



PEOPLE  
INNOVATION  
CAPITAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AGILITY

# New Brunswick Growth Opportunity

Attracting New Farmers



**New Brunswick Growth Opportunity:  
Attracting New Farmers**

Province of New Brunswick  
PO 6000, Fredericton NB E3B 5H1 Canada

ISBN 978-1-4605-1718-5 (PDF: English)

10913

# Message from the Minister

Agriculture is a part of our history and a mainstay of the New Brunswick economy. As the value of New Brunswick agriculture exports continue to rise, we have an opportunity to capitalize on the 21st century agriculture industry to create jobs and grow revenue. Today, New Brunswick's farms and processors generate more than \$570 million in farm cash receipts and more than \$1 billion in processed agri-food products every year.

A main focus of the New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan involves targeting our economic development efforts in areas where there is real potential for growth. New Brunswick has many assets and attributes that set our province apart from the competition and one of these opportunities involves new farmers investing in our agriculture sector. In addition to working with the established farming industry, the Economic Growth Plan has identified attracting new farmers as a priority, and an opportunity for economic growth, and is looking forward to working with farmers, and the private and public sectors to revitalize, innovate and grow the province's agriculture economy.

New Brunswick is one of the world's largest blueberry, potato and frozen food producers and exporters, establishing the province as an economic powerhouse in agricultural exports and enabling opportunities for new farmers to enter the industry here at home with an abundance of natural resources and competitive land prices.

The Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries is leading this opportunity with the support of the Departments of Energy and Resource Development, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Environment and Local Government as well as Opportunities New Brunswick. The opportunity also involves a number of external stakeholders, industry associations, and rural communities involved in developing agriculture opportunities based on local assets.

Hon. Rick Doucet  
Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries  
Minister of Energy and Resource Development



# The New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan

## Focusing our economic development efforts

The New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan establishes the framework and role for the provincial government to help bring the economy back to a solid rate of growth. A growing economy is needed to provide the fiscal foundation that will ensure the province remains a great place to live and work.

The Economic Growth Plan is a directional plan outlining how government – across all of its departments, agencies and related organizations - will mobilize to ensure there is a co-ordinated, complementary effort to improve New Brunswick's economy and establish a strong foundation for the future. The plan is the outcome of valuable consultation with hundreds of community and business leaders across the province.

The New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan is based on five key focus areas:

- **PEOPLE** - We will grow our workforce by providing more targeted training and skills alignment efforts; and by significantly expanding the number of new and returning New Brunswickers building their careers in the province.
- **INNOVATION** - We will foster an innovative economy by investing more in research and development, supporting high growth potential entrepreneurs and by transforming government through new and innovative technologies.
- **CAPITAL** - We will boost private-sector investment by strengthening our business climate and addressing key challenges that are holding back growth.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE** - We will expand investment into economic infrastructure that ensures industries continue to invest here and talent from around the world will come to call our province home.
- **AGILITY** - We will increase the speed at which government interacts with the business community and we will strive to build a stronger partnership with industries to move the province ahead within a sustainable fiscal framework.

## Pursuing Growth Opportunities

The New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan is focused on leveraging key industries, assets and attributes to create a strong value proposition for business investment. The global competition for business investment and talent has never been more pronounced and New Brunswick needs to focus its efforts to be able to compete and win.

Government will start by using the subject-matter experts in departments and working with the private sector and community-based partners to uncover potential opportunities. A growth opportunity is one that will lead to incremental business investment and jobs, leading to a sustained boost in economic activity (GDP) and tax revenue. Opportunities will be assessed based on:

1. the scope and scale of the opportunity (we need to boost the economy);
2. the time to impact (we need growth in the short term to stimulate the economy);
3. a clearly defined and relevant role for government and the resources required (not all opportunities for business investment require government involvement – some may require just a nudge); and
4. a defined return on taxpayer investment (we need to show that public investment in opportunities will increase tax revenues).

