

connection

THE HUMAN SIDE OF FARMING:

Mental Health in Canadian Agriculture

**AGM KEYNOTE ADDRESS
NOVEMBER 30, 10:30 AM**

In an industry that relies heavily on outside factors that are often unpredictable—such as weather—farmers face high levels of occupational stress, the cause of which is often beyond their control. As a veterinarian and associate professor of Epidemiology in the Department of Population Medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College, Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton

noticed many farmers struggling with their mental health and realized the need to explore this further.

The Ontario Veterinary College is located at the University of Guelph in Ontario. Her research is largely centred around the epidemiology of mental health and resilience in the agricultural and veterinary sectors. Epidemiology is a branch of medicine that deals with the incidence, distribution and possible control of diseases and other factors relating to health.

Dr. Jones-Bitton uses a mixed research methods approach—meaning she uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve her research objectives. Just recently she conducted a national survey among Canadian farmers on mental health, where she received an overwhelming response. These results show that farmers experience higher levels of mental stress and distress than other occupations. After analyzing the results of her research,



Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton is the keynote speaker at the Farm Safety Nova Scotia AGM.

Dr. Jones-Bitton and her team worked diligently to develop a mental health literacy training program called “In the Know” that is specific to the agricultural community—which is being piloted this fall!

Passionate about Canadian agriculture and the veterinary profession, she is eager to share her findings and to tell the story of the “human side of farming.” Join Farm Safety Nova Scotia as they welcome Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton, who will update us on her research, new programs, and provide us with strategies to ensure we take care of ourselves and each other in this challenging industry. 🌱

**FARM SAFETY NOVA SCOTIA
Notice of Annual Meeting**

Join us at **10:30 am on Friday, November 30**, Best Western Glengarry, Willow Street, Truro.

Hear the latest research from — Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton *“The Human Side of Farming: Mental Health in Canadian Agriculture.”*

The NSFA Annual Meeting will recess for the FSNS Annual Meeting, and resume immediately after.

If you have registered for the NSFA Annual Meeting, you are automatically registered for the FSNS Annual Meeting.

If you would like to register for the FSNS Annual Meeting **only**, please contact info@farmsafetyns.ca

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masthead photo: Browntown Farms in Shubenacadie (Photo: Seonaid MacDonell)

Mental Health Support

While we all know farmers are tough, hardworking people, this doesn't mean they are immune to stress and hardships. Approximately 1 in 5 Canadians are affected by mental illness, which many of us know either through our own experience or, through the experience of someone close to us (CMHA, 2018). The work being performed by Dr. Jones-Bitton and her team is making great strides in creating awareness of the stresses that come along with the industry.

Their research determined that, out of those surveyed, 35% had depression, 45% had high stress, and 58% had differing levels of anxiety (Tennison, 2016). From analyzing their research came their *In The Know* program. This is a program created for farmers to teach them healthy coping skills for dealing with stress and how to safely have conversations about mental health (McReavy, 2018). This program can mean more opportunity for having conversations on mental health in the agriculture industry, breaking away the stigma and letting others know they're not alone (Roberts, 2016).

FSNS recognizes the importance of having supports available. We are

monitoring the work of Dr. Jones-Bitton and her team and hope to bring you the resources you need to continue the conversation and support our industry.

While the *In The Know* program is being piloted, there are still options available for those who are seeking immediate support—one of which is the **Farm Family Support Center 1-844-880-9142** (available 24/7 for confidential support). As well, there is the **Mental Health Crisis Telephone Line 1-888-429-8167** or **1-902-429-8167**. Remember, there is always someone to talk to.

References:

Canadian Mental Health Association. (2018). *Fast facts about mental illness*. Canadian Mental Health Association. Retrieved from <https://cmha.ca/about-cmha/fast-facts-about-mental-illness>

McReavy, S. (2018). *Creating mental health resources tailored for Canadian farmers*. University of Guelph. Retrieved from: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/article/creating-mental-health-resources-tailored-canadian-farmers>

Roberts, O. (2016). *Farmers relieved mental health issues on the table: Coordinator*. RealAgriculture. Retrieved from: <https://www.realagriculture.com/2016/01/farmers-relieved-mental-health-issues-on-the-table-coordinator/>

Tennison, R. (2016). *Farmers suffering mental health issues fail to seek help*. The Western Producer. Retrieved from: <https://www.producer.com/2016/07/farmers-suffering-mental-health-issues-fail-to-seek-help/>

Monthly Insight



Keeping you up-to-date on upcoming training and workshops, current initiatives, helpful resources and farm safety news!

We work with Nova Scotia farms to keep farmers, their families, and their employees safe. It is our goal to ensure farmers have access to the tools and resources they need to operate safe and productive farms.

Farm Safety in the News



Commentary: Stuck behind a farm tractor? Please give it some space.

I've finished working in the field for the day and it's time to head back to the farm and have dinner with my family....

[Read more
www.thechronicleherald.ca](http://www.thechronicleherald.ca)

We are very happy to announce our new electronic monthly newsletter called the **Monthly Insight!** It will be sent out the first Thursday of each month—featuring information on training, workshops, new initiatives, campaigns and much more!

If you would like to sign up to receive the Monthly Insight, please leave us your email at [farmsafetyns.ca/monthlyinsight/](mailto:info@farmsafetyns.ca)

UPCOMING Training

Online Training

There are also a number of online training courses available on the FSNS website. Visit www.farmsafetyns.ca

On-Farm Inspection Session

Are you interested in learning more about an OHS inspection? Wondering what improvements you should make on your farm? We have an opportunity for you!

The objective of the sessions is to provide you with insight into potential health and safety improvements on your farm and to educate on the OHS inspection process. The events are educational in capacity and no administrative penalties or orders will be issued.

