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C A N A D A

2003–2004 Annual Report

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

**Annual Report
2003–2004**

**For the Fiscal Year Ended
March 31, 2004**

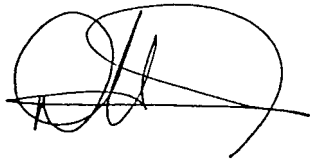
Fredericton, NB

The Honourable Herménégilde Chiasson
Lieutenant Governor of the
Province of New Brunswick

May it please Your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit to you the Annual Report of the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,



David Alward
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

Fredericton, NB

The Honourable David Alward
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

Dear Sir:

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report of the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,



T. Byron James
Deputy Minister
Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

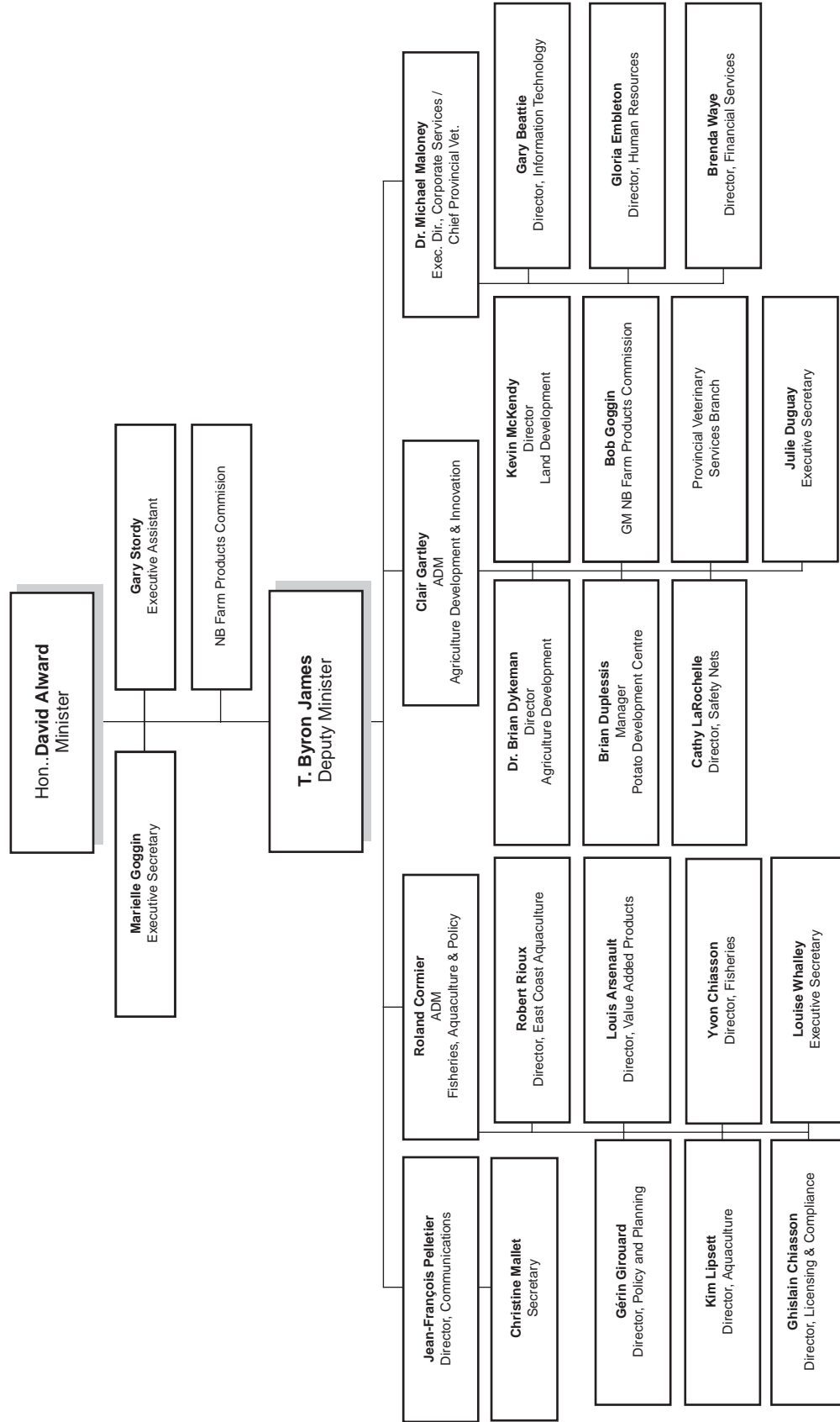
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Organizational Chart

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

March 2004



Vision

“A strategically focused team, nationally recognized, as driving sustainable growth and innovation for the greater prosperity of New Brunswick.”

Mission

“To promote sustainable growth of the Agriculture, Fisheries, and Aquaculture sectors through innovative partnerships, targeted policies and programs resulting in greater prosperity for New Brunswickers.”

Mandate

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture strives to achieve its vision and mission through:

- The adoption of a total development approach to food production and processing, from primary to value-added production, aimed at improving economic competitiveness and sustainable development of the food sector.
- The administration of a transparent and effective regulatory framework supportive of development.
- The creation of new economic opportunities through the provision of expertise and key research and development and innovation investments in the bio-economy industry.
- Contributions towards the achievement of a higher standard of living, wellness, and quality of life for all New Brunswickers.

