

greenhouse



Highlights

- Many greenhouses had serious structural damage due to the unusually high snowfall levels in February and March, 2015.
- All growers faced increased costs associated with snow load removal from greenhouse.
- Despite a delayed spring, many garden centers in the province have reported good sales and turnover of plant material for the 2015 season.

Sector Overview

The ornamental greenhouse sector is worth about \$5.7M annually in Nova Scotia and greenhouse vegetables production is estimated to be worth approximately \$4.8M annually.

Record snowfall amounts this winter proved to be very challenging for all greenhouse operations in the province. Many growers were heating houses earlier in the season in an effort to melt snow and ice build-up on their greenhouses resulting in higher fuel bills. All growers faced an increased cost in snow removal in an effort to prevent structural damage. And in a number of cases across the province, despite extra efforts to reduce snow load, some operations lost greenhouses. One operation in Falmouth lost over 4 acres of greenhouse space which was not able to be replaced in time for the growing season.

Despite a cool, wet, and delayed start to spring, many greenhouse and garden center operators reported a good year for sales. There may have been less product available on the market due to the loss of some production space, but growers have commented that many people were just anxious to be outside and put the winter of 2015 behind them. It was also felt that because there was so much press coverage regarding the losses faced by some greenhouse operations that people were either curious about their local greenhouses or wanting to help out in some way.

Major Initiatives

Greenhouse NS (GNS) has been working on a 'buy local' strategy and trying to promote locally run greenhouses for gardening needs and local produce that is grown close to home. They worked with Perennia on a Social Media campaign to encourage people to support local greenhouses and announce events that were being held by GNS members.

A Look Toward 2016

Greenhouse Nova Scotia are working with growers and officials at the Department of Agriculture to determine whether or not the damage incurred across the province will qualify for an Agri-Recovery claim. Perennia assisted GNS with gathering data for a potential claim. While growers can purchase insurance against structural damage in

most cases it is cost prohibitive to do so. If there is no assistance available, those that have lost significant growing space are undecided if they will rebuild which will be a loss to our NS greenhouse industry.

Greenhouse Nova Scotia together with Perennia will offer an educational program at their AGM on February 17th, 2016. Topics will include greenhouse heating systems, energy efficiency/recovery, and they have planned a discussion around insurance for greenhouse structures with a representative from the insurance industry.

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