

FarmWorks Annual Report April 26th 2026

FOOD GROWS HERE!



Office: 70 Eden Row, Greenwich, NS, B4P 2R2

Contact: lbest@ns.sympatico.ca

Phone: 902-542-3442, 902-670-3660

Annual General Meeting 2 PM, April 26th, 2026
The Station Food Hub, 1989 Wentworth Road, Windsor
Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82070030963>



Contents

Chair’s Report 1

Executive Director’s Report 2

FarmWorks Community Economic Development Investment Fund 3

Investments..... 5

Lending 5

Lending Procedures 6

Financial Information..... 7

CEDIF Outcomes..... 8

Field to Fork to Future..... 9

Chair’s Report

To Shareholders and Clients of FarmWorks Investment Co-operative:

Another year has flown by, and we are blessed to dwell in this corner of the world we call Nova Scotia. We have witnessed severe weather events here in Nova Scotia and throughout the world, continued animosity and strife in Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Africa. We see the effects of unilateral trade tariffs and will experience these for at least the short-term future. I like to think of my glass as being half-full versus half-empty. I like to focus on future potential versus the negatives that we cannot control. I hope that you will join me and the rest of the FarmWorks Board of Directors, as we work to devise solutions to the challenges that we are facing: 1) Timely preparation and approval of the FarmWorks annual share offering; 2) We need to work with our neighbours, our friends, and the general populace of Nova Scotia to reinforce the importance of increasing local food production and processing, so we are less affected by global events; 3) We need to co-operate with government and non-government organizations to support and finance an increased level of local food production and processing; 4) We need to take steps to ensure our current and future sustainability, as an organization that supports the growth of local food production and processing; 5) Recognition of the value of our shareholders’ investments in FarmWorks, and adoption of a measure to reward them beyond the 15 year CEDIF program.

Our ability to meet these challenges will determine our effectiveness in the future. The current level of local food production and food processing in Nova Scotia is only a small percentage of what it was sixty years ago. If we do nothing different in the future, the current level of local food production will continue to decline, and we will become totally reliant on imported food.

There are some very real impediments that need to be faced and overcome, some of which are listed below: 1) The ability of a farmer to make a reasonable living to support his/her family, without having to take a day job to pay some recurring bills; 2) Most farms are in rural areas and there is a logistical challenge to make local food available in urban areas; 3) Rationalization of government standards and inspection processes, which if not applied in a reasonable manner can impose large financial burdens on a new or existing struggling enterprise; 4) Exposure of school-age children to locally grown food, and the process of farming, so that they may understand some of the potential

opportunities that can exist in their backyard, instead of expensive trips to other communities, provinces, countries, or continents ; 5) The retail and financial marketing industry that would have one believe that you should be able to have all of your hopes and dreams realized today, and pay for it over time, instead of living within your current financial means and saving for future goals; 6) The social financial support systems that penalize recipients for accepting part-time or seasonable employment, instead of encouraging them to strive for gainful employment and supporting them to be financially independent.

We can make a difference in our communities, our province, and our country. However, we should not rely on the government of the day to do all of the work. If we build these changes from the bottom-up, and make them part of our lives, there is a good chance that they will continue well into the future. I encourage each of you to accept the challenge to do what you can to change these and other conditions, which will help to support the local food initiative.

Sincerely,
Charlie

DIRECTORS 2025	
Charles MacLean – North Sydney	Chair
Barb Boates-Sweet – Halifax	Vice-chair
Robin MacAdam - Halifax	Secretary
Avila Coutinho – Windsor	Treasurer
Linda Best – Greenwich	Executive Director
Danny Martin - Dartmouth	Director
Hana Nelson – Big Island	Director
Lindsay Reid – Kentville	Director
Hélène Branch – Wentzell Lake	Director
Stephen Read – Sydney	Director
Jean Kelly – Wolfville	Director
Chris Payne – Halifax	Independent Director
John Wray - Woodville	Independent Director

