Strategic Plan

2025-2026

Forestry, Agriculture and Lands

Newfoundland & Labrador

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

In accordance with government's commitment to transparency and accountability, I am pleased to submit to the House of Assembly and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands Strategic Plan. As Minister of Forestry, Agriculture, and Lands I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the goals and objectives contained therein.

As a category one government entity, under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** (the Act), the department is required to prepare a strategic plan every three years. The former Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture was split into two departments on October 29, 2025 namely the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands. Therefore, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands has prepared a strategic plan for the period from October 29, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

In accordance with the Act, this document identifies the key areas the department will focus on considering the strategic directions of government, the department's mandate and its fiscal resources. Through the goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan, the department will further contribute to its vision of sustainable renewable resources that are responsibly developed for the social, cultural, ecological, and economic well-being of the province.

Sincerely,

Hon. Pleaman Forsey
Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands

Newfoundland & Labrador

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Overview

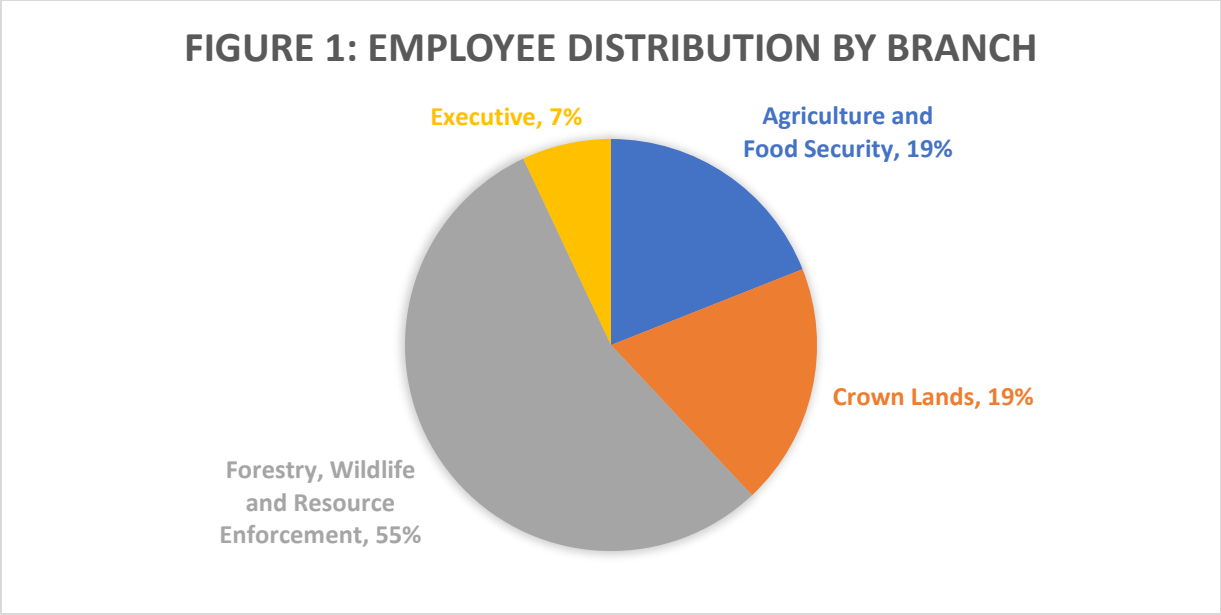
The Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (FAL) is a category one government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. It supports and encourages the development and sustainability of the province's agriculture and forestry industries, as well wildlife and administration of Crown lands. The department's main responsibilities include:

- Licensing and regulating the province's wildlife, forestry and land resources;
- Promoting the further development and diversification of competitive and sustainable agriculture businesses;
- Managing the province's timber resources and forest industry to develop and sustain it as an economic pillar in the province;
- Conserving, protecting and responsibly managing inland fish, wildlife, forestry and land resources;
- Providing emergency response services related to fire suppression and wildlife control/vehicle collisions; and,
- Delivering education and awareness around the province's natural resources.

