

New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Volume 12 Issue 2
Revised by Gabrielle Schenkels

April 2026 Newsletter

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Put Your Best Root Forward - Best Management Practices for Planting

The sun is shining and spring is in the air in New Brunswick! Farmers are watching the forecast, anxious to get in the fields and their crops in the ground....but are you set up for success? Here are a few things to keep in mind as you enter planting season to set up your crops for success:

Service and calibrate your equipment

A machine that isn't operating correctly, or operating at an unknown rate, is better left in the repair shed than brought into the field for a rushed job. Planters, fertilizer spreaders, and manure spreaders in particular can make or break the difference between a crop success or failure. In your planters, ensure there is no damage in your seed lines, closing discs, or to the frame of the planter before taking it out for field calibration. For your spreaders, consult your manual, the manufacturers' Youtube page/website, or better yet, your local coordinator to use our Massload scales to calibrate your equipment on site. These scales are perfect for manure in particular, as the volume and weight of manure will differ from farm to farm. This will ensure that you know exactly what you are feeding your crop, so you can be confident in manure management decisions.



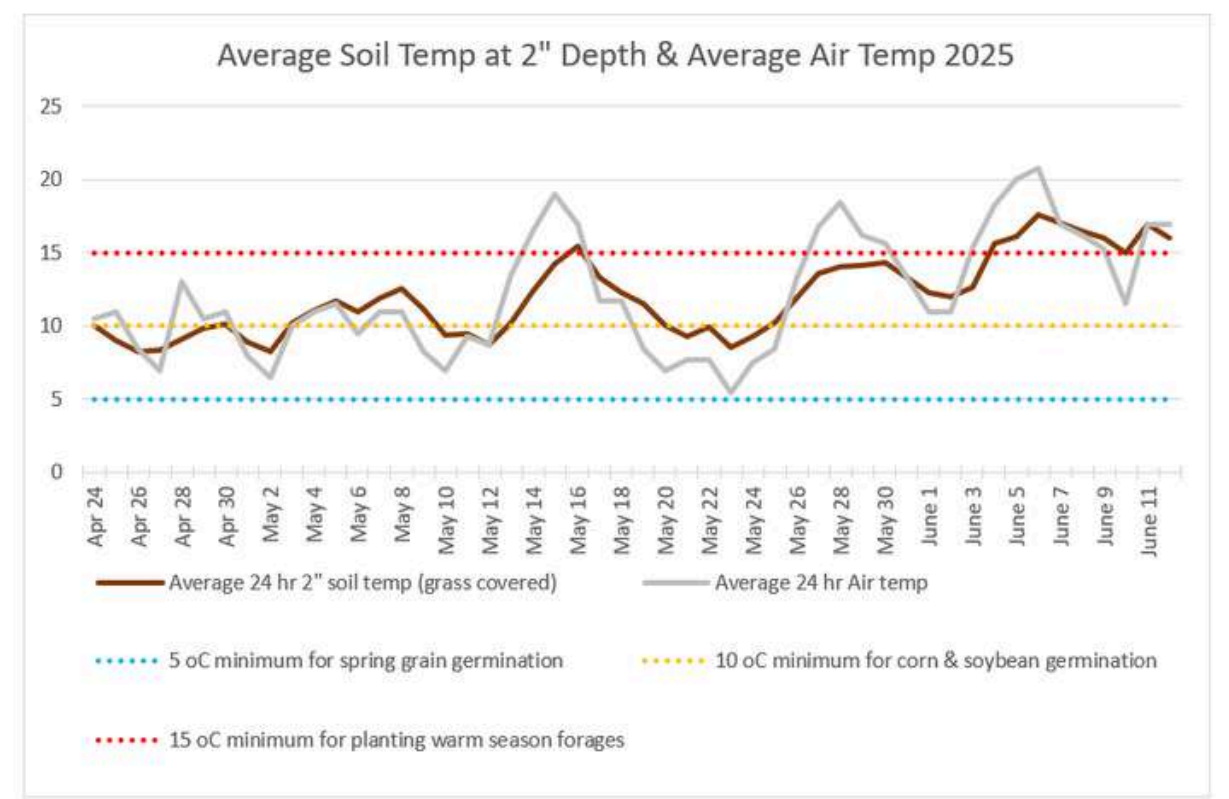
In field planting checks and daily testing

Now that your equipment is ready, it's time to take it out and check that your planting calibration and settings match your plan. On the first day of planting, start with planting a 100ft strip and stop! Check every row of the planter to confirm seed depth, spacing, and singulation – this will help you calculate your population. Inspect the closing of your seed trench and seed-to-soil contact, and adjust spring tension for each row if needed. A proper seed bed should crumble

when digging around, but firm if let alone. Do not rush through planting – you have one chance to do it right! Travel between 4.0-5.5mph or 6.5-8.5km/h, and set alarms to check your seed bed and depth twice daily during planting.

