

ATLANTIC AGROLOGY NETWORK NEWSLETTER



COUNCIL UPDATES

In This Issue:

- Council Updates

NBIA, NLIA, NSIA & PEIIA

- Job Postings

NBIA, NLIA, NSIA & PEIIA

- Trending Topic

PEIIA

NBIA - nbia@nsagrologists.nb.ca

As we move into 2022, the NB Institute of Agrologists would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

2021 was another interesting year with many challenges. The pandemic continued and forced us to continue to meet virtually and expand and update our procedures to include the new reality.

Congratulations to our award winners - Hanscome Group of Companies (Agricultural Leadership), Venessa Allain, Agr. (Agricultural Initiative), Kevin McCully, P.Ag. and Gerald Chevrier, P.Ag. (Distinguished Services to NB Agriculture) and Micheal Carr/Jemseg River Farm (Agricultural Environmental Stewardship).

Honorary Lifetime Membership Certificates were issued to George Maicher, P.Ag., William P. Lunnie, P.Ag., Ralph E. McQueen, P.Ag. and Paul Jensen, P.Ag. Unfortunately, online award presentations just do not have the same impact as in person events. We hope to be able to soon return to in person events.

In 2021, NBIA had 180 members. Two A.Ag.s passed the General Exam in December, on their journey to becoming P.Ag.s and three long time members of NBIA passed away

in 2021. Our sympathies to their friends and family.

In 2021, we updated the NBIA Manual and Exam and looking forward to hosting more PD sessions in 2022.

May 2022 be a year filled with good health, happiness, and great growing conditions.

Susannah Banks, P.Ag.
President

NLIA – NLAgrologists@gmail.com

To cap off the efforts of 2021, the NLIA can celebrate the delivery of a professional development session. The session was offered to our members and hosted virtually. The guest speaker for this session was Dr. Alister Bath, a Professor at Memorial University. Alister provided valuable insight into how consensus building with stakeholder groups can benefit of economic social and environmental sustainability.

The NLIA in the fall months participated in meetings with ACC and we look forward to contributing to future developments.

We look forward to 2022 and plan to build on the achievements of 2021.

Richard Tingskou, P.Ag.
President

NSIA – info@nsagrologists.ca

NSIA held our Semi-Annual Meeting in November 2021, as a hybrid meeting, allowing both in-person and virtual opportunities to members, due to COVID-19 Public Health restrictions in place at the time.

We are eagerly looking ahead to the NSIA Annual General Meeting this April, as well the Honours and Awards banquet, which can hopefully occur in-person this year as a celebration of well-deserved nominees for their agricultural contributions. We encourage members to recognize and nominate their fellow Agrologists, individuals working within the industry and farms, with all nominations closing mid-March.

NSIA membership remains strong for another year, with 160 Professional Agrologists, 16 Articling Agrologists, 2 Associate Members and 50 Retired Members.

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year and all the best in 2022.

Maxine MacLean, P.Ag.
President

PEIIA – info@peiia.ca

In my last PEIIA update, I struck a decidedly optimistic tone after the excellent growing and harvesting seasons and the reports of high yields. Unfortunately, this optimism has been dashed by the recent closure of the US to potatoes from PEI. There is a plethora of startling statistics to represent what this trade means to the PEI economy: \$240 million paid directly in wages, \$500 million to the provincial GDP and over 5000 jobs created by the potato sector on PEI (Visit: <https://bit.ly/3Fm88Cy> for a complete list). As professional advisors to the agriculture industry on PEI, many, if not all of our Institute membership is affected to some degree by this closure.

Farming is a tenuous business at best and upheavals like weather, pandemics and trade disputes can leave people feeling helpless and out of control. It is important to continually remind producers that they are not alone and help is available if they are feeling overwhelmed. As ag professionals, we encourage anyone to reach out to the resources available to keep healthy during this very stressful time. The Farmer Assistance Program is an initiative of the Provincial Department of Agriculture & Land to offer confidential counselling services to farmers. More information at: <https://bit.ly/3rcA1b4>

The PEIIA Council continues to hold regular monthly meetings. Our October and November meetings involved 2022 budget preparations and new initiatives to be undertaken by the Council on behalf of members in the coming year. The budget for the coming year is presented at the semi-annual meeting.