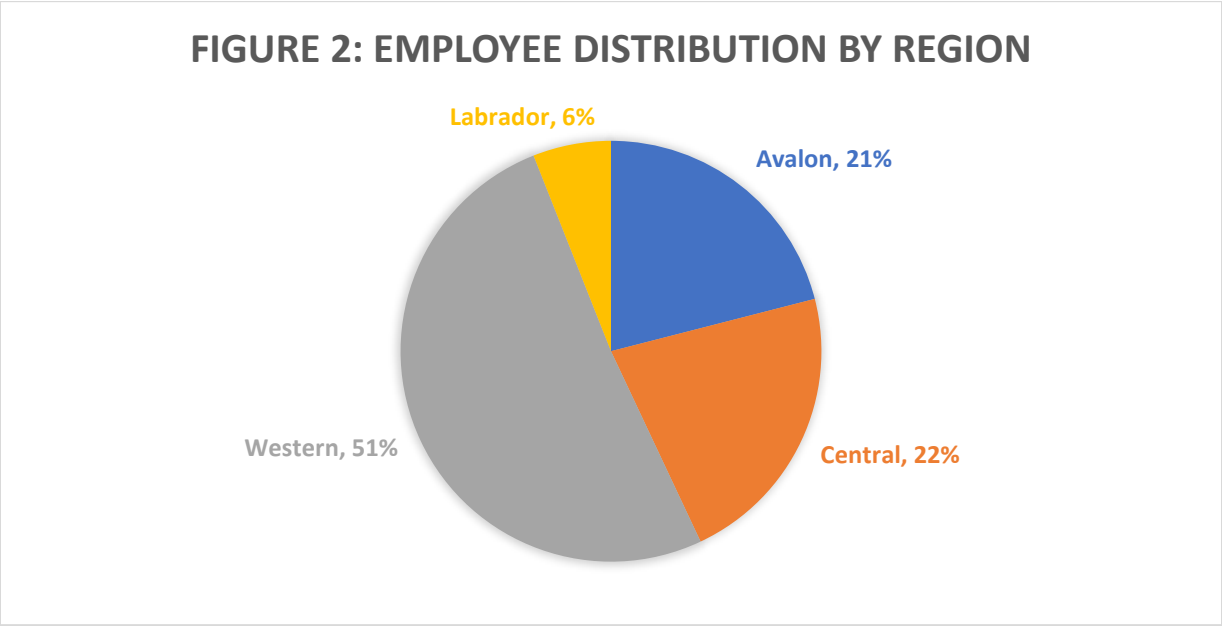
Additionally, the department is responsible for conservation, marketing, sustainable development and diversification efforts for sectors under its mandate. For additional information, please visit the departmental website at: https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal.

Staff Complement

As of December 31, 2025, the department had 500 employees and 901 positions (a significant number of seasonal positions start later in the spring). The distribution of employees among the branches of the department is shown in Figure 1 below.



The department is headquartered in St. John's, with a total of 56 office locations in 35 communities throughout the province. Figure 2 shows the geographical distribution of employees throughout the province. Employment opportunities are administered by the Public Service Commission, who is tasked with conducting a merit-based recruitment process that is fair, equitable and transparent. Gender balance is considered during the hiring process and efforts are made to ensure the department is representative of the population it serves.



Online Services

The department offers a growing number of its services online. A current listing of online services is in the table below.

Crown Lands Appointments, Applications and Fee payments	Crown Lands Appointments: https://www.gov.nl.ca/crownlands/book-an-appointment/ Crown Lands Application: https://www.gov.nl.ca/crownlands/apply-for-crown-lands/ Crown Lands Application Fee Payment: https://www.gov.nl.ca/onlineservices/ Crown Lands Annual Invoices: https://www.gov.nl.ca/onlineservices/
Digital Air Photo, Data, and Map Sales	https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/lands/maps/aerialphotos/
Domestic Cutting Permit Renewal Application	https://www.my.gov.nl.ca
Report Suspected Poaching or Illegal Activity	https://www.gov.nl.ca/feedback/report-poaching/ https://www.stoppoaching.ca/
Forest Fire Hazard Mapping	Observed readings for current date: https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/public-education/forestry/forest-fires/fire-hazard-map/
Honey Bee Registration Form	Beekeepers can now register with the Province in anticipation of legislative changes requiring mandatory registration. https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/programs-and-funding/programs/apiculture/
Wildlife Permits/Licences	https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/wildlife/permits/

In addition to Online Services, information on provincial programs and funding for renewable resource sectors can be found at the following links.

Agriculture Programs and Funding	https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/programs-and-funding/programs/
Forestry Programs and Funding	https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/programs-and-funding/forestry-programs-and-funding/

Service Standards

The Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands provides services according to defined standards and regularly monitors them to ensure those standards are met or exceeded. The achievement of service standards is a shared responsibility between the department and its clients and highly dependent on the submission of all required documentation to departmental staff in a timely fashion. Service standard commitments vary to reflect the unique requirements of programs and services. Information on service standards may be viewed at https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/service-standards/.