Executive Director’s Report

Dear Shareholders and Clients,

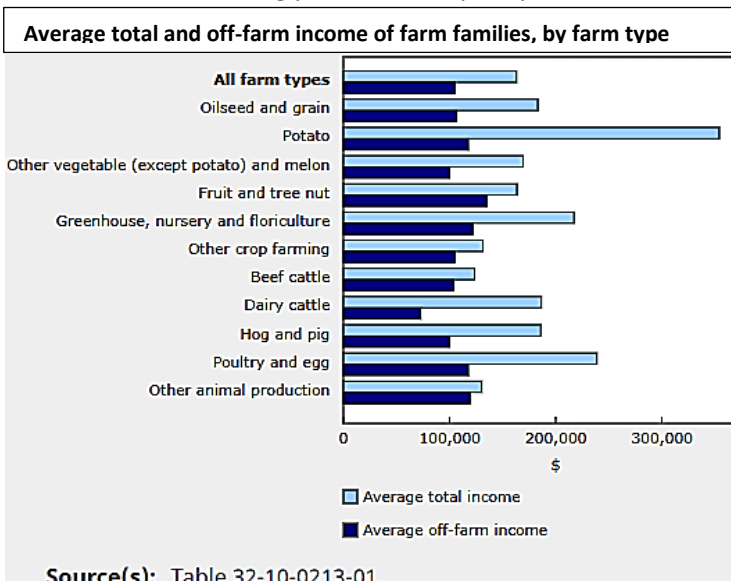
Our world is less food secure, locally and globally, than it was when I was younger, which is a huge problem, including here in Nova Scotia. It is crucial that we have *Healthy Farms and Healthy Food* because our quality of life – our lives and our livelihood - depend on what we eat. Understanding the challenges can help provide solutions.

We must all - funders, farmers, regulators, processors, retailers, chefs - work together to safeguard the environment and the people who grow, harvest and process food, and everyone who eats. FarmWorks’ Mission is to *promote, and provide, strategic and responsible community investment in food production and distribution in order to help increase access to a sustainable local food supply for all Nova Scotians.*

For our economic and social wellbeing, food production in NS is critical to partially offset the flood of long-distance, often highly processed food that doesn’t pay much in the way of local dues. More than 85% of the food consumed in NS crosses multiple borders, drains capital out of the province and has led to shrinking production capacity.

Statistics Canada reports that in Nova Scotia from 2016 to 2021 total farm area decreased by 20% from 915,657 to 725,738 acres and the number of farms decreased by the same percentage to 2,741. In 2020, poultry and egg production accounted for over a quarter (\$188 million) of farm operating revenues, followed by dairy and milk (\$178 million) and fruit and tree nut (\$105 million) farms. These sectors accounted for 65% of total NS farm income.

This chart shows that, across Canada, off farm income provides more than half of farm family income in almost every sector. Wages, salaries and commissions are major sources of farm household income with 45.9% of farm households reporting this as their major source of income, and private retirement income makes up 7.4% of farm household income, reflecting an aging population



continuing to operate their farms. The average age of farm operators increased from 56.5 years in 2016 to 58.2 years in 2021 and only 8% have a farm succession plan.

Local food producers face multiple challenges finding processors, distribution and markets. Over the last 50 years most fruit and vegetable processing facilities have closed and few abattoirs remain. When required processing is unavailable, sales to large retail are unavailable, and competing with one-stop retail is difficult, thus large stores that primarily source products from other locations, including significant quantities of highly processed foods, account for about 85% of food sales.

For the last seven years [income after expenses of farmers in Nova Scotia](#) has been negative. The number of farmers and producers is decreasing. Processing capacity is limited. Farmers' markets and farm markets are looking for more vendors. Chefs are looking for local products. The amount of local food in large stores is limited. This is challenging for everyone who is working to improve outcomes in Nova Scotia. But, as The NS Federation of Agriculture [New Economic Impact Study Highlights Agriculture as a Strong and Growing Pillar of Nova Scotia's Economy](#) study indicates there are opportunities and FarmWorks is working with clients and organizations who are moving forward.

