



March 2021

dispatch



Nova Scotia's Provincial Berry
www.nswildblueberries.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT March 2021

It's been 10 months since I started with WBPANS and the time has flown by. Even with Covid-19 the Association has been able to accomplish a fair amount over this past 10 months. Here is a list of a few things that the Association has done on behalf of growers:

1. Association Meetings – WBPANS puts on a lot of events for growers in a normal year, Covid-19 has thrown a wrench into those. However, we were able to have 5 separate zoom sessions that presented technical issues to growers (3 of which provided PRCP points for growers). We were also able to have our AGM with several industry presentations in a hybrid format.
2. Agri-stability – This has been a long sticking point with many in our industry. In 2020 WBPANS conducted a study to review the challenges of the program for wild blueberry growers in Nova Scotia. This document was circulated to the federal and provincial government and was part of a larger industry effort to make changes in this program. We are currently waiting on ratification of changes to Agri-stability, made by Minister Bibeau, that could have real impact for wild blueberry growers.
3. Building Tomorrow Fund – We are entering the last year of this \$930,000.00, three-year project, that aims to increase fresh, fresh frozen and value-added production in Nova Scotia. This project is fully funded by NSDA. This includes the Innovation Challenge which helps get new and innovative products, that use wild blueberries, to market. It also includes: research into fresh and frozen packaging, that will be released in the coming year; research into harvest quality which was released to growers last month and will be expanded this year; economic analysis on establishment of smaller scale fresh pack facilities; money to expand the brand within Nova Scotia and help get consumers familiar on where to buy local wild blueberries.
4. Pollination Expansion Program – WBPANS worked with the NS Beekeepers Association, through the Joint Pollination Committee, to lobby government to offer a pollination expansion program to help meet the growing needs of wild blueberry growers, as our industry starts to turn the corner. This new program, which will be released on April 1, is a two-year program that should make more hives available for wild blueberry growers.

Executive Director's Report Continued:

5. Ongoing Research – WBPANS continues to fund applied research at about \$100,000 per year. This money is leveraged by DalAC researchers and others to look at everything from new product registrations, innovative technologies (like UAVs and machine learning), pollination work, weed management etc. This year WBPANS is leading a weather monitoring pilot project that will validate weather-based prediction models and examine how they can be used with cost effective and locally sourced weather stations.
6. Promotion Activities – With Saltscapes Expo and the Wild Blueberry Harvest Festival cancelled in 2020, we had to be creative on where to focus promotion activities. We did a series of wild blueberry focused sessions on the Kilted Chef's facebook live sessions in August, with great success and high exposure. We were also able to put a two-page advertorial in the Feb-March issue of Saltscapes magazine. We have also ramped up our Canadian Wild Blueberry "Proudly Grown in Nova Scotia".branding activities. We are looking to expand this in 2021 and further link our fresh pack growers to consumers. WBPANS has partnered with Masstown Market during the month of March to celebrate the wild blue berry. When you purchase a 5lb box of Millen Farms Wild Blueberries you will receive a shopping bag compliments of WBPANS.
7. Government Advocacy – WBPANS is in contact with federal and provincial government departments on behalf of the growers. From minor-use pesticide priority setting, exploring drought relief, getting clarity on Covid-19 protocols/funding supports and just keeping government departments updated on our industry. We work closely with other partners like NSFA in NS and Canadian Hort Council nationally to make sure the wild blueberry voice is heard.
8. Regular Grower Supports - We have had many conversations with growers and industry reps over the last few months, answering questions, helping direct them to places that can help their businesses and keep growers updated on current industry trends.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the WBPANS office at 902-662-3306.

UPDATED WBPANS WEBSITE

We have updated our website!! Same address www.nswildblueberries.com, new look!

WBPANS has a new and easier to navigate website! With a "Grower Resources" section, it is easier to find fact sheets, old presentations and new podcasts! Click on the You Tube link in the top right hand corner to go to the WBPANS You Tube channel to see videos and recordings of previous zoom sessions. The "Links" section also makes it easier to find industry partners and resources available for growers! The "Wild Blueberries" section contains health information, photos, recipes and where to buy fresh and frozen wild blueberries! Check it out www.nswildblueberries.com

Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia
168 Dakota Road, PO Box 119 Debert, NS B0M 1G0
Tel: 902-662-3306 Email: info@nswildblueberries.com

WBPANS WINTER INFORMATION MEETING

Friday, March 26, 2021

1:00 pm— 3:00pm via Zoom Conferencing

This year's Winter meeting will be held via zoom and will focus on industry programs and supports.

We will also have some evening technical sessions in late March and early April, that will focus on research that has happened over the past year. Stay tuned for times and dates! Make sure you are on our email list to receive timely updates (call 902-662-3306 or email info@nswildblueberries and ask to be added).