## Growth Opportunity: Attracting New Farmers

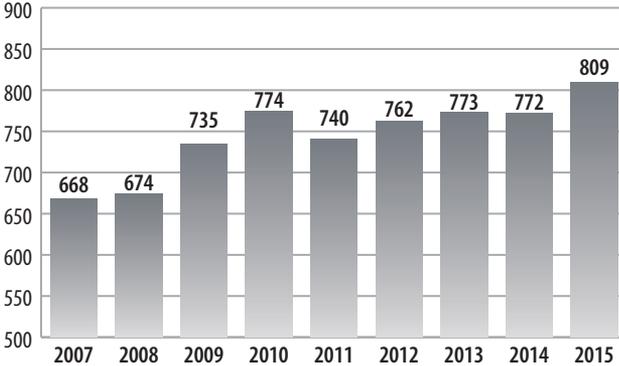
Agriculture and farming is a major contributor to the economy, with 13, 000 New Brunswickers employed in agriculture and farming across the province, generating \$800 million in food production each year.

The Economic Growth Plan for attracting new farmers aims to recruit farmers from within the province, across the country and from around the world in order to continue our province's success and momentum in agriculture and food production.

A strong agriculture sector has traditionally been anchored in generations of family farmers, however, in recent years, the pipeline for new farmers has declined, while the total GDP contribution for crop, animal and food production has increased, creating the need for new farmers in the province, and opportunities for further economic growth.

As the value of New Brunswick agriculture exports continues to rise, and the price of land in New Brunswick remains competitive, the ability to capitalize on the 21st century agriculture industry, whether locally or globally, for small and large scale production alike, is a multifaceted opportunity for employment in New Brunswick, and for growing revenues and spin-off industries.

**Figure 1: GDP contribution from agriculture and food processing in New Brunswick\***



Excluding seafood preparation and packaging. Source: Statistics Canada.

The New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan for New Farmers will work in conjunction with the Local Food and Beverages Strategy and with industry partners to focus on targets for local products, import reduction and rural revitalization, in order to create a strong and sustainable agriculture ecosystem.

The potential for continued growth in these sectors is unquestionable, and will play a vital role in helping to move New Brunswick forward. We remain committed to working with our sector partners and stakeholders to ensure a sustainable, healthy future. A variety of actions under the five pillars of the Economic Growth Plan have been identified to help us work together and create the conditions necessary for a sustainable and healthy future for our province today and for generations to come.

### **People – Strengthen the Workforce**

- Review financial and mentoring programs meant to welcome and support new and existing businesses.
- Engage university and post-secondary community with small-scale farming opportunities; create opportunity for small business and startup experiences for students.
- Create opportunities for k-12 students to learn and explore the industry in their jurisdiction, as well as family oriented activities and events.

## **Innovation**

- Research and innovate opportunities for New Brunswickers to explore urban and traditional farming.
- Create liaison opportunities for the business community to engage with those involved at all stages and scales of farming.
- Promote via social and traditional media the health benefits associated with New Brunswick specific crops, for example: blueberries, potatoes, maple sugar over cane sugar etc.
- Implement a tracking data system to manage all transactions and to monitor the number of inquiries and the number of new opportunities established and new investments.
- Develop tools to support the attraction of new farmers including a map to define the suitability of land for various crops.

## **Capital – more private investment**

- Explore and promote opportunities for private investment regarding the indirect services and economic benefits resulting from industry.

## **Investing in strategic infrastructure**

- Ensure appropriate investment in industry technologies.
- Promote New Brunswick's strategic location and transportation infrastructure (rail, road, ports) as a key competitive advantage.
- Investigate red tape barriers to businesses and seek out bottlenecks in distribution chains.

## **Foster agility and nimbleness in the public sector and across the economy**

- Focus on current centres for agricultural production to identify under-utilized or abandoned farmland that can be brought back into production.