



MAY 2020

# dispatch



Nova Scotia's Provincial Berry

Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia

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## NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, WBPANS has hired a familiar face as the new Executive Director, Peter Burgess. Peter grew up on a wild blueberry farm in Middle Musquodoboit and has spent the last 18 years as an extension specialist with Perennia. He has worked with multiple crops and industries over that time, but for the last 15 years, the majority of his time has been focused as the Wild Blueberry specialist. Peter will be moving away from providing direct production advice to growers, and working on broader industry issues and managing the affairs of the Association. Peter will also be working closely with the new Wild Blueberry specialist at Perennia, so there is seamless support for production issues in Nova Scotia. Peter's plans to be working in the Debert office Monday—Friday, 8:00 am—4:30 pm, unless attending meetings, or grower visits.

## VIRTUAL TWILIGHT MEETING

Given the challenges of Covid-19, WBPANS is looking to do something different for our regular twilight meetings. With in-field, large gatherings not possible right now, we are going to try a Zoom meeting as a way to get information out to the membership. We realize this might not be for everyone, with the challenges of rural internet in our province, but this will allow researchers and the association to get information out to the membership in a different way and hopefully allow for some Q&A. There is also the option to join the meeting via telephone.

We will be sending out a meeting announcement and those who are interested will have to contact the office in order to get an invite to the event (limited space on the video call). Janet will send a link for you to join the call. It will be a 1 hour call in the evening of June 17, at 6:30 pm, where guest speakers will give short presentations and growers can submit questions. If it is successful, this will be something we will try and do on a semi regular basis.

**If you are interested in participating contact Janet at the WBPANS office, by noon on June 15th to join by email: [info@nswildblueberries.com](mailto:info@nswildblueberries.com) or phone: 902-662-3306**

## ARE YOU ON OUR EMAIL LIST?

During these unprecedented times of Covid-19 pandemic and physical distancing rules, the need to communicate with our members electronically has become increasingly important. If you are not currently receiving email updates from WBPANS please send us your email address so we can add you to our list to receive the latest news and updates from our office. **Contact Janet at 902-662-3306 or email: [info@nswildblueberries.com](mailto:info@nswildblueberries.com)**

## COVID-19 RESOURCES

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture has put together a Covid-19 Resources webpage that can help farmers navigate the programs and resources available to them through this challenging time. It includes links to financial relief measures, Farm Safety resources, Covid-19 information pages and much more.

Follow the link below to explore what might work for your farm or your family. ***For farms that are struggling with cashflow, and have a payroll of more than \$20,000, they should take a close look at the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)***

<https://nsfa-fane.ca/covid-19/>

## EXPANSION TO THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT (CEBA)

On May 19, 2020, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced an expansion to the eligibility criteria for CEBA. The program will now be available to a greater number of businesses that are sole proprietors receiving income directly from their businesses, businesses that rely on contractors, and family-owned corporations that pay employees through dividends rather than payroll.

To qualify under the expanded eligibility criteria, applicants with payroll lower than \$20,000 would need:

- a business operating account at a participating financial institution
- a Canada Revenue Agency business number, and to have filed a 2018 or 2019 tax return.
- eligible non-deferrable expenses between \$40,000 and \$1.5 million. Eligible non-deferrable expenses could include costs such as rent, property taxes, utilities, and insurance.

For more information go to: <https://ceba-cuec.ca/>

## HARVESTER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture has once again released the harvester efficiency program, to help farms modernize their wild blueberry harvesting equipment. For farms that are looking for ways to adapt to harvesting restrictions brought on by Covid-19 contingency plans, this program may work for you. It offers 50% funding assistance on total eligible costs, up to \$20,000 per head. (\$40,000 for a double header). The program opens May 1st—October 31st (work to be invoiced by January 31, 2021). Those that received funding through this program in previous years are not eligible.

For a copy of the guidelines please contact NSDA Programs & Business Risk Management office at 902-893-6377 or toll free 1-866-844-4276 or go to the following link:

<https://novascotia.ca/programs/wild-blueberry-harvest-efficiency/20-21-Wild-Blueberry-Harvest-Efficiency-Program-Guidelines.pdf>

## SMALL FARM ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

For those Wild Blueberry farms that have gross revenues under \$30,000 annually, NSDA does have a program that may help modernize, make your operation more efficient and help grow revenues. <https://novascotia.ca/programs/small-farm-acceleration/>

The small farm Accelerator Program is a two phase application process for these farms. Phase one involves writing a business plan, either with a consultant or by yourself (up to \$1250 available to do it yourself), detailing how the changes you plan to make to your farm will improve your operations bottom line.

If this business plan is approved through, Phase two could include:

- A loan interest rebate of up to \$5000.00
- Or a project grant of 50% of the project costs up to \$5000 (this could include, equipment and efficiency up-grades)
- Or 50% coverage of business advisory services up to \$2500/year.

If you are a small wild blueberry farm, it is worth looking at this program to see if it fits your operation.

For more information please contact NSDA Programs & Business Risk Management office at 902-893-6377 or toll free 1-866-844-4276.



