

Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries

Annual Report
2019–2020



Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
Annual Report 2019-2020

Province of New Brunswick
PO 6000,
Fredericton N. B.
E3B 5H1 CANADA

www.gnb.ca

ISBN 978-1-4605-2641-5 (bilingual print edition)
ISBN 978-1-4605-2642-2 (English PDF edition)
ISBN 978-1-4605-2643-9 (French PDF edition)

ISSN 1929-8242 (bilingual print edition)
ISSN 2369-3908 (English PDF edition)
ISSN 2369-3908 (French PDF edition)

12937 | 2020.11 | Printed in New Brunswick

Transmittal letters

From the Minister to the Lieutenant-Governor
The Honourable Brenda L. Murphy
Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Margaret Johnson
Minister

From the Deputy Minister to the Minister
Honourable Margaret Johnson
Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries

Madame:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, for the fiscal year April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Cathy LaRochelle
Deputy Minister

Table of contents

Minister’s message	1
Deputy Minister’s message	2
Top Government Priorities.	3
Highlights	4
Performance measures.	5
Overview of departmental operations	10
Division overview and highlights	11
Financial information	16
Summary of staffing activity	17
Summary of legislation and legislative activity.	18
Summary of Official Languages activities	19
Summary of recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General	20
Report on the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act</i>	20

Minister's message

The agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors are the engine of New Brunswick's economy. They provide food on our tables, contribute to our exports and create jobs in rural, coastal and Indigenous communities across the Province.

In some instances, production and exports reached historic records during the 2019-2020 fiscal year, which is a testimony to the people who work in these industries and provide us with high-quality and safe products.

Everyday, New Brunswick products are sold all over the world, and yet it all starts at home, in our backyards. There is a strong and consistent demand for the quality of food that is farmed on our lands, in our oceans or fished from the cold waters of the Atlantic. A success we will continue to sustain with stakeholders, industry, Indigenous Nations and the federal government, through programs like the Canadian Agricultural Partnership and the Atlantic Fisheries Fund.

The 2019-2020 fiscal year brought new challenges, however it was another year of historic growth in exports. This would not have been possible without the collaboration, hard work and professionalism of the countless New Brunswickers who work in these sectors.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank departmental staff for providing expert, technical advice and support to our industries so that we can continue to make gains here at home as well as in the global food supply chain.

I am looking forward to working with you all in the months ahead.



Honourable Margaret Johnson
Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries

Deputy Minister's message

During the 2019-2020 reporting period, the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries delivered on strategic priorities that contributed to the development of its sectors. The department offers a variety of services such as marketing, export development, business growth, guidance for new entrants, veterinary services and technical expertise.

Efforts to diversify markets for wild blueberries resulted in a 3 per cent growth in export value over the previous year. As for oysters, the number of production bags in the water grew by 4 per cent compared to the previous year; unfortunately, this was below our targeted increase of 10 per cent annual growth due to unexpected mortality events that happened during the year.

Other highlights included the development of a roadmap for the hemp sector. Through the Apple Industry Development Program, staff also facilitated the establishment of high-density orchards to increase the yield per acre and reduce operating costs.

To help maintain the province's competitiveness, the department participated in national and international trade missions aimed at promoting New Brunswick products. The department planned to once again participate in the highly-anticipated annual Seafood Expo North America in Boston in March, however, the event was cancelled due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Attending these types of events is crucial to growing the province's exports and promoting our products to customers around the world.

Closer to home, initiatives such as the BuyAchetezNB platforms encouraged New Brunswickers to buy local products. In addition, an extensive engagement process has taken place as part of the ongoing work to renew the Local Food and Beverages Strategy.

One of the department's major highlights was the adoption of a new *Aquaculture Act*, which allows the provincial government to improve licensing and leasing predictability for operators, enhance animal health and welfare, improve environmental protections and offer greater public transparency. The *Act* follows years of hard work by the department and engagement with Aboriginal Nations, conservation groups, industry stakeholders and other federal and provincial agencies.

None of these important accomplishments would have been possible without our employees. Their input is highly respected and valued by our industry stakeholders, and I thank them for their dedication and passion.



Cathy LaRochelle
Deputy Minister

Top Government Priorities

Strategy and Operations Management

The Government of New Brunswick (GNB) uses a Formal Management system built on leading business practices to develop, communicate and review strategy. This process provides the Public Service with a proven methodology to execute strategy, increase accountability and continuously drive improvement.

The development of the strategy, using the Formal Management system, starts with our government's roadmap for the future of New Brunswick that focuses on key priorities and the importance of public accountability.

Our Top Priorities:

Affordable and Responsive Government

Getting our financial house in order will make it possible for government to be responsive and provide sustainable high-quality public services for all New Brunswickers.

Dependable Public Health Care

New Brunswickers deserve a sustainable, high-quality health-care system where they are able to access the services they need when they need them.

World-class Education

New Brunswick's young people need access to a world-class education, so they can make the most of their lives and compete in future job markets.

Energized Private Sector

All New Brunswickers benefit from a thriving private sector. Increasing private sector investment, growing our labour force and being home to successful businesses of all sizes is good for our province.

Vibrant and Sustainable Communities

Vibrant communities are places people want to call home. More vibrant and sustainable communities make for a more resilient province.

