

## **Graduate Research Training Initiative Canada-Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement for the Growing Forward 2 Program**

Purpose: To provide scholarships to high caliber students enrolled in the M.Sc. Agriculture program at the Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University and who are conducting research that will benefit Nova Scotia's agriculture and agri-food industry. This initiative is intended to ensure a reliable supply of highly-qualified personnel to meet the future needs of Nova Scotia's agri-food industry.

### **Value of Awards:**

Full-time students: \$17,300 per year for up to two years

Part-time students: \$ 8,650 per year for up to two years

*(Note: Full-time employees of NSDA, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) , farmers and Nova Scotia agri-food companies are encouraged to apply for part-time study.)*

Scholarships are intended to provide support for a maximum duration of 24 months. Applicants must however, remain in good standing in their graduate program to receive the second year of funding. Students must be registered in the M.Sc Agriculture at the Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University to be eligible to hold the scholarship. Students holding one of these awards may not simultaneously hold a scholarship of equal or greater value such as an NSERC (PGS, CGS), SSHRC, CIHR or NSHRF scholarship in support of graduate studies.

Number of Awards: Three to four scholarships will be granted annually, with the number of scholarships granted dependent upon the number of full-time and part-time applicants.

**Eligible Applicants:** To be considered eligible for support, applicants must:

1. be a Canadian citizen\*;
2. be admissible to pursue graduate studies in the M.Sc Agriculture program at the Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University. Students not yet registered in a graduate program of study as well as those students who have not completed more than four (4) months of graduate studies are eligible to apply;
3. have obtained a minimum average of 75% or B in each of the last two completed years of academic study; and
4. intend to pursue graduate-level research in the area of agriculture and agri-food. Research must benefit the agriculture/agri-food industry of Nova Scotia in one of the following two policy driver areas identified within the Growing Forward 2 Framework Agreement:

**1. Competitiveness in Domestic and International Markets**  
**2. Adaptability and Sustainability for the Sector**

To ensure that graduate-level research projects align with Growing Forward priorities and outcomes, applicants are referred to the end of this document for further information.

\*A Canadian citizen is a person who is Canadian by birth or who has applied for Canadian citizenship through Citizenship and Immigration Canada and has received a citizenship certificate.

**Application Package:** A complete application will consist of:

- a letter of application (maximum two pages)
- an outline of the proposed research (maximum of three pages). The outline of proposed research must include a detailed description of the proposed research project. **Applicants must identify their proposed supervisor and the time frame of the research project in this section.**
- a description of the benefit or impact of the proposed research to the agriculture/agri-food industry of Nova Scotia with linkage to at least one of the priority areas identified within the Growing Forward 2 Framework (see below). (maximum one page)
- two letters of reference. Referees should be specifically asked to comment on the applicant's research potential, communication skills and interpersonal and leadership abilities.
- official undergraduate transcripts
- a detailed resume of the applicant

**Application Procedures:** Three application deadlines annually until all scholarships are awarded (normally June, October, February). The top-ranked applicants will be offered a Canada-Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement Graduate Research Training Initiative Scholarship. Application is made directly through the Faculty of Agriculture Graduate Studies Office. Deadlines for 2013 application will be posted on the Faculty of Agriculture Graduate Studies website. In 2014 and following years these deadlines will apply:

- June 1<sup>st</sup> for students intending to take up the award in September
- October 1<sup>st</sup> for students intending to take up the award in January
- February 1<sup>st</sup> for students intending to take up the award in May

**Review of Applications:** The Selection Committee will be chaired by the Faculty of Agriculture Graduate Student coordinator and will consist of the Faculty of Agriculture Graduate Studies Committee Scholarships Sub-committee, with the Federal and Provincial Growing Forward 2 Management Committee Co-Chairs or designates. The Selection Committee awards scholarships to those applicants considered to have the best qualifications, according to the selection criteria.

**Selection criteria:** Applicants will be evaluated and selected according to the criteria in the following categories:

**Academic excellence/ability:** academic record, scholarships and awards held; duration of previous studies; quality of contributions to research and development; relevance of work experience and academic training to field of proposed research; ability to think critically; ability to apply skills and knowledge; judgment; determination and ability to complete projects within an appropriate period of time.

**Research:** significance of research; feasibility, and merit of proposed research, originality; enthusiasm for research; benefit of research within the agriculture and or agri-food industry to economic growth, the environment, and/or the health of Nova Scotians; need for research.

**Communication skills:** the ability or potential to communicate scientifically, clearly and logically in written and oral formats. For example, this could include: quality of the applicant's complete application; participation in preparing publications; and awards for oral presentations or papers.

**Interpersonal and leadership abilities:** professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations. For example, this could include: mentoring; teaching; supervisory experience; project management; chairing committees; organizing conferences and meetings; and elected positions held.

**Selection Criteria Weightings:**

Academic excellence and ability: 40%

Research: 40%

Communication skills: 10%

Interpersonal and leadership abilities: 10%

**Annual Report:**

Scholarship holders must submit an annual report to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, Faculty of Agriculture, Cumming Hall, by the last day of February each year. The one page report, to be written in layman's terms, should include the focus of the research, what has been accomplished to date, and what remains to be done. This report may be posted on-line or otherwise distributed by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

**IMPORTANT APPLICATION INFORMATION:**  
**RESEARCH PROPOSALS MUST ALIGN WITH GROWING FORWARD 2 OBJECTIVES**

*Graduate-student research projects **must** meet one or more of the following objectives of Growing Forward 2. Applications must include a description of how the research will address one or more of the following outcomes.*

**Policy Drivers:**

**1. Competitiveness in Domestic and International Markets**

A primary agriculture and processing sector that is competitive in domestic and international markets by:

- Being cost competitive;
- Meeting customer requirements for attributes;
- Taking advantage of new market opportunities; and,
- Gaining and maintaining market access.

