



**Press Release - For Release June 6**

### **Agriculture NB Launches New Mental Health & Farm Safety Program**

**FREDERICTON**, June 6, 2023- Agriculture NB is pleased to announce the launch of New Brunswick's first Mental Health and Farm Safety Initiative for the agriculture sector, and the appointment of Victoria Hutt as the Mental Health and Farm Safety Program Coordinator.

The Mental Health and Farm Safety program is the first of its kind for the agriculture sector in New Brunswick. New Brunswick is one of the only provinces that does not have a Mental Health and Farm Safety program in place. The first few years of the new program will focus on mental health, and will incorporate on-farm safety over time.

The NB Mental Health and Farm Safety coordinator will deliver and promote resources, workshops, information sessions, and material in both official languages that the New Brunswick agricultural community will use to mitigate the risks of mental illness and/or farm accidents.

"The New Brunswick Mental Health and Farm Safety Program will provide essential support and resources to producers when they need it most, and improve the mental and physical wellbeing of agricultural communities across New Brunswick." said the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

In 2021, a study conducted by University of Guelph, found that 76 per cent of Canadian farmers said they were currently experiencing moderate or high perceived stress. In the same study, 1 in 4 Canadian farmers said they had thoughts of suicide in the past 24 months.

"New Brunswick farmers have one of the most important jobs in the province and also one of the most challenging and stressful," said Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries Minister Margaret Johnson. "We must do whatever we can to assist our farmers. This program will provide the tools and resources they need. We want our farmers to be safe, healthy and happy."

The program website [www.farmtalkcare.ca](http://www.farmtalkcare.ca), is a hub where mental health and wellness training, tools, and resources can be easily accessed. The material provided supports the agricultural community to take the first steps in maintaining mental fitness; recognizing when it may be time to reach out and talk to someone; and learning how to care for yourself, your family, your workers on the farm, and anyone in the farming community.

Newly appointed Mental Health and Farm Safety Coordinator Victoria Hutt brings with her over a decade of experience coordinating initiatives in the not-for-profit sector, developing community collaborations and

capacity building supports for networks, organizations and individuals. “Providing better supports for agricultural workers to be safe and prosperous in the essential and difficult work they do is an initiative that directly or indirectly benefits all New Brunswickers. I’m looking forward to being able to contribute to the New Brunswick farming community through this role.” says Victoria Hutt.

Funding for this initiative was provided by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a new \$3.5-billion, 5-year agreement (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2028), between the federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. The agreement includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and \$2.5 billion in cost-shared programs and activities funded 60 percent by federal, and 40 percent by provincial and territorial governments. These cost-shared programs and initiatives are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

Agriculture NB is the formal collaboration of the National Farmers Union in New Brunswick, the Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick and Really Local Harvest, to represent the New Brunswick agricultural sector at large.

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