



New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association

April 2025 Newsletter

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Revised by Andrea Versloot

Inside this issue

The Benefits of Incorporation	Page 1
Message from the GM	Page 2
Regional Updates	Page 4
Photos	Page 13
Contact Us	Page 15
Partners & Sponsors	Page 16

The Benefits of Incorporation

As planting season approaches, farmers are wondering what they can do to get the most out of their fertilizer to set their crops up for success from the ground up.

Most crops have active roots in the 0-15 cm soil depth range, with some extending even deeper into the soil where compaction and rock isn't a barrier. This rooting zone is where nutrient uptake takes place with the exchange of CO₂ with soil microbes that supply the plants available forms of essential nutrients for root uptake. This nutrient exchange process happens naturally as long as the soil biology is active and plant essential nutrients are present in the soil. This raises the question: how do nutrients applied on the soil surface become available for the soil microbes and roots of the plants?

Some nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are mobile in solution and can be moved into the soil with rainfall; however,

that can only happen if rainfall is in the forecast and as long as the soil structure is able to take in that rain when it comes. Between the time when fertilizer or manure is spread on the soil surface and the time that the field receives sufficient rainfall to wash in the nutrients, significant nutrient losses could have already taken place. In addition to this, if the soil is unable to absorb the rainfall efficiently due to compaction or moisture holding capacity limitations, nutrients could be washed off the surface of the soil. Over time, soil life such as earthworms and dung beetles could transport organic amendments such as manure or compost down into the soil but by that time the organic forms of these nutrients may be all that remains, the readily available forms could have been completely lost.

The solution to ensuring that most of these applied nutrients are available to your plants and the microbes that make the nutrients available, is incorporation. There are many tools available and ways to adapt your equipment to make the incorporation process easy and applicable to your farm operations. Planters can come with banding units that allow the fertilizer to be simultaneously placed in the soil near the seed while planting. Liquid manure spreaders can be equipped with injection disks to place manure into the sod of forage fields. There are also other tillage tools that

can be run after broadcast fertilizer or manure application such as Lemkens and other vertical/minimum tillage implements to incorporate the applied amendment. An important consideration to note; however, is that the incorporation must be timely after application. For instance, it has been proven that within hours after surface application you can start to lose nitrogen via a process called volatilization where nitrogen goes off as a gas into the air and certain weather conditions can increase the rate of loss such as hot, humid and windy weather. It is recommended that manure or fertilizer be incorporated immediately or at most within 24hrs of application to minimize the amount of nutrient value lost to the surrounding environment. Other benefits of the incorporation of manure are the quicker breakdown of the organic material components and the reduced odour when the manure has been applied.



A high speed disk that could be used to incorporate manure.

Message from the General Manager Ray Carmichael

The 46th Annual General Meeting and Technical Workshop, March 13th -14th was well attended with many engaging presentations. Believe it or not spring is finally here, a coordinator has already collected a soil sample last week and the results were received today. Obviously, PEI lab is not busy yet.

NBSCIA is attempting to work with NBDAAF staff to schedule field days for this summer, so if you have any suggestions on subjects, let your local coordinator know.

Finally, NBSCIA is accepting OFCAF applications; however, remember that each of the BMP areas: nitrogen management, cover cropping and rotational grazing require a management plan. So don't wait to give your Coordinator, PAG or CCA a heads up if you require assistance.





▶▶▶ **What's next
happens here.**

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Regional Updates

Hotspot in the Northwest: A radiant winter 2025 for the northwest region

by Jean-Mars Jean-François

Despite the much-feared harshness of last winter, the northwest agri-environmental advisory club was not idle. This icy period allowed the coordinator to strengthen his ties with farmers by assisting them in several activities, including the preparation of nutrient management plans, environmental farm plans, the planning of certain individual projects, and the current agricultural season. In addition, three training workshops were held on field nitrogen management and rotational grazing. To top it all off, the winter of 2025 left a sweet taste in the mouths of the northwest agri-environmental advisory club. The Lionel and Alyre Poitras farm, members of the club, were crowned Farm of the Year for 2024. In this context, to fully understand the merits of this note of joy, let's briefly take a look at this farm.