Horizontal Initiatives

The department also contributes to a number of horizontal initiatives across government. These include, but are not limited to, participation in:

- The Provincial Government's 2025-2030 climate change action plans will guide our efforts to further reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and assist communities as we learn to adapt to the realities of climate change. The Climate Change Adaptation Plan and Climate Change Mitigation Plan includes actions that partners will take to achieve the collective goal of reducing GHG emissions, and to assist governments, organizations, businesses and residents to be prepared for a worsening climate. We will together, building resilience and adapt by implementing strategies and measures to minimize the risks and manage the implications of climate change, such as increased storm severity and fire risk. It is a shared challenge that requires a whole of society approach.

Contact Information

Contact information for the department, including divisions, offices and program areas can be found online at: https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/.

Mandate

The mandate of the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands includes:

- Development and growth of renewable resources including inland fish and wildlife, agriculture and forestry for optimum sustainable economic benefit to the province as well as its ecological integrity.
- Conservation and protection of the province's inland fish, wildlife, wildlife habitat, forestry and land resources.
- Administration of Crown lands as a social and economic resource for the province.
- Regulation of, and compliance and enforcement activities for animal health and protection, food safety, agriculture, inland fish, wildlife, and forestry.

Budget

The department's fiscal 2025-26 budget is approximately $86 million as shown below.

Division	# of Employees	Budget [1]
Agriculture and Food Security	93	$ 26,043,300
Crown Lands	94	$ 9,514,500
Dairy Industry	0	$0
Forestry, Wildlife and Resource Enforcement	279	$47,180,500
Executive and Executive Support	34	$ 3,900,400
Total Department	**500**	**$86,638,700**

[1] Figures provided are based upon the department's proposed restructure and is pending approval. Actual approved budget may differ from the figures provided here.

Lines of Business

Animal Health

The Animal Health Division provides mobile clinical routine and emergency veterinary services to livestock and poultry owners across the province. Additionally, it conducts diagnostic laboratory testing in support of farm animal veterinary services and provides regulatory pre-processing food safety and quality testing. The division conducts disease surveillance to monitor, identify and control animal diseases of public health and economic importance.

Education and Awareness

The department provides training programs such as firearm safety and hunter and trapper education courses. It also promotes fire education, prevention and mitigation to help increase public awareness and reduce the threat of wildfires. Furthermore, the department is responsible for the development and implementation of environmental education programs. It manages and administers the programs at Salmonier Nature Park, which serves as a wildlife rehabilitation, interpretation and research facility.

Within the agriculture sector, the department invests in awareness and public trust initiatives in the food system, such as agriculture fairs, Canada's Agriculture Day, Agriculture in the Classroom and Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month. It also administers public awareness programs i.e. presentations to schools, service clubs, etc., address public concerns on forest resource management issues and develops district sustainable forest management plans.

In addition to specific education and awareness activities, the department also provides services and support to the public and Provincial Government departments and agencies through Crown lands administration, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Mapping (such as a map and air photo library service), Provincial Land Use Atlas, Crown Lands Registry, and the provision of topographic base maps and the geodetic reference system for legal and engineering surveys.

Licensing/Permitting

The Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands is responsible for the licensing and permitting and the development and implementation of policies and regulations related to each type of licence. The department licenses fur farms under the **Animal Health and Protection Act** and Regulations; and it licenses abattoirs under the **Meat Inspection Act**.

Under the authority of the **Wild Life Act** and **Forestry Act**, it also issues hunting and trapping licences, Newfoundland and Labrador Guide licences, permits for the non-consumptive use, possession, importation and export of wildlife. It issues licences and permits for commercial or domestic timber cutting, commercial or domestic sawmilling, burning, operating during the fire season, timber export, the purchase of timber, protection of livestock from wild animals, bear protection, replacement of a big game licence, removal of nuisance animals, game export, temporary outdoor identification cards, possession for taxidermy, and transport of firearms and fur bearer export.

Finally, under the authority of the **Lands Act**, the department issues licences and other forms of title such as grants, leases and easements for an array of other purposes such as cottages, agriculture, commercial resource-based cabins, sawmill sites, pastures, residential uses, commercial ventures, trails, boathouses and wharves.

Inspection, Compliance and Regulatory Enforcement

Enforcement services include resource enforcement, which focuses on protecting the province's valuable wildlife, inland fish, and forestry resources through the enforcement of provincial and federal laws and regulations relating to them. The department also uses compliance and enforcement as a tool in forestry management delivered by conservation officers located at various regional and district offices across the province. In agriculture, the Farm Industry Review Board addresses compliance issues under the **Natural Products Marketing Act** and the **Farm Practices Protection Act**. Additionally, the department enforces lands legislation and addresses incidents of unauthorized use and occupation of Crown lands.