If you are interested in either hosting an **On-Farm Inspection Workshop** or an **Individual On-Farm Inspection** contact us at info@farmsafetyns.ca (902) 893-2293.

For more information on training, or to schedule a course in your area, please contact us!

Visit www.farmsafetyns.ca
Call (902) 893-2293 or
Email info@farmsafetyns.ca

FARM SAFETY NOVA SCOTIA LAUNCHES

“ONE ROAD” Campaign

Release as issued to media on October 2 / 2018

Farmers aren't exactly surprised to learn that they often face the ire of commuters when they need to take their farm equipment onto Nova Scotia's roads and highways. What does surprise them is the number of motorists who would rather risk their own lives, and the farmers' lives, rather than slow down.

It's an issue that Farm Safety Nova Scotia is prioritizing in its latest campaign called, "One Road."

The campaign's objective is two-fold: keeping farmers, workers and commuters all safe when farm vehicles are on highways with motorists traveling at high speeds, and making sure farmers/workers are adhering to safe practices when using provincial highways and roadways.

"As we are in the midst of fall harvest season, Nova Scotians are going to see more of our farmers and farm workers out on the roads transporting goods in slow-moving farm equipment," said Carolyn Van Den Heuvel,

manager with Farm Safety Nova Scotia. "This campaign is to remind everyone that we all share the same road, but use it for different purposes. Whether it's the farmer or the motorist—road safety is everyone's responsibility."

Van Den Heuvel makes clear that while their message hopes to create greater awareness and understanding about farm vehicles operating on Nova Scotia's highways, there is also a key role for farmers and their workers to play in making sure they follow safe practices and vehicle compliance regulations.

Farmers are often traveling short distances on the road; however they are typically only travelling 30–40 km/hr. The equipment is wide and can be longer than you expect. When you see a slow-moving vehicle, slow down and use caution.



The "One Road" campaign was launched this fall by FSNS to promote safety on the roads for both farmers and motorists.

"Farming is vital to our economy here in Nova Scotia and has been for a long time. People seem to realize and respect this until they find themselves behind a slow-moving tractor on the highway," said David Newcombe of Cornwallis Farms. "Getting on the road with our equipment is stressful. We know we are holding motorists up—we need motorists to know that we're just doing our jobs and we want to do them safely."

The campaign will feature print ads and social media communications over the next few months and is expected to expand in the spring of 2019. 🌱

SEPTEMBER 2018

Kids learning about agriculture at the Hants County Exhibition Future Farmers event



From the boardroom table

The FSNS Board of Directors met with a full agenda on September 20th to discuss funding, operational plans, policies and more! Earlier in September, FSNS received confirmation of receiving \$100,000 through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program in a one year agreement with the NSDA, retroactive to April 2018. Receiving this funding contract took some pressure of the organization for the next few months and will allow us to execute components of our strategic plan!

With funding confirmed for the April 2018 – March 2019 funding year, the budget and operational plan was presented by staff and approved by the Board at this meeting. However, being part way through the funding year, there was also discussion on the future funding of the organization and the Board and staff will continue to strategize to secure further funding moving forward.

In thinking into the future, the Board has also decided to review and create governance policies to support the Board and staff in their work for the organization. The intention of the policies is to provide direction to the Board of Directors and staff on the

internal functioning of the organization in an effort to work in the best interest of its members.

FSNS continues to support national initiatives including the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association. FSNS Manager Carolyn Van Den Heuvel has accepted a nomination for a second 3-year term with the CASA Board of Directors. Election results will be announced at the October 10th Annual General Meeting. FSNS has also agreed to provide a \$1000 sponsorship to the CSA Agricultural Machinery Technical Committee for the upcoming year. This committee is responsible for reviewing and approving standards relating to agricultural machinery and is important to equipment manufacturing and users.

The FSNS Annual Meeting is quickly approaching and the Board currently has two vacancies coming up for 3-year director terms. FSNS is seeking qualified candidates with experience in governance, government and industry relations and advocacy. The Nominating Committee of the NSFA is responsible for finding suitable candidates for the FSNS Board.

LLOYD EVANS MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Lloyd Evans, a founding director of FSNS, passed away earlier this summer. We were very honoured that the Evans family identified FSNS for donations in memory of Lloyd.



Lloyd was integral to the establishment of FSNS and was one of the original directors of the organization. As many know, Lloyd was extremely passionate about the industry and chose to give back by participating in various organizations. We are happy that FSNS was one of those organizations, as even after his board involvement he was sure to keep in touch and advocate for the organization.

We thank all those who contributed memorial donations and we will ensure it helps carry Lloyd's legacy forward. All contributions have been earmarked in an in-trust memorial fund and we will ensure they support an initiative of which Lloyd would be proud. 🌱

For NS farmers seeking support – **Farm Family Support Line**

A confidential, short-term counselling and advisory service — to help you manage and reduce the stresses in life, including mental health, legal, financial and more.

No cost for up to 3 hrs of service per issue.

Line open 24 hours a day —
Available to farmers or their immediate family members

1.844.880.9142

TTY: 1.877.338.0275

workhealthlife.com

MORNEAU SHEPELL

Farm Family Support Line is managed by Morneau Shepell as a Member Assistance Program.

FSNS Board of Directors

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www.farmsafetyns.ca

Connection is produced by:

Farm Safety Nova Scotia
60 Research Dr, Bible Hill, NS B6L 1N2

info@farmsafetyns.ca

o: (902) 893-2293

f: (902) 893-7063

FSNS Manager: Carolyn Van Den Heuvel
Member Services Coordinator:
Seonaid MacDonell