High-performing Organization

All New Brunswickers benefit when engaged and empowered civil servants use their talents and skills to make our province a better place.

Highlights

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries focused on these strategic priorities through:

- A new *Aquaculture Act* received Royal Assent, which will support industry growth, while strengthening environmental protections, improving fish health and welfare, and increasing public reporting.
- Delivering the second year of the five-year federal/provincial *Canadian Agricultural Partnership* to drive sustainable growth, innovation and competitiveness in the New Brunswick agriculture sector. A total of \$6.0M was invested.
- Approving 34 projects under the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, to support the New Brunswick fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing sectors. The projects were valued at \$23M, of which \$6.85M was leveraged from the Federal government and the Provincial government contributed \$2.95M.
- Releasing the *Road Map to Develop the Industrial Hemp Sector in New Brunswick*.
- Leading and coordinating the distribution of 365,875 oral rabies vaccine baits through aerial and hand distribution in southwestern and western New Brunswick. One new rabies case was reported during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
- The Provincial Veterinary Laboratory and Foreign Animal Disease Laboratory completed approximately 70,000 tests in support of its role in promoting and protecting animal health, public health, regulatory responsibilities, animal welfare and other functions related to disease surveillance and control in New Brunswick.
- Continuing support of industry participation in aquaculture and seafood trade initiatives across American, European and Asian markets, resulting in seafood export sales reaching \$1.74B, the second highest in Canada.
- Promoting business development opportunities for Indigenous communities through participation on the Joint Economic Development Initiative Business Steering Committee.
- Developing a multi-agency funded project with the North Shore Mi'kmaq District Council to promote Indigenous participation in the shellfish aquaculture sector, including technical training and development of marketing materials.

Performance measures

Affordable and responsive government	Measures
Balance budget	Actual to budgeted expenditures
	Actual to budgeted revenues
Energized private sector	Measures
Enable sector growth in the agriculture, aquaculture (shellfish and finfish), and fisheries sectors	Increase in wild blueberry exports
	Growth in oyster production

Affordable and responsive government

Objective of the measure

Balance budget

Measure

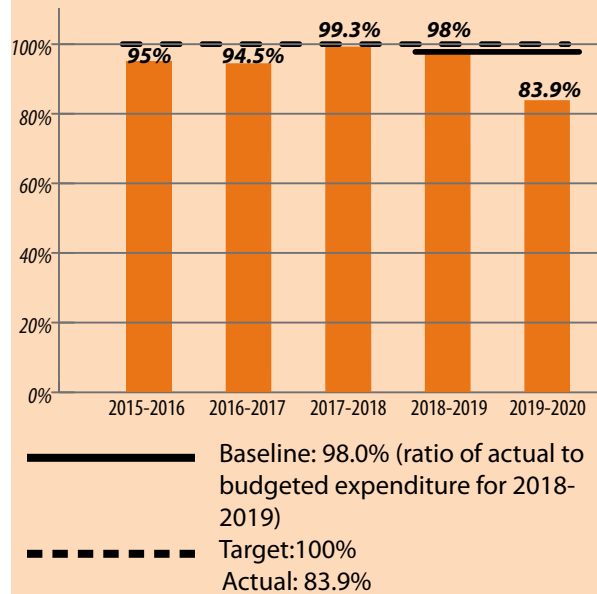
Ratio of actual to budgeted expenditures

Description of measure

The ratio measures whether the department is over-budget or under-budget on expenditures. The ratio will exceed 100 per cent when expenditures are over-budget and be less than 100 per cent when under-budget.

Overall performance

The department was under-budget on ordinary expenditures by \$6,507,300.



Why do we measure this?

This indicator measures the ability of the department to manage its overall expenses as compared to its budget. The department must ensure expenses are managed in accordance with the budget and be prepared to take corrective action if expenses are projected to be over-budget during the year.

What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

Expenditures were lower than budget mainly due to a change in the method of accounting for the AgriStability program.

Affordable and responsive government

Objective of the measure

Balance budget

Measure

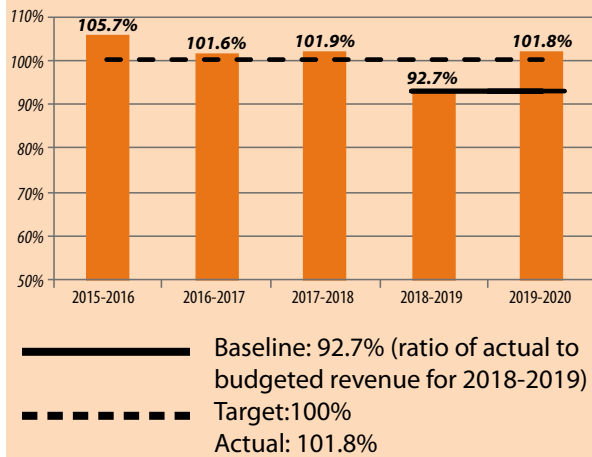
Ratio of actual to budgeted revenues

Description of measure

The ratio measures whether the department is over-budget or under-budget on revenue. The ratio will exceed 100 per cent when revenue has exceeded budget and be less than 100 per cent when revenue has not achieved budget.