Acts administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

- Agriculture Commodity Price Stabilization Act
- Agriculture Land Protection and Development Act
- Agriculture Operation Practices Act
- Apiary Inspection Act
- Aquaculture Act
- Crop Insurance Act
- Diseases of Animals Act
- Farm Income Assurance Act
- Fish Processing Act
- Injurious Insect and Pest Act *
- Inshore Fisheries Representation Act
- Livestock Operations Act
- Marshland Reclamation Act
- Natural Products Act
- New Brunswick Grain Act
- Plant Diseases Act *
- Plant Health Act
- Potato Disease Eradication Act
- Poultry Health Protection Act
- Sheep Protection Act
- Weed Control Act *
- Women's Institute and Institut féminin Act

* was repealed in September 2003

Acts administered under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Aquaculture and administered by a Board or an Association

- Keswick Islands Act (*administered by the Keswick Islands Property Owners Association*)

AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Agriculture Development Branch

The Branch develops and implements strategies, programs and initiatives required to further the growth of the agri-food and agri-product industry in the province. The Branch provides scientific expertise and information to stimulate innovation, encourage sustainability, improve competitiveness and facilitate total development of the sector. The Branch also advises government on policy and issues related to the sector.

The Branch is comprised of three sections: *Crop Development*, *Livestock Development* and *Integrated Pest Management*. The Branch also includes an Agriculture Research Coordinator position.

The *Crop Development Section* is responsible for facilitating development and innovation in the cranberry, field crop, greenhouse, vegetable, nursery, landscape, small fruit, tree fruit, wild blueberry and apiculture sectors. The *Livestock Development Section* is responsible for facilitating development and innovation in the dairy, beef, swine, poultry, sheep, fur and alternate livestock sectors. Expertise is provided by regional development officers and provincial specialists for both sections.

The *Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Section* supports departmental efforts to improve competitiveness and sustainability within the agricultural sector by promoting the adoption of IPM principles for the management of pests in an effective, safe, economical and environmentally sound manner. The section also develops and promotes the adoption of organic food production within the agriculture sector where opportunities exist. The section provides expertise in plant pathology, entomology, weed science, and organic agriculture.

The Research Coordinator is responsible for encouraging sector innovation and the development of bio-economy opportunities. The Branch also has operational responsibilities for the NB Grain Commission, the NB Dairy Laboratory and Agriexport Inc.

Highlights

- Regulatory responsibilities of the Branch included the *Apiary Inspection Act*, *Injurious Insect and Pest Act*, *New Brunswick Grain Act*, *Plant Diseases Act*, *Sheep Protection Act* and the *Weed Control Act*. The *Injurious Insect and Pest Act*, the *Plant Diseases Act* and the *Weed Control Act* were repealed in September 2003 and replaced with a newly proclaimed *Plant Health Act*.
- The Branch provided support for the *Potato Disease Eradication Act* through cull pile inspection and enforcement, the *NB Grain Act* by supporting the operation of the NB Grain Commission and co-ordination of the Chief Grain Grader services, and the *Natural Products Act* by issuing of Controlled Atmosphere apple storage licenses and verification of storage conditions.
- The Branch provided knowledge transfer support in the areas of production and enterprise development and assisted with the implementation of initiatives under the Canada/NB Agricultural Policy Framework.
 - Twenty-three local and provincial knowledge transfer events were organized with partners including: NB Soil and Crop Improvement Association, NB Horticulture Trades Association, NB Wild Blueberry Growers Association, Apple Growers of NB, Potatoes NB, Maritime Branch of the Canadian Seed Growers Association, Atlantic Grains Council, NB Cranberry Growers Association, Horticulture NB and NB Beekeepers Association.
 - The Branch organized the 2003 Fusarium Workshop, as series of five regional workshops in cooperation with the NB Grain Commission and Atlantic Grains Council to help grain producers manage an outbreak of this disease. The Branch also organized in cooperation with beef industry stakeholders a series of seven local beef producer workshops regarding on-farm food safety. With industry, the Branch helped organize Hort. Congress 2004, Potato Conference 2004, NB Soil & Crop Improvement Association 2004 annual meetings and a Poultry Health Forum. The provincial conferences included technical presentations and trade shows.
 - Branch staff provided over 90 presentations at field days, tours, technical sessions, producer meetings or conferences. Eleven new and updated publications were generated from research findings and four new IPM posters were developed and released.
 - The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plant Pest Diagnostic Laboratory processed 187 plant disease samples, 136 insect samples, and 64 weed /herbicide injury samples.

