

Strategic Plan

2026-2029

Forestry, Agriculture
and Lands





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 for April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029. 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. 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,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pleaman Forsey'.

Hon. Pleaman Forsey
Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands

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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; wildlife; administration of Crown lands; and emergency services for the province. The department's main responsibilities include:

- Licensing, regulating, protecting and responsibly managing the province's wildlife, forestry, agricultural and land resources.
- Supporting and promoting sustainable, competitive agriculture and forestry businesses and encouraging diversification in these industries.
- Providing emergency response services related to all hazards including floods, storms, wildfires, and contributing to improved resilience and safer communities.
- Delivering public education and awareness on provincial agriculture, forestry, and wildlife resources, and natural disaster preparation.

There are sixteen Agencies, Boards and Commissions under the purview of the Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (Annex B). For additional information, please visit the departmental website at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal>.

Staff Complement

As of March 31, 2026, the department had 564 employees and 941 positions (a significant number of seasonal positions start later in the spring). The distribution of employees by branches of the department are Executive Support (32), Forestry, Wildlife, and Resource Enforcement (286) Agriculture and Food Security Branch (108), Crown Lands (105) and Emergency Services (33).

The department is headquartered in St. John's, with a total of 32 office locations in 54 communities throughout the province. The geographical distribution is Avalon (131), Central (125), Western (275), Labrador (33) of employees throughout the province.

Service Standards

The department 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/>.

The department also offers a growing number of its services online. A current listing of online services can be found in Annex C. Information on provincial programs and funding can be found at the following links.

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/programs-and-funding/programs/>

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/programs-and-funding/forestry-programs-and-funding/>

Horizontal Initiatives

The department contributes to a number of horizontal initiatives across government such as participation in the Provincial Government's 2025-2030 Climate Change Adaptation Plan and Climate Change Mitigation Plan. This plan will guide our efforts to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and assist communities as we learn to adapt to the realities of climate change. Using a whole of society approach, we will build resilience to a changing climate by implementing strategies and measures to minimize risks and manage climate change implications such as increased storm severity and fire risk.

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.
- Responsibility for emergency management services in the province, including preparing to mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies and natural disasters.

Vision

The vision of the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands is of sustainable renewable resources that are responsibly developed for the social, cultural, ecological and economic well-being of the province. Furthermore, the department's vision is to establish and maintain a modern, robust emergency management system that supports planning, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for emergencies and disasters.

Budget

The department's fiscal 2026-2027 budget is approximately \$126,093,400 million as shown below.

Branch	Budget
Forestry, Wildlife and Resource Enforcement	\$47,831,900
Agriculture and Food Security	\$26,419,000
Crown Lands	\$9,259,400
Emergency Services	\$36,664,100
Executive and Executive Support	\$5,919,000
Total Department	\$126,093,400

Lines of Business

Agriculture and Food Security

The department supports the sustainable development of agriculture in Newfoundland and Labrador by helping farmers grow and market their businesses, improve production, and adapt to changing conditions. It provides opportunities for advisory services, financial support, and crop and livestock insurance to strengthen farm operations and encourage innovation across the agrifoods sector. Science-based research strengthens climate resilience and food security, while veterinary services protect animal health and manage disease risks.

Land Management

The department manages Newfoundland and Labrador's Crown land to ensure it is used responsibly and in ways that benefit the public, the environment, and the economy. It reviews land use applications, issues land titles, and maintains official Crown land records and mapping. The department also supports land use planning by helping identify suitable areas for development, recreation, and agriculture, and by working with municipalities and Local Service Districts on responsible land growth. In evaluating proposals, it collaborates with other government departments to mitigate

conflicts and ensure that land development aligns with environmental, legislative, and policy requirements.

Forest Management

The department ensures forests are sustainably managed through planning, silviculture, research, and monitoring. It maintains access roads, responds to pests and disease, manages wildland fire programs, and regulates timber harvesting. Field staff conduct inventories, reforestation, and wildfire response.

Wildlife Management

The department protects wildlife and their habitats across Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure healthy, sustainable populations for future generations. This includes supporting responsible hunting and trapping while safeguarding game species, furbearers, and species at risk, as well as conducting species research and population monitoring. Additionally, it issues licences, operates the wildlife laboratory, and delivers public education programs, including at Salmonier Nature Park.