FarmWorks was established in 2011 to support people who provide good food for all. Continuing since COVID, FarmWorks' clients have faced many challenges, and as an organization working in a difficult sector, it is discouraging when regulators fail to understand how crucial our clients' and FarmWorks, work is for all Nova Scotians. We encourage everyone, in every sector, to collaborate to move the needle towards more positive outcomes.

There are 484,634 households in NS and [average annual purchases of food](#) from stores is \$7,950 indicating that \$3.8 billion is spent on food for home preparation. Average restaurant purchases are \$2,855 indicating that approximately \$1.4 billion is spent in all categories of restaurants. Thus total spent directly and indirectly is approximately \$5.2 billion. If households increased their purchase of local foods in stores and from restaurants by 10% that could add about \$50 million to local food producers' income, helping to ensure that we don't lose more producers.

We must work together to revitalize Nova Scotia's agriculture and food sectors. Significantly increasing local production of good food is crucial for us to meet health, security of food supply, social, economic and environmental challenges. Provision of healthy food for all citizens requires continuing investment in people and the means of production, distribution, marketing and integration of local supply chains. Interest in local food is increasing but attracting new and perhaps younger participants depends on the availability of funds and resources and expertise. Food producers have to multi-task – they wear many hats – and many of them need help with some tasks to achieve sustainable outcomes.

FarmWorks Directors are thankful for all the Shareholders who support our clients so we can keep pushing that needle in the right direction. We are glad to collaborate with other organizations and departments that are helping farmers and other food entrepreneurs find funds and technical, business, and development resources and mentoring. But we need more help. Please ask for local when you shop, talk about farming, and when you have a chance, thank the people who are putting healthy local food on our tables.

Linda Best

FARMWORKS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT FUND

VISION *Healthy Farms, Healthy Food*

MISSION *Promote, and provide, strategic and responsible community investment in food production and distribution in order to help increase access to a sustainable local food supply for all Nova Scotians*

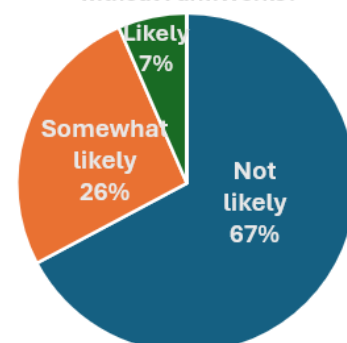
STRATEGIC GOALS

- Promote investing locally and buying local food to gain health, economic, social, environmental and other benefits that result from growing and processing food.
- Use the Community Economic Development Investment program to enable Nova Scotians to invest a significant percentage of their capital in NS agriculture and food related enterprises.

OPERATIONAL GOALS

- Develop and market an annual Community Economic Development Investment Fund.

Would business have succeeded without FarmWorks?