- The Branch supported and promoted pesticide risk reduction at the provincial and national level.
- Two “Emergency Use” request packages were compiled and submitted to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). Emergency pesticide registrations were granted for Senator™ on mushrooms and CheckMite™ on honeybees. Supporting data to document pesticide resistance to CheckMite™ and efficacy was generated through numerous tests. A bee over-wintering loss survey was also coordinated as per requirements of the emergency use.
- New crop development efforts resulted in the establishment of 120 acres of processing carrots in Southeastern NB, 60 acres of processing squash and 750 acres of hybrid seed canola in Central / Western NB.
- Mature cranberry acreage, capable of producing a marketable crop, increased by 60 acres to a total of 358 acres. Total planted acres increased to 496 acres. The provincial crop increased by 31% over the previous year. Value-added product development continued in areas of dried-sweetened fruit, juice, wines and specialty wines.
- Work continued on two Crown land projects for wild blueberry development in Northeast NB: 9,000 acres on the former Tracadie Range and 7,000 acres of land in the Acadian Peninsula. Activities related to the latter project included suitable land identification and preliminary mapping, and land use consultations with stakeholders.
- A close working relationship with the organic industry through an industry advisory group was maintained. Support was continued for the Canadian Organic Centre at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and the Atlantic Certified Organic Growers Network (ACORN). A survey was conducted to determine the impact of the sector on NB and the region.
- The Branch was involved with the revision of the National Organic Standard and the development of a national organic regulatory system. These initiatives will aid in the development of the sector and export markets.
- The Branch updated nine crop production profiles, developmental strategies and research priorities in consultation with industry partners and provided technical reviews on research and development proposals to provincial and federal funding agencies.
- To encourage crop technology innovation/adoption and sustainable development, the Branch provided scientific leadership and coordination for 26 research and demonstration projects in horticulture crops and 29 projects in field crops.
- The Provincial Dairy Laboratory continued to provide food safety and quality testing for milk products as required under the *Natural Products Act*. Testing of individual farm samples includes a monthly Standard Plate Count, Laboratory Pasteurization Count, Freezing Temperature (for added water) and Somatic Cell Count. A total of 3,565 producer samples were tested for these parameters as well as 672 bulk truck samples. 1,171 supplemental tests were performed to assist producers with quality problems. Inhibitor (antibiotic) testing remained a major priority with 144 samples tested, including one meat sample. The Laboratory also provided composition testing as a service to the Dairy Farmers of New Brunswick, for milk producer payment purposes. 17,525 samples were tested for composition (fat, protein and lactose) in 2003, which included 14,070 for payment and 3,455 other samples. Quality testing of dairy solids (cheese, butter, ice cream) consists of Standard Plate Count, Yeast & Mould Count and Coliform Count. A total of 583 bacterial counts were performed on 236 samples. A total of 1,148 tests were performed on 450 fluid milk products for New Brunswick dairy processors. The total number of tests carried out at the Provincial Dairy Laboratory in 2003 was 56,720.
- A Chief Apiary Inspector was employed on an as needed basis by the Department in late 2003 to encourage compliance with the *Apiary Inspection Act*. A total of 234 beekeepers were registered in 2003 with 5,917 colonies. A total of 29 apiaries were inspected for disease and pest problems.
- The Department conducted an over-wintering survey to evaluate honey bee losses caused by winter injury in 2002 / 2003 and administered a bee recovery program for losses suffered during the winter of 2001-02. Under the program, \$88,880 was contributed to 17 beekeepers as a result of the loss of 2,222 colonies.
- The ruminant livestock sectors were severely impacted by the occurrence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in Alberta. The immediate economic impact was a plunge in market prices for all classes of beef animals as well as breeding dairy animals and other ruminants, caused by Canadian export market losses. The Department administered and provided three special financial assistance programs to NB producers to help them deal with the BSE crisis:
 - **Canada-New Brunswick BSE Recovery Program** – This program was designed to help defray some of the losses due to the sudden decline in cattle prices following the May 20, 2003 find of BSE in Alberta. Under the program, \$1,356,583 was contributed to 375 producers, and a further \$60,559 was contributed to 32 applications from provincially licensed abattoirs. The provincial share of the program was 40% or \$566,857.

- **Canada-New Brunswick Cull Animal Program** – The program provided cash payments to ruminant livestock herd owners to compensate for the reduced value of cull animals. Farmers were eligible for compensation of \$320 per head. Approximately 1,000 applications were received from NB herd owners. The total program expenditure was \$1.65 million of which New Brunswick's share was 40 % or \$660,000.
- **New Brunswick BSE Recovery Supplement** – This was a 100% provincially funded program which provided \$56,477 in deficiency payments to New Brunswick feedlots on finished cattle sold and delivered for slaughter between September 1, 2003, and October 17, 2003. The program was designed to address producer losses during the six-week period immediately after expiry of the BSE Recovery Program.

Agriculture Research / Innovation

The Coordinator of Agriculture Research was the lead on several major science projects including the establishment of the National Agricultural Greenhouse Management Institute and Agcheck Canada. The coordinator participated in "The NB Potato Industry: An Economic and Strategic Cluster Analysis" project, and was the provincial co-chair for the Science and Innovation element of the Canada/NB Agricultural Policy Framework.

New Brunswick Grain Commission

The purpose of the Commission is to encourage the production of high quality grains in NB. Seven representatives and one secretary continued their duties as appointees to the NB Grain Commission. Membership included producers (4), the feed grain trade (1), grain seed producers (1) and government (1). Two meetings and two conference calls were held to deal with Commission business. The Commission maintained its membership on the Atlantic Grains Council and cooperated with the Department and the council in conducting a series of five regional workshops on Fusarium in cereals. The Chief Grain Grader offered workshop training to first time graders and provided technical support to the 31 authorized grain graders in the province.

Land Development Branch

The Land Development Branch is responsible for the creation of strategies and initiatives aimed at the sustainable development and management of private and Crown land resources for crop and livestock production. The Branch also encourages the proper management of agricultural operations and ensures maintenance of the marshland protection systems in Westmorland and Albert Counties.

The Branch is responsible for the following legislation: *Agricultural Land Protection and Development Act*, *Livestock Operations Act*, *Marshland Reclamation Act* and the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* as well as administration of the Farm Land Identification Program under the *Real Property Tax Act*.

Land Development Officers and Technologists are strategically located throughout the province and are responsible for the administration and delivery of land and environment programs and for providing technical advice to farmers in areas such as water management, irrigation, land development, manure management, crop development and environmental stewardship.

Resource Development Specialists located in Fredericton provide recommendations on the assessment and management of soil, fertilizers, manure, and amendments for agricultural land use as well as application technologies related to fertilizer, manure and pesticide use. Research is conducted in collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and farm organizations. Climate assessments, environmental data collection and weather summary information are also provided.

The New Brunswick Agricultural Laboratory provides analytical services for field and greenhouse soils, soil amendments, feed and plant tissue to agricultural producers and the general public and provides support for research activities. A full range of analyses is available for field and greenhouse soil, livestock feed, plant tissue and soil amendments including manure and compost.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture is responsible for maintaining water control infrastructure that prevents tidal flooding of 15,000 hectares of marshland in the southeast region of the province. This includes 80 kilometers of dykes, 76 water control structures including 2 tidal dams and 112 kilometers of marsh roads and bridges. Staff monitors the integrity of earthen barriers, dams and aboiteaux, and provides for their operation, maintenance and repair.

