

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

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Agri-Land Accessibility and Enhancement





Program Description/ Objectives

Support the development of farmland for agriculture in New Brunswick including bringing lands formerly used for agriculture back into active production, enhancing the development and productivity of new production fields and improving existing farmland. Any increase in acreage will support:

- more sustainable farming practices with reduced environmental impacts,
- improved crop rotations resulting in healthier soils,
- increased land base for the production of crops and livestock feed, and
- increased self-sufficiency levels of food and livestock feed crops which will reduce transportation costs and associated environmental impacts.



Eligible Applicants

- Indigenous Peoples or Organizations
- Agriculture producers (individuals, partnerships and incorporated agri-businesses involved in primary agricultural production)
- Agriculture producer associations involved in primary agricultural production (e.g. Community Pasture Associations)
- Other individuals or groups capable of achieving program objectives.

Eligible Land

Financial assistance provided under this initiative is available for land that is suitable for the intended crop and meets the following conditions:

1. is owned by the applicant, or
2. is accessible to the applicant under a valid, written, long-term lease agreement to manage the land for agricultural production for at least 5 years. A copy of the agreement may be required, or
3. is accessible to the applicant under a Licence of Occupation, or
4. is potentially accessible to the applicant (Site Suitability Assessment element only), and
5. is located within the Province of New Brunswick, and
6. is located at least 30 metres from a wetland or watercourse, and
7. does not have a registered subdivision plan, and
8. has a slope of no greater than 7%, unless the Project Officer or other DAAF staff has recommended otherwise, and
9. must remain actively farmed for at least five production years following project funding.

Land to be used for commercial turf production is no longer eligible under this program.

In the case of cranberry development, the Applicant must have either an approved EIA Determination, or a document from the Department of Environment and Local Government indicating that the proposed cranberry development does not require an EIA, to be eligible for any site development activities.

Environmental Considerations

Any project funded under this initiative must meet all requirements of applicable federal and New Brunswick environmental legislation. These may include but are not limited to:

- *Wellfield Protected Area Designation Order – Clean Water Act* and the *Watershed Protected Area Designation Order – Clean Water Act*. For example: Areas to be cleared from a PID located within a Zone C of a designated drinking water watershed are limited to 5% per year. **A Guide to New Brunswick's Wellfield Protected Area Designation Order** or **A Guide to New Brunswick's Watershed Protected Area Designation Order**

- *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Regulation – Clean Water Act*.

NOTE: Activities within 30 metres of a wetland or watercourse will not be funded by the Agri-Land Accessibility and Enhancement Program.

- ***Heritage Conservation Act***. For example if any person discovers an archaeological object, burial object or human remains, work should stop immediately in the vicinity of the find and the Manager – Review & Regulatory Section, Heritage and Archaeological Services Branch of the NB Department of Tourism, Heritage & Culture is to be contacted immediately at (506) 238-0438.

Ineligible Activities

- Legal costs
- Land acquisition costs (purchase of lands or any interest therein)
- Leasing costs (land, buildings, equipment)
- Activities considered normal operational and maintenance activities.
- Refundable portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax and interest charges
- Ordinary on-farm labour costs
- Unspecified “miscellaneous” costs
- Permitting costs
- Engineering services (Except under Site Suitability Assessment)
- Costs associated with the commercially viable harvest and movement of merchantable timber and biomass.
- EIA registration fees (Except under Site Suitability Assessment)
- Expenses associated with roads, such as off-farm transportation corridors, that are not of primary benefit to the Sector
- Purchase and/or implementation of items which are considered normal or ongoing farm operating expenses.
- Any land development activity begun before the project approval date as indicated in the letter of offer (no retroactivity).
- Project activities that are eligible for funding under concurrent programs are not eligible for funding under the Agri-Land Accessibility and Enhancement Program.

