

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present the 2024-25 annual performance report for the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. This report was prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** requirements for a category one government entity and details the department's progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in our 2023-26 strategic plan. As Minister, I am accountable for the results contained within.

Our department's many programs and services support Newfoundland and Labrador's fisheries, aquaculture, wildlife, agriculture, lands and forestry sectors. Through the dedicated efforts of staff, we have made significant progress delivering key programs and services, and meeting required indicators.

The department continued to focus on initiatives that aim to enhance sustainable growth in Newfoundland and Labrador's renewable resources industries. A few highlights include:

- A collective effort with industry partners to tackle the threat of tariffs from the United States. Actions included a commitment of \$5 million in funding in 2025-26 to support market diversification initiatives to ensure the long-term sustainability of the seafood industry.
- A \$10-million loan supporting a new local dairy co-operative to transform the dairy industry in this province, and ongoing support for the agriculture sector through workshops, research initiatives and continued funding opportunities from the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership and Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program.
- Launch of a new system to streamline and simplify the Crown lands application process and amended legislation to assist people seeking clear title to Crown lands.
- Changes to the **Animal Health and Protection Act**, including increased fines and penalties, to help ensure the legislation continues to reflect the highest possible standards for animal welfare.
- Funding agreements with the federal government to invest in new provincial programs and activities to reduce wildland fire risk and support the Provincial Government's Atlantic Wildfire Centre.

We continue to work with industry stakeholders, governments, communities and others to create new opportunities in the fishing, forestry and farming sectors, which all make significant economic and cultural contributions to this province.

I am confident that through the fine work of our valued employees, we will continue to effectively deliver these programs and services for the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Dempster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hon. Lisa Dempster
Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) is a category one government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. FFA supports and encourages the development and sustainability of the province's fishing, aquaculture, agriculture and forestry industries, as well as wildlife conservation and management, resource enforcement and administration of Crown lands. Its main responsibilities include:

- Licensing and regulating the province's fish processing sector, as well as wildlife, forestry and land resources;
- Supporting the strategic development of the fishing industry as a key pillar of economic growth;
- 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;
- Effectively and sustainably developing, managing and licensing the aquaculture sector;
- 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, FFA is responsible for the 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/ffa>.

Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2025, the department had 609 employees. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, FFA’s net budget was \$75,754,500.

Branch	Number of Employees	Budget (\$)
Agriculture and Lands	200	18,579,500
Fisheries and Aquaculture	69	15,503,800
Forestry and Wildlife	308	36,698,800
Executive and Executive Support	32	4,972,400
Total Department	609	\$75,754,500

FFA is headquartered in St. John’s and has 69 offices located in 44 communities throughout the province.

Vision

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

Mandate

The mandate of FFA includes:

- Development and growth of renewable resources including fisheries, aquaculture, 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, aquaculture, agriculture, fish processing, inland fish, wildlife and forestry.

Lines of Business

FFA has the following eight main lines of business:

1. **Animal Health** - Provides mobile clinical routine and emergency veterinary services to livestock and poultry owners across the province, and veterinary services and regulatory oversight of the aquaculture industry.
2. **Education and Awareness** - Provides activities to promote education and awareness around the province's natural resources.
3. **Licensing/Permitting** - Responsible for licensing and permitting and the development and implementation of policies and regulations related to each type of licence, such as fish processing, fish buyers and restricted buyers.
4. **Inspection, Compliance and Regulatory Enforcement** - Conducts comprehensive inspection, compliance and enforcement duties within its legislative authority.
5. **Marketing** - Provides marketing support services to fish, seafood, and agrifoods industries in the province.
6. **Resource Research and Development** - Assists the fishing, aquaculture, agriculture and forestry industries through the provision of technical and financial support in business development.
7. **Sustainable Resource Management** - 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.
8. **Conservation** - Responsible for sustainable management of the resources under its mandate and jurisdiction, such as our province's forest, agricultural and land resources.

Additional information about FFA, its mandate and lines of business can be found at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/>.