Overall performance

The department's ordinary revenue was over budget by \$181,500.



Why do we measure this?

This measure shows whether the department is accomplishing the projected revenue that is tabled at the beginning of the fiscal year.

What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

The department reached 101.8 per cent of the ordinary revenue budget mainly as a result of higher than anticipated demand for Veterinary Services.

Energized private sector

Objective of the measure

Enable sector growth in the agriculture, aquaculture (shellfish and finfish), and fisheries sectors

Measure

Increase in wild blueberry exports (by weight)

Description of measure

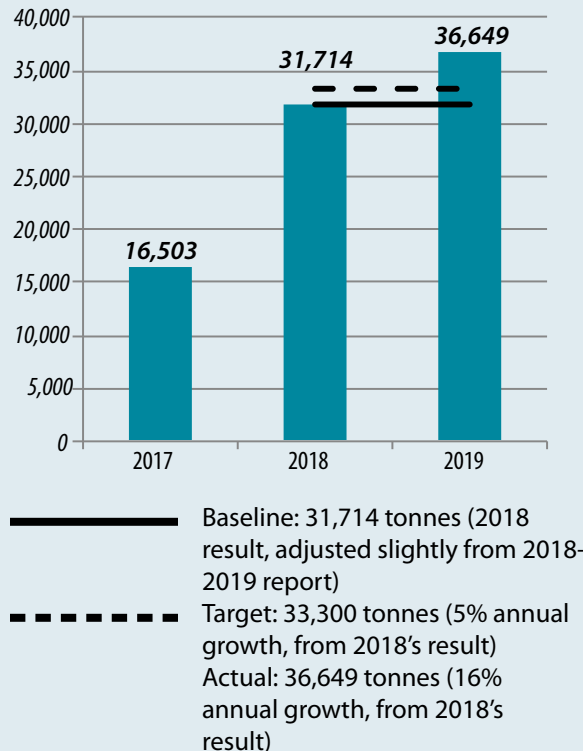
This measure captures the total amount of wild blueberries (tonnes) exported to international markets (USA, Europe, Asia, etc.) by calendar year, to understand the annual improvement for New Brunswick's wild blueberry exports.

Overall performance

The estimated volume of New Brunswick wild blueberries exported internationally grew by 16 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018 to reach 36,649 tonnes. Notable increases include the United States (74 per cent to reach 11,876 tonnes), Germany (5 per cent to reach 7,976 tonnes), Japan (9 per cent to reach 2,104 tonnes) and France (106 per cent to reach 1,697 tonnes).

Meanwhile, the estimated New Brunswick wild blueberry export value grew by 3 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018 to reach \$96M. Notable increases include the United States (113 per cent to reach \$27.6M), Germany (20 per cent to reach \$21.2M), Japan (26 per cent to reach \$7.2M), China (7 per cent to reach \$6.5M) and the Netherlands (17 per cent to reach \$6.1M).

Wild blueberry exports



Why do we measure this?

The wild blueberry sector has been identified as a priority area of economic growth for the province, given its potential for creating new companies and new jobs in New Brunswick. Diversification and growth of wild blueberry export volumes are a means to increase the demand and revenue of the entire wild blueberry sector.

What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

To support growth opportunities in the wild blueberry sector, the department has been working to diversify in international markets. In 2019-2020, department efforts focused on developing new markets for frozen wild blueberries in Europe and Asia. Targeted and sustained in-market missions and promotions were organized by department staff members, which contributed to increased growth of New Brunswick's wild blueberry export volumes in both markets (Europe and Asia). Wild blueberries are one of New Brunswick's products with the strongest market diversification, with no more than 32 per cent of its export volume allocated to one country.

Energized private sector

Objective of the measure

Enable sector growth in the agriculture, aquaculture (shellfish and finfish), and fisheries sectors

Measure

Growth in oyster production (bag count)

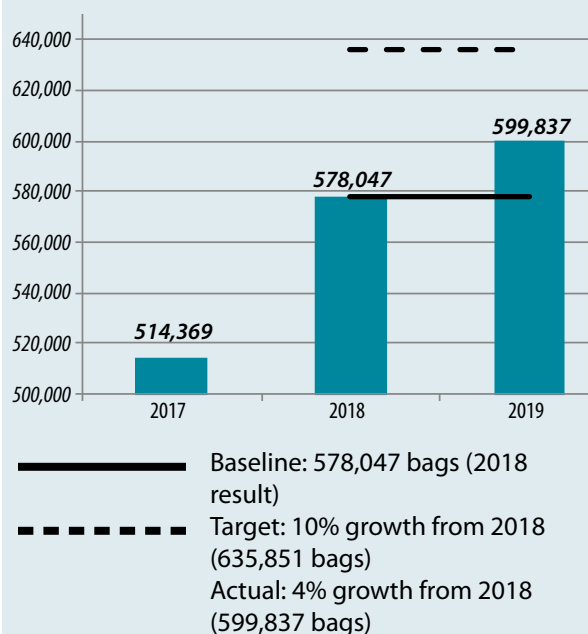
Description of measure

This measure uses the total number of oyster production bags in the water, by calendar year, to capture the annual growth rate for New Brunswick's oyster production.