## NEW WILD BLUEBERRY SPECIALIST AT PERENNIA

Perennia is pleased to announce the appointment of Hugh Lyu to the position of Wild Blueberry Specialist. Hugh will begin with Perennia on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and, although working from his home office for the time being, will be based out of the Truro area. Hugh is in the process of completing his M.Sc. program at the Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture (DAL-AC) under the guidance of Dr. Scott White. Hugh has been working in Nova Scotia wild blueberry research since 2014, covering all areas of pest management, including disease control and vegetation management. Many of the Nova Scotia producers have likely already been introduced to Hugh while he conducted a weed survey in wild blueberry fields across Nova Scotia. Hugh's contact information will be posted in Perennia's Horticultural publication [The Root](#) in the coming days.

### LIKE AND FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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**TWITTER:** [@canadianwildbb](https://twitter.com/canadianwildbb)



**INSTAGRAM:** [canadianwildblueberries.ca](https://canadianwildblueberries.ca)



## AGRI-STABILITY AND AGRI-INSURANCE UPDATES

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, WBPANS was able to sit in on a zoom meeting, NSFA organized, with the Federal Minister of Agriculture - Marie-Claude Bibeau. In the meeting she highlighted some of the changes to existing BRM programs for this year. Here is a link to the Agri-stability site <http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/?id=1291990433266>

### Agri-Stability

The deadline for to apply for Agri-Stability for the 2020 cropping year has been extended to July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

If you expect you will trigger a payment, you can now apply for 75% of the estimated payment as an interim payment to allow for cashflow. (the old threshold was 50%)

There is now an online calculator that can help determine if Agri-Stability will work for you.

### Agri-Insurance

The federal government is allowing labour shortage as an insurable risk for the 2020 season under the Federal –Provincial Agreement for Agri-insurance. So if approved by the Nova Scotia government (each province would have to approve this) if you are unable to manage or harvest your crop because of labour shortage and the crop loss is enough to trigger a crop insurance payment, it would be considered an insurable risk.

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Due to the physical distancing regulations, WBPANS staff have not attended any in-person meetings but are continuing to do business through virtual meetings and conference calls as well as working in the Debert office managing multiple ongoing projects:

Frequent communications with NSFA staff regarding:

- burning permits
- COVID-19 assistance programs

Participated in a conference call hosted by NSFA, with Federal Minister of Agriculture Marie-Claude Bibeau - regarding federal assistance programs.

Agri-Stability review and recommendations

Building Tomorrow Fund Project:

- Innovation Challenge
- Fresh Market Study

Communications with NSDA staff regarding the next Harvester Efficiency Program.

Industry Collaboration with the Atlantic Wild Blueberry Association's Presidents and Executive Directors.

General office administration including regular conference calls to WBPANS Executive and Board members.

## FLY TRAPS

Once again WBPANS will have blueberry maggot fly traps for purchase at the association office.

**Please contact the office prior to pick up for the amount you want and when you will be here to pick them up. Social distancing protocols will be in place.**



## WBANA-CANADA UPDATE April 2019

Covid-19 has had a serious effect on everyone and on everyone's plans. The good news for the wild blueberry industry is that while the foodservice (restaurants) side of the demand is down due to restaurant closures, etc., the retail side of the demand has been very strong! It appears that consumers have been stocking up on Wild Blueberries and other frozen and canned products. This is true in North America, in Europe and other countries around the globe.

WBANA Canada maintained a small presence in all countries mostly by social media, while we were trying to determine the best way to move forward with Oxford Frozen Foods opting out of their WBANA Canada membership. An important meeting to determine the future direction of WBANA Canada and its role was to be held in Moncton in early March, however, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the meeting was re-scheduled for May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, however, as everyone knows by now, that meeting needed to be rescheduled as well.

For the 2019 crop, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and PEI producer Associations have committed dues to WBANA Canada. The other 3 major processors and a new smaller processor, have paid their 2019 crop dues to WBANA Canada so that it can continue to promote and to oversee and direct funds to Health Research.

I will keep everyone posted as to any new developments.

Neri Vautour, Executive Director WBANA Canada  
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## ATLANTIC TECH TRANSFER TEAM FOR APICULTURE

### Honey Bee Stocking Density in Wild Blueberry Research Project

A summary of our three year research project investigating the effect of honey bee stocking density on multiple endpoints is now available on our website.

English version: <https://www.perennia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Effect-of-Stocking-Density-in-WB-eng-3.pdf>

French version: <https://www.perennia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Effect-of-Stocking-Density-in-WB-French-3.pdf>

### Nosema Update

ATTTA is working on a project investigating Nosema in honey bee colonies that do and do not go to wild blueberry pollination. An overview of the project is available here: <https://www.perennia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ATTTA-Nosema-FINAL.pdf> More project updates will be available this fall. Thanks to all participating beekeepers!

### Email Blog Update

ATTTA specialists are currently working on a new email blog for beekeepers and blueberry growers to subscribe to for regular updates- we will keep you in the loop when that is ready. Stay tuned for planned updates including managing drought in honey bee colonies, Asian Giant Hornet, queen cost of production, and more! For now, you can check out our research and extension materials on our website here: <https://www.perennia.ca/portfolio-items/honey-bees/>

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