Fermes Lionel & Alyre Poitras Ltée., located in Saint-André in the northwest of the province, are a member of the New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association. This farm, currently managed by Alyre Poitras and his son Paul Poitras, was founded in the 1930s by Paul's great-grandfather. At that time, everything from pork and beef to potatoes and cereals was produced with diversity. From humble beginnings, only about 135 acres were cultivated. Starting in the 1960s, the farm took a reluctant turn by contracting with the newly established McCain company. In 1998, its incorporation resulted in an expansion of its land and infrastructure. Currently, 80% of this farm's production is potatoes, which feeds McCain's processing line, 10% is devoted to the table and the rest is intended for seed. The rotation chosen favors potatoes and cover crops. Cover crops facilitate the improvement of soil health and water availability in the soil, the reduction of erosion and the need for chemical fertilizers, the control of weeds and the increase of biodiversity. In addition, the farm employs three full-time farm workers and, during the harvest season, recruits more than 19 local farm workers.

For several years now, with a view to extending crop rotation, the family has been gradually clearing certain wood plots. Alyre and Paul regularly rely on their agronomist and McCain's recommendations to implement a nutrient management plan, guide cultivar selection, and carry out appropriate phytosanitary treatments. Each year, the land dedicated to potato cultivation is analyzed using a georeferenced method to ensure precise fertilization rates. With the application of lime, this farm manages to maintain soil pH around 6 to 6.5, something that represents a real challenge for tuber producers located along the Woodstock-Saint-Quentin corridor. On the other hand, the Lionel & Alyre Poitras farm relies on the use of ammonium sulfate to reduce to zero the incidence of common scab. Alyre and Paul rely on FCC's " AgExpert " software to store all the operations carried out in the fields. As good, informed and committed producers, Alyre and Paul work closely with McCain professionals. The latter frequently conduct crop reconnaissance to highlight intervention thresholds against pests and diseases. The farm applies an innovative practice which involves planting and hilling potatoes in a single pass, thanks to the planter equipped with a rear ridger. This reduces the number of passes required in the field, minimizes disturbance to soil life and improves soil structure.

In addition to their work on the farm, Alyre and Paul are never inactive. They sit on several regional committees and are active in various community groups. For instance, they are members of the Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick and NBSCIA. They also participate in the McCain Producer Advisory Council. Paul, for his part, in addition to his role as a good father of five, regularly lends a hand as a volunteer firefighter in his community. He is also President of the northwest region fishing and hunting club. In the past, he has also served as a municipal councilor. In the coming years, Alyre and Paul envision a sunny future. They plan to acquire more land, allowing them to extend crop rotations, and to work for the agri-environment by testing different products to improve potato quality and yield, and reduce the use of chemical fertilizers. Paul is happy with the current size of the farm and wants to work towards maintaining a good balance between farm and personal life so that he can spend quality time with his family and continue to serve his community.

Fermes Lionel & Alyre Poitras Ltée. is adorned with several McCain awards. In February 2025, this same farm was awarded the Farm of the Year award for the Northwest region. Recently, on March 14, 2025, and after a close and high-level competition, Miramichi was the scene of a major event. Fermes Lionel & Alyre Poitras Ltée. received, with the highest distinction, the 2024 Farm of the Year award for the entire province of New Brunswick. Let us emphasize it is with a sense of pride and admiration that the entire agricultural community of the province, the members of the northwest agri-environmental advisory club, and the New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association join hands to applaud the noble work carried out by the Alyre and Paul tandem for the benefit of the agricultural sector of the province. This well-deserved award is the result of the immeasurable support of their wives, who have always been by the side of these two giants through thick and thin. As the old saying goes, behind every successful man, there is a truly great woman. This award comes at the right time, recognizing the many efforts combined with sacrifices, perseverance, and vision of this farm to feed New Brunswickers.

Congratulations and well done!!!



The nominees for the 2024 Farm of the Year Award at the banquet in Miramichi.