Use Growing Degree Days to guide your crop protection applications

With snow disappearing and temperatures warming, perennial and overwintering crops are beginning to break dormancy. Many plant and pest disease growth models start April 1st and use Growing Degree Days (GDD's) to predict when certain events occur, such as bud break and egg hatch for example. All of NBSCIA's weather stations across the province are integrated into Perennia's Farm Data Tools which has a GDD calculator and reference GDD values for wild blueberry growth stage development and strawberry pest development. This can be a valuable resource for timing scouting and field operations instead of relying on calendar dates. Farm Data Tools can be found at www.farmdatatools.perennia.ca. The GDD calculator is a free resource on Farm Data Tools.



Average soil temps at 2" depth on grass covered soil, across NB from April 24 - June 11, 2025



General Manager Report - Ray Carmichael

NBSCIA General Manager

Weather impacted attendance for 47th NBSCIA Annual General Meeting and Technical Workshop, March 12th -13th, 2026 "Envisioning New Brunswick's Agri-Food Sector in 2050". Keynote speakers were David Phillips, ECCC, Beth Martel, FM Agronomy, Manitoba, Dr Joseph Sanford, University of Wisconsin, and Laura Scott, OMAFA as well as an OFCAF Farmer Panel.

NBSCIA plans to work with NBDAAF staff to schedule field days for this summer, so if you have suggestions on subjects let your local coordinator know. Andrea Versloot has taken a maternity leave from NBSCIA and Lauren Boonstoppel has accepted the maternity replacement for Andrea.

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 give your Coordinator a heads up you require assistance.

NBSCIA ACS-OFCAF Manager

As of January 28,2025, AAFC announced that the NBSCIA was one of 13 organizations to receive funding for the expansion phase of the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) ending March 31,2028. During the 202-2026 fiscal year NBSCIA provided $2,956,432 in funding for Ultimate Recipients (Farmers) as reported in the following table.

NBSCIA OFCAF 2025-2026 Annual Performance Report

BMP category	Total Hectares		Spending			Number of producers supported
Nitrogen management	8,360	85%	$2,361,138	80%	$282/ha	92
Cover cropping	1,197	12%	$368,501	12%	$307/ha	21
Rotational grazing	333	3%	$226,793	8%	$681/ha	16
TOTAL	9,890	100%	$2,956,432	100%	--	112 Producers

This OFCAF funding supports New Brunswick's producers in their ongoing progress adopting beneficial management practices (BMPs) that reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and store carbon, specifically for in-field nitrogen management, expanding cover cropping, and implementing rotational grazing practices. These practices also provide other environmental benefits such as improved biodiversity and soil health.

NBSCIA is currently accepting applications for the 2026-2027 fiscal year of OFCAF program in the following BMP areas of: 1) nitrogen management, 2) cover cropping, and 3) rotational grazing practices. Detailed program guidelines and the application process are available on the NBSCIA website: https://www.nbscia.ca/ofcaf-program-registration/

For assistance with the application process contact a member of the NBSCIA OCAFA Program Administration team: Stephen London (506) 392-0408 ofcaf.facf@nbscia.ca; David Walker (506) 461-6046 research@nbscia.ca;David Good (506) 391-9424 drgood449@gmail.com; Ray Carmichael (506) 276-3311 ofcafadmin@nbscia.ca

NBSCIA 47th Annual General Meeting and Technical Workshop





NBSCIA hosted its 47th Annual General Meeting and Technical Workshop on March 12th and 13th at the Moncton Crowne Plaza with a great turnout for the sessions and banquet. Congratulations to Intervale Farms and the Wesselius Family, the winner of the 2025 Farm of the Year Award sponsored by Pioneer Seeds and Corteva Agriscience. We also honoured George Trueman from the Chignecto region and Winston Jones of the Moncton region for the NBSCIA Dedication Award, for their many years of service to NBSCIA and contributions to agriculture in the province (Photos on Page 14). Next years AGM will be hosted in the West of the province.

Message from the NBSCIA President - John Bos

As days grow longer and spring work begins across New Brunswick, we look forward to another cropping season with you. With rising fertilizer costs, it's more important than ever to get the most value from every application. Optimize your soil pH to improve nutrient efficiency and crop performance by taking advantage of soil testing services this spring. Also, explore available government lime programs to help bring fields into optimal balance.