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

- In May 2024, the Minister of FFA announced a \$10 million loan in support of a new local dairy co-operative to transform the dairy industry in this province. This investment was in support of the acquisition of Agropur's fluid milk processing and distribution facility in Mount Pearl, including the Central Dairies brand. The Co-operative is comprised of 19 dairy producers from across Newfoundland and Labrador who have united to further develop the industry, create new local jobs and spur additional local investment in the dairy sector. In providing a \$10 million loan for this initiative, the Provincial Government is supporting the continued growth, sustainability, and expansion of the Newfoundland and Labrador dairy industry.
- In May 2024, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced an investment of \$15 million by the Innovation and Business Investment Corporation of the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology, for a new Harvester Enterprise Loan Program. This program is an enhancement of the Fisheries Loan Guarantee Program and will expand supports for independent fish harvesters positioning the sector for future success. The program has been enhanced to increase maximum guarantee thresholds. New components have been added to allow for downpayment loans and interest payment rebates to harvesters to support eligible activities. This partnership and the establishment of the program is the latest initiative that the Provincial Government has undertaken to position the province's fishing industry for future success.
- In September 2024, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was recognized for its efforts to achieve and maintain environmentally responsible forest management standards. For the 10th consecutive year, forestry operations administered by FFA have maintained International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification,

keeping Newfoundland and Labrador on the leading edge of responsible forest management. FFA's professional team of foresters, forest technicians and conservation officers marked a decade of excellence in managing Newfoundland and Labrador's forests to international standards.

- In November 2024, changes to the **Animal Health and Protection Act** were introduced, including increased fines and penalties, compliance measures that give a broader scope of enforcement action, and more precise and definitive language, will help ensure the legislation continues to reflect the highest possible standards for animal welfare. The amendments update and modernize the legislation, clarify some of the language and specific definitions used throughout, enable designated enforcement officials to issue compliance orders and increase fines and penalties for animal cruelty offences.
- In November 2024, FFA released 10 decisions and directions to be taken by the Provincial Government in advance of the 2025 snow crab fishery. The plan to advance free enterprise is built on three pillars: 1) A return to independent collective bargaining; 2) Increased competition through increased processing capacity; and 3) Strengthened controls over corporate concentration.
- In December 2024, **Lands Act** amendments received Royal Assent. Applicant-friendly changes were introduced, including: providing shortened, easier requirements for establishing adverse possession, better known as squatter's rights, against the government; creating Certificates of Dispossession whereby large areas of land and property are acknowledged up front to have been dispossessed from the government, (i.e. not considered to be Crown Lands); creating an independent tribunal to hear appeals of adverse possession decisions; offering greater flexibility for applicants to meet timelines and to develop land in shoreline reservations. Other changes that will help streamline and clarify the process of securing property title include easier access to Crown lands through an online applications and payment portal; establishing a clearer and more applicant-friendly assessment and evaluation manual and directives related to Crown land assessments; establishing greater housing security through the Primary Residence Property Title Program. Additionally, payment related to market

value of land that were originally proposed will no longer be required. An application fee and quitclaim fee will apply, as well as a document preparation fee and provision of an acceptable land survey upon approval.

- In February 2025, in response to tariff threats from the United States, the FFA Minister launched a fisheries roundtable comprised of a diverse assembly of fisheries and aquaculture industry stakeholders. The industry demonstrated unity and a desire to work cooperatively on initiatives to tackle tariffs. Specific actions were taken immediately, including key discussions with the federal government on financial supports and flexibilities for the sector. The department also earmarked over \$5 million in funding for 2025-26 to support market diversification initiatives to ensure the long-term sustainability of the seafood industry.
- In February 2025, FFA made significant changes to enhance hunting and trapping opportunities on the Island of Newfoundland. These changes included establishing Caribou Management Area 80 for Upper Grey Island, extending the season of Caribou Management Areas 71 and 80, extending the fall black bear season to November 30 and re-structuring black bear management areas to broaden hunter opportunities, adding a trapper's beaver licence to permit trapping in unoccupied traplines, and making break-away devices mandatory on neck snares used for trapping furbearers. The changes promote food self-sufficiency and sustainable wildlife management.
- Initiatives were launched to re-introduce Newfoundland Woodland Caribou to the Grey Islands (Bell Island and Grois Island) in 2018. The program has been largely successful and as a result, quotas were re-established for hunting opportunities for both areas in 2024-25.

Partnerships

- To support wildfire management and response, Newfoundland and Labrador is signatory to a four-year agreement under the Wildfire Resilient Futures Initiative (WRFI) valued at \$12.8 million. WRFI invests in new provincial programs and activities to increase wildfire resilience in Newfoundland and Labrador. Six new positions are

planned under this initiative, and recruitment in 2024-25 has filled two of these positions.

