

Season Extension Enhancement Program Guidelines 2023-2024



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Season Extension Enhancement program is to help support fruit and vegetable growers who invest in innovative technologies to extend their growing season, adapt to a changing climate and open up new market opportunities.

The program encourages and supports Nova Scotia's fruit and vegetable producers by providing financial assistance with the following on-farm infrastructure:

- adopting season extension technologies;
- enhancing storage capacity;
- adopting and developing irrigation capacity for field operations.

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants are producers of fruit and vegetables grown and sold in Nova Scotia
- Farming activities must be carried out within the province of Nova Scotia.
- Registered Farmers in Nova Scotia with annual fruit and vegetable income shown in Statements of Farming Activities in most recent 2 years of submitted Tax Returns (2020, 2021, or 2022).

Note: Applicants can apply for 1 or multiple streams to reach maximum funding.

Gross Farm Revenue	Maximum funding
Under \$10,000	\$5,000
\$10,000 to \$49,999	\$10,000
\$50,000-\$99,999	\$25,000
\$100,000-\$249,999	\$50,000
\$250,000 – \$499,999	\$100,000
\$500,000 - \$749,000	\$150,000
\$750,000 or more	\$200,000

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Stream 1: Season Extension Technologies

With use of season extension technologies, fruit and vegetable producers will be able to increase their production capacity. That increased production capacity will allow Nova Scotia's consumers to make more year-round purchases of locally grown products.

Stream 2: Post-Harvest Cooling, Freezing and On-Farm Storage Systems

Additional produce conditioning technologies and on-farm storage capacity will allow producers to store more fruit and vegetable crops and improve local food availability.

Stream 3: Commercial Grade Irrigation Equipment

Irrigation is a key management tool to help mitigate losses in crop quality and yield due to low soil moisture and drought conditions. The production of perishable produce under optimal moisture conditions will help extend its post-harvest and storage life while maintaining quality. Stream 3 will provide funding assistance for the purchase of commercial grade irrigation equipment.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Applicants are eligible for **60%** funding assistance on total eligible project costs. Maximum funding level is determined by applicant's gross farm revenue category (see table on page 2).
- The intention of the program delivery is to support as many farm operations as possible subject to budget constraints. Therefore, registered farms will be limited to one application.
- Quotes are required and must be provided with the application.

Note: Funding for the Season Extension Enhancement Program is limited and may be pro-rated if program demand exceeds funding availability. Notice to applicants will be provided, if necessary.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

Stream 1: Season Extension Technologies

- Heated greenhouse kits, unheated greenhouses, tunnels (high, low or mini-tunnels) or hydroponic technologies.
- **Materials** to be considered for funding include: plastic, polycarbonate; row or thermal covers; steel structures; heating, ventilation, electrical, plumbing, anchoring systems, other related building supplies and irrigation system for season extension technologies.
- **Equipment and tools** used to monitor and control climatic conditions and irrigation in Controlled Environment Agriculture facilities (greenhouses and indoor production).

Note 1: New structures must be commercial grade designed and used for vegetable and/or fruit production and constructed to meet industry standards and off-season weather conditions. Commercial grade prefabricated or "engineered" greenhouse (in accordance with the national building code requirements for the right usage eg. commercial or institutional) and high tunnel technologies are required.

Note 2: Quotes for greenhouses must include an engineering report to prove the greenhouse meets national building code as well as project site snow and wind factors.

Note 3: Only the cost of off-farm hired labor for site preparation and assembly of the greenhouses or high tunnels will be eligible.

Stream 2: New or Upgrading Post-Harvest Cooling, Freezing and On-Farm Storage Systems

- Commercial grade high efficiency system for:
 - on-farm cooling,

- refrigerating,
- humidity control system,
- pre-cooling system,
- freezing and
- storage technologies for fruit and vegetables inventory.

Examples: walk-in coolers, Coolbot systems, heating/curing systems, controlled atmosphere systems, storage facility monitoring and regulating technologies are eligible.)

Ineligible Items:

- Units that are used for the transportation of produce are not eligible.
- This stream does not cover the physical building construction component of the project, labor costs for site preparation and construction of a facility will not be eligible.