Overall performance

The number of oyster production bags in the water grew by four per cent compared to 2018. This was below our targeted increase of 10 per cent annual growth, due to unexpected mortality events during the year. However, it does represent overall growth of 16.6 per cent since 2017.

Growth in oyster production



Why do we measure this?

While the shellfish aquaculture sector has experienced unprecedented growth in New Brunswick in the past decade, there remain opportunities to further grow the sector, thus creating jobs and developing the economy. The number of bags on a site directly correlate to the site's inventory.

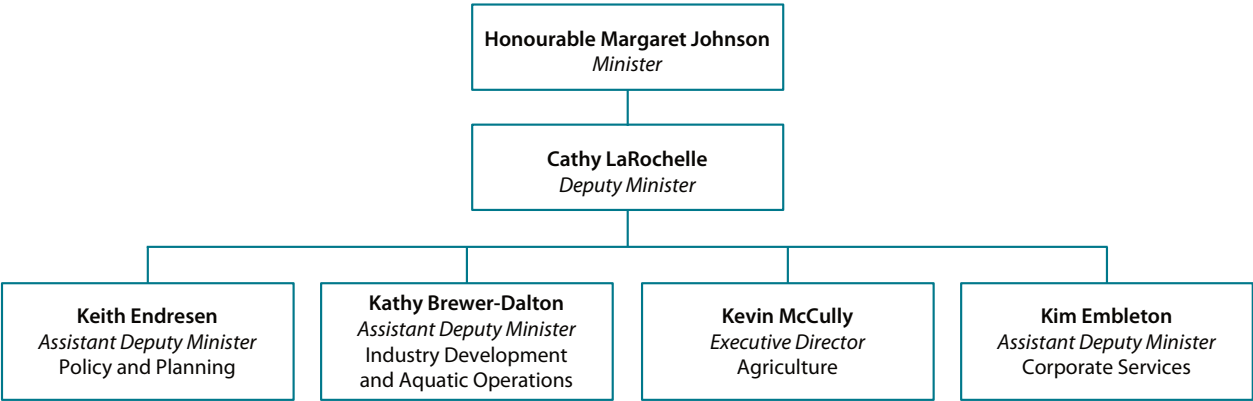
What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

This outcome was achieved as part of the department's 2017-2021 Shellfish Aquaculture Development Strategy. The goal of this strategy is to promote the orderly growth of New Brunswick's shellfish aquaculture industry, while recognizing the importance of protecting the environment and co-existing with other interest groups and users of the marine resources. Five broad objectives have been set to guide efforts aimed at increasing shellfish production significantly by 2021. Strategic actions have been identified to address priorities, the implementation of which is coordinated by the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries through a multi-party committee (the Shellfish Aquaculture Development Strategy Steering Committee) that includes industry and First Nations representatives.

Overview of departmental operations

The mandate of the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries is to develop and implement a total development approach for the agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and value-added sectors. This approach aims at improving the economic competitiveness and sustainable development of these sectors and related industries.

High-level organizational chart



Division overview and highlights

The department delivers targeted programs and services and provides strategic direction in support of economic development opportunities related to the sustainable primary and value-added agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

Please note that the budget and expenses for the common administration of the Departments of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and Natural Resources and Energy Development are recorded in the 2019-2020 annual report for the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development. The common administration applies to the Policy and Planning Division and the Corporate Services Division.

Agriculture

The Agriculture Division is composed of four branches: **Animal Health Services**; **Crop Sector Development**; **Livestock Sector Development**; and **Potato Sector Development**.

Highlights

- ◆ The division supported the development and implementation of industry strategies, programs and initiatives for the apple, cranberry, honey bee, potato, maple, grape, dairy, vegetable and beef sectors.

The **Animal Health Services Branch** provides veterinary field services and laboratory diagnostic services to the livestock sector to improve profitability, competitiveness and sustainability, as well as supporting important related programs for the greater public good (e.g., Rabies, New Brunswick Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). Veterinary field services provide on-farm animal health care, technical services and disease surveillance to agriculture and equine stakeholders throughout the province on a 365 day (24-hour basis).

Highlights

- ◆ Department veterinarians completed 8,598 on-farm visits to support the health and development of the livestock industry and were supported by the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory with diagnostic work.

The **Crop Sector Development Branch** works with the crop sectors to improve profitability, competitiveness and sustainability through the provision of technical advisory

services; provision of strategic and innovative research and monitoring; and development and implementation of strategic sector initiatives and programs to support economic development and growth.

Highlights

- ◆ The apple sector in New Brunswick continued to transition to higher density orchard systems and more profitable apple varieties, such as Honeycrisp. The branch supported the sector through strategic plan development and implementation funding that included the Apple Industry Development Program (to enable the establishment of high-density orchards to increase the yield per acre and reduce operating costs), the Wildlife Damage Mitigation Program (not exclusive to apples), as well as technical / research support.