- Newfoundland and Labrador is also signatory to an agreement with Natural Resources Canada (Federal Government) related to Fighting and Managing Wildfire in a Climate Change Program (FMWCC). It is a four-year agreement valued at \$32 million, with \$19.8 million targeted for aviation improvements (repair of fifth water bomber and purchasing bird dog aircraft) and \$12.2 million targeted to invest in specialized equipment, enhanced training opportunities, response in shoulder seasons, technology, and information management. In 2024-25, contracts related to the repair of fifth water bomber were signed and implemented, with \$ 4.4 million expended on the repair of the water bomber.
- Between March 16-18, 2025, the FFA Minister and a delegation of Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries and aquaculture representatives met with key buyers, Premiers and Fisheries Ministers from Eastern provinces, the Governor of Massachusetts and the Consul General of Canada in Boston at the Seafood Expo North America trade show. The primary objective of the show was to maintain existing, strong relationships with United States buyers, while also reinforcing the value and need for United States partners to engage with their political representatives around the impact of tariffs on American consumers and industry. The show also provided an opportunity to forge relationships with buyers from other countries that were in attendance.
- FFA partnered with Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture (NLFA) to fund Women in Agriculture Workshops. Events were held to discuss barriers for women to enter the agriculture industry and gauge interest in establishing a Women in Agriculture Organization in Newfoundland and Labrador. Four sessions were held, three in person (Corner Brook, Gander and St. John's) and one virtually. A total of 129 participants attended the sessions. Similarly, FFA partnered with the NLFA through the NL Young Farmers and Agriculture in the Classroom NL projects to continue the Women in Agriculture video series. Two videos were produced with a total of six videos in the series. These videos highlight successful women in the agriculture sector to raise awareness and encourage more women to consider agriculture as a career

option. On February 11, 2025, FFA officials joined the NLFA to celebrate Canadian Agriculture Day and to bring awareness to the growing agriculture industry.

- In 2024-25, FFA continued to partner with Agriculture AgriFood Canada (AAFC), Memorial University of Newfoundland, Grenfell Campus, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture and agriculture industry stakeholders on the NL Living Lab Initiative. The five-year Agricultural Climate Solutions Program is supported by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada (Federal Government) and focuses on co-development of farm practices and innovative technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon.
- In 2024-25, the Centre for Agriculture and Forestry Development continued with equipment and infrastructure upgrades as well as continuation of programs to support both the agriculture and forestry sectors. Its Vegetable Transplant Program produced over four million vegetable transplants, that were grown and distributed to 135 farms. Additionally, through the Silviculture Program, over seven million tree seedlings were grown and over five million were distributed to assist with provincial reforestation efforts.
- On May 28, 2024, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador celebrated National Seal Products Day with government and industry stakeholders in Ottawa. National Seal Products Day is celebrated annually during the month of May to promote Canadian seal products and highlight the importance of the Canadian seal fishery, particularly for coastal communities and Indigenous people. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provided the Fur Institute of Canada with a \$10,000 grant to assist with this important event which is attended by Members of Parliament, Senators, and seal industry advocates and stakeholders from across Canada.

Report on Performance

Issue 1 – Development and Growth of Renewable Resources

Development and growth of renewable resources is of great value to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. FFA, through its programs, services and initiatives, focuses on

exploring and supporting opportunities to utilize natural resources that generate employment and bring economic benefits now and for future generations. It supports initiatives to create opportunities for more people in the province to engage in traditional cultural and recreational activities such as hunting, wood-cutting, fishing and growing food. Utilization of natural resources provides significant economic, cultural and recreational benefits to the province, and FFA undertakes initiatives to protect and sustainably manage these resources.

Goal

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

2024-25 Objective

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture will have further developed and implemented initiatives to facilitate the development and growth of renewable resource sectors for the socioeconomic benefit of the province.

Results

The table below outlines planned versus actual results of the 2024-25 objective indicators set out in FFA's 2023-26 Strategic Plan.

Indicator 1: Advanced the development of a provincial Forestry Strategy.
In 2024-25, FFA completed a draft Provincial Sustainable Forest Management Strategy (2025-2035). The development team included: the Director of Forest Ecosystem Management, Supervisor of Strategic Planning, two Foresters, and the Regional Ecosystem Planner. A contract was also awarded to Barnett Clarke Associates (September to December 2024) to help advance development of this draft strategy document, with specific deliverables of conducting a literature review of national and global trends influencing the forest sector, compiling relevant data and information, and

aiding in the establishment of the Strategic Goals and Objectives. The draft Strategy Document was circulated for review within FFA's Forestry and Wildlife branch and to other departments including Environment and Climate Change and Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, to inform and refine the development of targets, objectives and identifiers. Next steps include circulating the draft for broader government review, followed by public and industry consultations.