- Invest strategically in agricultural enterprises to increase sustainable local food production and profitability.
- Create mentoring support and help to facilitate farm and food-related innovation and diversification in partnership with government and non-government organizations.
- Monitor and evaluate other investment tools and investment opportunities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. In accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, FarmWorks Investment Co-operative Limited, a for-profit Co-operative with a Board of Directors elected by the shareholders who are residents of Nova Scotia, is:
 - a. carrying on an active business that evaluates and makes eligible investments in active Nova Scotian businesses that will increase access to a sustainable local food supply for Nova Scotians;
 - b. providing information and educating investors who are interested in supporting food producing enterprises in Nova Scotia with regard to the role of capital in business, the value of equity investments to the defined community and the rights and obligations of corporations and shareholders,
 - c. investing the capital raised, for which a tax credit pursuant to the Act has been issued, in eligible food producing businesses in Nova Scotia,
 - d. exercising ownership rights with respect to the eligible investments made by the corporation,
 - e. providing the administrative support necessary to carry on the business of the corporation, including preparation of annual reports and the holding of meetings of shareholders and the Board of Directors,
2. FarmWorks Investment Co-operative is carrying on this business for the people of Nova Scotia to increase access to a sustainable local food supply for NS,
3. FarmWorks Investment Co-operative Limited has made provision for annual general meetings of shareholders,
4. FarmWorks Investment Co-operative Limited is providing mentoring support and help to facilitate farm and food-related innovation and diversification in partnership with government and non-government organizations.
5. FarmWorks Investment Co-operative Limited monitors and evaluates other investment tools and opportunities that may be used to achieve FarmWorks and clients' goals.
6. Develop and market a Community Economic Development Investment Fund that raises a minimum of \$50,000 up to a maximum of \$2,000,000 of equity capital in each Offer, and
 - a. the equity shares are of only one class without series and have never previously been issued,
 - b. will be issued from the treasury of the corporation on being fully paid for in cash
 - c. will, immediately following their issue, be registered in the name of each shareholder that purchases them or in the name of a trustee, if the shares are held by the trustee for the benefit of a shareholder,
 - d. do not have any rights or restrictions that may be prohibited by these regulations;
7. If a share certificate is not required to be issued to each new shareholder, an investment confirmation will be issued to each new shareholder within thirty days of share registration, setting out at least the following:
 - e. the number of shares acquired, the price paid per share, the total amount paid, and the procedure for obtaining the tax credit receipt pursuant to the Act.
8. FarmWorks Investment Co-operative grants loans at 6% for five years unless otherwise decided by the Directors.
9. FarmWorks will invest the proceeds of each Offering in eligible businesses that will strive to increase their sustainable local food production and profitability by 10% per year by the third year.



FARMWORKS SHARE OFFERS

The price per share is \$100 and the minimum share purchase under each Offering is 1 share.

The number of Shares to be sold in each Offer is decided by the Directors.

Shares are fully paid, newly issued voting common shares that are non-retractable, non-redeemable for 5 years, non-convertible and not restricted in profit sharing or participation upon dissolution.

Investments can be eligible for a 35% Nova Scotia non-refundable Equity Tax Credit which may be carried forwards 7 years and backward 3 years and for RRSP tax deferral. Investments are eligible for further Equity Tax Credits of 20% and 10% at the 5 and 10 year investment anniversaries, respectively, if the CEDIF meets certain conditions.

Investing funds in FarmWorks' RRSP (through Canadian Workers Cooperative Federation) defers federal tax based on the investor's marginal tax rate. RRSP investments can gain the combined Provincial credit and Federal tax deferral and five and ten year NS tax credits.

Transferring existing RRSPs to FarmWorks gains the 35%, 20%, 10% Provincial tax credit on funds that otherwise sit outside Nova Scotia working for economies other than our own.



INVESTMENT

Shareholders' investments in FarmWorks are making a significant difference in the year-round availability of good food for Nova Scotians. Loans assist farm startups and expansions, restaurants and cafés, stores and farm markets, seed growers and cideries, brewers and distributors, and many other enterprises that are building food-related capacity in Nova Scotia. The 592 people who have purchased shares in FarmWorks can confidently say that they're helping to grow sustainable food-related businesses from field to fork to future.

Annual investments by shareholders are shown in the accompanying chart. The total amount invested has varied depending on external issues such as COVID and weather affecting Directors' ability to meet with potential shareholders. Over 45% of Shareholders have invested from two to fourteen times and only 14% of funds have been redeemed, primarily by people redeeming RRSPs at age 71.

FarmWorks worked with the NS Securities Commission to increase the total amount that could be raised from \$6 M to \$25 M and in the 15th Offer we were able to raise \$520,100 in eleven days. Lauren Vail, BDO Canada is preparing audited Financial Statements according to International Regulatory Financial Standards.