The **Livestock Sector Development Branch** works with livestock sectors to improve profitability, competitiveness and sustainability through the provision of technical advisory services; provision of strategic and innovative research and monitoring; and development and implementation of strategic sector initiatives and programs to support economic development and growth.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch helped to support the dairy sector through programming and technical support including the promotion of the use of machinery co-ops, custom operators and financial management, which all contribute to improving profitability of the sector.
- ◆ The branch completed upgrades to its electronic database for registering the geographic location of New Brunswick livestock operations. To date, a total of 962 livestock premises identification numbers have been issued to New Brunswick livestock operations. This initiative is part of a national effort to develop a livestock traceability system to enhance food safety, traceability, and disease monitoring and control in Canada. Branch staff also provided input to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Traceability Task Team who continue to focus efforts on provincial collaboration in this area.

- ◆ The branch helped support the livestock sectors through programming and technical support including the promotion of livestock biosecurity, animal welfare practices, financial management tools, livestock genetic enhancement and technology adoption as part of efforts to improve the overall profitability of operations.

The **Potato Sector Development Branch** works with the potato sector to improve profitability, competitiveness and sustainability through the provision of technical advisory services; provision of strategic and innovative research and monitoring; and development and implementation of strategic sector initiatives and programs to support economic development and growth.

Highlights

- ◆ Sector specialists at the Potato Development Centre continued to provide support to the industry through extension services, disease diagnostics, technical support, processing potato testing, potato variety research trials, crop monitoring services for pests and disease, daily crop updates, post-harvest testing for Potato Virus "Y" and regulatory services to ensure enforcement of the *Potato Disease Eradication Act*. Support provided by the branch has contributed to potatoes remaining the highest value crop grown in New Brunswick with 2019 farm cash receipts at \$166.2M; notably higher than the five-year average of \$154.3M. Seeded area increased slightly by 1.7 per cent to 52,888 acres in the province, due mostly to processing contract volume increases.
- ◆ The branch also includes the Plant Propagation Centre (PPC) which is a provincial government lab accredited by the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency. The lab is responsible for the production of tissue cultured nuclear stock according to the requirements of the Canadian Seed Potato Certification System. This includes the introduction, banking, and distribution of potato varieties that have been disease-tested by an accredited laboratory. The PPC also houses the Canadian Potato Variety Repository, a collection of 500+ varieties that supplies nuclear stock material to the seed potato industry of New Brunswick, other Canadian provinces, the United States, and countries around the world.

Industry Development and Aquatic Operations Division

The Industry Development and Aquatic Operations Division consists of four branches: **Aquaculture; Commercial Fisheries and Strategic Initiatives; Marketing and Trade;** and **Business Growth**.

The **Aquaculture Branch** provides specialist advice and extension services to promote and foster the growth and competitiveness of the aquaculture sector and administers the regulatory framework for aquaculture in New Brunswick. The branch provides services and programs focused on maintaining sustainable practices that produce safe, high quality seafood products. The Aquaculture Branch includes two separate units: Aquaculture Sector Development and Aquaculture Science and Fish Health.

Highlights

- ◆ The Aquaculture Science and Fish Health Unit continued to monitor aquaculture stocks for fish health and shellfish health purposes. Approximately 5,200 salmon and over 500 oysters were sampled and tested in support of these two vital aquaculture sectors.
- ◆ Accomplishments under the departmental Shellfish Aquaculture Initiative in 2019-2020 included completion of a project related to increasing shellfish site utilization and began the work to update the leasing and licensing policy for marine shellfish aquaculture.

The **Commercial Fisheries and Strategic Initiatives Branch** provides specialist advice and extension services to promote and foster the growth and competitiveness of the fisheries sector. The branch provides services and programs focused on maintaining sustainable practices that produce safe, high quality seafood products. The Fisheries Branch includes two separate units: Commercial Fisheries, and the New Brunswick Aquarium and Marine Centre.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch continued to work and collaborate with the seafood industry to coordinate and implement priority objectives of the 2018-2020 *Fisheries Renewal Framework Action Plan* of the Minister's Round Table on Fisheries, which included recognition of the Fundy North Fishermen's Association and their members under the *Inshore Fisheries Representation Act*.

- ◆ The branch continued to work with the Federal government and support New Brunswick fish and seafood harvesters to retain and protect New Brunswick's access to the resource and to support the development of new emerging fisheries.
- ◆ The branch oversaw the management of the Marine Service Centers located in Shippagan and Grand Manan.
- ◆ The New Brunswick Aquarium and Marine Center saw a 21 per cent increase in visitors in 2019-2020, the largest increase in New Brunswick government attractions for the year, due in part to new exhibits and activities for children.

The **Marketing and Trade Branch** provides strategic delivery and coordination of marketing and trade initiatives. This includes facilitation of increased local, domestic and international New Brunswick seafood and agri-food sales. Key initiatives include the promotion of the New Brunswick Food Basket, the promotion and expansion of the seafood/agri-food export markets, the compilation of market intelligence and other related activities.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch led delegations to more than 24 trade events in Europe, Asia and North America, which contributed to a growth in seafood exports of 4 per cent. New Brunswick remains the second largest exporter of seafood in Canada with over \$1.74B in sales.
- ◆ In addition to increased seafood export sales, the New Brunswick Food Basket of products saw a 7% increase in export value of wild blueberries in China due in part to joint promotions with lobster.
- ◆ The branch focused efforts on expanding new and existing shellfish markets.
- ◆ The branch completed extensive consultations and engagement to inform the development of the second iteration of the *Local Food and Beverages Strategy*.