John Bos among NB commodity group representatives, at roundtable meeting with federal Agriculture Minister Heath MacDonald, April 2026

We want to recognize the success of the recent NBSCIA Annual Meeting held in Moncton. It was a well-attended and engaging event, thanks to the hard work of our coordinators and the valuable contributions from presenters and members alike. On behalf of the Board, congratulations to Intervale Farms—Ryan, Albert, and Coralee Wesselius—on being named Farm of the Year. We also extend sincere appreciation to Winston Jones and George Trueman for their dedication and service to the association.

As the season gets underway, we wish you safe, productive days ahead. And timely rains! Don't hesitate to reach out to your local coordinators for support with soil and crop management questions—they are there to help you make the most of your efforts this year.

Sincerely,
John Bos



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Register now for the CFGA's spring mentor training

As more producers turn to rotational grazing to improve productivity, soil health and climate resilience, the need for practical, trusted guidance continues to grow. To help fill this need, the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) established a national grazing mentor program that offers a well-designed mix of training, support, incentives and community to help experienced producers guide others in adopting rotational grazing.

Grazing mentors play a vital role in helping producers adopt and succeed with rotational grazing. They are experienced producers who understand the realities of grazing management and enjoy helping others build confidence in their own grazing plans. Mentors work directly with producers, offering one-on-one support, answering questions and helping them adapt grazing practices to their land, livestock and goals.

Every CFGA mentor receives comprehensive training, beginning with the Advanced Grazing Systems (AGS) course for mentors. This course introduces the CFGA's grazing approach, planning tools and program guidelines. This is followed by two virtual mentor-training workshops that cover the fundamentals of rotational grazing, how to guide producers through the mentorship process and where to find ongoing support.

The next mentor training takes place May 6 and 20, 2026, via Zoom. The deadline to register is April 30 to give participants time to complete the AGS course. Contact learning@canadianfga.ca for more information and to register. CFGA mentors also join a national network of peers, with monthly check-ins and on-demand learning resources that ensure they are never working alone.

Provincial forage associations play an important role in supporting mentors by helping match them with producers and providing regional extension support. This partnership ensures that mentors have strong local connections and that producers receive guidance tailored to their specific conditions.

Mentors benefit from early access to funding opportunities; higher reimbursement rates through the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Quebec; promotional support to help them find mentees; access to a national mentor community; opportunities for paid speaking engagements and funding for continuing education. For many, the greatest reward is seeing producers gain confidence and watching grasslands improve under better management.

The program is well suited to producers who have experience with rotational grazing, enjoy working with others, value continuous learning and want to strengthen grazing practices in their region. For those who care deeply about pasture and grassland health and want to help shape the future of grazing in Canada, becoming a grazing mentor is a meaningful and rewarding way to make a difference.

For more information about becoming a CFGA grazing mentor, visit the CFGA's Advanced Grazing Systems – Mentors webpage.

Regional Updates

Central Update

by Lauren Boonstoppel

Hi everyone,

My name is Lauren Boonstoppel, and I am excited to be joining NBSCIA as an Agrologist/Coordinator covering the Central Region.

I am currently completing my Agricultural degree and will be graduating this spring. Through my studies, I developed a strong interest in crop production, soil health, and helping producers make practical management decisions.

Growing up involved in agriculture and gaining hands-on experience in both crop and livestock settings has given me an appreciation for the industry and the people in it. I am looking forward to getting out in the field, meeting growers, learning from the team, and contributing wherever I can. I'm excited to get started and be part of NBSCIA.



Lauren's Contact:
(506)323-8900
central@nbscia.ca

Northeast Update

Although recent temperatures in the Northeast are starting to feel more like summer than spring, our soils and crops are just coming out of winter dormancy, due to the persistence of the snow cover this spring with late season snow storms. Growing Degree Day models are starting to accumulate on some of our Davis Weatherlink stations, signaling crops like wild blueberries and winter wheat that it is time to get water and nutrients moving!

We had a great winter season in the Northeast – although it was very cold for us with some messy travel days, we were fortunate to have good snow cover for most of the season to protect overwintering crops.



A well yielding rock field in Northern NB

Winter meetings also went smoothly – the NBSCIA provincial AGM in Moncton featured quite a few interesting speakers, with a full house for the Farm of the Year banquet as well. The Maritime Wild Blueberry Producers meetings in Moncton earlier this month were similarly well attended, where I was able to connect with many industry partners and producers.

