

New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Volume 12 Issue 4
October 2026 Newsletter
Revised by Lauren Boonstoppel & Gabrielle Schenkels

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Agricultural Drone Use in NB

By Joseph Graham

In the past several months, Canada has made important changes to its agricultural drone regulations. With this development, we at NBSCIA would like to provide a brief update to our members about on-farm drone use. As someone who has operated a drone for seeding and fertilizing this season, I have witnessed some of the challenges first-hand.

The NB Department of Environment and Local Government (DELG) released a new policy outlining requirements for pesticide application by drone in New Brunswick in September; the full document can be read on our website. It addresses that specialized pesticide applicator training is needed for drone operator and is expected to be completed by mid-2027 in NB and Atlantic Canada. In the interim, the document states , “Until an RPAS certification is formally established, the certification requirements for drone usage will be included as part of the traditional aerial application certification (Class A1). This is currently what level of training is required for pilots conducting aerial application of pesticides in the forestry sector.” (page 3)

Going forward, producers should not apply any plant protection products unless they are certain they are following all federal and provincial laws, including but not limited to:

- RPAS pilot certificate and RPAS registration (Transport Canada)
- Pesticide Use Permit (DELG)
- Aerial A1 Pesticide Operator License (until 2027)
- RPAS Pesticide Operator License (after release in 2027)
- Proof of insurance

It is also important to note that the individual operating the drone must be different from the person mixing and loading, according to Health Canadas Drone Science Policy.



If you are considering using a drone to apply plant protection products on your farm, it's important to consider that *only* pesticides that are approved for aerial use may be applied with a drone. Sprayers 101 is a great resource website, that includes a screening tool for many aerially approved pesticides in Canada, and their spray guidelines.

From my point of view, drones create so many amazing opportunities for farmers, but they also have their own unique challenges. If you are planning on spreading seed or top-dressing fertilizer, the biggest obstacle is getting product into the drone. My drone, a DJI T25, holds 50lbs, and can empty that payload in about 30 seconds before returning to land. There is no perfect way to fill a drone quickly, at least not that I have found. Payloads on the largest drones are currently at 200lbs, so you will need to be prepared to be filling your drone often. I use buckets to refill the drone which are fast, but may not practical for several tonnes of seed or fertilizer.

Spraying liquid solution is another option with agricultural drones. Unlike loading dry product, liquid products can be pre-mixed in large batches and use pumps to load the drone, so no lifting is needed. The major challenge is setting your drone up to do the task well. Swath widths, product rates, drone height, drone speed, droplet size, landing/takeoff locations, all become much more important. There is also the added challenge of the drone pilot being at risk of being in the drift path. With seeding or fertilizing, a bit of overlap or some seed hitting just outside the edge isn't always damaging. Though, after a few runs you can get a good grasp on what seed will do and adjust as needed. With liquid, this become a lot more difficult and riskier.

One final thing to consider is that drones are developing rapidly. Improvements like LIDAR, increased flight speeds, bigger payloads, weed detection, imagery software, and others are constantly changing what a drone is capable of. So, it will be very difficult for policies and for us at NBSCIA to keep up with. Lastly, we do look forward to sharing results of our Drone Cover Cropping trial at this year's AGM.

General Manager Report - Ray Carmichael



TNB2425-0045-Y3 NB Weather Monitoring & Mapping for Intensive Crop Management, detailed summaries to September 30 can be found on the NBSCIA website:

- Rain to September 30 2026
- CHU to September 30 2026
- GDD to September 30 2026

Rainfall was certainly spotty Grand Falls received 550 mm and some areas in Queens County exceed 3000 CHUs.

NBSCIA and NBDAAF are collaborating in Climate Change Strategy project titled Establishing Cover Crops into Corn Using Aerial Drones, AAFC will also be included to collect NDVI imagery.

NB2324-0184Y4 Oat and Winter Wheat Cultivar Development, as of October 31 all of plots have been harvested and weighed, with some selections reaching 3.4 tonnes per acre. Given the massive weight from this year's selections, it was decided that NBSCIA staff would weigh all samples and only send samples of the highest yielding and lodging resistant selections to Phytogene Resources in Ottawa.

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. This OFCAF funding supports New Brunswick's producers in their ongoing progress in 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.

As of October 17,2026, NBSCIA using OFCAF dollars, has paid 50% of funds allocated for the 2026-2027 fiscal years to support Ultimate Recipients (farmers) in BMP projects for nitrogen management, cover cropping and rotational grazing practices.