Northshore Update

by Gabrielle Schenkels

In March, the Northshore had the honour of hosting this years provincial AGM in our region, which was a great success! We had over 100 attendees for our technical workshops and the Farm of the Year Banquet, including NBDAAF Minister Pat Finnigan, finance minister Minister René Legacy, and Minister Luc Robichaud. We heard great feedback from attendees on the speakers, whose topics ranged from nitrogen inhibitors and emissions, to cybersecurity in agriculture, to precision mapping and wild blueberry growing models. All in all, there was something for everyone! We hope those of you that attended enjoyed your visit to Miramichi and that we will be able to host you again in the future. A special thanks going out to Northeast Farm of the Year, Reno Poirier and Legumes Chez Reno, for their generous donation of preserves for our speaker gifts, and to the Rodd staff for their great service throughout the event.

As we look forward to the cropping season, I will be assisting in a couple neat projects with our partners. In partnership with Perennia, I will be the boots on the ground for a Pollinator Efficiency project, which will help blueberry producers by building a model of the flowering window by Growing Degree Days. I will also assist Jason Wells with his corn/alfalfa trial at a producer plot in the Northeast. Please keep an eye out for local field day announcements as we make plans in the next couple months.


As for on-farm work, I am available for fertility and crop planning, and scouting recommendations as the season moves on, but the earlier you reach out to me, the better! If you have a particular activity in mind, such as field sampling or assistance with funding applications, please reach out so we can start planning now. Hoping for a safe and productive planting season for all producers out there!



The Farm of the Year banquet in Miramichi.



The Northeast Farm of the Year recipient, Reno Poirier.



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Carleton Region & Research Project Update

by Andrew Sytsma

The CEROM winter wheat variety development plots in Williamstown are looking good after the winter! They were planted a bit on the early side but it appears that we'll have good winter survival and minimal snow mold and heaving.

The oat variety development work with Phytogene Resources will be a go ahead again this year. One line from last year's trial has been advanced to the Atlantic regional trials for registration support. Two lines that have gone through NBSCIA's trial work are now officially registered varieties under the names of "Simonds" and "Acer" which we're very excited to see our efforts pay off! We're still about two years away from them being commercially available to grow but they will be available at Carleton AgriSolutions when the time comes.

We are expanding our partnership with CEROM out of Quebec to include a spring wheat variety development trial this year! It's starting out as a small trial, but our variety development work is now becoming more important than ever, especially with other variety breeding programs in the Atlantic provinces being shut down in the near future.

NBSCIA will be conducting a starter nitrogen in soybeans research project over the next three years. This project will investigate the impact of soybeans with or without starter nitrogen on early, mid and late planting dates. There isn't much local or regional data published on this topic so stay tuned!

We will be upgrading the weather stations with an additional soil temperature sensor this year to cover the 2"-3" soil depth. This will nicely complement our current sensors at 6" and 12" to help generate more data for management decisions.



The winter wheat plots after the snow had melted.



Spring Update from the Central Region

by Andrea Versloot

I hesitate to put “Spring” in the title of my update for this newsletter as it seems winter is still hanging in at the time that I write this update. However, crops are starting to wake up and the geese are back so field work is just around the corner.

Frost seeding is one of the first things producers can be doing at the start of the growing season when freeze, thaw cycles are happening. I hope some farmers were able to take advantage of this longer transition period to get some seeding done this way to thicken up their pasture and forage stands for this year.

Speaking with a few apple growers in the area this past March, winter pruning has been completed on orchards in the outskirts of Fredericton. The next step for growers is to manage their branch training and to start adding fertility to their trees.

Dairy and beef producers are waiting for their fields to dry up to get manure applied and incorporated where possible to empty their storages and provide important nutrients and organic matter to their crops. Corn and soybean planting preparation will be underway soon if it hasn't started already on many grain and dairy farms in the area.

I have read several articles that predict that we may have a dry season this year; however, I am hopeful that we will receive sufficient moisture at key times during the season to support good crop development and yields.

I would like to congratulate our local 2024 Farm of the Year recipient, Coburn Farms! This family is dedicated and innovative in all the practices they do and they are a key part of their local community.

If you have any soil or crop related questions or have interest in using my services this spring/summer, don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to working with you this growing season!