Indicator 2: Advanced the development of a Multi-Species Aquaculture Strategy and Multi-Species Research and Development.

The Multi-Species Aquaculture Strategy continues to be developed with members of the Aquaculture Working Group, which is comprised of government and industry representatives. A jurisdictional scan on five species (Marine Plants, Cleaner fish, Sea Urchin, Atlantic halibut and Wolffish) in multiple national and international countries was completed, which will assist in the development of the strategy.

To support research and development of the aquaculture sector, the Aquatic Animal Health Division of FFA collected oceanographic data for informing aquaculture site selection, management strategies and informing on water circulation patterns between and within sites. Data was also collected to add more information to assess and delineate Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs). Additionally, two data collection campaigns were conducted to add more information to assess and delineate AMAs.

The Aquaculture Development Division of FFA conducted oceanographic data collection in areas of former shellfish aquaculture sites to support the department's recommendations on site utilization for new species development and assist with the identification of potential site developments for the Multi-Species Aquaculture Strategy.

The Multi-Species and Research Development Fund is being used to help advance species not currently commercialized in the province to date. FFA provided funding to four companies under the Aquaculture Multi-Species Research and Development Fund through an open intake application process.

Indicator 3: Continued to implement the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Agreement and the Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program.

In 2024-25, the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership invested approximately \$8.3 million in over 150 projects to advance the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture and agrifoods industry. Investments were made in innovative technology, market development, secondary processing, land development and environmental sustainability, as well as investments in industry initiatives such as mental health and farm safety, Agriculture in the Classroom, Women in Agriculture and NL Young Farmers.

In 2024-25, the Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program invested over \$2.1 million in 108 projects to enhance growth and commercialization in the agriculture industry. Investment was made in agricultural land development and agriculture infrastructure, such as the construction of livestock facilities and the acquisition of forage handling systems and robotic milking technology, as well as \$132,900 was invested in the Community Garden Support Program.

Indicator 4: Supported fish harvesters and processors through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund.

In 2024-25, in partnership with the Government of Canada through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF), FFA strategically supported 66 new fisheries development projects and has approved additional funding to nine existing projects with a combined investment of \$9.2 million in the harvesting, processing, and aquaculture sectors. The projects focus on maintaining quality during harvesting and processing, the creation of value-added products and improving harvesting and processing efficiencies. More specifically, snow crab quality improvements are being addressed with the addition of refrigerated seawater holding systems on vessels and crab cleaning equipment in processing plants.

With the significant increase in the lobster resource in the province, FFA has supported harvesters and processors with purchase of efficient lobster haulers, insulated containers to keep lobster cool and out of the elements to reduce stress and maintain

quality, expansion or establishment of holding systems and purchase of transport crates to accommodate the higher landings of lobster. The AFF has also made contributions to processing plants for the production of value-added products including ready-to-eat lobster products and fish sausage.

From a research perspective, technology projects were funded to conduct groundfish research using tagging systems and development of artificial intelligence technology to automate defect detection in white fish which will improve quality and increase processing efficiencies.

Indicator 5: Supported market research, trade shows, trade missions and in-market promotional activities to identify new market opportunities and expand international markets for fish and seafood products.

Between March 16-18, 2025, a delegation of Newfoundland and Labrador fishery representatives met with key buyers to confront trade realities and secure strong markets at the Seafood Expo North America in Boston, Massachusetts. In 2024, approximately 65 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador's seafood was exported to the United States, valued at \$890 million. Seafood from the province is highly desired by buyers because of our wide diversity of products harvested in our pristine ocean waters and meeting stringent guidelines for quality, food safety and sustainability.

This event was particularly important as the seafood industry contends with United States tariffs and trade uncertainties. The primary objectives included maintaining existing relationships with United States buyers and reinforcing the need for United States partners to engage with their political representatives around the impact of tariffs. Recognizing that market diversification will be imperative to the long-term sustainability of the seafood industry, the delegation also placed greater emphasis on promoting Newfoundland and Labrador products to the global marketplace and forging new international relationships.