For the upcoming year 2027-2028, applications will be accepted from January 1 2027 closing when funding is fully allocated, for projects funded in the fiscal year ending March 31,2028.
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 OFCAF Program Administration team: Stephen London (506) 392-0408 ofcaf.facf@nbscia.ca ; David Walker (506) 461-6046 research@nbscia.ca; Ray Carmichael (506) 276-3311 ofcafadmin@nbscia.ca

NB2324-0090-Y4 - Establishing Alfalfa with a Corn Companion Crop
by Jason Wells

The project was once again established on-farm, marking the 4th field season. Results from the 2026 establishment were vastly different than the previous 3-years. It is believed that the cool wet conditions following planting favored the growth of the alfalfa over the corn (Figure 1). It is well documented that competition in corn's early growth stages can negatively impact yield and this was evident in this year's trial. The impact was so great that the alfalfa and corn were harvested together in late August instead of waiting for the corn to mature for silage. The project team will be compiling and analyzing the data over the next few months and reporting during winter meetings. This year's observations show exactly why it is so important to conduct trials over multiple field seasons.



2026 Alfalfa and Corn Establishment - 29 Days after Planting



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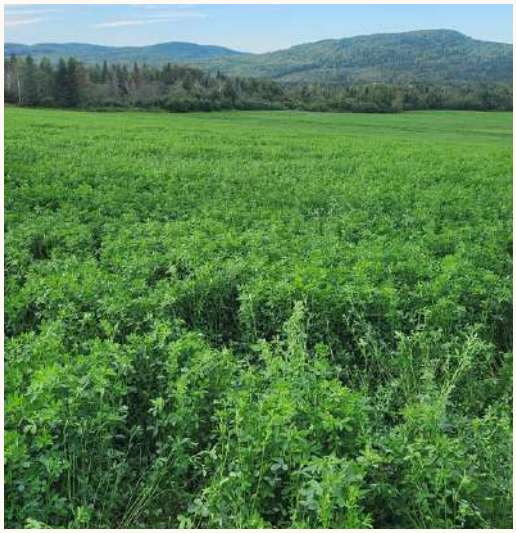
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Regional Updates

News from Northwestern New Brunswick: A relatively satisfactory 2026 growing season

By: Jean-Mars Jean-François, October 2026



After an uncertain start to the season, Northwestern New Brunswick ultimately benefited from relatively favourable weather conditions throughout most of the growing season. Despite two weeks of severe drought in July 2026, hay production turned out to be slightly above the average of recent years. Thanks to these encouraging yields, most livestock producers in the region believe they have stored enough forage and roughage to feed their herds and face a potentially harsh winter with confidence.
For forage crops, silage corn also performed very well, delivering excellent yields in both quantity and nutritional value. The outlook for grain production is even more encouraging. Canola, cereals, and buckwheat have all performed well above their usual seasonal averages, providing local producers with exceptional harvest volumes.

However, results are more mixed for potatoes, one of the main crops of the region. Seed potato growers are very satisfied, reporting excellent yields and outstanding quality. By contrast, results are more modest for table and processing potatoes. Although tuber quality has been good, yields per acre have remained relatively average.

Throughout the growing season, the Northwest agri-environmental Club was particularly active in the field, providing support to the agricultural community. Working closely with Charles Karemangingo, the Coordinator contributed to the implementation of two potato demonstration projects in Saint-André and Drummond. In addition, farmers received ongoing, personalized support to facilitate the adoption of sound farm management practices. These efforts focused particularly on pasture improvement, the establishment of effective cover crops, and optimized nitrogen management to reduce environmental impacts and the cost of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers.

The Club also organized two open-house field days, one in Drummond and the other in Baker-Brook, focusing on runoff control in potato production, cover crop management and techniques for producing high-quality hay. Both events stood out for their exceptional attendance. Farmers from across the region turned out in large numbers, demonstrating a level of participation and enthusiasm that the agricultural community had not experienced in many years.
By the end of the fiscal year, the Club will focus on preparing and finalizing several nutrient management plans and environmental farm plans.

October Update from the Central Region

by Lauren Boonstoppel



Forage from Late this summer

As the 2026 growing season comes to a close, producers are finishing up harvest and preparing for the upcoming season. The impacts of last year's drought were still evident in this year's apple harvest, with some producers continuing to see its effects. Cooler temperatures in the last month or two may have delayed the maturity of corn in the area.

Fall is an important time to review soil fertility, complete soil sampling, and begin planning for 2027. I have been keeping busy throughout the Central Region with soil sampling, Nutrient Management Plans, Environmental Farm Plans, and helping with Andrew's oat trials. If you are interested in soil assistance or need assistance with an NMP or EFP, I encourage you to reach out.

