

MEDIA RELEASE

Funding program helps farmers tackle climate change and improve soil health

July 15, 2022 (for immediate release)

A new \$7 million fund will help farms in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador mitigate the impacts of climate change on the environment. Farms can apply for up to \$75,000 through the On-Farm Climate Action Fund being delivered by Perennia, Nova Scotia's food sector development agency.

"The program puts funds into the hands of farmers to help them adopt and implement farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon in the soil," said Charles Keddy, Chair of Perennia's Board of Directors and owner of C.O. Keddy Farms that produces strawberry plants and sweet potatoes outside Kentville.

Nova Scotia farmer Will Spurr, of Spurr Brothers Farm in Melvern Square, hopes the funding program will motivate more farmers to adopt practices like cover cropping, which has been a valuable part of his farm business.

"Cover cropping solved a significant problem that would normally be quite expensive, if not impossible, to solve," says Spurr. "We were losing half of our carrot crop due to soil-borne pests and planting the right cover crop not only improved our soil health, but also helped address the pest problem."

Cover cropping is the practice of planting a crop specifically to protect or enhance the soil. Soils left bare, for example before a cash crop is planted or after it is harvested, can be easily eroded or degraded. Cover crops not only protect the soil against this they can help manage pests and build soil organic matter – key to maintaining healthy and resilient soil.

When farmers make improvements in their soil organic matter, they also remove carbon from the atmosphere and sequester it in the soil. For every acre planted in cover crops, approximately half a metric ton of carbon is sequestered per year – that's the weight of a grand piano.

That can go a long way toward reaching Canada's goal to reach net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. While Canada's agriculture sector currently accounts for 10 percent of Canada's GHG emissions, there are great opportunities to implement best management practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon.

Farmers adopting cover cropping, rotational grazing, or improving nitrogen can get reimbursed for up to 75 per cent of eligible costs associated with adopting the new practices. The program also supports education and training for farmers and agronomists.

The first intake of applications for project funding under the program is open until July 31. For more information about the On-Farm Climate Action Fund in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador, visit

<https://ofcaf.perennia.ca>

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ABOUT PERENNIA

Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. is a provincial development agency with the mission to support growth, transformation and economic development in Nova Scotia's agriculture, seafood, cannabis and food and beverage sectors.

ABOUT THE ON-FARM CLIMATE ACTION FUND

On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) is an initiative to help farmers improve soil health, protect soil from erosion, and tackle climate change by adopting beneficial management practices that store carbon and reduce greenhouse gases. The program offers funding to help farmers implement nitrogen management, cover cropping, and rotational grazing practices. In addition, the OFCAF program supports professional training for farmers, agronomists, and certified crop advisers.

Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Climate Solutions – On-Farm Climate Action Fund.

High resolution photos owned by Perennia of cover crops in Nova Scotia are available

For broadcast:

Farmers who help tackle climate change can now get as much as \$75,000 per farm through a new On-Farm Climate Action Fund delivered by Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. The Nova Scotia food sector development agency was selected by the Canadian government to administer the fund to farmers in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Over the next two years, Perennia will spend close to \$7 million, with the bulk of that money going directly to farmers who adopt rotational grazing, cover cropping, or improved fertilizing practices. Farmers can get reimbursed for up to 75 per cent of eligible costs associated with adopting the new practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon. The program also supports education and training for farmers and agronomists.

Applications are now open for the program, which ends March 31, 2024. For more information about the On-Farm Climate Action Fund in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador, visit ofcaf.perennia.ca