Stream 3: Commercial Irrigation Equipment

- Irrigation equipment used to produce fruit and vegetables grown in fields, including pumps, filtration system, fertilizer injectors and mixing tanks, water storage tanks, piping (aluminum and underground plastic pipe), valves, sprinklers, heavy wall drip tapes (>25mil), hose reels, rain guns, specialized pipe trailers and controllers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

As part of the application, applicants must provide information on the following areas:

- **Stream 1: Season Extension Technologies**
 - description of existing farming practices
 - description of the proposed projects
 - quotes for all project activities
 - detailed itemized budget (provided with application)
 - current crop(s) grown including the amount and value
 - expected volume of the additional crops grown in the new season extension structure
 - description of proposed plan for marketing increased volumes and/or new crops
- **Stream 2: New and Upgraded Post Harvest Cooling, Freezing, and On-Farm Storage Systems**
 - prior to project activities provide the value and type of crops currently being kept in storage facilities (over a standard growing season)
 - after project completion, expected value and type of crops being kept in storage facilities (over a standard growing season)
 - if upgrading, descriptions of the current storage system is required as well as a description of the intended upgrades
- **Stream 3: Commercial Grade Irrigation Equipment**
 - indicate the amount of growing space (acres) that your current irrigation system supported
 - with additional equipment, how much more growing space (acres) will receive irrigation

- Provide a rationale that demonstrates that the project is strategic for the operation and how it will contribute to the farm's sustainability.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

These include but are not limited to:

- direct income support
- energy sources to operate irrigation systems
- operating expenses / existing staff salaries
- refundable portion of the HST, value-added taxes, or other items for which a refund or rebate is receivable
- other costs that deemed ineligible
- replacement of components for existing season extension technologies
- plastic and biodegradable materials that are used for a one-year growing season
- used equipment
- non-arm's length transactions

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the Season Extension Enhancement program:

1. Complete and submit the application, including quotes for all project activities.
2. Eligible project expenses will be recognized within the Activity Period stated in the table below.

Application Intake	Activity Period	Final Claim Deadline
April 17, 2023 – May 19, 2023	December 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023	January 31, 2024
October 1, 2023 – October 31, 2023	October 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024	June 30, 2024

APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of representatives from Horticulture Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.
2. If approved, applicants will receive a **Letter of Agreement (LOA)** which identifies the eligible project activities, assistance offered, and the terms and conditions under which assistance is approved.
3. Review, sign and return the LOA to Horticulture Nova Scotia within **30 days** of the date of the letter or your funding will be forfeited.

CLAIMING PROCESS

1. After Horticulture Nova Scotia receives your signed Letter of Agreement, a **Program Claim Form** will be sent to you.
2. Complete and sign **Program Claim Form**. Claim deadline is noted in table above (page 5).
3. Attach copies of all invoices for eligible project costs incurred and paid for by the applicant.

4. Attach proof of payment for each invoice – e-transfer confirmation, debit slips, cleared cheques, or credit card/bank statements (invoices marked paid and signed by the supplier are not accepted).
5. Provide supporting documentation to the Horticulture Nova Scotia office with your claim

Note 1: No payment will be made for claims under \$20.00.

Note 2: Projects must be claimed by the identified claimed deadline and at least 20% of all projects will be audited to verify program objectives.

ARM'S LENGTH TRANSACTIONS

Program funding will only be offered on transactions (invoices) that involve a supplier/service provider with an arm's-length relationship to the applicant for approved projects. For the purposes of Programs, arm's length is defined as individuals who are NOT connected by blood relationship, marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption.

PERMITS AND REGULATIONS

The Recipient must ensure that all work in respect of the Project is carried out in accordance with federal and provincial legislation and regulations regarding environmental impact, food safety and animal welfare. It is the Recipient's responsibility to research legislative and regulatory requirements, obtain required permits and ensure environmental compliance for the Project.

AUTHORITY

Horticulture Nova Scotia shall have the authority to deny an application if there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information or if Horticulture Nova Scotia believes that an application does not conform to the spirit of the Program.

EVALUATION AND AUDIT

Review and evaluation of projects may be carried out by Horticulture Nova Scotia for the purpose of audit, analysis, evaluation, program development and determining financial assistance. This review and evaluation process may be conducted prior to project commencement, during work or upon project completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Applicants consent to the release of their name and the amount of support received under the Program. This specific information is deemed to be public information, to be actively disseminated by Horticulture Nova Scotia. Horticulture Nova Scotia may provide any information from an applicant to another public body or a law-enforcement agency in Canada to assist in an investigation, undertaken with a view to a law-enforcement proceeding or from which a law-enforcement proceeding is likely to result. Any other information provided, unless disclosed in the manner and for the purposes stated above, will be subject to the confidentiality and disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please submit all documents related to the Season Extension Enhancement program to Horticulture Nova Scotia at the address, email or fax number below. For more information about the program, please contact Horticulture Nova Scotia.

Horticulture Nova Scotia

32 Main Street, Blair House
Kentville Agricultural Centre
Kentville, NS
B4N1J5

Programs@horticulturens.ca

P: 902-678-9335

F: 902-678-1280