Kings County October Update

by Joseph Graham

With the summer ending the fall sampling season started. Moving into late summer NBSCIA's event schedule also hit full speed. With cover cropping events and field tours happening all across the province. Locally, there was a Drone Cover cropping field day on Oct 7th, hosted by Lonsview Farm. The purpose of the event was to demonstrate drone seeding into standing corn. There was also a tour of the trial site which consist of 3 plots, 1 with fall rye, 1 with oats, and 1 with hairy vetch and tillage radish. We would like to thank everyone that participated, and a big thanks to Mrs.Dunsters for donating coffee and donuts.

The plots are looking really interesting, we seeded sept 1st, additionally in the Sussex region we left a section to be later harvested as corn cob meal. I look forward to seeing how the cover crop handles growing under the corn crop for that long, and what sort of impact corn harvest will have on it. We will be presenting this information and our data at the AGM. There are three sites across the province so it should be valuable information to our producers.

In the Sussex region many producers have been happy with their corn harvest. After such a dry season last year we were fortunate to have adequate moisture this season. There were plenty of hot and dry periods this season too. This allowed producers to get their dry hay and silage harvest done on time. The slightly cooler temperatures this season has led to a few farms waiting just a bit longer to harvest their corn.

With sampling and mapping season underway, we look forward to another year of the OFCAF program soon approaching. Work is also underway to provide great information sessions to everyone for this year's AGM. The Kings Farm of the Year Nominee is Bunnett Family Farm. We wish them the best of luck at this year's awards banquet and Farm of the year ceremony.

Carleton October Update

by Andrew Sytsma

We have recently wrapped up another year of our cereal variety development trials that are in partnership with PhytoGene Resources out of Ontario and CEROM out of Quebec. Yields were more on the average side this year for the spring and winter wheat trials but the top yielding lines were new varieties currently in development by CEROM. The top spring wheat yield was 2.3 tonnes/ac
and winter wheat at 3.4 tonnes/ac. Even though the oat plots were planted later than we hoped for in late May, yields were the best we've ever seen with it. Average yields were around 2.4 tonnes/ac, with the top-performing lines hitting slightly over 3 tonnes/ac and the highest yield at 3.4 tonnes/ac. This year also had high lodging pressure so we have good data this year for selecting the very best lines that combine both high yield and lodging resistance. The new winter wheat plots for the 2026/2027 year were planted September 21st which was later than ideal, but it may be a good test of winter survival if plants are going into the winter with less growth.



No-till project: Sorgum sudangrass as seen in in Early September

The no-till annual species into native pasture project provided good data in its pilot year for which species can work and which didn't. Overall, medium to large seeded species like sorghum-sudangrass, forage peas and sunflowers performed the best while others were generally poor. Soil moisture was likely a limiting factor for all species and especially with small, shallow planted seed. Areas of the fields where nitrogen supply was higher like in areas with heavy manure coverage saw the annual species perform and establish well alongside the existing species. We're hoping to continue this project again next year and try some different management strategies now that we have a better idea of what works and what doesn't. The project is now continuing into the fall with the addition of winter triticale and fall rye tests. This is to see if planting winter cereals into existing forage stands can increase forage volume in the following spring, particularly in lower yielding or heavily grazed fields. The winter triticale was planted September 15th and is off to a slow start but as competition from the existing forage decreases as it gets colder it may still get a chance to pick up. Fall rye was planted a week later and is off to a better start and had much better germination. Refer to the July 2026 newsletter for more background information on this project.



No-till project: fall Rye in Mid-October

Project reports for all of NBSCIA's project work will be available in the coming months on the NBSCIA website at www.nbscia.ca

The Carleton region hosted two field days showcasing the above project work and more. Thanks to all the hosts, cooperators and everyone who attended in making our field days and research projects a success!

Moncton & Chignecto October Update

by Beverly Booth

Hello Everyone! I hope you all had a great haying/cropping season with hopefully higher yields than compared to last year. This summer has flown by and the cows will be happy to be coming home right away. I have been busy with nutrient management planning and have been consistent with that throughout the summer and fall. Along with nutrient management planning comes nutrient and fertility recommendations which have accounted for a large portion of my day-to-day tasks. I have been fortunate to meet with many of the producers in my area from one end of my region to the other.