On December 6th, 2021, the PEIIA held its Semi-Annual Meeting as a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting at the Emerald Community Centre in Emerald, PEI. The Semi-Annual Meeting is an opportunity for members to review the expenditures of the Institute, discuss any new initiatives, and to vote on the coming years' budget.

The Semi-Annual and Annual General Meeting are also opportunities to welcome new members into the Institute and present those members with framed copies of their membership certificates. This tradition serves as an introduction of the new entrant to fellow Institute members. During the recent Semi-Annual Meeting, four new members were formally welcomed into the PEIIA.

Gwen Corrigan Vessey, P.Ag.
President



JOB POSTINGS

NBIA:

Please frequently check [NB Jobs](#) for updates.

NLIA:

Please keep checking the [Job Board](#) for new employment opportunities.

NSIA:

[Program Coordinator \(Term\) – Extended Learning, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture](#)

[Program Manager – Extended Learning, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture](#)

Please routinely the [Job Postings page](#) on our website. The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) also has an [online Job Board](#) for agriculture related jobs in the province.

PEIIA:

[Relationship Management Associate – Farm Credit Canada](#)

Please frequently check the [Careers page](#) on our website for updates.



Agriologists Agronomes Canada (AAC):

Job postings nationwide can be found on the [AAC Employment Opportunities webpage](#).



This current, hot topic within the agriculture industry will alternate between the four provinces each edition.

Testing the Waters – A short history of the 19-Year Moratorium on High-Capacity Wells for Agricultural Irrigation on PEI, 2002-2021

Gwen Corrigan Vessey, P.Ag.

With the Introduction of the new PEI Water Act in the summer of 2021, the Hon. Steven Myers, the current Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action for PEI, has effectively declared the 19 year long moratorium on high-capacity wells for agricultural irrigation to be over.

In 2001 the Island experienced a serious drought that reduced potato yields by as much as 35% in the central part of the province. Irrigation systems were already becoming popular among growers to counter the mid-season dry periods that frequently occur in PEI, but after the 2001 season-long drought, interest increased dramatically. By 2002, there were over 50 permit applications for high-capacity wells for agricultural irrigation. A high capacity well is described by the PEI Department of Environment as a well supporting pumping rates higher than 345 m³/day or 50 imperial gallons per minute.

The increase in permit applications for these high-capacity wells raised concerns from environmental groups and the general public, who were worried about the potential impacts on ground and surface water resources more widespread use of large irrigation systems might have. Much of this concern stems from the fact that 100% of the Island's drinking water is sourced from groundwater extraction. As the opposition grew louder, the Minister of Environment instituted a one-year moratorium on the drilling of high-capacity wells specifically for agricultural irrigation in starting in 2002. The move was intended to allow some time until the impacts of high-capacity wells could be carefully studied. Once that was done and all the data had been collected, a science-based path forward would occur. A comprehensive hydrological study was promptly initiated. However, as time went on, the issue became politicized and successive governments shied away from making decisions on lifting the moratorium. Meanwhile, the concerns around climate change and the need for irrigation have only increased and other related issues such as surface water quality, soil health, pesticides use, and fish kills have been folded into the discussions.

Over the past 19 years, the high-capacity well debate has raised very legitimate issues, but also its fair share of myths and misinformation. The Government of PEI has created a website called "On the Level" (<https://www.onthelevelpei.ca/>) dedicated to informing the public about the amount of study and monitoring that is in place for water extraction. It also features reports on the feedback from the public consultation process and general information on water. The information presented on the website points to sufficient groundwater for available for supplemental irrigation. According to the website, less than 2% of PEI's annual water recharge is actually used while 33% of the recharge is safely available for use with 65% being reserved to ensure healthy environmental flows.

Though an impressive amount of research into the groundwater resource has already occurred, the current Department of Environment is funding another comprehensive study headed by the Canadian Rivers Institute. The results are meant to provide more insight into the best ways to balance the needs of water users with protection of Island waterways, but aren't expected for at least six years.

It is important to note the high-capacity well moratorium applied only to wells drilled for agricultural irrigation. Other users; golf courses, municipalities, food and aquaculture processing plants, etc. continued to apply and receive permits for drilling high-capacity wells over the past 19 years. The current Minister of Environment Energy and Climate Action has assured the public that the regulations accompanying the new PEI Water Act will protect the water resources while providing a measure of fairness and equity for all users.



Potato Irrigation, Long River
(Photo: PEI Government, Flickr)