As we move into planting season for crop farmers, and soon into flowering for blueberry farmers, I want to remind members that I can make myself available any time of day, any day of the week! I love receiving questions – whether you are trying to figure out how to find your soil temp on your nearest weather station, or wondering how to change your application rate when you run out of a certain product. We are here to help make the go-time decisions a little bit easier. Wishing all producers around the province a safe and successful planting season!

Kings County Spring Update

by Joseph Graham

Kings County is preparing for the fast-approaching planting season. A couple of mild rainy days removed the snow from most agricultural land by early March. During the month of March, we also had our provincial AGM on the 12th and 13th. It was great to see many local producers attend the meetings in Moncton. Locally we held our annual AGM in January. During the local meeting it was decided the local would be selling both pieces of rental equipment. The Aerway Aerator has now been sold to a local member, and the board is working on the best option for Multi-Purpose NTS2511 seeder.

This spring NBSCIA has been working hard to plan training events for producers and professional agrologist. We have already held many virtual sessions and plan on hosting various in field summer events. We hope to continue to offer interesting events focused on the main themes of the OFCAF program. Which includes: Cover Cropping, Rotational Grazing, and Nitrogen Management. If any local producers have event ideas, feel free to reach out.

With the arrival of spring many farmers are looking for updated EFPs, nutrient management planning, and mapping. The DAAF lime subsidy program has helped encourage many producers to get fields tested that they plan on amending with lime. Spring soil sampling can be challenging when trying to get dry samples, and it is difficult to receive results quickly enough to use for fertilizer recommendations.

Locally we will be working towards getting all weather stations up and running for April 1st, we would enjoy a growing season with a bit more rainfall this year. The local will also be deciding on the KCSCIA field day. Last year was the first year KCSCIA had an event that wasn't forage or tillage focused. The Seed Day last season went very well, despite the 40-degree temperatures. The challenges of getting live demos of new equipment grow larger each year. We hope to offer our members an event that is KCSCIA inspired, but also is of interest to the agricultural community as a whole.

Moncton January Update

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 15th at the Salisbury legion. Congratulations to Intervale Dairy Farm Ltd for being the 2025 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 Isaac Wilson as a new board of director. The Chignecto AGM was held on February 2nd at the Port Elgin Exhibition grounds. Congratulations to Jakob's Energy Fruit Farm for being the 2025 Chignecto farm of the year recipient. Chignecto's executives consists of Nathan Murray holding presidency, Evan Davis as vice, Erin Ward as secretary and Jessica Murray as treasurer. In the Chignecto region we have chosen our 2026 farm of the year nominee.

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mackenzie.wheaton@lpconsulting.ca

With spring coming brings the anniversary of the Chignecto soil and crop bulk fuel program. We, the Chignecto and Moncton soil and crop associations would like to congratulate and introduce Michaud Harnois Energies Inc for successfully winning the bid for the 26/27 bulk fuel program to supply petroleum products to the members of the soil and crop associations designated areas. This achievement reflects not only the company's competitive strength but also the confidence that the membership place in its capabilities, vision, and integrity of the bulk fuel program. With the following information in hand, the transition to saving the membership money and strengthening the goals of the bulk fuel program will be enjoyed.

Attached is Ed Everill's business card with his contact information. Each association member needs to supply Ed with an email address so that he can send the account application forms. He requires each member to complete and send back to his attention with mailing and delivery addresses, tank sizes and if they would like to call in or have automatic deliveries. Anyone purchasing dyed diesel would also have to supply Ed with a copy of their tax exempt certificate. Once Ed has the application, the office will touch base with each individual to discuss credit terms and payment schedules.

It has been a very eventful spring season aiding farmers with rotational grazing, cover cropping and nutrient management planning which have been my primary responsibilities. 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 this year to improve the soil and crop sustainability in New Brunswick and we will be back to doing field work before you know it. I can't wait!

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

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Ed Everill
Sales Representative-Lubricants and Fuels
Représentant des ventes-lubrifiants et carburants
Michaud Harnois Energies Inc.
866 Boulevard E.H. Daigle Blvd.
Grand-Sault / Falls, NB E3Z 3E8
Tel | Tél : 902-397-0381
E | C : ed.everill@michaudharnoisenergies.com

Carleton Spring Update

by Andrew Sytsma

2025/2026 marks another year of NBSCIA's partnership with CEROM in the winter wheat cultivar development work. The plots, which are located in Williamstown near Centreville, were planted on September 15th. The hardening off period may have been shorter this season with significant snow cover starting in the third week of November, but after initial assessments the stand looks like it's in good shape. New to this year's trial work is the inclusion of two winter barley plots. Although winter barley is less hardy than winter wheat and was planted two weeks later than its optimum planting date, there is still some green in the crowns which indicate that it may pull through. The oat cultivar development work with PhytoGene Resources and the spring wheat cultivar development work with CEROM are a go-ahead for this year as well as the starter nitrogen in soybean project. We have some potential new research projects in the works for this year so stay tuned.