**2. Adaptability and Sustainability for the Sector**

A sector that is adaptable and sustainable, in that it:

- Maintains and improves its productive capacity by:
  - Making effective use of appropriate skills and knowledge;
  - Managing human, natural, and financial resources; and
  - Attracting young farmers and new investors to the sector;
- Anticipates and adapts to changing external circumstances;
- Manages risks effectively;
- Contributes to key food policy objectives such as health or food safety; and,
- Recognizes and responds to society's demands.

**Canada and Nova Scotia have agreed that the two policy drivers of the Growing Forward 2 Framework have the following objectives:**

**1) Innovation from Discovery to Adoption**

A sector that continuously develops and adopts new products and practices to remain competitive and sustainable through:

- Sustained commitment to public research and development (R&D);

- Improved collaboration/partnerships among key institutions (governments, universities, industry etc.); and,
- Increased private sector leadership and investment.

## 2) Institutional, Physical and Human Resource Infrastructure

A sector that is equipped with the modern infrastructure (institutional, physical and human resource) needed to secure its long-term competitiveness and sustainability:

- Through access to modern regulatory structures and institutions;
- By developing mechanisms and systems to enable the sector to respond to issues it faces; and,
- By enhancing the capacity of the sector to further develop skills and knowledge.

### TO MEET THESE OBJECTIVES:

#### 1. Competitiveness in Domestic and International Markets

Growing Forward 2 will facilitate the growth of a sector that is competitive on the basis of product attributes and costs, by:

- Facilitating the sector's ability to effectively compete on costs and attributes to meet customer requirements through:
  - The availability of competitively-priced inputs to reduce costs;
  - The adoption of new products, processes, technologies, and business models developed domestically or abroad;
  - Access to meaningful and timely information on markets and customer requirements; and,
  - New business models that enable competitiveness and market access.
- Fostering innovation to respond to market demands, and improve productivity and efficiency through:
  - Public-private partnerships and investments to foster knowledge creation and increased industry capacity to leverage research; and,
  - Increased commercialization of new ideas, products and processes.

- Improving institutional, physical and human resource infrastructure to support competitiveness through:
  - The increased ability of the sector to meet customer requirements and influence private standards;
  - Addressing regulations that impede competitiveness; and,
  - Greater efficiency in transportation and distribution systems, including the development of identity preserved systems.

*The Parties will facilitate the growth of a sector that is able to compete in domestic and international markets, by:*

- Fostering easier access to domestic markets by addressing barriers to internal trade and facilitate movement of agricultural products across provincial/territorial boundaries.
- Maintaining and gaining access to traditional and emerging export markets through:
  - Improved access to information on market and trading requirements;
  - Enhanced industry capacity to be well-positioned to meet national and international food safety, animal and plant health standards; and,
  - Continued work with trading partners to reduce barriers to trade and distorting support, including the development of international (multilateral or bilateral) trading agreements.

## **2. Adaptability and Sustainability for the Sector**

*The Parties will facilitate the growth of a sector that improves and maintains its productive capacity (natural, human and financial resources) to be sustainable, by:*

- Supporting industry's efforts to enhance its productive capacity through more efficient and responsible use of resources through:
  - The development and transfer of knowledge, skills, tools and services necessary to enable industry players to be profitable and sustainable;
  - The development of industry capacity to mitigate risks to productive assets; and,
  - Knowledge and innovation to improve resource-use productivity and efficiency.
- Moving toward more targeted, collaborative and result-oriented approaches to address environmental challenges through:
  - Better integrated and targeted science efforts to meet existing and new challenges; and,

- Collaboration among governments, industry and academia to increase sustainability and profitability for the sector.
- Enabling the industry to attract new entrepreneurs, investments and business models, including facilitating farm transfers.
- Enabling market-based solutions to broad environmental challenges.

*The Parties will facilitate the growth of a sector that is adaptable and resilient, by:*

- Enhancing the capacity of industry—collectively—to anticipate and adapt to changing demands and external pressures through:
  - Improved availability of information relating to markets;
  - The development and implementation by industry of longer-term strategies to adapt to challenges and seize opportunities;
  - Private risk management tools; and,
  - Collaboration among governments, industry and academia to increase the sector's capacity to adapt, be sustainable and increase market-based profitability.
- Enhancing the capacity of individual players to effectively anticipate and manage challenges and risks by facilitating:
  - Risk management capacity at the farm/firm level—through use of sound on-farm management practices and private sector tools—to improve market-based profitability;
  - The development of knowledge, skills and tools—across all business models—for enhanced adaptability and sustainability at the farm/firm level; and,
  - Innovative capacity at the farm/firm level to enable sustainability and the ability to address economic and environmental challenges.
- Leveraging more insurance-like approaches to address risks, where appropriate.

*The Parties will facilitate the growth of a sector that responds to society's demands and contributes to the well-being of Canadians, by:*

- Enabling the industry to contribute solutions to broad sustainability challenges;
- Enabling the industry to contribute to challenges related to food policies;
- Facilitating public awareness of food safety and quality, as well as industry accredited practices; and,
- Enabling industry to better understand citizen attitudes toward food and supply-chain production processes.