FarmWorks Directors and Clients sincerely thank the Shareholders – your confidence in Nova Scotian producers provides us with the opportunity to support outstanding business people who are providing excellent food and beverages. **As always, we request that you consider joining the Board so you can work more closely with farmers and producers in one of the most encouraging initiatives in Nova Scotia!**

	Shareholders	Amount	Average	Total
2012	102	\$ 224,200	\$ 2,163	\$ 224,200
2013	78	\$ 225,300	\$ 2,888	\$ 449,500
2014	78	\$ 271,500	\$ 3,234	\$ 721,000
2015	86	\$ 312,400	\$ 3,383	\$1,033,400
2016	105	\$ 372,300	\$ 3,442	\$1,405,700
2017	100	\$ 378,900	\$ 3,845	\$1,784,600
2018	91	\$ 444,000	\$ 4,879	\$2,228,600
2019	125	\$ 483,300	\$ 4,480	\$2,711,900
2020	103	\$ 516,700	\$ 5,016	\$3,228,600
2021	127	\$ 783,300	\$ 5,965	\$4,011,900
2022	137	\$ 622,500	\$ 4,493	\$4,634,400
2023	112	\$ 574,900	\$ 4,956	\$5,209,300
2024	100	\$ 474,000	\$ 4,740	\$5,683,300
2025	69	\$ 300,000	\$ 4,348	\$5,983,300
2026	96	\$ 520,100	\$ 5,475	\$6,503,400

LENDING

FarmWorks Directors are committed to building and maintaining the relationships that are the foundation of this organization. As mandated by CEDIF regulations, loans are unsecured and loan security requires significant due diligence and supportive relationships with clients to help insure against losses. Directors provide mentoring and, when appropriate, find advisors to help assure clients' success. Directors spend a substantial amount of time promoting clients' businesses and providing encouragement and support.

Over 25% of clients operate interconnected businesses, such as farming and processing, or processing and retail stores. Links between businesses supported by FarmWorks continue to grow, and we are often thanked for making connections, including through events like "FarmWorks Connects" and business to business introductions.

By the end of March 2026 over \$12,500,000 had been loaned to 190 businesses. Monthly repayments are now above \$90,000 and as payments are made these funds are loaned to qualified new applicants and interest income increases.

Analysis of 2024 and 2025 financial outcomes are provided in the Audited Annual Financial Statements. Overall statistics from 2012 to 2026 show that of the 190 clients, there are 97 current loans and over fourteen years 37 clients have repaid loans and continue in their original, or expanded business, and continue to be associated with FarmWorks, and 33 paid

off clients have discontinued or moved to other businesses. Circumstances including serious health issues, fires, loss of use of facilities and regulatory issues have led to closure of 19 businesses, and of those, five are bankruptcies or consumer proposals and to date 35% of the capital has been recovered. Shareholder capital protection is a key element of FarmWorks' due diligence and lending to a broad portfolio of businesses provides interest income to cover expenses and losses. Total losses declared from 2012 to 2025 amount to 4.5% of the \$12,500,000 in loans which is less than the anticipated 33% loss of interest income.

When necessary, FarmWorks defers two to four months principal and interest to help ensure the viability of clients. As described previously, with increasing costs of supplies and inputs, climate challenges, average increases in sales in some sectors, labour issues, regulations and other issues, food producers are not making sufficient profits. Directors are very concerned when any client struggles or fails, but recognizing the challenges faced by food-related businesses, we are pleased with the overarching successes of the businesses we support. FarmWorks clients are outstanding contributors to the life and economy of Nova Scotia.

LENDING PROCEDURES

Capital for Food-Related Enterprises

Businesses seeking loans send a preliminary application to FarmWorks. If the business fits with FarmWorks principles and objectives including growing and using local products, the applicant will be asked to submit a business plan and current and projected financial information and other documents to FarmWorks. Board Members will evaluate the plan, meet with the applicants and visit the site, discuss the percentage of locally produced ingredients and complete the Comprehensive Review. Loans are provided to qualifying enterprises to help them to increase production, sustainability, value-adding, marketing and related economic activity.