Inspection, Compliance and Regulatory Enforcement

Resource enforcement officers conduct inspections, respond to violations and promote compliance to enforce legislation protecting wildlife, inland fish, forests, and Crown lands.

Emergency Services

The department leads provincial emergency management, including planning, training, response coordination, and disaster recovery, and administers disaster financial assistance. It also supports fire protection, public safety communications, and 911 services.

Further information on departmental programs and services is available at

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/>.

Primary Clients

The primary clients/stakeholders of the department include individuals or groups who use the department's services and who have an influence on its business. As the department has a large mandate covering agriculture, forestry, wildlife and land resource management, and also in emergency management services, it interacts with many stakeholders throughout the province. For a listing of primary clients identified by the department, please refer to Annex D.

Strategic Issues

The strategic issues are based upon the strategic directions of government (Annex A), which are to strengthen the province and deliver better healthcare; lower taxes and create safer communities; and specific strategic directions for forestry, agriculture and lands which are to prioritize the growth of the farming and agrifood industry in the province and strengthen capacity for emergency response and improve resilience to wildfires in the province.

Strategic Issue 1 – Growing the Farming and Agri-Food Industry in the Province

Farming and the agri-food sector play a vital role in advancing food security and driving economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador. The agriculture industry strengthens long-term economic resilience—particularly in rural communities—while supporting both direct and indirect employment across the province. Food self-sufficiency remains a key priority for the department, which is focused on expanding domestic food production, enhancing supply chain resilience, and reducing reliance on imported food. These efforts are increasingly critical in the face of rising food prices, climate change, and transportation challenges. Through programs, technical services, land access, and financial supports, FAL assists producers and processors while also working to improve the availability and affordability of food for residents throughout the province.

Goal

By March 31, 2029, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have supported growth in the farming and agri-food industry to enhance food security and self-sufficiency.

Goal Indicators

- Advance the development and implementation of a long-term agriculture strategy, informed by engagement with farmers, industry partners, and stakeholders, to support increased local food production and sector growth.
- Increase access to and use of suitable Crown lands to support new entrants and the expansion of agricultural production.
- Enhance access to financing and financial supports for farmers, including exploring mechanisms to leverage federal and private investment.
- Improve access to shared infrastructure, equipment, and technology to support efficient and sustainable farm operations.
- Support the development and expansion of secondary processing capacity to enhance value-added production and market opportunities for local products.
- Strengthen connections between local producers, retailers, institutions, and residents to improve access to locally produced food.

Objective 2026-2027

By March 31, 2027, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have identified and begun implementing key initiatives to support growth in the farming and agri-food sectors, contributing to enhanced food self-sufficiency in the province.

2026-2027 Indicators

1. Initiated the development of a 10-year agriculture strategy to boost local food production, indoor growing, and extend the growing season.

2. Developed and modernized policies to make Crown Land more accessible to new farmers and existing producers and reduce administrative barriers.
3. Continued infrastructure planning, upgrades and maintenance to agricultural equipment and facilities to support provincial agriculture.
4. Improved access to shared farm tools and equipment through the farm equipment bank to reduce farmers' overhead, maintenance, and storage costs, while improving farm efficiency, scalable production, and profitability, thereby strengthening local food self-sufficiency.
5. Provided funding through Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program (PAAP) and Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) to qualifying farmers and agrifoods businesses for land development, equipment, infrastructure etc.
6. Supported expansion of secondary processing capacity by assisting producers in navigating regulatory processes and improving access to local and national markets.
7. Continued animal and plant pest and disease surveillance and management for sustainability of animal and plant health.

Objective 2027-2028

By March 31, 2028, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have expanded and enhanced programs, infrastructure, and market access initiatives to accelerate sector growth and food self-sufficiency.

Objective 2028-2029

By March 31, 2029, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have supported initiatives that foster growth in the farming and agri-food sectors and contribute to increased food self-sufficiency in the province.

Strategic Issue 2 – Strengthening capacity for emergency response and improving resilience to wildfires in the province.

Strengthening provincial capacity for emergency response is essential to protecting public safety and creating safer, more resilient communities in the face of increasing natural hazards, including floods, storms, wildfires and other climate-related events. The department recognizes the need for continued investment in infrastructure, equipment, and essential services delivered during emergencies to ensure the public has timely access to safe and effective supports.