The **Business Growth Branch** provides strategic delivery and coordination of development initiatives to support clients, including new entrants. The branch is also responsible for fostering the growth of existing businesses looking at expansion, modernization or diversification within agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

Business growth officers are the liaison to programs, including extension services, offered by the department or various other partners.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch facilitated and managed the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, approving 23 projects to support the New Brunswick fish and seafood sectors. Key initiatives that were funded included year two of the New Brunswick Oyster Farm Development program and projects that supported the modernization and automation of the seafood processing sector.
- ◆ The branch facilitated a successful Business Succession Planning Workshop for agri-food and seafood producers, industry stakeholders, and development officers focusing on business valuation and succession planning.
- ◆ The branch continued implementation of the Client Relationship Management System, a system that enables data driven support to over 2,900 clients in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

Policy and Planning Division

The Policy and Planning Division provides support to the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development, and consists of the **Strategic Planning and Intergovernmental Relations Branch**, the **Regulatory Affairs Branch**, the **Performance Excellence Branch**, the **Corporate Affairs Branch**, and the **Economic Analysis and Trade Policy Branch**.

The **Strategic Planning and Intergovernmental Relations Branch** provides strategy development, strategic planning, and support for federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) activities.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch provided ongoing support for the annual conference of federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of Agriculture and the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers Conference.
- ◆ The branch, in collaboration with other branches in the department, played a pivotal role in drafting the new *Aquaculture Act*.
- ◆ The branch enabled work with its federal and provincial partners, as well as industry and other stakeholders, in support of the agriculture and agri-food, and fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

The **Regulatory Affairs Branch** provides leadership, coordination and support regarding the development of legislation, policy initiatives and proposals, and the Minister's legislative business. The branch also manages requests under the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and privacy matters.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch coordinated responses to 16 requests under the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- ◆ The branch, in conjunction with the Strategic Planning and Intergovernmental Relations Branch, continued to provide policy administrative support to the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development's Policy Management Committee.
- ◆ The branch continued to provide support to the department on legislative, regulatory and other proposals.

The **Performance Excellence Branch** supports the implementation of GNB's Formal Management system, leads process improvement projects and provides project management services throughout the department.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch worked with program areas to implement Lean Six Sigma Black Belt/Green Belt Process Improvement projects and conducted Waste Walk training sessions (jointly with the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development). The branch also implemented a new Improvement Reporting System allowing staff to easily report improvements they implement in their work areas.
- ◆ The branch supported the initial phases of the value for money initiative, establishing measures for each program area within the Department. The branch also supported program areas in the design and delivery of the department's strategy, provided project management support, and supported the establishment of daily management techniques.

The **Corporate Affairs Branch** provides corporate policy support, including review and analysis of contracts and agreements, and liaises with the Department of Justice and Office of the Attorney General on litigation, legislative and other major initiatives.

The **Economic Analysis and Trade Policy Branch** is responsible for trade policy analysis, economic forecasting, monitoring, research, statistical analysis, reporting and providing support to the agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, mining and energy sectors.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch published (on-line) Sectors in Review Reports for Agriculture and Agri-Food, Aquaculture and Commercial Fisheries, as well as the New Brunswick Agri-Food and Seafood Export Highlights, all for 2018.
- ◆ The branch also provided updates, input and analysis on various trade issues, including trade agreements.

Corporate Services Division

The Corporate Services Division provides direction and support in matters of human resources, financial services, information and technology, and facilities management and coordinates financial assistance to the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors under various funding programs. The division is also responsible for the management of the province's Crown land resources and various leasing and licensing functions. The division serves both the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development.

The division consists of the **Financial Services Branch**, the **Human Resource Services Branch**, the **Information Systems and Departmental Services Branch**, the **Crown Lands Leasing and Licensing Branch** and the **Industry Financial Programs Branch**.

The **Financial Services Branch** is responsible for the department's financial resources, including expenditure and revenue management, budgeting, accounting and financial reporting services.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch supported a change to the *Fiscal and Economic Update* published quarterly by the Department of Finance and Treasury Board. This change in reporting is a new way of providing up-to-date financial results to New Brunswickers by providing quarterly actual results in addition to the regular year-end projected results.
- ◆ The branch reviewed departmental data to assist with the transition to the GNB Enterprise Resource Planning system.

The **Human Resource Services Branch** is responsible for providing all human resource management services, including recruitment and retention, classification, labour relations, human resource policies, employee engagement, organizational development, succession planning and administration of programs such as health and safety.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch continued to provide effective and consistent human resource management to both the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development.
- ◆ The branch coordinated numerous health and safety and employee experience initiatives.

The **Information Systems and Departmental Services Branch** provides province-wide services to the department, including information technology, records management, information security, intranet management, facilities management, and geographic information services.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch implemented a new electronic document and records management system and provided hands-on training to approximately 200 staff members of the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries.
- ◆ The Geographic Information Services section launched a GIS Open Data website to provide a simple location for the public to access the department's geographic information related to both agricultural and marine aquaculture production. This information allows the public and businesses to make informed decisions in regard to growth and development in these sectors.