Discussion of Results

During 2024-25, FFA developed and implemented numerous initiatives to facilitate the development and growth of renewable resources in the province. This included initiatives such as: drafting the Forest Strategy, collecting oceanographic data to support growth and management of Aquaculture, and investing through Sustainable CAP and the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to improve technology and processing in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. FFA worked with groups such as the Aquaculture Working group and supported programs such as Women in Agriculture to identify opportunities to grow natural resource sectors. FFA continues to avail of national and international opportunities to promote Newfoundland and Labrador products and identify new market opportunities for fish and seafood products. FFA will continue to engage stakeholders to advance these initiatives in 2025-26.

Objective 2025-26

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture 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.

Indicators

1. Continued advancement of the provincial Forest Strategy.
2. Continued to develop the Aquaculture Multi-Species Strategy and issued funding under the Multi-Species Research and Development Fund.
3. Administered the Atlantic Fisheries Fund in support of the provinces fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
4. Supported market diversification initiatives for the sustainability of the seafood industry.
5. Developed and/or enhanced data collection and management tools.
6. Continued infrastructure planning, upgrades and maintenance to FFA's equipment and facilities to enhance growth and development of Natural Resource Sectors.

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. Additionally, enhancing the resilience of the province’s renewable resources to the effects of a changing climate has become increasingly important. FFA will support initiatives that improve sustainability of our forests, marine life, wildlife and plant biodiversity, along with other renewable resources. This will ensure that resources in Newfoundland and Labrador are managed to maximize their socio-economic benefits for now and for future generations.

Goal

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

2024-25 Objective

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture will have further developed and implemented initiatives to enhance the sustainable management of renewable resources for the socioeconomic benefit of the province.

Results

This table outlines planned versus actual results of the 2024-25 objective indicators set out in FFA’s 2023-26 Strategic Plan.

Indicator 1: Advanced initiatives to further develop the fisheries sector with a focus on sustainability.
In 2024-25, documentation of processes pertaining to fish processing continued to identify efficiencies and omissions within the process. Advancements have been made

to develop a new, updated licensing system to replace the existing application, with a target completion date of 2025-26. Additionally, FFA updated the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual for the 2025 season based on the new policies introduced by the Minister. By improving the processes used for fish processing, for example licensing, inspections, audits and strong quality control practices, FFA is efficiently using our current resources and ensuring sustainable management of the resource for future generations.

Indicator 2: Improved processing of Crown land applications through updated policies and new technology.

In December 2024, FFA launched a new system to streamline and simplify the Crown lands application process. The online Crown Lands Application Portal launched for new personal, commercial and government Crown-lands-use applications and will enable people to submit supporting documents, maps and applicable fees online. This will eliminate application errors, simplify fee payments and reduce the number of incomplete applications submitted. For anyone without Internet access, NL Public Libraries will assist anyone wishing to use library workstations to apply for Crown lands. The portal can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/crownlands/>.

FFA created an action plan to implement activities that improve the processing of Crown land applications through updated policies and regulation.

FFA also introduced the new Primary Residence Property Title Program, which provides an affordable path to ownership. The program is a quick and affordable option for people who can prove possession and occupation of their primary residential property but do not meet the requirements of adverse possession (i.e., commonly known as 'squatters' rights'). People can apply via the new, user-friendly online portal for a quitclaim deed that eliminates the Crown's claim to a property.

Additionally, FFA is undertaking the design and implementation of a new Crown Lands Land Use Atlas GIS Application. The objective of the application is to enable users within FFA to better and more easily manage and analyze land use data within an on-

premises GIS application, ensuring timely retrieval of geospatial data with optimal data integrity. Furthermore, geospatial data used within the enterprise environment will be disseminated using modern technologies for improved public use.

Indicator 3: Implemented initiatives under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership to support sustainability of the agriculture sector.

The Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) is a program under Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) with the objective of implementing best management practices that reduce GHG emissions and enhance carbon sequestration. In 2024-25, RALP invested over \$1.0 million in 530 acres to conserve and enhance the resiliency of agricultural landscapes by accelerating the adoption of land use management practices such as cover cropping, rotational grazing and perennials in annual crop rotations. RALP invested in 35 on-farm projects to enhance the sustainability of farms in Newfoundland and Labrador. Sustainable CAP through the Climate Change and Environmental Outreach Program invested over \$100,000 to support sustainable practices such as energy efficient lighting and alternative energy on farms, as well as supported the environmental farm planning initiative to enable farmers to identify risks and develop mitigation measures to enhance environmental sustainability.

Indicator 4: Facilitated initiatives for sustainable forest management in the province.