Highlights:

Resource Development

- The Branch cooperated with farm organizations and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, as either scientific leads or collaborators, in 21 technology evaluation and demonstration projects involving a wide variety of crops at locations throughout the province.
- The Branch contributed to a major initiative of the New Brunswick Taking Charge Committee under the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program that included field trials, demonstrations, the preparation of fact sheets and the preparation of a booth highlighting results.
- Documents were reviewed and comments prepared for numerous organizations including eight for District Planning Commissions and ten for the National Agri-Environmental Health Analysis and Reporting Program (NAHARP).
- Nutrient management planning was supported through participation in an international conference and local courses, plus the delivery of supplementary training and information sessions for members of agro-environmental clubs.

Marshland Maintenance

- A new section of earthen barrier was constructed on the Aulac marsh body behind the existing barrier which was severely impacted and deteriorated by wave action from the Cumberland Basin. The cost of the project was \$64,700. Repairs were completed on another section of the earthen barrier located next to the Nova Scotia border stabilizing the structure at a cost of \$54,500.
- A major aboiteau located on the Westcock marsh body near Sackville was relined with polyethylene pipe and stabilized using concrete, grout and armor stone. The cost of the project was \$31,800.
- A section of the Dixon Island marsh body earthen barrier was repaired and protected using large armor stone. The cost of the project was \$26,200.
- A bridge crossing being used by Sackville farmers located on the Tantramar marsh that had collapsed in 2002 was replaced with a ten-foot diameter corrugated steel pipe at a cost of \$22,500. The new crossing helps farmers in accessing an important area of cropland used for their farming operations.
- Materials such as culverts and steel fabrication of aboiteaux gates and parts totaled \$38,400.
- Marshland drainage, road improvements and maintenance totaled \$59,600.
- Dam maintenance for the Shepody River dam and the Tantramar River dam such as electrical repairs and steel lifting arm fabrication and installation totaled \$25,300.

Farm Land Identification Program – The program encourages the preservation of agricultural land by providing tax deferrals for farm land and buildings.

- The program provided provincial property tax deferrals of \$4.5 million to some 5,100 landowners on approximately 10,574 individual properties. The deferrals consist of \$2 million for land and \$2.5 million for buildings. The cumulative total deferred property tax under the program is approximately \$52 million.
- During the calendar year 2003, 110 properties were deregistered or withdrawn from FLIP, primarily for residential purposes. The taxes repaid on these accounts amounted to \$121,499.13 and penalties were \$178,778.05, for a total of \$300,387.20.
- 108 new applications were processed for registration of property and 591 transfers of ownership of registered property were processed.
- The Farm Land Identification Program Appeal Board heard five appeals of decisions of the Registrar.
- The Registry of Agricultural Land established under the *Agricultural Land Protection and Development Act* has 15,462 land parcels registered for protection.

Crown Land Leasing – The program facilitates the use of Crown land for agricultural production.

- During the fiscal year, leases were managed on 146 land parcels totaling 8,348 hectares.
- 323 hectares of pasture land on the Aulac marsh near Sackville, NB was transferred to the Department for the

benefit of local farmers.

- The Department in cooperation with the Tantramar Grassland Cooperative transferred 141 hectares of wetland on the Tantramar Marsh to the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture for Wildlife program.

Agricultural Laboratory – The Agricultural Laboratory provides analytical services for field and greenhouse soils, soil amendments, feed and plant tissue samples to agricultural producers, research projects and the general public.

- 6,178 field soil samples were received, with an average turnaround time of 14.4 working days.
- 409 greenhouse soil / water samples were received, with an average turnaround time of 2 working days.
- 4,054 livestock feed / manure samples were received, with an average turnaround time of 5.1 working days.
- 1,735 plant tissue samples were received, with an average turnaround time of 3.1 working days.
- The average turnaround time for soil samples was significantly higher than 2002–2003 due to a prolonged instrument breakdown during the fall. The processing times for greenhouse soil / water and livestock feed / manure samples were also slightly increased by this event.

Agricultural Operation Practices Act

- Members of the Farm Practices Review Board, appointed under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*, developed Practices and Procedures for their activities.
- Approximately 20 agricultural nuisance complaints were received and effectively resolved by Land Development staff. No applications were submitted to the Farm Practices Review Board.

Livestock Operations Act

- As of March 31, 2004, 11 farms were licensed under the *Act*.
- Livestock Operation Licenses were issued for two beef operations, one located in Mill Cove and the other in South Tetagouche.
- Two other license applications are on hold, pending more information to be supplied by the applicants.
- Semi-annual inspections were carried out on all licensed operations and no cases of non-compliance were observed.

Potato Development Centre

The Potato Development Centre's major responsibilities include:

- Supporting the growth, total development, and sustainability of the potato sector.
- Encouraging innovation in the sector through a team of potato specialists.
- Monitoring compliance and enforcing the *Potato Disease Eradication Act*.
- Providing a continued source of high quality seed to the New Brunswick potato industry through the operation of the Plant Propagation and Bon Accord Elite Seed Potato Centres.

Highlights

- Supported the New Brunswick Potato Industry Cluster Study and the Canadian Potato Genome Project.
- Provided the potato integrated pest management, aphid and blight alert programs.
- Conducted 20 research trials in cooperation with industry stakeholders.
- Evaluated potato handling and cultivation equipment: de-stoning equipment, bed former, bed planter, and one pass hiller.
- Coordinated the enforcement of Cull Pile regulations under the *Potato Disease Eradication Act*. 54 farm visits were conducted to encourage compliance. Only one order was served.
- Provided a potato processing quality monitoring service.
- Collaborated with the Centre d'excellence en sciences agricoles et biotechnologiques (CESAB) to study bio-fuels.
- Monitored and assessed disease control strategies in field and storage.
- Prepared/updated fact sheets and variety and production guides.

