



2015 FINALIST

Farm Environmental Stewardship Award

Dan and Heather Sanft, owner of Lunenburg County Winery at Hackmatack Farms, operate a winery and commercial high bush blueberry farm. The third-generation farm, located in Newburne, Lunenburg County is surrounded by lakes and forest. At Hackmatack Farms, you can enjoy the taste of wine, pick berries, have a tour of the winery or have a lovely picnic in the beautiful surrounding gardens. The commercial blueberry farm is 100 acres.



Biodiversity is well established on the farm property. Natural fields and flowering plants are cultivated for pollinators and butterflies. Uncultivated fields and forest land provide habitat for wildlife. Nest boxes are also located throughout the farm. To conserve and protect water, Dan and Heather have installed drip irrigation lines that are only used during the hot summer months. They were the first farmers in Nova Scotia to have this irrigation system, which was installed in the early 1990's. Soil management practices are a priority on the farm. Sphagnum moss, collected from the farm, is placed under the blueberry bushes to cover any bare root systems and soil. Between each crop row there is an abundance of grass and legumes to further enhance biodiversity and help control erosion.

At the winery, sprays are used to help control disease as well as to prevent infestation from



fruit flies. The farm owners do their best to only use products listed by the Organic Material Review Institute, and only applying when absolutely necessary.



Wines are made using traditional aging methods, only with fruit grown on the farm. Organic wastes from the farm and winery are composted, along with seaweed and cattle manure, which is brought onto the farm. Due to current concern over Spotted Wing Drosophila fruit flies, compost is buried under soil for a period of time prior to being used as a soil amendment. The farm has won a number of awards and honors for

their wine. “Wine making has been an integral part of the family life and enjoyment for as long as anyone remembers” -Dan and Heather Sanft.

The Sanft family’s dedication to farm stewardship has made them one of three finalists for this year’s Farm Environmental Stewardship Award. The award is part of the Environmental Farm Plan Program created through a partnership of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Nova Scotia Environmental Farm Plan Team and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

The award recognizes producers who make land, water and habitat stewardship a significant part of their farm operations. To be eligible for the award, farmers must have an environmental farm plan. The voluntary plan helps them identify, assess, and reduce environmental risk on their farms. Since the program’s inception in 1999, more than 1,800 farmers have developed Environmental Farm Plans for their operations.

The Environmental Farm Plan Program is supported under *Growing Forward 2*, a five-year agricultural agreement between the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia.
