

Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee

Activity Plan

Fiscal Years 2011-2014



Chairperson's Message

Honourable Shawn Skinner
Minister of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Dear Minister:

In accordance with the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* for category 3 public bodies, I am pleased to submit the Performance-Based Activity Plan for the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee. This Activity Plan covers the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014.


The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee has a mandate to:

- a. Ensure public awareness of Government's Agricultural Land Consolidation Program;
- b. Evaluate applications for land acquisition by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador under the Agricultural Land Consolidation Program based on established guidelines and policies; and
- c. Facilitate and conclude negotiations for a land purchase and sale agreement for applications that meet program criteria.

The Committee has reviewed all Strategic Directions of the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency and has prepared this Plan to support agrifoods resource and land management to ensure future agriculture and agrifoods production. Furthermore, the Plan has been prepared in recognition of the direction to enhance agriculture through the innovation, promotion and development of agriculture sector in regards to land development and primary agriculture production.

My signature below is on behalf of the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee and is indicative of the Committee's accountability for the preparation of this Plan and the achievement of its objectives.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Walsh

Chairperson

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1. Overview

There are significant growth opportunities in the agriculture sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. Only 3% of beef and 15% of root crops consumed by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are produced here. Furthermore, the dairy industry continues to work towards self sufficiency in forages and assessing opportunities to grow grains, which requires an expanded agricultural landbase.

The availability of suitable farm land is one of the more critical challenges facing the agriculture and agrifoods industry. In order to position this industry to take advantage of the tremendous growth opportunities, farmland has to be made available. The expansion and development of the landbase will provide the root crop sector with the means to increase local production and create opportunities to increase the consumption of locally-grown goods. For the dairy sector, it will mean having access to more land for forage production.

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee administers the Agricultural Land Consolidation Program designed to provide the opportunity for non-farmer landowners and retiring farmers to sell their granted land to the provincial government. In turn, government makes this land available to existing commercial farmers, part-time farmers and new entrants who are in need of additional lands.

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee has one member from the Department of Natural Resources, one member from the Department of Transportation and Works, a representative from industry who acts as chairperson from the public at large. The current members are: Richard Carey (Department of Natural Resources); Martin Balodis (Department of Transportation and Works) and Robert Walsh (industry); Raymond Tucker (Department of Natural Resources) is the Committee's secretary, researcher/assessor who maintains the files.

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee receives operational support from the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency. Employees of the Agency perform many day to day administrative functions. The Agricultural Land Consolidation Program is currently funded by the Agency based on a \$2,100,000 annual budget.

2. Mandate

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee has a mandate to:

- (a) Ensure public awareness of Government's Agricultural Land Consolidation Program;
- (b) Evaluate applications for land acquisition by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador under the Agricultural Land Consolidation Program based on established guidelines and policies; and
- (c) Facilitate and conclude negotiations for a land purchase and sale agreement for applications that meet criteria.

3. Core Values and Guiding Principles

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee performs its duties within the following core values:

Integrity - Each individual will be honest, dependable, fair, credible and trustworthy. They will openly acknowledge mistakes, seek to correct them and learn from them.

Respect and Professionalism - Each individual will apply program guidelines and policies equitably to stakeholders. They will serve our client groups to the fullest extent possible.

Timeliness - Each individual will meet specified deadlines in accordance with priorities and follow through on their commitments.

Collaboration - Each individual will seek the opinions and ideas of others in the application of supporting legislation and policies.

Innovation - Each individual will demonstrate initiative and flexibility in responding to challenges and change.

4. Primary Clients

The clients of the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee are members of the public and organizations who wish to sell or relinquish arable land to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for agricultural purposes.

5. Vision

The vision of the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee is of a Province that realizes the full benefit from the sustainable development of its natural resources.

6. Mission

The mission statement is the priority focus area of a public body over its planning cycle. It represents the key longer term result that the public body and the responsible minister will work towards to achieve a component of government's strategic directions. The statement also identifies the measures and indicators that will assist a public body and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

To prepare the mission of the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee, the Committee considered that the province has many opportunities for the expansion of agricultural and agrifoods production. The consolidation of agricultural land will help achieve adequate economies of scale in operation needed to sustain current operations and make agricultural production more feasible for new entrants. Concurrently, the acquisition of granted land and subsequent allocation as Agricultural Crown Land Leases, ensures the landbase will be protected from conflicting developments. Thereby, the Committee contributes to the Strategic Directions of the Minister responsible for the Department of Natural Resources by strengthening and sustaining the agriculture resource through the purchase of agricultural properties for allocation to the Province's farmers.

Mission: By March 31, 2017, the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee will have contributed to the preservation and expansion of land for agricultural purposes.

Measure: Contributed to the preservation and expansion of agricultural land

Indicators:

- Properties purchased and made available for allocation as Agricultural Crown Land Leases
- Supported provincial agricultural zoning policies

7. Objectives

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee facilitates purchases of land by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for lease to farmers based on guidelines for the Agricultural Land Consolidation Program. The process involves a periodic public notice to submit an application for agriculture land purchase. Applications are reviewed by the Committee to determine whether the land is suitable for agricultural purposes and is free of zoning issues. Applicants wishing to sell suitable land are invited to commence negotiations for a purchase and sale agreement. A number of third parties are involved in the process, such as land appraisers, land surveyors and lawyers. An environmental assessment may be required.

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee considered the Strategic Directions of the Minister of Natural Resources to work toward enhance resource management to ensure future agriculture and agrifoods production. See Appendix A for further details. The following area has been identified as the key priority of the Committee for the three year period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014. The objective below applies to each year covered by this plan and will be reported on in relevant annual reports.

Issue: Agricultural Land Consolidation

Objective: The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee will have administered the Agricultural Land Consolidation Program in an effort to preserve and / or increase the province's agricultural landbase.

Measure: Administered program

Indicators:

- Completed communication activities regarding the Agricultural Land Consolidation Program
- Assessed applications and prioritized purchase opportunities
- Carried out negotiations for land purchase(s)

8. Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communiqués. 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. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee considered the Strategic Directions of the Minister responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency in preparation of its April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014 Activity Plan.

The following excerpt from the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency's Strategic Plan 2011-14 is relevant to the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee in the development of its Activity Plan. For a full list of the Strategic Directions of the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency, please contact the Agency.

1. Title: Forestry, Agriculture and Agrifoods Resource Sustainability

Outcome: Enhanced resource management to maintain a globally competitive and sustainable forest industry and to ensure future agriculture and agrifoods production.

This outcome supports the policy direction of Government and requires systemic intervention by the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee in the following areas:

Strategic Direction Component (Focus Area)	This direction is ...	
	addressed in the entity's Activity Plan	not applicable
Agrifoods Resource Management	√	
Land Management	√	
Research and Development		√
Human Resource Development		√
Resource/Product Safety		√
Forest Resource Management		√
Industry Support to Strengthen Global Competitiveness		√
Environmental Management System		√

2. Title: Forestry, Agriculture and Agrifoods Innovation, Promotion and Development

Outcome: Enhanced forestry, agriculture and agrifoods sector's innovation promotion and development.

This outcome supports the policy direction of Government and requires systemic intervention by the Agricultural Land Consolidation Review Committee in the following areas:

Strategic Direction Component (Focus Area)	This direction is ...	
	addressed in the entity's Activity Plan	not applicable
Land Development	√	
Agriculture Primary Production	√	
Agrifoods Secondary Processing		√
Innovative Research and Development		√
Agribusiness Development		√
Product Diversification		√
Comprehensive Marketing Strategy		√
Promotion and Education		√