- Assisted with the development of an on-farm food safety program for NB potato growers.
- Assisted in organizing the 2003 Potato Conference and Trade Show.
- Participated in workshops and consultations on life sciences/bio-economy and innovation activities.

Plant Propagation Centre

The Plant Propagation Centre is an accredited nuclear stock production facility that complies with the requirements of the *Canada Seeds Act*. The Centre supplies disease-tested tissue cultured nuclear stock potato plantlets to New Brunswick's potato industry. The Centre provides an aseptic environment, specially designed to prevent the entry of potato pathogens and other pests.

Highlights

- Produced 231,088 potato plantlets and 53,700 microtubers of 112 varieties.
- Provided 110 different potato varieties/seedlings for a DNA fingerprinting research project.
- Maintained the Canadian Potato Variety Repository with a collection of over 480 potato varieties and seedlings:
 - Received 13 new varieties/seedlings for entry screening into the variety collection.
 - Distributed 26 varieties to ten tissue culture nuclear stock producing clients or research institutions.
 - Conducted research on the effect of various culture vessels on plantlet and microtuber production.
- Hosted 13 groups including visitors from Australia, Cuba, and Egypt and conducted a one week in-house training course for an Egyptian group.
- Consulted with industry regarding the Centre's strategic direction and services through a stakeholders committee.

Bon Accord Elite Seed Potato Centre

The Bon Accord Elite Seed Potato Centre delivers Nuclear and Elite seed potatoes to New Brunswick producers to encourage high quality potato production and reduce losses due to potato diseases. Bon Accord produces a range of varieties, enabling New Brunswick seed growers to rapidly respond to changing market demands.

Highlights

- Planted 13 hectares (36 varieties) of Elite seed potatoes. Approximately 85 % of the production was concentrated in 15 varieties of primary commercial importance.
- Sold a total of 3,394 cwt of seed potatoes to 53 producers.
- 1,267 pounds of greenhouse tubers and 24,500 transplants were sold to 19 growers.
- Conducted an extensive leaf testing and post harvest testing program during the 2003 season. Samples were tested for PVY, PLRV and BRR.
- Hosted three incoming delegations including those from Hungary, China and Cuba.
- Consulted with industry through a stakeholders committee on strategic direction, production and allocation plans.

Safety Nets Branch

The Safety Nets Branch is responsible to develop, administer and deliver federal / provincial agricultural risk management programs. It also is responsible for renewal programming and the administration of provincial programs under the Canada/NB Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) implementation agreement.

Highlights

- Participated in Federal / Provincial / Territorial working groups in the development of the new Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program which replaced the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) program and Canadian Farm Income Program (CFIP).
- Participated in 41 information sessions held throughout the province to promote and explain the CAIS program, with attendance in excess of 1,380 individuals. Information sessions were also held for departmental staff.
- Delivered the New Brunswick Crop Insurance Program, and introduced one new plan to the program (hybrid canola seed).

- Participated in Federal/Provincial working groups developing renewal programming under Agricultural Policy Framework Agreement and participated as member of the Canadian Farm Business Management Council.
- Coordinated and promoted the Canadian Farm Business Advisory Service (CFBAS) program in conjunction with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff. A total of 22 CFBAS applications were processed for New Brunswick producers.
- Under the Canadian Farm Income Program (CFIP), for the 2002 claim year, 86 applications were received from New Brunswick agricultural producers. A total of 52 claims resulted in payments for a total amount of approximately \$1,137,038 (60 % federal and 40 % provincial).
- Under the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) program, on April 1, 2003 there were 608 NISA participants in New Brunswick with a total fund balance of \$40,455,507. On March 31, 2004, there were 631 participants with a total fund value of \$42,029,302. During fiscal 2003/04, New Brunswick contributed approximately \$2.175 million to the NISA program. For the 2002 stabilization year, as of March 31, 2004, 176 New Brunswick producers withdrew a total of \$3,127,101 from their NISA accounts to stabilize their income. The NISA program is being replaced by the CAIS program, and producers are required to withdraw funds from their NISA accounts at a minimum of 20 % of the fund value annually. Producers have until March 31, 2009 to completely close their NISA accounts.
- Provided administrative support for the delivery of programs under the Canada/NB Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) Implementation Agreement.

New Brunswick Crop Insurance Commission

The NB Crop Insurance Commission is governed by the *Crop Insurance Act*. The Commission is responsible for the initiation of new plans of insurance, the revision of existing plans, and the review of notices of dispute. The Commission is directly responsible to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Commission submits audited financial statements annually to the Office of the Comptroller. During the year, the Commission heard six notices of dispute from insured producers.

New Brunswick Crop Insurance Program

The objective of the Canada / New Brunswick Crop Insurance Program is to provide farmers with insurance protection against crop production losses caused by natural hazards beyond their control. New Brunswick continues to be responsible for the delivery of the Canada / New Brunswick Crop Insurance Program and shares the cost of administration with the federal government. The administrative costs of the program are shared 40 % provincial and 60 % federal. The premiums are cost shared as follows:

Coverage level	Producer share	Province share	Federal share
50%	Free	40%	60%
65%	50% of buy-up	20% of buy-up	30% of buy-up
80%	80% of incremental buy-up	8% of incremental buy-up	12% of incremental buy-up

Crop Insurance has staff in Fredericton, Grand Falls, Wicklow, Bouctouche and Tracadie.

