CASE STUDY

Nova Scotia's Limestone Trucking Assistance Program

Problem:

Acid rain lowered soil pH across Atlantic Canada, reducing crop productivity and harming ecosystems.

Solution:

Limestone Trucking Assistance Program (LTAP)

- Helps farmers transport agricultural limestone
- Offsets up to 80% of delivery costs
- Supports soil health across the province

Key Actor:

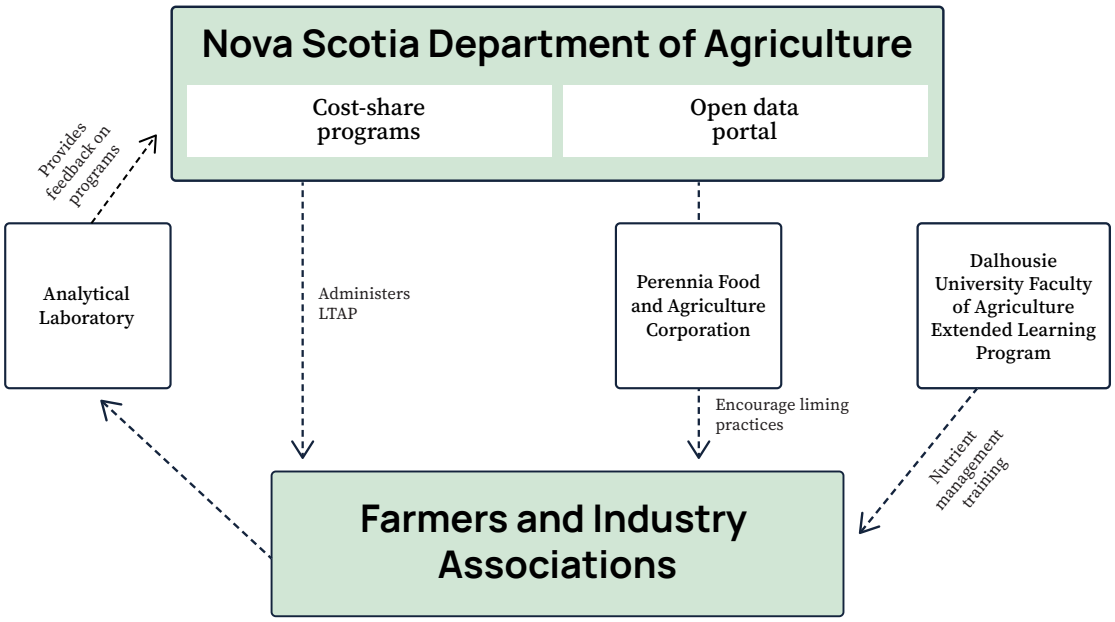
Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

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Anecdotally, the practice of liming soils and rivers in Nova Scotia was a response to counter the effects of acid rain that had drifted north from industrial centers along the east coast of the U.S. Acid rain has substantially lowered soil pH levels across Atlantic Canada, where soils are already naturally acidic, negatively impacting crop yields and aquatic life.

The Limestone Trucking Assistance Program (LTAP) has been an enduring feature of Nova Scotia's farm policy for at least 35 years. Over time, the program's structure and name have evolved, but its essential purpose to help farmers improve productivity by defraying the cost of transporting agricultural limestone has remained consistent.[1]

The Limestone Trucking Assistance Program (LTAP)



LTAP helps registered farms and industry associations offset limestone delivery costs by covering up to 80% of approved transportation expenses, capped at $32,000 CAD per applicant per year. Eligibility requirements include a soil analysis lab report or a Nutrient Management Plan no more than three years old.[2]

Program governance rests with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, which administers LTAP alongside its other cost-share programs. The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture serves as a key consultative partner; the Federation of Agriculture provides annual feedback on the Department of Agriculture's suite of funding programs on behalf of its members, which are considered in light of government objectives and resource availability.

[1] Canada Info (CKJM Radio). (2022). Department of Agriculture adds $200,000 to cover farmers' limestone trucking costs. https://canada-info.ca/en/department-of-agriculture-adds-200000-to-cover-farmers-limestone-trucking-costs/
[2] Limestone Trucking Assistance Program Guidelines, 2025-2026. https://novascotia.ca/programs/limestone-trucking-assistance/docs/lta-guidelines.pdf



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Liming practices are actively encouraged by the provincial extension services and Perennia Food and Agriculture Corporation, a government-owned business providing technical expertise to farmers. The Department of Agriculture operates a subsidized analytical laboratory where farmers can submit soil samples for pH analysis and receive recommendations for liming application. Soil samples can be dropped off at regional offices, which facilitate delivery to the lab.

The program's broader agronomic framework connects to Nova Scotia's nutrient management and environmental planning systems. Anyone offering nutrient management advice must be a professional agrologist, registered with the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists. Although there is no provincially enforced template for a Nutrient Management Plan, the Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture's Extended Learning program offers recognized training in this area. Most farms, particularly those with livestock, incorporate nutrient management into their Environmental Farm Plans, a free and voluntary program to help farmers assess environmental risks.

Overall demand for LTAP has risen over the past two years, both in terms of the number of applications and in requested funding. The increase in requested funding amounts appears to be mainly driven by increasing fuel prices.

Public transparency is maintained through Nova Scotia's Open Data Portal, which lists funding recipients and amounts disbursed each year. These records document the program's duration and changes over time in response to agricultural requirements. The program's inclusion in successive provincial budgets indicates its ongoing role in supporting soil health within the province's agricultural framework.

The Limestone Trucking Assistance Program serves as an example of a sustained, iterative approach to agricultural support that relies on transparency, an interconnected system of public services, and multiple touch points with the local farming community.

This case study was informed through correspondence with Rebecca Sooksom, Program Director at the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

[3] Government of Nova Scotia. (n.d.). Agriculture Funding Program Details: Total Funding by Year. https://data.novascotia.ca