These investments, together with public education and strong community partnerships, are foundational to emergency preparedness, risk reduction, and community resilience in a changing climate. Recent events have highlighted the growing frequency and complexity of emergencies across the province. From large-scale evacuations to infrastructure disruptions and environmental impacts, these events underscore the importance of a coordinated and well-resourced approach to prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and response.

Wildfires represent a growing and particularly severe risk to community safety. Across Canada, wildfire frequency, intensity, and severity are increasing, and in 2025 the province recorded 249 wildland fires, more than double the historical average of 118, burning 18,486.6 hectares. The impacts were significant, especially in the Conception Bay North area, with hundreds of structures destroyed and thousands of residents evacuated. Targeted investments in wildfire prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery support the FAL's strategic direction to strengthen emergency capacity while advancing the broader goal of creating safer communities. Building on recent wildfire response efforts, these actions focus on improving future readiness and enhancing the resilience of individuals and communities to wildfire impacts.

Goal

By March 31, 2029, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have enhanced provincial emergency response capacity and strengthened community

resilience to wildfires and other disasters, supporting safer communities through improved preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery.

Goal Indicators

- Progress toward strengthening and modernizing legislative and policy frameworks to support effective forest fire prevention and mitigation.
- Enhanced community wildfire resilience through planning, prevention and mitigation initiatives.
- Extent of support provided for emergency response and recovery efforts.
- Progress in implementing and improving emergency response technologies.
- Strengthened community emergency preparedness.
- Emergency response capacity enhanced through investments in equipment, staffing, training, and preparedness resources.
- Integration of wildfire risk mitigation into long-term forest management planning.

Objective 2026-2027

By March 31, 2027, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have advanced initiatives that strengthen provincial emergency response capacity and enhanced community preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery to all hazards including floods, storms, and wildfires, contributing to improved resilience and safer communities.

2026-2027 Indicators

1. Advancement of updates to forest fire related legislation supporting effective prevention and mitigation.
2. Financial assistance provided to communities across the province to support development of community wildfire resiliency plans and community-based wildfire prevention and mitigation projects.
3. Provided support for response and recovery efforts to help communities in Conception Bay North recover and become more resilient to disasters.

4. Advancement of the transition to Next Generation 911 system to strengthen provincial emergency response capacity.
5. Supported communities in completing emergency management plans to increase local preparedness and response capacity across the province.
6. Enhancement of the coverage and reliability of the Province-Wide Radio System to support effective emergency response and coordination.
7. Emergency response capacity increased through investments in equipment, staffing, training, and preparedness resources.
8. Development of five-year forest management plans incorporating wildfire risk mitigation.

Objective 2027-2028

By March 31, 2028, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have further taken initiatives to strengthen provincial emergency response capacity and enhanced community preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery to all hazards including floods, storms, and wildfires, contributing to improved resilience and safer communities.

Objective 2028-2029

By March 31, 2029, the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands will have continued to strengthen provincial emergency response capacity and enhanced community preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery to all hazards including floods, storms, and wildfires, contributing to improved resilience and safer communities.

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
- Supporting safer communities through all hazards disaster preparation, mitigation response, recovery, including 911 services

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 (Inactive)
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

Annex C – Online Services

The department offers the following services online:

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/lineservices/ Crown Lands Annual Invoices: https://www.gov.nl.ca/lineservices/
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/
Fire Protection & Detection Equipment Servicing Licences	onlinepayments.gov.nl.ca/OnlinePayments/index.jsp

Annex D – Primary Clients/Stakeholders

In delivering its mandate, the department identifies the following as primary clients/stakeholders. Emergency services are also provided to individuals or groups of individuals through 911, the public safety radio system, and emergency services.

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
FPIInnovations	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	
Emergency Services	
Emergency First Responders	Municipalities
Search and Rescue Associations	Law Enforcement Entities
Recovery/Rehabilitation Companies	Provincial Government Departments
Municipal and Volunteer Fire Departments	Federal Government Departments
Utility Companies	Humanitarian Associations
Telecommunications companies	Transportation Companies
General	
College of the North Atlantic	Humber Environment Action Group
Environmental groups	Indigenous Governments and Groups
General public	Memorial University – Grenfell Campus