Borrowers repay loans within the period decided during the review at an interest rate that reflects both the unsecured nature of the loan and the patience of investors willing to accept moderate returns on investment. As repayments to FarmWorks are made, repaid funds are loaned to other qualifying enterprises.

General Lending Criteria

Applicants will have strong, experienced and ethical management with a clear and compelling vision; the skills and will to execute the business plan and grow the enterprise, and the potential to achieve a minimum of a 10% increase in production and profitability within three years. The applicants will provide all required information to FarmWorks and, when appropriate, FarmWorks will facilitate mentoring by appropriate Directors, Advisors or other specialists to help ensure the success of the enterprise.

Social Impact

The business will meet food-related needs, stimulate economic growth, provide social and environmental benefits and collaborate with others to achieve benefits for other producers and consumers. FarmWorks will provide ongoing support in the form of promotion of the benefits of eating healthy local food and investing in local enterprises.

Characteristics of loans

- No application or legal fees and there are no charges for any assistance provided by Directors Loans are unsecured and no chattel security is taken
- No payments are required for the first three months
- No interest charges for prepayment of loan balance
- Businesses submit semi-annual reports and Financial Statements

Procedure

- Preliminary Application and Confidentiality Agreement
- Presentation to Board Reviewers
- Business Plan, Financials and Projections, Personal Financial Information
- Consultations with Applicant



- Comprehensive Evaluation
- Board Decision and Disbursement

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

Three or more of the Directors review all of the information, ask questions, meet with the applicants and complete a comprehensive questionnaire prior to sending a summary of the results to the whole Board of Directors for their votes. Loan agreements are signed when funds are disbursed.

Section		Total
Character	Rank 1 to 20	
Commitment	Rank 1 to 20	
Management	Rank 1 to 25	
Business Plan – Markets	Rank 1 to 25	
Business Plan – Materials/Methods	Rank 1 to 25	
Business Plan – Financials	Rank 1 to 25	
Viability	Rank 1 to 60	
Total	1 – 200	
Less than 130 do not proceed, 130–160 reapply, greater than 160 proceed		

FINANCIAL REPORT

Bookkeeper, Chris MacQuarrie, and Administrative Assistant, Nadia Gerrits, and Linda Best, Executive Director, provide financial reports to the Directors and to the Independent Accountant, BDO Canada. The Directors oversee all expenses for travel, accounting, promotion and carrying out the due diligence required prior to disbursing loans.

In 2014 the Department of Finance reduced the amount that could be raised by a 'blind pool' CEDIF such as FarmWorks from \$25 million to \$6 million. In 2023, as FarmWorks approached the \$6 million cap, we hired a lawyer to work with the NS Securities Commission and the cap was raised to \$25 million in April 2024 with the provision that subsequent financials would be reported according to International Financial Regulatory Standards (IFRS).

Lauren Vail, BDO Canada was confirmed at the 2025 AGM as FarmWorks' independent accountant, as required by the NS Department of Finance and Securities Commission, to provide IFRS review engagements and audits as required. All Shareholdings and Financial Statements have been required to be submitted to the Nova Scotia Securities Commission and the Department of Finance twice annually. FarmWorks is able to seek the approval of Canada Revenue Agency to change the year-end from December 31 to October 31 so that year-end financial statements can be submitted for share offers, thus avoiding the necessity and cost of interim engagements.

This table shows the actual and projected amounts for the years 2016 to 2028 apart from Income Tax and the Loan Loss Provision (LLP) that are provided in the Financial Statements. Challenges associated with COVID are lingering and in 2024 and 2025 several clients faced major challenges and others had lesser challenges and we are constantly communicating with these clients. Over the years health has been an issue for a number of clients and is the case for several clients at this time. Due to such issues annual income for 2025 is less than projected, but expenses are also lower and loan losses are as expected. Total interest income from 2012 to 2025 is \$1,624,586 with total expenses of \$\$914,456 (56%) and total losses of \$424,479 (26%) which is less than the 33% expected when FarmWorks was established. The \$424,479 loss relative to \$12,500,000 in loans issued is 3.4%.