Marketing

In the agrifoods sector, the department supports the development of primary and secondary products of animal and plant-based industries, specializing in professional extension support through the delivery of training; evaluating, recommending, and implementing new opportunities for primary and secondary agrifoods products; and developing new markets and products.

Resource Research and Development

The Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands assists the agriculture and forestry industries through the provision of technical and financial support in development. Innovation within these sectors is fostered through extensive interaction with the private sector, industry-related organizations, other government departments and academia.

The department offers business development programs and advisory services to the agriculture and agrifoods industry. The Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program provides non-repayable financial support to further strengthen and grow the agricultural sector including investment in agricultural land development and infrastructure to support food self-sufficiency. The Community Garden Support Program provides financial assistance to community organizations, municipalities, and schools to establish new community gardens or expand existing gardens. The department also delivers the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP), a federal-provincial cost-shared program, that provides investment to strengthen domestic market development, agriculture innovation and growth, risk management, environmental sustainability and climate change, value-added agriculture and agrifood processing, and public trust. The department offers business advisory services to new entrants and existing farmers to research and analyze opportunities to increase profitability and competitiveness in the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture industry.

Forest management programs are responsible for the development of forest-related research programs and science capacity in the province, which is consistent with themes of the Provincial Sustainable Forest Management Strategy.

Through its agriculture research and development programs, the department also carries out applied research and development to build science-based knowledge and innovation capacity around crop production, soil health and nutrient management. Primary research and demonstration activities are intended to grow and diversify the agriculture industry through collaborative efforts between industry, provincial and federal governments and academic institutions to ensure the science is applicable for use on Newfoundland and Labrador farms.

Sustainable Resource Management

The department works to ensure a balance between environmental, economic and social values with management plans and programs that safeguard viable resources that are economically sustainable and provide employment.

It offers a number of programs and services in the areas of land resource stewardship, forest management, geographic information systems, mapping and land use management. It designates and manages wildlife areas and is responsible for the administration and management of the Province's Crown lands.

The department’s forest management and protection programs include: sustainable forest management planning, silviculture, resource roads construction, forest inventory, forest fire suppression, forest insect control, and maintaining Environmental Management System ISO 14001 certification for forest harvesting operations on Crown land. The fire suppression program, along with wildlife control programs, are also important public safety programs.

Conservation

The department is responsible for sustainable management of the resources under its mandate and jurisdiction, such as our province’s forest, agricultural and land resources. It protects and conserves the province's biodiversity, wildlife resources and wildlife habitat. Additionally, it designates and manages wildlife areas to support conservation efforts. The department is responsible for identifying, designating, developing and

implementing recovery strategies for species at risk according to the **Endangered Species Act**.

Primary Clients

The primary clients/stakeholders of the department include individuals or groups who use the department's services and resources and who have an influence on its business. In delivering its mandate, the department identifies the following as primary clients/stakeholders:

Agriculture	
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Horticulture Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
Chicken Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeepers Association
Dairy Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador Fur Breeders Association
Egg Producers of Newfoundland and Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador Young Farmers Forum
Farmers and Producers	Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture
Food First NL	Pet and Livestock Owners
Forestry	
Canadian Council of Forest Ministers	Natural Resources Canada - Canadian Forest Service
Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Ltd.	Newfoundland and Labrador Lumber Producers Association
Domestic and commercial harvesting and sawmill operators	Newfoundland and Labrador Forest Industry Association
Forestry Safety Association of Newfoundland and Labrador	Northern Peninsula Loggers Association
FPInnovations	Registered Professional Foresters of Newfoundland and Labrador
Maritime Lumber Bureau	Value Added and Secondary Manufacturers
Wildlife	
Atlantic Salmon Federation	Hunters, trappers and anglers
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society	Labrador Hunting and Fishing Association

Canadian Wildlife Service	Nature Conservancy Canada
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association
Friends of Salmonier Nature Park	Parks Canada
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Stewardship Association of Municipalities
Tourism operators	
General	
College of the North Atlantic	Humber Environment Action Group
Environmental groups	Indigenous Governments and Groups
General public	Memorial University – Grenfell Campus

Vision

The vision of the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands is that of sustainable renewable resources that are responsibly developed for the social, cultural, ecological and economic well-being of the province.