To support sustainable forest management, FFA planted approximately 5 million seedlings on 2,454 hectares, implemented site preparation on 777 hectares and performed plantation maintenance on an additional 47 hectares during the summer field season of 2024. Construction and maintenance of roads and bridges was also completed to access harvest and silviculture sites. In June of 2024, FFA entered into a Forest Manage Agreement (FMA) and issued a Crown Timber License to the Miawpukek first nation in support of Indigenous engagement in forest management. In Fall of 2024, FFA updated the provincial timber resource analysis to reflect updates associated with the new five-year plan in Forest Management District 20 in Labrador.

FFA delivered control programs based on the use of the Early Intervention Strategy to control rising populations of spruce budworm. FFA completed its third year of a four year agreement for its Early Implementation Strategy (EIS - phase III). In 2024-25, a total of 90,007 hectares of forested land was treated using a biological insecticide (BTK) on the island west coast and northern peninsula. FFA continues to monitor development using three main surveys i.e., Pheromone, Defoliation survey and Fall forecast survey. To date, under EIS (Phase III), FFA has treated a total of 341,426 hectares with approximately 42.4 million hectares over the first three years of this program. FFA has also supported, through funding and in-kind research, a variety of spruce budworm related research projects through an Agreement with the Spray Efficacy Research Group International. FFA also held its annual meeting of Newfoundland and Labradors Provincial Forest Pest Management Committee on March 13, 2025.

Indicator 5: Undertook management and monitoring of wildlife populations to protect and conserve wildlife resources.

In 2024-25, FFA undertook fall classifications for all caribou herds on the island, and for the George River Herd in Labrador. Surveys were conducted for moose in Moose Management Areas 4, 39, 39A, 42 and Labrador 93, and census completed on Southcoast Newfoundland herds.

Under the Limestone Landscapes Priority Place, surveys were completed for plant species at risk, short eared owl, other birds, artic hare and several other species. Monitoring was also completed for Piping Plover in Big Barasway, lichens on the Avalon Peninsula and west coast, and for bats throughout the island. Pine marten presence absence surveys, small mammal surveys and surveys for rare and endangered lichen were completed in various areas throughout the province.

FFA developed game management recommendations for harvested species in the province, including establishing quotas for caribou on the island and moose across the province. Bear management zones were revised to assist in population management.

Indicator 6: Continued actions to research and test infectious animal diseases of concern.

FFA continued to provide front-line veterinary service to the livestock industries for early detection and response to infectious animal disease of concern including reportable disease such as rabies and avian influenza, production-limiting disease such as contagious mastitis of dairy cattle, and animal diseases of public health concern.

The provincial Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory continued with Milk Quality testing to ensure food safety. FFA, through the provincial Foreign Animal Disease Laboratory, completed procurement of molecular laboratory equipment that will enhance the provincial capacity for disease surveillance.

FFA continued to oversee the aquatic animal health of cultured aquatic animals by conducting surveillance and audits as outlined in the Aquaculture Policy and Procedures Manual, including veterinary oversight for items such as aquatic animal health testing, preventative medicine, and biosecurity at aquaculture facilities. Monitoring and maintaining aquatic animal health is a crucial pillar in maintaining a sustainable aquaculture industry.

Discussion of Results

During 2024-25, FFA continued to facilitate the growth and sustainable management of renewable resources for the socioeconomic benefit of the province. By improving processes for licensing, inspections, audits and quality control practices, FFA is improving methods for obtaining and processing fishery resources. Through silviculture and infrastructure investments, FFA is supporting the efficient use of the province's timber. Advancements made in the use of technology are working towards easier management of crown land resources and improved disease detection capabilities in the provinces agriculture and animal health sectors. FFA also continues to complete surveying and monitoring of wildlife populations to support protection of at-risk species and to ensure hunting occurs at sustainable levels.

Objective 2025-26

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

2025-26 Indicators

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

Opportunities and Challenges

The growth of Newfoundland and Labrador is heavily driven by renewable resources. These renewable resources provide economic, environmental, and social benefits and therefore it is important they are managed sustainably.

Opportunities

FFA utilizes every opportunity to ensure the sustainable use of the resources while creating a positive impact for reliant industries. Federal-Provincial cost shared programs, such as the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) provide opportunities to address key market-access issues and drive innovation in the fish and aquaculture sectors in the province. The ongoing Seafood Marketing Support Program supports market research and

initiatives by providing a maximum funding of \$100,000 per project, and likewise, assists industry players in developing new market opportunities in response to potential tariffs in the United States.