FarmWorks Loans	\$1,053,086	\$1,402,548	\$1,842,490	\$2,636,181	\$2,920,695	\$3,510,320	\$4,336,063	\$4,639,450	\$4,332,533	\$4,095,756	\$4,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,500,000
Actual and Projections	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 Proj	2027 Proj	2028 Proj
Annual Expenses	(\$45,785)	(\$28,654)	(\$61,846)	(\$57,364)	(\$39,050)	(\$49,403)	(\$80,540)	(\$169,668)	(\$165,283)	(\$143,781)	(\$190,000)	(\$220,000)	(\$270,000)
Annual Income	\$52,884	\$71,197	\$102,356	\$119,261	\$107,884	\$161,983	\$210,611	\$240,455	\$226,863	\$243,644	\$300,000	\$340,000	\$430,000
Loan Loss		(\$23,084)	(\$7,266)	(\$32,491)	(\$54,326)	(\$96,692)	(\$64,703)	(\$30,006)	(\$18,776)	(\$58,742)	(\$100,000)	(\$110,000)	(\$120,000)
Profit before LLP, Tax	\$7,099	\$19,459	\$33,244	\$29,406	\$14,508	\$15,888	\$65,368	\$30,781	\$42,304	\$41,121	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000

For information – Nova Scotia Securities Commission

The amount of capital raised by the CEDIF under each offering does not exceed \$3,000,000 and the amount of capital raised by the CEDIF and any affiliated CEDIFs, within the meaning in the Equity Tax Credit Act (Nova Scotia), under all exemptions from the prospectus requirement a) does not exceed \$6,000,000 in aggregate **unless** the CEDIF (i) files and delivers to all of its securities holders audited annual financial statements that are prepared under **International Financial Reporting Standards** for its financial year beginning on or after January 1, 2024, including any interim financial reports for that year; (ii) files an annual certificate in the prescribed wording; and (iii) obtains from each investor a signed risk acknowledgement in the prescribed form at the same time or before that investor signs an agreement to purchase a security from the CEDIF, and b) does not exceed \$25,000,000 in aggregate.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT FUND OUTCOMES

CEDIFs are currently the best mechanism to efficiently and effectively leverage local capital to help build a sustainable agricultural and food economy, help rebuild rural communities and contribute to all aspects of life in the Province. FarmWorks provides the means for citizens to invest in multiple well-managed enterprises that are scaling up or launching agricultural and food-related businesses in Nova Scotia.

The most recent Survey Report – **Economic and Social Impacts of FarmWorks Support for Food Related Businesses in Nova Scotia** – described the success of FarmWorks clients:

providing wider access to healthy food; creating employment; contributing to an improving economic outlook for farmers and food producers; helping to restore rural vitality; and helping to remove the risks associated with lack of food self-sufficiency.

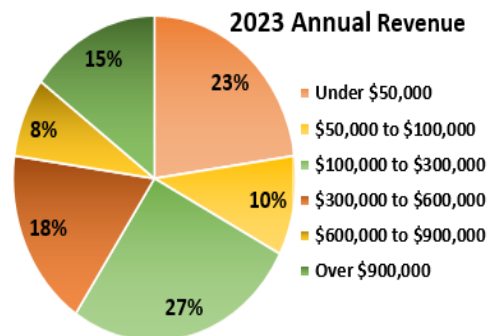
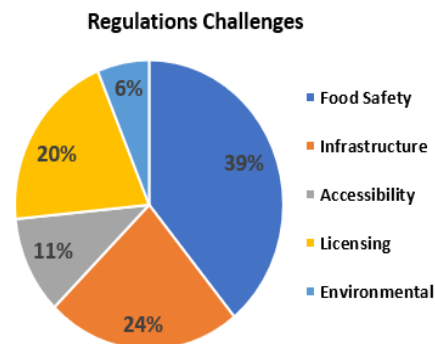
FarmWorks was successful in receiving from the Clean Foundation 60% of the salary for a 2023 summer student who used a modified version of the survey with all clients including those who have repaid their loans. The results are being analyzed and will enable comparison with the 2020 outcomes briefly described here. Several 2023 outcomes have been assessed and are reported in brackets.