Program Elements

1. **Re-development of inactive agricultural lands (“idle” or “abandoned” agricultural land)** - To provide an expanded land base for crop and livestock feed production, with minimal tree removal.
 - The site must have been used for agricultural production in the past and agriculture type features should be visible. It should also be apparent that the site has not been used for agricultural purposes for some period of time, as supported by the presence of woody vegetation such as brushes, alders, wild cherries, or any other factor deemed appropriate by DAAF staff.

- Eligible activities include: removal of brush, non-merchantable trees, stumps, roots, rock and other debris; chipping/mulching and spreading on-site or other disposal of resulting biomass; the grinding off of wood debris flush with the soil surface and spreading on-site as required.
 - The site must be suitable for the intended crop(s).
- 2. Land clearing for the production of wild blueberries** - To provide an expanded land base for the production of wild blueberries.
- Eligible activities include: removal of non-merchantable trees, roots, brush, rock and other debris and disposal off-site; chipping/mulching and spreading on-site or other disposal of resulting biomass; the grinding off of stumps and wood debris flush with the soil surface; pulverization of rock and the preparation of the newly cleared or re-cleared land for production.
 - The land clearing site must be suitable for wild blueberry production including sufficient wild blueberry plant coverage for commercial wild blueberry production practices.
- 3. Land clearing for the production of crops (other than wild blueberries) and livestock feed** - To provide an expanded land base for crop and livestock feed production that will e.g. support beneficial production techniques such as lengthened crop rotations for potatoes or promote increased or improved crop production on an expanded or renewed land base.
- Eligible activities include: removal of non-merchantable trees, stumps, roots, brush, stones, rock and other debris; chipping and spreading on-site or other disposal of resulting biomass; the grinding off of stumps and wood debris flush with the soil surface; pulverization of rock and wood debris down to a depth of eight (8) inches.
 - The land clearing site must be suitable for the intended crop(s).
- 4. Field Consolidation** - To improve efficiency of field operations.
- Eligible activities include removal of hedge rows, line fences, and rock piles.
- 5. Land Levelling** - To improve efficiency of mechanized field operations.
- Eligible activities include land levelling or “tracking” especially for the production of wild blueberries.
- 6. Site Suitability Assessment** - To support the identification and assessment of lands suitable for crop and livestock feed production by supporting the professional assessment of lands for the production of existing, new and emerging crops.
- Eligible activities:**
- Preliminary assessment for mapping, site layout plan including details on the location and layout of future phases.
 - Pre-engineering for soil/water and subsurface analysis and topographic survey work.
 - A comprehensive study of the water supply.
 - Work using computer models, acquiring GIS layers to assist in establishing support information required to finalize plans for the proposed project.

- Application fee to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
 - If required, activities by the applicant and associated with First Nations engagement or consultation are also within the scope of the Site Suitability Assessment.
- 7. Wetland or watercourse delineation (when separate from a Site Suitability Assessment project)** - To determine the wetland status of an agricultural property and validate the status of those shown on GeoNB if their field status is questionable.
- Eligible activities are those required to complete the Wetland Delineation Data Form – NB and present results in a “Standard Wetland Delineation Report”.
 - Eligible activities are to be carried out by a Wetland Delineator recognized by the Province of NB and completed to the satisfaction of the Department of Environment & Local Government (DELG). Confirmation of this by DELG will be required.
 - Land to be delineated must be for agricultural purposes. The applicant must already be actively farming, or the land must be included in a farm business plan.
 - The land must require delineation to meet DELG requirements for agricultural use.

Levels of Assistance:

Funding will be approved one year at a time. There will be no multiyear approvals under this program.

For program elements 1 – 5, the maximum combined annual contribution is \$7,000.

For claims including program elements 1 – 5, when equipment from on-farm is used, standard per acre (per hectare) rates will be applied based on the area(s) developed.