Newfoundland and Labrador holds promising future opportunities in agriculture, with several key opportunities positioning the province for strong sector growth. One of the most significant assets is the availability of vast amount of underutilized land, much of which remains uncultivated. Coupled with an abundant supply of fresh water and a relatively clean environment, these natural resources offer the foundation for expanding agricultural production.

There is a continued opportunity for FFA to enhance firefighting capabilities through an announcement for a \$32 million cost-shared, four-year investment in partnership with Natural Resources Canada for a new Atlantic Wildfire Centre in Gander and the purchase of firefighting equipment. The establishment of the Atlantic Wildfire Centre in Central Newfoundland will strengthen and enhance efforts to protect Atlantic Canada's communities and forests.

Finally, the Seafood Marketing Support Program (SMSP) provides an opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador seafood processing and marketing companies, industry associations, and not-for profit organizations to identify, assess, target and develop new market opportunities in response to tariffs levied by the United States (US). The objective of this program is to support market diversification and reduce reliance on the US market while capitalizing on new opportunities in domestic and international markets. This program will focus on market information and research, market development planning, adapting products and packaging for new markets, market development activities and marketing material and promotional tools.

Challenges

The province's fisheries, forestry, aquaculture and agriculture sectors face varied challenges from an aging workforce, attraction and retention of specific trades, international trade dynamics as well as challenges arising from climate change.

The fishing industry is threatened by international trade dynamics, particularly, potential market tariffs by the United States which could significantly increase costs for importers, erode margins, and create disruptions in the supply chain that can increase seafood prices and weaken demand. In March 2025, China has placed a 25 per cent tariff on certain Canadian seafood products. Market diversification and expansion into Europe, Asia (other than China) and Canada is critical to minimize the economic effects of tariffs.

The agriculture industry continues to face challenges rising from inadequate secondary processing facilities; high cost of production relating to the input costs associated with farming such as animal feed costs, fertilizer costs and seed costs; current farmer demographics; and labor shortages. Climate change is and will continue to be a challenge for the agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. Increased periods of drought, intense rainfall events, increased occurrences of invasive species such as the Japanese Beetle, will all effect how farms are managed now and into the future. Planning and adaptation is key for sustainability of the industry.

FFA is advancing sustainable wildlife management through engagements, policies and plans that protect habitats and ensure sustainable harvesting, yet conservation remains a key challenge in the management of wildlife resources. Caribou in Labrador continue to face significant conservation challenges, with populations continuing to decline. To enhance caribou conservation, FFA has recently hired several new enforcement staff and biologists in Labrador and has prepared a Range Plan designed to protect caribou habitat in Labrador.

In addition, the forestry industry is mainly faced with challenges from wildfires that threaten and cause disruptions to wildlife and nearby communities. Labrador faces higher

risk of large fires due to the forest type (mainly Black spruce forest) and abnormally dry conditions in recent years. In 2024, wildfires caused two major evacuations for Labrador-Churchill Falls Complex. Climate change is worsening the situation by increasing forest fire frequency and intensity and creates potential for early 2025 fire activity due to predicted low precipitation amounts. Beyond the risk of wildfires, this industry also struggles from the fundamental nature of the resource base which has high portion of small diameter trees unsuitable for lumber production; limited market outlets available for pulpwood and sawmill residue; and limited opportunities for market diversification options. There is a need to assess viable diversification options in the context of local market demand for wood and/or energy products.

Financial Information

Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture			
Statement (Unaudited) of Expenditures and Related Revenue *			
Summary for the Year Ended March 31, 2025*	ESTIMATES		
	Original	Amended	Actual
	75,754,500	54,227,500	46,616,242
EXECUTIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES			
MINISTER'S OFFICE			
Minister's Office	258,300	308,500	303,265
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION			
Executive Support	1,427,200	1,415,800	1,333,879
Policy, Planning and Administration	1,841,900	1,901,900	1,958,743
Revenue – Provincial (Policy, Planning and Administration)	(2,000)	(1,401,700)	(1,575,311)
Administrative Support	1,447,000	2,365,100	3,021,063
Executive and Support Services Subtotal	4,972,400	4,589,600	5,041,639
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE			
FISHERIES PROGRAMS			
Marketing and Development	4,441,100	1,441,100	1,474,427
Licensing and Quality Assurance	2,311,400	1,883,500	1,979,264
Revenue – Federal (Licensing and Quality Assurance)	-	-	(30,000)
Atlantic Fisheries Fund	4,500,000	3,844,800	4,344,119
Revenue – Federal (Atlantic Fisheries Fund)	-	(948,100)	(948,008)
Sustainable Fisheries Resources and Oceans Policy	694,900	694,900	576,717
Coordination and Support Services	100	100	-
AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT			
Aquaculture Development and	1,510,100	1,168,100	959,441
Revenue – Provincial (Aquaculture Development and Management)	(10,000)	(18,000)	(17,985)
Aquaculture Capital Equity Investment	100	100	-
Revenue – Provincial (Aquaculture Capital Equity Investment)	-	(105,200)	(105,176)
AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH			
Aquatic Animal Health	2,056,100	2,526,100	2,548,761

