

Media Kit for Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust

About the Trust:

The AVFTS was born from a need to protect Annapolis Valley's valuable farmland from development. In Canada since 1966, over 6 million hectares of land previously farmed has been lost to alternative uses, chiefly development, and the pace is not slowing. The Trust (a charitable, not-for-profit, community run organization) seeks to protect and conserve as much farmland as possible for farming in perpetuity.

Who to Contact:

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Background (adapted from an article submitted by AVFT to The Grapevine in 2017):

Standing at the stunning Lookoff and gazing over thousands of hectares of Nova Scotia's best farmland, you could be forgiven in believing that farms are forever. Unfortunately, farmland in Canada is disappearing at a disturbing rate with over 6 million hectares lost mainly to development since 1966.

Nova Scotia is certainly not immune to the trend, which is why the work of the Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust is so important. Formed by a group of concerned but enthusiastic Valley community leaders in 2009, the AVFT set out to facilitate the preservation of farmland, and simultaneously inform landowners and the general public on options for conserving our farming land base.

As the headline on the Trust's website (preservefarmland.com) states: 'Good Farmers are not Scarce. Land they can afford to farm is. We can change this.' Only 3 percent of Nova Scotia's land is in the sought and fertile class 2 category, and already 7 percent of that meagre base is used for commercial and residential building.

The AVFT works in partnership with landowners who wish to ensure their land is used for agriculture in perpetuity by enacting a voluntary conservation easement on their property. As Brian Newcombe, chairperson of the Trust, is quick to point out, the land remains the property of the farmer, but the Trust helps to ensure that no severance for non-agricultural uses can ever take place, as mandated under the Province's 2013 Community Easement legislation. Since this may mean a decrease in monetary value of the land to the owner, the easement is generally accompanied by income and property tax benefits to the owner(s).

Should the farmer wish to take a different approach and donate his or her land, the AVFT can take ownership either immediately or over a period of years, ensuring that the conservation easement is respected and that the land continues to be used for agriculture.

Land trusts exist to hold or protect land for public benefit. Many people are familiar with those trusts that protect natural areas, species at risk, or ecologically sensitive tracts of land, but many farmland trusts also exist throughout Canada. The AVFT is the first of its kind in Nova Scotia, and it is proud to work to protect and preserve farmland for future generations in the fertile valley renowned for its apples, blueberries, vegetables, wine grapes and animal husbandry.

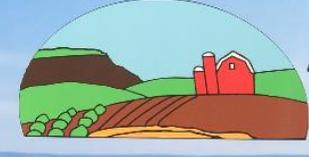
Farming is the economic engine that supports rural Nova Scotia. Without the wealth and employment generated by farming, fewer businesses could survive in our smaller towns and villages. The range of local products and services, from fresh strawberries in July to the corn mazes that delight families in our colourful fall, would disappear.

Thanks to the work of the AVFT, farmland like that of Paul and Marilyn Cameron (Hawthorn Hill Farm), and Josh Oulton and Patricia Bishop (TapRoot Farm), who have preserved their farms through agricultural conservation easements, will still be here for future generations.

AVFT is a registered community organization with charitable status and can be supported through tax-deductible donations. Funds raised are used to assist in the protection and upholding of easements, and where appropriate, in the acquisition of land. Membership is another way to support the trust and is available to all interested community members.





 **Annapolis Valley
Farmland Trust**

Thank you to the **OULTON** family.
This farmland is protected by Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust

www.preservefarmland.com 