The New Brunswick Crop Insurance Program provided insurance protection on the following commodities in 2003-2004:

- Potatoes – Seed and Non-Seed
- Spring Grain – Feed and Seed
- Apples, Wild Blueberries and Strawberries
- Hybrid Canola Seed

In 2003, potato producers were again given the option to participate in either the Crop Insurance Program or the Self Directed Risk Management Program. The Self Directed Risk Management Program was delivered through the Net Income Stabilization Account Program.

Canada/New Brunswick Crop Insurance – 2003 Crop Year					
Insured crop	No. of contracts	Insured Acres	Insured value (\$)	Total premium revenue (\$)	Total indemnities (\$)
Blueberries	100	4,421	1,176,853	194,718	26,304
Apples *	19	509	1,744,005	76,252	116,728
Potatoes	543	25,016	20,209,386	1,112,847	750,483
Grain	248	35,076	3,785,234	193,757	534,438
Strawberries	43	252	498,422	57,498	34,823
Hybrid Canola Seed	5	287	98,332	6,195	61,860
Total	958	65,561	27,512,232	1,641,267	1,524,636

* Includes Apple Tree Rider

Canada/New Brunswick Agricultural Policy Framework

In June 2002, New Brunswick and Canada signed the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF). The goal of the APF is to make Canada the world leader in food safety and quality, environmentally responsible production and innovation, while improving business risk management and fostering renewal. The APF consists of five elements:

- Business Risk Management
- Food Safety and Food Quality
- Science and innovation
- Environment
- Renewal

Highlights

- In July 2003, the Canada – New Brunswick APF Implementation Agreement was signed. This agreement sets out the programming and delivery mechanisms for APF in the province, as well as the goals and targets that are to be achieved. In addition, the Implementation Agreement lists program costs and formalizes such things as the management structures needed to oversee particular programs.
- A Federal – Provincial governance structure consisting of a Management Committee, Implementation Committee and Working Groups and administrative support was established to oversee the implementation of the APF in New Brunswick.
- A Federal/Provincial NB Industry Advisory Committee was established to provide advice on programs and initiatives associated with the Canada – New Brunswick Implementation Agreement.
- Staff participated on all of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial working groups in the development of National programs under APF.
- A contribution of \$167,500 was provided for the development of a computerized veterinary record tracking system under the Food Safety and Food Quality component of APF.
- Under Renewal, a contribution of \$50,000 was provided to the New Brunswick Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program.
- Under the Environment component of APF, a proposal for implementation of a National Farm Stewardship Program was submitted to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and approved.

- The Environmental Farm Planning Workbook was revised by the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre under contract with AAFC and in cooperation with New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island.
- A Farm Portrait questionnaire consisting of 94 questions on farm practices with potential to impact the environment was developed and completed on 329 Farms.
- Under the existing Agricultural Environment Management Initiative (AEMI) program, contributions were provided for a broad range of environmental protection and awareness projects. Project funding for the 2003-2004 fiscal year is summarized in the following table:

Program	Number of projects completed	Financial contribution from AEMI
Soil Conservation	62	\$ 523,277
Environmental Research	28	397,588
On-farm Stewardship	114	371,338
Agro-Environmental Club	7	368,312
Integrated Pest Management	8	70,742
Nutrient Management	4	4,474
Livestock Odour Reduction	0	0
Strategic Agricultural Environment Management	11	411,623
Total	233	\$ 2,147,354

- The existing Canada—New Brunswick Research and Innovation Program is designed to assist NB's agricultural industry to maintain its competitiveness and to develop innovative ways of producing traditional products more efficiently. During fiscal year 2003-04, the program provided a total contribution of \$1,110,773 towards the implementation of 31 innovative projects with a total value of \$2,576,325.

Veterinary Services Branch

The Branch is responsible for the provision of animal health services to livestock and poultry producers and equine owners within the province to support the ongoing development and innovation within these sectors. Animal health services are delivered through on-farm clinical, preventative, medical, surgical, therapeutic, control and emergency services as well as associated referral clinic and diagnostic laboratory services. The Branch is comprised of two sections the *Veterinary Field Services* and the *Provincial Veterinary Laboratory*.

Veterinary Field Services

The *Veterinary Field Service's* goal is to ensure that all livestock and poultry producers and equine owners have access to high quality universal veterinary services regardless of where they live in the province on a 24 hour, 365-day a year basis. Services are provided on a fee for service basis at levels equivalent to what producers pay in other Maritime jurisdictions. In support of the field services the Branch operates a central referral clinic equipped with specialized diagnostic equipment and surgical facilities as well as a pharmaceutical purchasing unit that purchases and distributes pharmaceuticals to departmental veterinary offices.

Provincial Veterinary Laboratory

The *Provincial Veterinary Laboratory* continues to play an essential role in disease prevention and surveillance and in the maintenance of animal health in New Brunswick by testing the wide range of samples submitted by departmental and private veterinarians, as well as by livestock and poultry producers. The test results aid in diagnosing disease problems so that appropriate preventative, therapeutic and control regimens can be implemented. The test results are important for

minimizing producer losses, safeguarding public health, promoting animal welfare, reducing barriers to trade, and supporting provincial meat inspection and on-farm food safety programs.