David Christie, Central Soil & Crop president with Glen and Tyler Coburn of Coburn Farms.

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA)

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) launched its New Brunswick Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool (HBAT) on March 26. The two-hour webinar provided background on the HBAT project and tool, a demonstration of the tool, how to read the output report(s) and the potential for use across New Brunswick.



Designed as an extension and awareness tool, the HBAT is a province-specific online tool meant to help land managers gain an understanding of important habitats and biodiversity on their land and the stewardship opportunities they could implement to sustain them. It is based on the potential for species to occur in an area and avoids releasing sensitive information about actual native species observations.

The tool provides agricultural producers with the knowledge of what native species have the potential to occur on their land based on the known or expected distribution of species, the geographic location of the farm or ranch and on the habitat types and features that are found on it. With that knowledge, conservation opportunities for native species can be suggested to producers who can then decide on what, if anything, is compatible and desirable within their operational constraints and objectives.

For more information about the HBAT project and to access the NB HBAT [visit the CFGA website.](#)

Kings County Happenings

by Joseph Graham

Over the winter months NBSCIA has been busy hosting training sessions across the province. With rotational grazing, nitrogen management and cover cropping events happening in the beginning months of 2025. Following our local sessions, the local was well represented at the provincial AGM in Miramichi; we thank our local Farm of the Year nominee EverAnne Farms Ltd.

A busy planting season is fast approaching with the snow disappearing fast across the Kings region. Following an amazing growing season last year, we suspect a lot of corn silage to be planted once again. Make sure you check the NBSCIA OFCAF updates for the 2025 season, cover cropping is a main feature of this program. Last season saw us have an extended growing season and early corn harvest. If you check the provincial NBSCIA weather maps it was an exceptional season for corn heat units (CHU) and growing degree days (GDD). Going forward there may be more opportunities to try a cover crop following your corn silage harvest.

This summer the local looks forward to hosting another local Forage Field Day, this will be planned for late summer. If we can navigate the weather properly, we hope to have lots of forage and hay equipment on demo. In other local news, the club will be looking at parting ways with all their equipment. Last year the local club parted with the corn planter. This year the Aerway aerator and NST2511 multi-purpose seeder are being considered for sale. We hope to share details with the local membership about these pieces going forward. The club is looking at the potential for something new based on the membership's interest.



Your Trusted Partner in Agriculture

Founded in 2023, **Carleton AgriSolutions** is dedicated to serving farmers throughout New Brunswick with high-quality products and reliable services. Our goal is to provide solutions that help you achieve greater efficiency, healthier crops, and improved yields. Whether you're planting your next crop, managing your harvest, or preparing for the next season, we're here to support you every step of the way.

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As a **Certified Cereal Seed Producer**, Carleton AgriSolutions takes pride in offering top-performing seed varieties that deliver strong, consistent results in the field. Our certified seeds are carefully selected and tested to ensure they meet high standards for purity, germination, and performance.

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Why Choose Carleton AgriSolutions?

At Carleton AgriSolutions, we are committed to building lasting relationships with our customers by providing trusted products, expert advice, and dependable service. Our knowledgeable team is always available to answer questions, offer recommendations, and support your farm's unique needs.

Greetings from Moncton & Chignecto

by Beverly Booth

Spring is in the air!

As the Moncton and Chignecto club coordinator I would like to wish you all a safe planting season! Now that winter meetings and workshops have winded down it is time to start thinking about spring/summer planning. The Moncton AGM was held on January 23rd at the Salisbury Legion. Congratulations to Ravenwood Holsteins Ltd. for being the 2024 local Farm of the Year recipient. Moncton's executives remain the same with Ryan Van de Brand as president, John Bos as vice president and Winston Jones as secretary/treasurer. I would like to welcome Calvin Hicks as a new director on the local board. The Chignecto AGM was held on February 10th at the Port Elgin Exhibition grounds. Congratulations to Willie A. Leblanc & Sons for being the Chignecto Farm of the Year recipient. Chignecto's executives remain the same as 2024 with Nathan Murray holding presidency, Dean Acton as vice, Erin Ward as secretary and Jessica Murray as treasurer. I would like to welcome our new board members: Allison Lange, Ryan Estabrooks, Jake Reade, and Ryan Perkins. During the Chignecto local AGM we asked the membership for suggestions on equipment that may be useful or of interest to our membership. After taking these suggestions the board was able to decide on purchasing a new land leveler as well as a roller for paying Chignecto members to rent. In the Chignecto region we have already selected our 2025 Farm of the Year nominee.