Anyone wishing to participate in the Winter Information Meeting, please contact WBPANS office before 10:00 am on March 24th to register. An email containing the link to the meeting will be sent to those registered. Contact WBPANS Office at: [902-662-3306](tel:902-662-3306) or Email: info@nswildblueberries.com

AGENDA

1:00 pm	Introduction - Peter Swinkels, President, WBPANS
1:10—1:50 pm	WBPANS Update (Industry Outlook, Activities of the Association) - Peter Burgess, Executive Director, WBPANS
1:50—2:10 pm	NS Farm Loan Board Update—Jen Thompson, Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board
2:10—2:30 pm	Wild Blueberry Crop Insurance for 2021—Bill MacLeod, NS Crop & Livestock Insurance Commission
2:30 pm -2:50 pm	Available Programs For Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Growers— Terry McKay, NSDA Programs
2:50 pm	Question & Answer (Feedback and Questions from Members)

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ARE YOU ON OUR EMAIL LIST?

WBPANS continues to regularly communicate with members via our electronic newsletter. These enews are distributed approximately twice per month and contain the latest news and updates from our office. If you are not currently receiving the enews from WBPANS please send us your email address so we can add you to our list. Contact Janet at [902-662-3306](tel:902-662-3306) or email: info@nswildblueberries.com

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Nova Scotia Pesticide Certification Exam Schedule 2021

If you need pesticide applicator certification and are not using re-certification points or reciprocity, please register for one of the on-line exam-writing sessions listed below by submitting a completed *Application for Pesticide Certificate* to PesticideApplications@novascotia.ca. We will need to receive it at least 5 business days in advance of the exam. The application form can be found at:

<https://novascotia.ca/nse/pests/docs/pesticideCertificationApplicationForm.pdf>. The fee for pesticide certification is \$66.35. The payment must also be received 5 days prior to be granted access to the exam session. Please send a cheque to the NS Environment office located in Bedford, Kentville or Sydney (Attention: Regional Secretary). See below at the bottom of the page for the office address.

Please include a valid email address on your application so we can send you the link to the online exam. Before writing the exam, study the appropriate pesticide manual(s). The manuals can be found at

<https://www.novascotia.ca/nse/pests/applicatortraining.asp>. Agriculture, Domestic Vendor and Commercial Vendor categories have one manual. For other categories, see the Core Manual and the applicable Category Manual. You will need to achieve at least 75% on the exam to pass.

Once a complete application form, including a valid email address, and payment has been received, we will send you an email the morning of the scheduled exam session containing the link to the exam session.

You will have three hours to complete the exam. Exams are closed book so you will not be permitted to reference any manuals or other resources during the exam. To complete the exam, you will need a computer with:

- Internet access to write the online exam and to enter the proctoring platform, and
- Audio and camera capability for exam proctoring by NS Environment

There may be calculations as part of the exam. Therefore, a pen, paper and a calculator may be required.

Your results will be sent to you by email. The certification provided by this on-line exam will be valid for **5 years**. If you need to rewrite the exam, you will need to submit another application and applicable fee for the next online exam session.

Application to be Received by:	Dates & Times of On-Line Exam Sessions	
9:00 am on March 3, 2021	March 10, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am on March 17, 2021	March 24, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am March 31, 2021	April 7, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am April 14, 2021	April 21, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am April 28, 2021	May 5, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am May 12, 2021	May 19, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am May 26, 2021	June 2, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am June 9, 2021	June 16, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am June 29, 2021	July 7, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am July 14, 2021	July 21, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am August 11, 2021	August 18, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am September 8, 2021	September 15, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am October 13, 2021	October 20, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am November 9, 2021	November 17, 2021	9:00 am
9:00 am December 1, 2021	December 8, 2021	9:00 am

If you have additional questions, please contact one of NS Environment regional offices:

For Yarmouth, Digby, Shelburne, Annapolis, Kings, Queens, Lunenburg Counties, and West Hants Municipality:

Nova Scotia Environment – Western Region
Attention: Regional Secretary 136 Exhibition Street, 2nd Floor, Provincial Building
Kentville, Nova Scotia B4N 4E5
Phone: 902-679-6086

For HRM, Colchester, Cumberland Counties, and East Hants Municipality:

Nova Scotia Environment – Central Region
Attention: Regional Secretary 30 Damascus Road, Suite 115 Bedford, Nova Scotia B4A 0C1
Phone: 902-424-7773

For Cape Breton, Port Hawkesbury, Antigonish, Guysborough and Pictou Counties:

Nova Scotia Environment – Eastern Region
Attention: Regional Secretary 1030 Upper Prince Street, Suite 2 Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 5P6
Phone: 902-563-2100