The 2020 Survey was completed by 50 of 72 (2023 by 62 of 94) clients that had been in business for at least a year to gauge the economic and social impacts of their businesses, FarmWorks’ support for them, clients’ access to mentoring, their assessment of opportunities and challenges and the effects of COVID 19. Quantifying the economic and social impacts of FarmWorks’ clients helps gauge the role of FarmWorks CEDIF in helping to grow rural and urban food-related businesses.

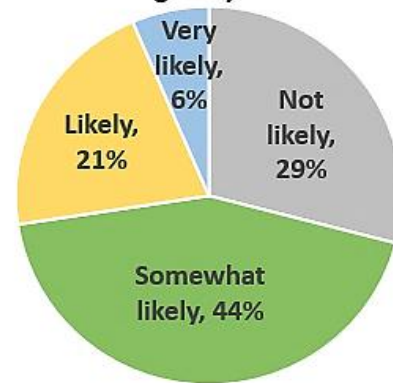
In 2020 the importance of FarmWorks loans was clear as 61% of clients indicated that their business would not have succeeded, and 37% considered success would be only somewhat likely without the loan and support. Thirty two percent of businesses used funding from FarmWorks to get started, 22% were doing poorly prior to the loan and 42% borrowed to improve their businesses. Most loans were multiple purpose, used for equipment purchases, working capital and leasehold improvements. In response to questions about support, 98% of clients indicated that FarmWorks’ assistance was very or somewhat helpful.

The 50 respondents were generating approximately \$14,250,000 (2023 \$25 M) in annual gross business revenues with annual business expenditures of about \$12,900,000 (2023 \$20 M). Multiplier effects ranging from 1.8 to 2.6 for food-related enterprises indicated that FarmWorks’ clients’ annual monetary impact in Nova Scotia ranged from \$40,000,000 to \$60,000,000. The 50 businesses indicated that prior to COVID 19 they had 233 full-time and part-time employees. Hourly wages ranged from the Nova Scotian minimum wage of \$12.55 to \$38.00 with an average of wage of \$15.47 and 84% of clients paid above the minimum.

FarmWorks-supported businesses provide local employment and they purchase goods and services in their area or the province, they provide good food and raise awareness of the benefits of supporting the local economy. They support community endeavours, restaurants, cafés and markets contribute to year-round tourism. In the 2020 survey FarmWorks clients contributed many thoughtful comments about FarmWorks, Nova Scotia’s ability to be more food-secure, and the contributions of their businesses, such as the following: *“FarmWorks has been incredibly supportive and helpful in assisting the start up our business and with checking-in to see if there’s anything we need along the way. We’re very grateful that such a program exists for Nova Scotians! Thank you for keeping up with the important work everyone – N.S. has wonderfully hard-working food producers under your umbrella :)”*



Is net income over the past 12 months sufficient to grow your business?



FIELD TO FORK TO FUTURE

There are challenges and opportunities throughout the local food system, and FarmWorks’ Shareholders invest funds that enable Directors to provide capital and mentoring and promotional support for food related entrepreneurs who are working to increase production and provide more food.

FarmWorks investors and clients share a common desire to invest in our communities so that all Nova Scotians can reap the multiple benefits of that investment. Local and regional food production can add entrepreneurship opportunities in rural communities while expanding food access and benefiting the economy. Buying and Investing locally helps ensure greater availability of local food now, and in the future.



In response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food system, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2020) emphasizes that “promoting local food production and short supply chains and a greater degree of self-sufficiency” is a central strategy that can bolster the food system’s ability to weather future crises.

Money spent on food is powerful and helps determine social and economic outcomes - food is the main course for our health, environment and economy.