Winter barley plots on April 10th. Note the leaves have died unlike the winter wheat plots beside it. Although winter injury is present, there is green tissue at the crowns.



Winter wheat on April 10th. Note the purpling of the leaves, which is cold soil induced phosphorus deficiency. This is an normal occurrence when winter wheat is coming out of dormancy and will disappear as temperatures warm.

Northwest. Agricultural Spring 2026: Between challenges and hope

By Jean-Mars Jean-François

Spring has finally arrived in northwestern New Brunswick, bringing with it that unique mix of hope and urgency that defines every farming season. The fields are clearing, the days are getting longer, and across our farms, a new race against time has begun. But in 2026, the awakening of the land is taking place in a more complex context than ever before.

In the maple groves, producers are working hard to collect the last runs of sap. Every drop matters, because a significant portion of the year's income depends on this short season. However, yields remain below expectations compared with last year. Even so, determination remains strong: maple producers know that patience is part of the trade. In the beef and dairy sectors, the challenges are very real. . The shortage of hay has forced many farms to purchase feed at high prices ($40–$50 per round bale), putting added pressure on budgets. Even when cattle markets offer strong prices, rising costs quickly erase part of the gains.

Producing is no longer enough — farmers must constantly calculate, adjust, and plan ahead. Fortunately, some sectors offer more encouraging news. Seed potatoes are benefiting from a stronger market, sales are progressing well, and storage losses remain very limited. Canola, buckwheat, and several cereal crops are also showing promising prospects, although caution remains necessary.

Beyond our fields, global tensions continue to shake regional agriculture. Wars and geopolitical instability are disrupting supply chains, influencing energy markets, and maintaining volatility in fertilizer prices. Fuel, transportation, fertilizers, and many essential inputs remain expensive and unpredictable. For many producers, every acre to be planted has become a strategic decision. In response, farmers in the Northwest are not backing down. They are innovating. They are adapting. They are investing in sustainable solutions with the support of the Northwest Agri-Environmental Advisory Club. Pasture rotation, cover crops, precise nitrogen management, and nutrient management plans are helping reduce losses, protect soils, improve profitability, and strengthen farm resilience.

A note of gratitude should also be highlighted. Producers recognize the valuable support of the OFCAF program, whose funding supports concrete projects that help farms fight climate change and adopt more sustainable practices. They also express their appreciation to the Department of Agriculture for its continued support, particularly through the lime transportation assistance program, an important tool for improving soil health and farmland productivity. Spring is not only the season of planting. It is the season of courage. Despite economic pressures, global uncertainty, and constant risks, our producers continue to feed their families, their communities, and far beyond. In 2026, more than ever, northwestern New Brunswick reminds us of one essential truth: as long as there are women and men willing to sow with passion, there will always be reasons to hope.



A snow covered field in the Northwest

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The 2026 Maritime Wild Blueberry Producers Conference in Moncton, Apr 11-12th



Central Coordinator Andrea and her baby, Harmony



Views from the tractor cab in Fredericton



Winter wheat with several tillers



Dedication Award Winner from Moncton, Winston Jones



Dedication Award Winner from Chignecto, George Trueman

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General Manager
Ray Carmichael
Office: (506)276-3311
Cell: (506)392-7214
gm@nbscia.ca

Fredericton Office
150 Woodside Lane, Unit 2
Fredericton, NB E3C 2R9
Telephone: (506)454-1736
Fax: (506)453-1985

Central
Lauren Boonstoppel
(506)323-8900
central@nbscia.ca

Carleton
Andrew Sytsma
(506)245-2220
carleton@nbscia.ca

Moncton/Chignecto
Beverly Booth
(506)364-2853
moncton@nbscia.ca

Kings
Joseph Graham
(506)567-0224
kings@nbscia.ca

Northshore
Gabrielle Schenkels
(506)625-7718
northshore@nbscia.ca

Northwest
Jean–Mars Jean–Francois
(506)459-7075
nwno@nbscia.ca



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