In the case of very large projects, the applicant may request consideration for a modified approval for program elements 1 – 5 combined. Approval could then exceed \$7,000 per year. The maximum financial assistance over the 5-year duration of the framework (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2028) would not, however, exceed a combined total of \$35,000 for elements 1 - 5. Approval will be on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed.

1. Re-development of inactive agricultural lands – Up to 50% of eligible costs.
2. Land clearing for the production of wild blueberries – Up to 30% of eligible costs.
3. Land for the production of crops (other than wild blueberries) and livestock feed – Up to 30% of eligible costs.
4. Field Consolidation – Up to 30% of eligible costs.
5. Land Levelling – Up to 30% of eligible costs.
6. Site suitability assessment – Up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$40,000 per project over the life of the framework (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2028).
7. Wetland or watercourse delineation (separate from 6) – Up to 70% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$2,100 per project.



Administrative Guidelines

All applicants must be familiar with the administrative guidelines prior to applying. The Administrative Guidelines can be found here:

SCAP Administrative Guidelines

Administrative Guidelines for the Agri-Land Accessibility and Enhancement program

- a) Projects will become eligible for funding in chronological order of receipt. In the event that more applications are received than funding is available in any given fiscal year, unfunded projects will be carried over to the following year of the program. Applicants will then be notified by DAAF staff when funding becomes available.
- b) The assigned DAAF Project Officer may carry out a site inspection of the PID(s) proposed for work and submit a completed Preliminary Site Inspection form to the program Administrator. The applicant is responsible to confirm to the Project Officer the area(s) and work to be carried out as part of the project.
- c) A Project Officer may determine that the land is not suitable for production of the proposed crop. In such a case the application may be declined.
- d) A Project Officer may determine that an application requires additional information to be considered and may request the applicant to provide it.
- e) Upon completion, each project may be inspected by the Project Officer to verify its satisfactory completion and the area developed.
- f) The applicant will submit through the Project Officer, copies of detailed paid invoices or receipts from the contractor or goods and service provider for eligible project costs. When equipment from on-farm is used, standard rates will be applied to a claim on a per acre basis for the area developed.
- g) Applicants must notify the Project Officer immediately upon becoming aware of unforeseen circumstances that may increase the submitted project's budgeted costs, or delay a project's completion past the approved completion date, or otherwise alter a project's size (land area to be worked). If costs in excess of the approved eligible costs are incurred prior to notifying the Project Officer, these additional costs may be denied. If the applicant does not notify the Project Officer of the unforeseen circumstances prior to the project's completion date, then an extension to the completion date may be denied.
- h) Applicants must notify their Project Officer when the project has been completed, so that a final site inspection may be scheduled and carried out effectively, before submitting the claim in a timely manner.
- i) Applicants must continue to use the land for agriculture for a minimum of 5 production years following the year during which the land work was funded. If not, future applications to this program by the applicant may be denied.
- j) If the applicant sells land for non-agricultural development within 5 years of the funded land work, future applications to this program by the applicant may be denied.
- k) If the applicant registers a subdivision plan for the PID developed within 5 years of the funded land work, future applications to this program by the applicant may be denied.
- l) If the applicant determines the project will not proceed, the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries must be notified immediately.



Reporting

Applicants may be required to report on the impact of the funding received. Reporting requirements will be outlined in the letter of offer.



Other Requirements

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any necessary permits, environmental approvals, or certifications are obtained to complete their project.

How to Apply

Applicants should discuss applications with appropriate Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries staff (Development Officer or Specialist) before applying. A list of departmental contacts can be found at the following link:

[Crop Sector Development \(Branch\) \(gnb.ca\)](https://gnb.ca)

[Livestock Sector Development \(Branch\) \(gnb.ca\)](https://gnb.ca)

Completed applications may be submitted by e-mail or mail.

E-mail Applications:

Sustainable.CAP@gnb.ca

Mail Applications:

Sustainable CAP Program Administrator
Industry Financial Programs
Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
PO Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1