The **Crown Lands Leasing and Licensing Branch** is responsible for management of the province's Crown lands, including coastal and submerged lands. The branch administers the legal responsibilities and manages initiatives associated with Crown lands in New Brunswick, including leasing for agricultural and aquacultural purposes, and licensing for seafood processing, fish buyers and aquaculture. The branch also administers the Farm Land Identification Program.

Highlights

- ◆ Approximately 49 per cent of all farmland in New Brunswick reported in the 2016 Census is registered under the Farm Land Identification Program, accounting for approximately 165,100 ha of land, a decrease of 2000 ha since 2018-2019.

The **Industry Financial Programs Branch** provides financial assistance to the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors under various funding programs.

Highlights

- ◆ The branch administered the second year of the five-year Canadian Agricultural Partnership, an investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen and grow the agriculture sector.
- ◆ Changes were made to the regulatory framework of the *Agricultural Development Act* and *Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Act* to improve the department's loan and loan guarantee programs.

Financial information

Expenditures in detail 2019-2020 (\$)

Ordinary Program	Main Estimates	Appropriation Transfers	Final Budget	Actual	Difference
Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries	40,197,000	145,300	40,342,300	33,835,000	(6,507,300)
Total 2019-2020	40,197,000	145,300	40,342,300	33,835,000	(6,507,300)
Capital Account	Main Estimates	Appropriation Transfers	Final Budget	Actual	Difference
Capital Equipment	100,000	–	100,000	98,200	(1,800)
Strategic Infrastructure	200,000	–	200,000	165,700	(34,300)
Total 2019-2020	300,000	–	300,000	263,900	(36,100)
Loans and Advances	Main, Estimates	Appropriation Transfers	Final, Budget	Actual	Difference
New Brunswick Agricultural Insurance Commission	1,600,000	–	1,600,000	0	(1,600,000)
Loan Programs	9,500,000	–	9,500,000	2,441,600	(7,058,400)
Total 2019-2020	11,100,000	–	11,100,000	2,441,600	(8,658,400)

Revenues in detail 2019-2020 (\$)

Revenue	Main Estimates	Appropriation Transfers	Final Budget	Actual	Difference
Return on Investment	900,000	–	900,000	421,700	(478,300)
Licences and Permits	290,000	–	290,000	225,100	(64,900)
Sales of Goods and Services	4,447,000	–	4,447,000	5,034,900	587,900
Miscellaneous	71,000	–	71,000	225,600	154,600
Conditional Grants - Canada	4,630,000	–	4,630,000	4,612,200	(17,800)
Total 2019-2020	10,338,000	–	10,338,000	10,519,500	181,500
Loans and Advances	Main, Estimates	Appropriation Transfers	Final, Budget	Actual	Difference
Recoveries	3,000,000	–	3,000,000	1,427,600	(1,572,400)
Total 2019-2020	3,000,000	–	3,000,000	1,427,600	(1,572,400)

Summary of staffing activity

Pursuant to section 4 of the *Civil Service Act*, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources delegates staffing to each Deputy Head for his or her respective department(s). Please find below a summary of the staffing activity for 2019-2020 for the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries.

Number of permanent and temporary employees as of Dec. 31 of each year		
Employee type	2019	2018
Permanent	192	194
Temporary	23	26
TOTAL	215	220

The department advertised 19 competitions, including 13 open (public) competitions and six closed (internal) competitions.

Pursuant to sections 15 and 16 of the *Civil Service Act*, the department made the following appointments using processes to establish merit other than the competitive process.

Appointment type	Appointment description	Section of the <i>Civil Service Act</i>	Number
Specialized Professional, Scientific or Technical	An appointment may be made without competition when a position requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a high degree of expertise and training – a high degree of technical skill – recognized experts in their field. 	15(1)	1
Equal Employment Opportunity Program	Provides Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group with equal access to employment, training and advancement opportunities.	16(1)(a)	1
Department Talent Management Program	Permanent employees identified in corporate and departmental talent pools, who meet the four-point criteria for assessing talent, namely performance, readiness, willingness and criticalness.	16(1)(b)	1
Lateral transfer	The GNB transfer process facilitates the transfer of employees from within Part 1, 2 (school boards) and 3 (hospital corporations) of the Public Service.	16(1) or 16(1)(c)	5
Regular appointment of casual/temporary	An individual hired on a casual or temporary basis under section 17 may be appointed without competition to a regular properly classified position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(i)	0
Regular appointment of students/ apprentices	Summer students, university or community college co-op students or apprentices may be appointed without competition to an entry level position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(ii)	0

Pursuant to section 33 of the *Civil Service Act*, no complaints alleging favouritism were made to the Deputy Head of the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and no complaints were submitted to the Ombud.

Summary of legislation and legislative activity

Bill #	Name of legislation	Date of Royal Assent	Summary of changes
28	<i>Aquaculture Act</i> https://www1.gnb.ca/legis/bill/editform-e.asp?ID=1469&legi=59&num=3	December 20, 2019	The regulatory framework was based on an <i>Aquaculture Act</i> adopted in 1988 when the industry was developing. The maturing of the industry, improved animal husbandry practices, advances in animal health and welfare, increased environmental awareness and more public interest are driving new regulatory approaches.
29	<i>An Act to Amend the Seafood Processing Act</i> https://www1.gnb.ca/legis/bill/editform-e.asp?ID=1470&legi=59&num=3	December 20, 2019	Amendments were made to the <i>Act</i> to replace the former federal <i>Fish Inspection Act</i> by the new federal <i>Safe Food for Canadians Act</i> .