Highlights

- Departmental veterinarians responded to 11,521 calls for service involving travel of approximately 907,500 kilometers. Calls totaling 9,353 were classified as clinical and 2,168 dealt with preventative herd health services.
- With the occurrence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in a cow in Alberta, veterinary staff worked with their federal counterparts in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in the design of a national enhanced surveillance program for BSE. In conjunction with staff of the Department of Health and Wellness, departmental veterinarians assisted with the implementation of the Specified Risk Material removal program at provincial abattoirs.
- Due to the outbreak of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza within British Columbia and some states in the United States, poultry producers were encouraged to maintain tight bio-security measures to protect against incursion of disease pathogens onto their farms.
- Veterinarians attended a number of professional development meetings to ensure they remained competent in the delivery of animal health services, most notably the World Buiatrics Congress in Quebec City, the Atlantic Bovine Veterinary Practitioner's meeting in Moncton in addition to the Atlantic Veterinary College's Fall Conference in Charlottetown, PEI.
- The Branch continued with the development of an electronic Veterinary Records System to support on-farm food safety programs. This system, once implemented in 2004/2005, will handle veterinary records, inventory, and billing for the Department's livestock, poultry and equine veterinary services.
- Two new pieces of equipment, an autoclave and a laminar flow safety bio-cabinet, were acquired. The autoclave is used to sterilize surgical equipment and laboratory equipment and media, and was needed to replace a unit that was 24 years old and could no longer be repaired. The laminar flow safety bio-cabinet was installed in the necropsy room to better protect laboratory staff from zoonotic diseases when performing necropsy examinations on specimens that could pose a human health threat.
- There was no activity required under the provisions of either the provincial *Diseases of Animals Act* or the *Poultry Health and Protection Act*.
- Fees for all veterinary services together with pharmaceutical markups generated in excess of \$1.8 million dollars of revenue to the Province. The Department continued to utilize a two-tiered (equine/food animal) fee structure for field and laboratory services with actual fees charged during 2003/2004 remaining at previous 2002/2003 levels.

New Brunswick Farm Products Commission

The New Brunswick Farm Products Commission is a nine-member decision-making body appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council that operates under the authority of the *Natural Products Act*. Commission members represent the interests of producers, processors and consumers. The Commission is responsible for the overall supervision of all producer boards formed under the *Act* and facilitates the province's participation in provincial and national orderly-marketing systems.

The commodities under the regulatory mandate of the Commission account for some \$320 million in farm cash receipts, or nearly 80 % of New Brunswick's agricultural production. The Commission has a wide range of responsibilities including:

- Negotiation of, signing and monitoring Federal-Provincial supply management Agreements;
- Establishing the price of milk at all levels in the province;
- Licensing of those engaged in the dairy products trade;
- Issuing orders relating to the operation of a regulated marketing system;
- Administering regulations and penalties concerning milk quality;
- Hearing of appeals on matters relating to marketing boards;
- Establishment of industry councils.

Highlights

- During 2003-2004, the Commission met nine times and approved 17 orders, including borrowing orders for several commodity groups, pricing orders relating to fluid milk, and orders concerning the dairy industry. The Commission also conducted annual reviews of all eight boards under its supervision and attended their annual meetings. In its role as an Appeal Body, the Commission held two hearings during the year concerning decisions made by the Dairy Farmers of New Brunswick.
- The Commission participated in discussions at the federal/provincial/territorial level pertaining to national agreements for supply-managed commodities through representation at national meetings of the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, the Canadian Milk Supply Management Committee, the Eastern Provincial (P5) Milk Pooling Committee, the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency, Chicken Farmers of Canada, the National Association of Agriculture Supervisory Agencies, the International Association of Milk Control Agencies and the National Farm Products Marketing Council.
- The Commission completed eight new regulations under the *Natural Products Act* for four different commodity groups (eggs, chicken, turkey, and hogs). In addition to creating new regulations, the Commission repealed three out-dated regulations and amended four others, including the Milk Quality Regulation. The amendment to this regulation provided for increased financial penalties to producers with milk quality infractions.
- The Commission administered the provisions of the Milk Quality Regulation and licensed those engaged in the dairy products trade. Licenses were issued to 309 milk producers, three milk dealers, 60 milk vendors, 20 transporters, 72 bulk milk tank graders and 59 quality assurance inspectors.
- In February of 2004, the Commission implemented a milk price adjustment. The Commission determined that a price increase was warranted after having reviewed cost of production studies for the province's dairy producers and a financial analysis of returns to the processing industry. The Commission also re-activated the School Milk Program Committee and adjusted the price of school milk for the first time in 11 years.
- The Commission established the NB Cattle Industry Council consisting of representatives from the various stakeholders in the cattle industry. The Commission also facilitated the participation of the NB Cattle Producers in the National Beef Cattle Check-off Program and worked towards the development of new legislation governing the transportation of cattle.

FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND POLICY DIVISION

Resource Management Branch

The Branch ensures that the province gains maximum value from its fishery resource through the coordination of resource management plans, new fishery products and initiatives. The defence of New Brunswick's interests and historic share of the Atlantic fisheries is an intrinsic part of the Department's Strategic Plan for helping the Government to achieve its vision of the province.

Provincial shares

The Department realizes that the economic prosperity of coastal communities relies on the stability and the predictability of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' fishery plans. Consequently, the Department remains vigilant and takes action by different means to protect the quotas and licences allocated to New Brunswick. The Branch makes sure that the province's traditional shares in the fisheries sector are respected and that this same principle is applied in the cases of permanent and temporary quota allocations, the creation of new fishing areas, and the process of integrating Aboriginal communities into the Atlantic fisheries.

Highlights

- The Department reacted strongly to the transfer of four lobster fishing licences from a village in southwestern New Brunswick to Nova Scotia. That part of the province is located in the only administrative region of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) where transfers of licences between provinces are allowed. For the first time, the Department succeeded in making DFO aware of the impact of such transfers on coastal communities. DFO therefore declared an indefinite moratorium on all new transfers. A working committee set up by the two government levels determined that the southwestern part of the province had in fact lost a considerable number of fishing quotas and licences to the benefit of the neighbouring province in recent decades. The committee is seeking a long-term approach to this problem.
- The Department is continuing its efforts to block attempts to transfer snow crab licences from the province to Prince Edward Island by means of trust agreements. One licence was returned, and five new attempts were forestalled.