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Fisheries and Aquaculture Subtotal	15,503,800	10,487,400	10,781,560
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE			
FOREST MANAGEMENT			
Administration and Program Planning	3,851,200	3,429,500	3,061,900
Operations and Implementation	6,951,000	7,611,000	7,884,030
Silviculture Development	3,269,000	2,982,700	3,006,195
Resource Roads Construction	3,711,600	3,711,600	3,581,663
FOREST PROTECTION			
Insect Control	1,081,700	976,000	962,472
Revenue – Provincial (Insect Control)	-	-	(3,194)
Fire Suppression and Communications	4,449,800	11,889,500	10,986,315
Revenue – Federal (Fire Suppression and Communications)	(503,300)	(1,818,600)	(1,818,438)
Revenue – Provincial (Fire Suppression and Communications)	-	-	(5,593)
WILDLIFE			
Wildlife Operations	5,053,600	5,053,600	5,079,317
Revenue – Provincial (Wildlife Operations)	-	-	(45,575)
Cooperative Wildlife Projects	1,050,600	1,049,700	949,838
Revenue – Federal (Cooperative Wildlife Projects)	(622,000)	(622,000)	(562,304)
Revenue – Provincial (Cooperative Wildlife Projects)	(287,000)	(287,000)	89,096
ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE			
Compliance	1,203,200	988,200	957,551
Revenue – Provincial (Compliance)	-	-	(922)
Enforcement	7,489,400	7,333,300	7,025,673
Forestry and Wildlife Subtotal	36,698,800	42,297,500	41,148,024
AGRICULTURE AND LANDS			
LAND MANAGEMENT			
Land Management	2,171,400	2,015,900	1,570,652
Revenue – Provincial (Land Management)	(8,608,000)	(27,853,900)	(32,160,393)
Land Development	1,301,900	1,301,900	765,878
AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION AND RESEARCH			
Agriculture Production and Research	6,297,900	5,684,400	5,006,936
Revenue – Provincial (Agriculture Production and Research)	(104,500)	(104,500)	(38,529)

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Marketing Board	236,500	236,500	205,520
Limestone Sales	431,800	126,200	124,253
Revenue – Provincial (Limestone sales)	(147,500)	(39,500)	(39,418)
AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT			
Agricultural Business Development Administration	1,209,300	1,030,200	997,419
Agriinsurance and Livestock Insurance	463,700	226,600	223,509
Revenue – Federal (Agriinsurance and Livestock Insurance)	(202,800)	(178,200)	(144,274)
Agricultural Initiatives	2,282,900	2,282,900	2,187,891
Revenue – Provincial (Agriculture Initiatives)	-	-	(498)
Canadian Agricultural Partnership	10,334,400	8,984,400	8,537,351
Revenue – Federal (Canadian Agricultural Partnership)	(5,578,300)	(4,978,300)	(5,088,861)
Revenue – Provincial (Canadian Agricultural Partnership)	-	-	(4,729)
ANIMAL HEALTH			
Administration and Support Services	4,371,500	4,371,500	4,145,316
Revenue – Provincial (Animal Health)	(1,300,000)	(1,671,800)	(1,824,833)
LANDS			
Crown Land	4,104,300	4,101,300	3,886,328
GIS and Mapping	1,365,000	1,348,700	1,326,645
Revenue – Provincial (GIS and Mapping)	(50,000)	(31,300)	(31,145)
Agriculture and Lands Subtotal	18,579,500	(3,147,000)	(10,354,981)
Department Total	75,754,500	54,227,500	46,616,242

*Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the **Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Year Ended March 31, 2025**.

