan. The new Online Environmental Farm Plan can be used on computers, tablets and phones making it easier for farmers to use.

The AANB is the administrator for the Species at Risk Partnership on Agricultural Land. This federal program seeks to involve farmers to adopt practices that would benefit various species at risk in the province. Various workshops on how to help wood turtles were held throughout the province.

The mulch program working much smoother after redesigning the administration of it.

Promoted courses, training and events in our communications, website and activity reports. Sent out Newsletters and E-Activity reports to members, commodity groups and industry partners.

Organized the Atlantic Open Farm Day event in New Brunswick in collaboration with the other Atlantic Provinces.

Provided Canada GAP workshops in April 2024

Trespass signs are still available at \$5.00 each at the Alliance office in Fredericton.

Members Benefits ongoing for the 2024-2025 year, with the addition of three new benefits for a total of fourteen.

New sponsors have been added to our list, and new members benefits will be out for the 2024-25 membership year.

PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Member of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and representation on their Board of Directors

Member of the Atlantic Federation of Agriculture (AFA).

Member of the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) and representation on their Board of Directors.

Atlantic Veterinary College representation on the Advisory Council.

Member of Savor NB and representation on their Board of Directors.

Member of the Canadian Agriculture Safety Association (CASA) and representation on their Board of Directors.

Member of Ag in the Classroom Canada and representation on their Board of Directors.

Letters of support were written for Valores, students applying to attend the Atlantic Veterinary College, Cleanfarms, the Nashwaak Watershed Association, and the Kennebecasis Watershed Restoration Committee

Prepared and sent E-activity reports and bi-annual newsletters to members, commodity groups and industry partners.

Hosted Advisory Commodity Group- the group met on two occasions (April & September). A meeting was held in the spring with representatives of DAAF, DNRED, PETL, Housing NB, and DTI to present the 2024 Resolutions. The departments then responded to the resolutions at a later date by written responses.

Social Media- promoting facts and a positive image of the agricultural industry on AANB's Facebook page, Instagram.

A new AANB website was developed and launched in the fall.