



## 2016 FINALIST

# *Environmental Farm Plan Stewardship Award*

Cornwallis Farms Ltd., nominated by Egg Farmers of Nova Scotia, is located in Port Williams, Kings County. The farm is owned and operated by Craig and Brian Newcombe and their families. A ninth generation farm, the Newcombe family runs a truly diverse operation. The farm has 21,000 laying hens, 65 purebred



Holstein cows and six broiler barns that produce approximately 1.2 million kg of meat. In addition to livestock, the Newcombe families grow primarily corn, soybean, winter wheat and forages on approximately 1,700 acres of farmland.

With a goal of increasing self-sufficiency, Cornwallis Farms uses an on-farm feed mill for their livestock with over 90% of the feed ingredients being grown on their farm. The Newcombes have long recognized the importance of soil health in producing viable crops. The farm uses no-till technology to seed its corn, soybean and wheat. Their no-till methods help prevent soil erosion, while increasing soil organic matter and reducing nutrient losses. A nutrient management plan has been developed for the farm, which includes annual soil testing and periodic manure analysis of each type of manure. The target manure application rate is determined based on soil tests results, crop nutrient requirements and manure nutrient analysis. Manure is applied to the fields precisely, weighing each load in the spreader prior to land application, to meet the nutrient target. Fertilizer is applied only if the nutrient requirements of the crop are not met by soil levels and manure application.



Cornwallis Farms also recognizes the importance of protecting water quality. Grazing cattle are fenced from streams and buffer areas are maintained between crop land and any watercourses. A number of manmade wetlands have been

constructed on the farm to treat wash water from the dairy barn and any barn yard runoff. Field drainage and ditching is completed as required to reduce surface runoff and to improve productivity.

The farm recently installed and upgraded equipment to reduce their energy consumption. A solar wall (passive air system) was installed on one of the chicken barns which provides an additional heat source and reduces the amount of fuel required to heat the barn by 30%. Natural ventilation (curtains and chimneys) is used in the dairy barn and a number of upgrades have been made to milking and cooling equipment, which have also resulted in energy savings. The farm is also in the process of changing to LED lighting.



Steps have also been taken to protect the local environment. The farm has a number of engineered manure storage facilities to help ensure the various types of manure generated on the farm are stored properly and do not impact the environment. Diesel fuel is stored inside a building and has a full containment system. Pesticides are stored in a separate contained storage area.

The efforts that the Newcombes and Cornwallis Farms Ltd. have made in order to reduce their environmental impact have made them one of three finalists for this year's Environmental Farm Plan 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 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.

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