I was able to attend many field days and training sessions this summer but one that I would like to highlight was being able to assist with the planning of a field day for the Moncton Soil & Crop club known as the annual farm tour and social which was held on August 28th. This field day consisted of a tour of two local farms in the Salisbury area. We visited Golden Acres Honey Farm Ltd., a sheep farm and apiary to showcase their facility and pasture management. The second location was held at Boscenic Farms Ltd. Where we were able to view their dairy operation including new renovations and an addition to their calf barn. The attendees also had a viewing of some of this farms crops including corn followed by a crop of fall rye as silage, and corn in grass after a first cut no till. There was a mulching demo followed by the viewing of the Bos's newly installed solar panel system. Equipment dealers were on site including County Tractor and Nova International. A BBQ and corn boil was provided on behalf of the Moncton soil & crop club, the Moncton Farmers Co-op, and the Moncton local milk Committee with corn being provided by Michaud Farms. It was a great turnout and everyone stuck it out until the end, even though it got wet in a hurry.

Currently, I have been keeping up with weather station maintenance throughout the Moncton and Chignecto regions. Planning is well underway for our AGM and Technical workshop for March of 2027 including booking of the venue and confirming potential speakers. Some critical components of the Farm of the Year process have taken place and I am proud to say that there is a nominee in both the Moncton and Chignecto regions. I have also been making farm visits a priority to help producers start to facilitate a plan for upcoming funding programs. I hope you all have a great fall season and I look forward to working with you in the near future 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!



Northshore Update

by Gabrielle Schenkels

The late summer into fall has been well tempered for weather compared to previous years with a healthy harvest of late forage and silage corn production. Corn Heat Units range from 2400-2600 (as of Sept. 30) in the area which is down slightly from 2700-2800 in 2024 and 2025 at this time. This trend is still positive towards higher heat units in the area and I would encourage producers to explore different varieties. Weed pressure slowed down some corn fields but for the most part, fields were uniform and of good quality. We saw more bear damage than normal throughout the Northeast which can be disheartening, luckily many producers have applied to the provincial Wildlife Damage Program which can help offset some of those late season losses. I was able to get out with my drone to photograph some fields which is always interesting to get a new perspective!

Blueberry harvest this year was variable to say the least. Some fields saw yields bouncing back to average, while some remained in a slump closer to those of 2025. One thing that is commonly reported among producers is a decrease in stem density in sprout fields – fields that were harvested during 2025's drought. As I begin fall bud counts, I expect to see buds per stem similar to last year; the average of all my counts in the Northeast was 3.72 buds/stem. Individual field averages ranged from 2-8 buds/stem, which reflects the variability we saw in harvest averages this year. I encourage producers to take advantage of the dormant period now to apply herbicides such as Kerb, dicamba, or Chateau, while the crop is dormant.

Thank you to all who came out for the September field day at Schenkels Farms in Rogersville. We had over 30 farmers and industry representatives join the Northeast club for the drone cover crop plot tours, fencing discussion, and no-till seeding demo. Thank you to Green Diamond and Bayview Kubota for their generous sponsorship!

As I finish up soil sampling and move into planning mode for crop planning and our AGM, I encourage producers to reach out to me with any ideas, thoughts, or concerns they had this year that they would like to address in 2027. The crop may be a long way from being planted, but the planning that goes into it begins now!





Rogersville Field Day (left) and drone shot of corn silage harvest (right)

Upcoming Events



Atlantic Farm Mech Show 2026

NBSCIA will once again have a booth at the Atlantic Farm Mech show this year, which is taking place **November 19 to November 21** at the Moncton Coliseum Complex. We will be on the mezzaanine at **booth 632**. Stop by to discuss the On-Farm Climate Action Fund, nutrient management planning, sampling, and our research projects!

Atlantic Farm Mech Show Website





Oat Lodging Resistance Project



Fall rye following corn in our Drone Cover Cropping trial



Carleton County Field Day



Winter Wheat Plots October 15th 2026



Blueberries in the Northeast in late fall



Corn silage harvest in action

Service Description

Geomatic Package
Includes a basic set of farm maps. These maps are georeferenced and illustrate watercourses and other buffers.
Custom mapping packages include soil status maps, target balance maps, variable rate application maps, GPS work, perimeter mapping, area determination, and crop yield determination.

Soil, Manure & Tissue Sampling
Sampling, sample preparation, completion of soil form, submission of samples, interpretation of results, and recommendations. Does not include the cost of soil analysis. 15% discount for PEI lab soil analysis.

Emergency Response Plan
A written emergency response plan for compliance with regulatory bodies.

Environmental Farm Plan
Preparation of field maps and emergency response plans as part of your EFP.

Equipment Calibration
Manure spreaders, sprayers and seeders.

Nutrient Management Plan
Whole farm nutrient management plans including plans compliant with the Livestock operations Act.

Crop Monitoring and IPM
Planning, integrated pest management, scouting fields for insects, pests and weeds, plant population counts, and plant emergence counts.

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Contact Us

If you are in need of any services, or have any questions, please contact your local coordinator.

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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