It has been a very eventful spring season aiding farmers with rotational grazing, cover cropping and nutrient management planning which has been the bulk of my work load. I have been fortunate to meet with many of the producers in my area from one end of my region to the other. I had the opportunity to get out and meet many new producers from the past workshops and events over the winter months. I am in the works of planning two or three upcoming field days regarding the cover cropping, nutrient management and rotational grazing BMP topics and already have some ideas flowing so stay tuned for official dates! I look forward to working with you to enhance the soil and crop sustainability in New Brunswick.

Don't hesitate to contact me at 506-364-2853 or moncton@nbscia.ca for any of your soil or crop needs!



Andrew Sytsma installing a new weather station in Lynnfield, NB



Rotational grazing workshop in Edmundston, NB



Field of oat stubble after winter in Maple Ridge, NB



FOY Award presented by Pioneer Corteva to Paul Poitras & Family



NBSCIA AGM March 13th & 14th in Miramichi



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15

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Barn Raisers

The logo for AGTIV, featuring the word "AGTIV" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol.The logo for Potatoes Pommés de terre NB CANADA. It features the words "Potatoes" and "Pommés de terre" in green, "NB" in a large red font with a green leaf on top, and "CANADA" in red below. Small text "NEW BRUNSWICK / NOUVEAU BRUNSWICK" is also present.The logo for Cavendish Agri Services. It features a green house icon on a hill above the word "Cavendish" in white on a green background, with "Agri Services" in smaller text below.The logo for New Brunswick / Nouveau Brunswick, featuring a stylized red and white bird or leaf shape above the words "New Brunswick" and "Nouveau Brunswick" in green.

Harvesters

The logo for the Alliance of NB • agricole du N.-B. It features a stylized green and brown hand holding a plant, with the word "Alliance" in green and "of NB • agricole du N.-B." in black below.The logo for SEMICAN, featuring a red maple leaf above the word "SEMICAN" in black.The logo for Brookville Lime, featuring a green stylized "E" shape above the words "Brookville Lime" in green, with "AGLIME AND CRUSHED STONE" in smaller text below.The logo for LIVING LAB NEW/NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK. It features a stylized green plant icon above the words "LIVING LAB" in blue, with "NEW/NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK" in smaller text below.The logo for DEKALB, featuring a stylized green and yellow wing above the word "DEKALB" in red on a yellow background.The logo for BAYER, featuring the word "BAYER" in black inside a blue and green circular border.The logo for Belchim Canada GROWING TOGETHER. It features a stylized green and blue leaf icon above the words "Belchim Canada" in black, with "GROWING TOGETHER" in smaller text below.The logo for QS Quality Seeds. It features a stylized red "QS" with a green plant icon inside the "Q", and "Quality Seeds" in black below.The logo for Envirem Organics. It features a stylized green and blue swirl icon above the words "Envirem Organics" in black, with "A Member of the Convertus Group" in smaller text below.The logo for FUNDY, featuring a blue silhouette of a cow above the word "FUNDY" in blue.

Seed Sowers

The logo for maizex, featuring a stylized blue and white "M" icon above the word "maizex" in black.The logo for Dairy Farmers of New Brunswick du Nouveau-Brunswick. It features a blue cow icon with a white maple leaf, with the text "Producteurs laitiers" above and "Dairy Farmers of New Brunswick du Nouveau-Brunswick" below.The logo for Chaleur ENGRAIS • FERTILIZERS. It features the word "Chaleur" in green, with "ENGRAIS • FERTILIZERS" in black below.The logo for COHORT WHOLESALE. It features a green shield icon with a white leaf, with the words "COHORT WHOLESALE" in black above a colorful image of various fruits and vegetables.