Name of regulation	Effective date	Summary of changes
Amendments to the General Regulation (84-295) under the <i>Agricultural Development Act</i>	February 5, 2020	Amended to facilitate economic development in the agriculture sector, and to standardize the administration of agriculture loan programs relative to other loan programs by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) adding the purchase of shares in a farming operation as an eligible activity under the loan program; b) specifying that the interest rate on loans cannot be less than the provincial lending rate; and c) repealing provisions that were no longer required.
Amendments to the General Regulation (84-166) under the <i>Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Act</i>	February 5, 2020	Amended to facilitate economic development in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) specifying that the interest rate on loans cannot be less than the provincial lending rate; and b) repealing provisions that were no longer required.
Repeal of the New Entrant Farmer Loan Regulation (90-125) under the <i>Agricultural Development Act</i>	February 5, 2020	Repealed the Regulation as new entrant farmer loans are now issued under the General Regulation (84-295) under the <i>Act</i> .
Repeal of the Perennial Crop Establishment Loan Regulation (90-152) under the <i>Agricultural Development Act</i>	February 5, 2020	Repealed the Regulation as perennial crop loans are now issued under the General Regulation (84-295) under the <i>Act</i> .
Amendments to the Plant Propagation Centre Fees Regulation (2001-4) under the <i>Financial Administration Act</i>	February 28, 2020	Amended to establish new and increased fees relative to the products and services provided by the New Brunswick Plant Propagation Centre with respect to potato crops under the <i>Financial Administration Act</i> .
General Regulation (2009-20) under the <i>Seafood Processing Act</i>	March 5, 2020	Amended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Replace all references to the federal <i>Fish Inspection Act</i> now that it has been replaced with the <i>Safe Food for Canadians Act</i>; and 2) Distinguish a third-party audit program as a distinct requirement from certification and authorize the Minister to determine acceptable audit programs for Class 2 and 3 primary processing licences.

The acts for which the department was responsible in 2019-2020 may be found at:

<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/deplinks?subjectnumber=1>

Summary of Official Languages activities

Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries has continued to work on its Official Languages action plan, which includes the four sectors of activity as identified in the Plan on Official Languages – Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value. The following outlines the actions taken during 2019-2020 in each of the four areas of focus.

Focus 1

Ensure access to service of equal quality in English and French throughout the province:

- Employees were reminded of their legal obligation to offer service of equal quality in English and French in all locations.
- Linguistic profiles were maintained throughout the year and utilized during the hiring process to ensure the department's ability to provide services in both Official Languages throughout the province.

Focus 2

An environment and climate that encourages, for all employees, the use of the Official Language of their choice in their workplace:

- Communication, correspondence, and interactions with employees, such as performance appraisals, were delivered in their Official Language of choice.
- The department continued to encourage the use of both Official Languages for small meetings. For all large meetings, the department promoted bilingual presentations, or separate English and French sessions.

Focus 3

New and revised government programs and policies will take the realities of the province's official linguistic communities into account:

- Correspondence and information were provided to the public in the Official Language of their choice.
- The department's annual report provided a summary of activities associated with Official Languages.

Focus 4

Ensure Public Service employees have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the *Official Languages Act*, relevant policies, regulations, and the province's obligations with respect to Official Languages:

- The Deputy Minister, and other management team members, reminded employees of their legal obligation to offer services in the Official Language of choice of the client. Employees were also reminded of the Language of Service Policy and Guidelines and the Official Languages Toolkit.
- As part of the ongoing process for employee orientation and performance management, employees were required to read the policies related to Official Languages.

Conclusion

The department understands its obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and related policies and strives to provide quality services to clients in both Official Languages. The department encourages and supports the use of both Official Languages in the workplace and invests in employee development through second-language training.

Summary of recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General

Section 1 – Includes the current reporting year and the previous year.

Name and year of audit area with link to online document	Recommendations	
	Total	Implemented
2019 Volume 3 Chapter 7 Contaminated Sites https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2019V3/Chap7e.pdf	1	

Implemented Recommendations	Actions Taken
7.31 We recommend the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries obtain and maintain proof of insurance or financial security as collateral for all property it leases to third parties.	Implemented. The Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries obtains and maintains proof of insurance or financial security as collateral for all property it leases to third parties.

Section 2 – Includes the reporting periods for years three, four and five.

Name and year of audit area with link to online document	Recommendations	
	Total	Implemented
Agricultural Fair Associations (2016) – Determine whether there is adequate government oversight of New Brunswick Agricultural Associations. http://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2016V1/Chap4e.pdf	4	4

Report on the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*

As provided under section 18(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, the chief executive shall prepare a report of any disclosures of wrongdoing that have been made to a supervisor or designated officer of the portion of the public service for which the chief executive officer is responsible. The Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries did not receive any disclosure(s) of wrongdoing in the 2019-2020 fiscal year.