Strategic Issues

These actions support the strategic directions of government, which are: strengthening the province, improving access to healthcare, lowering taxes to reduce the cost of living, and creating safer communities.

Strategic Issue 1 - Development and Growth of Renewable Resources

Newfoundland and Labrador's abundance of renewable resources continue to be a significant source of economic, cultural and recreational value for residents of the province. The Department will continue to respond to the needs of its renewable resource sectors - Forestry, Agriculture and Lands - by continuously pursuing strategic opportunities and seeking to remove barriers to better support sector growth and cultivate conditions that foster increased business activity and stimulate employment in these sectors. Where necessary, this will include modernizing legislation and developing policies to support industry growth. The growth of the renewable resources

industry translates into real socio-economic benefits for our rural, coastal and inland communities.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have supported development and growth of renewable resources for the socioeconomic benefit of the province.

Goal Indicators

- Supported industry diversification, growth and development in renewable resource sectors.
- Modernized legislation and policies to support industry development and growth.
- Researched the impacts of climate change on renewable resource sectors and identified potential mitigations to minimize impacts.
- Enhanced the agriculture industry and furthered provincial food self-sufficiency and security.

Objective 2025-2026

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have continued to develop and implement initiatives to facilitate the development and growth of renewable resource sectors for the socioeconomic benefit of the province.

2025-2026 Indicators

1. Continued advancement of the provincial Forest Strategy.
2. Developed and/or enhanced data collection and management tools.
3. Continued infrastructure planning, upgrades and maintenance to equipment and facilities to enhance growth and development of Natural Resource Sectors.

Strategic Issue 2 - Sustainable Resource Management

Renewable resources must be protected and managed sustainably and in a manner that recognizes the cultural significance of these resources as well as the social, economic, and recreational activities related to them. The Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will continue to manage the provinces renewable resources to ensure that future generations also benefit from Newfoundland and Labrador's valuable resources. Additionally, the department will continue to enhance the resilience of the province's renewable resources to the effects of an increasingly changing climate. In our efforts to support activities that explore and mitigate the impacts of climate change, we will also improve sustainability of our forests, wildlife and plant biodiversity, along with other renewable resources. By focusing on sustainability and adapting to climate change, resources in Newfoundland and Labrador will thereby be managed in such a way to maximize their socio-economic benefits for the people of the province.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have enhanced the sustainable management of renewable resources for the socioeconomic benefit of the province.

Goal Indicators

- Modernized legislation and policies to support sustainable resource management.
- Improved sustainable management of wildlife, wildlife habitat, forests, agriculture, and land resources.
- Increased resilience to the effects of climate change on the province's renewable resources.
- Enhanced animal health and protection.

Objective 2025-2026

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have continued to develop and implement initiatives to enhance the sustainable management of renewable resources for the socioeconomic benefit of the province.

2025-2026 Indicators

1. Continued to develop the agriculture sector by increasing agriculture capacity and land development, supporting new entrants and enhancing industry resilience and technical support.
2. Developed and modernized policies to make Crown Land more accessible and reduce administrative barriers.
3. Continued development of wildlife management plans and policies.
4. Continued animal and plant pest and disease surveillance and management for sustainability of animal and plant health.
5. Continued to facilitate initiatives for sustainable forest management in the province.

Annex A – Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the expressions of desired physical, social, or economic outcomes that would normally require action by, or involvement of, more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by government through platform documents, the Speech from the Throne, annual budget speeches, and policy documents. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans.

These following strategic direction themes were considered, as appropriate and applicable, in the development of this document.

- Strengthen the Province
- Deliver Better Healthcare
- Lower Taxes
- Safer Communities

Specific Strategic Directions for Forestry, Agriculture and Lands:

- Grow the Farming and AgriFood Industry in the Province
- Increase Wildland Firefighting Capacity

Annex B – Entities

The following entities fall under the purview of the Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands:

1. Chicken Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador
2. Dairy Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador
3. Egg Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador
4. Farm Industry Review Board
5. Forest Land Tax Appeal Board (**Inactive**)
6. Governing Board of Newfoundland and Labrador College of Veterinarians
7. Governing Board of Newfoundland and Labrador College of Veterinarians - Disciplinary Panel (**Inactive**)
8. Livestock Owners Compensation Board
9. Newfoundland and Labrador Crop Insurance Agency
10. Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board
11. Section 36 Regional Appeal Boards
12. Species Status Advisory Committee
13. St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority
14. St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Appeal Board
15. Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board
16. Wooddale Land Development Advisory Authority

Newfoundland & Labrador