In the interest of coastal communities and fishermen

The Department defends the interests of its coastal communities and fishermen through advisory committees for the different fisheries, various forums, and regional and interprovincial management committees, as well as during exercises involving the development or review of policies affecting fisheries management. The Department co-operates in and commissions economic impact analyses and descriptive profiles to generate reflection on issues related to fisheries resource development.

Highlights

- The Branch participated in several advisory committee meetings dealing with the development of management plans for the following fisheries: bluefin tuna, scallop, snow crab, Gulf and Scotian Shelf shrimp, small pelagics, groundfish, lobster, spiny dogfish, smelt, gaspereau, eel, and sea cucumber.
- The Branch also participated in various transborder forums concerning fisheries in the Scotia-Fundy region. In addition, it provides significant organizational and administrative support for the Scallop Interprovincial Management Board and the Groundfish Regional Management Board.
- The Branch continues to promote a common harvesting and conservation plan for the lobster resource in the disputed maritime zone around Machias Seal Island and the grey zone bordering the United States.
- The Department is a signatory to seven memoranda of understanding concerning the management of conditionally approved shellfish growing areas to ensure access for our fishermen.
- The Branch worked closely with various stakeholders in order to assist the seiners in their efforts and find a solution to the ongoing conflict between the province's herring seiners and Prince Edward Island fishermen.
- The Branch worked closely with Quebec in order to develop a common strategy in preparation for the spring 2004 snow crab fishing season and developed its own action strategy, in consultation with various provincial stakeholders.

- The Branch continued to participate in the Atlantic Fisheries Policy Review. The Department provided input at each relevant step of the process and expressed serious warnings to the federal authorities regarding the protection of provincial gains. It is concerned that trust agreements jeopardize the licence ownership and transfer policy and asked DFO to eliminate all loopholes conducive to such a situation.
- The Department funded two studies aimed at quantifying the economic impact of the herring sector on the province's east and southwest coasts as well as by county. The analyses incorporate the impact of both fishing and processing activities.
- The Branch responds to requests for the evaluation of environmental impact assessments and comments on lease applications involving the use of Crown lands from the commercial fisheries standpoint.

Conservation and Development

The Department co-operates in the development of conservation measures, particularly through advisory committees on the various fisheries and the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council. The Branch develops and participates with various resource sector stakeholders in specific projects designed to gather or disseminate new knowledge, ensure maximum use and sustainable renewal of the resource, and diversify activities.

Highlights

- The Department's staff participated in the regional advisory process presided over by a DFO scientific group for most of the commercial species. This process enables biologists, managers, fishermen, and the industry to review data on the fishing and biology of a species and their interpretation and subsequently deduce the status of the resource.
- The Department supported the draft version of an MFU transition plan including a Gulf sector lobster fishery rationalization component.
- The Branch participates in the activities of the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC). This agency was created in 1993 to form a partnership between scientific and academic expertise and all sectors of the fishing industry. Together, Council members make public recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on conservation measures for the Atlantic fishery.
- The Branch sits on the board of directors of the Marine Products Research and Development Centre (MPRDC). The mission of this centre is to support the New Brunswick fishing and aquaculture industry in its efforts to maintain and improve the quality of marine products, as well as to diversify those products.
- The Department's staff contributed to the new species development process and the study of licence proposals as representatives on various advisory councils. The emerging fisheries are Atlantic hagfish, shrimp by trap, quahaug, sea cucumber, rock crab and Jonah crab, toad crab, and marine worms.
- The Branch and the Grand Manan Fishermen's Association jointly developed and presented a proposal to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans aimed at obtaining a share of the Canadian bluefin tuna quota. The first step is to document bycatches of bluefin tuna in the weirs used for herring fishing in the Bay of Fundy and determine what happens to the catches that are released.

Through the Total Development Fund, the Department participated financially in the following projects:

- In co-operation with the Maritime Fishermen's Union and other partners, the Department contributed to the scallop enhancement project for the renewal of stocks on New Brunswick's east coast. More than 12 million scallops were seeded in 2003, and a total of approximately 35 million is anticipated in 2004.
- The Department, in partnership with the Kouchibouguac Commercial Clam Fishermen Association Inc. and Department of Fisheries and Oceans biologists, participated in a pilot project aimed at improving the natural collection of soft-shell clams.
- In co-operation with the Maritime Fishermen's Union, Orion Seafood Canada, the Eel River Bar First Nation, and DFO, the Department participated in a lobster enhancement pilot project. The aim is to produce lobster larvae in the hatchery for seeding on the seabed. A site in Caraquet Bay was seeded with a few thousand lobsters.
- The second phase of the Tagging of Weir Herring in the Bay of Fundy project was carried out in 2003-2004. This is an initiative of the Fundy Weir Fishermen's Association, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Grand Manan Fishermen's Association, Connors Brothers Ltd., and the Department.

- The Department contributed to the costs of at-sea observers for fishermen engaged in the exploratory toad crab fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Owing to the concentrations found, development of this species in deep water is not considered viable.
- The Department continued to support an initiative aimed at evaluating various techniques in order to identify a soft-shell clam culture methodology, under the direction of Eastern Charlotte Waterways Inc.
- The Department participated in a project aimed at developing a manufacturing process for long weir stakes for the herring industry in partnership with the Fundy Weir Fishermen's Association, Connors Bros. Ltd., and the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation. The process is being developed by the University of New Brunswick's Wood Science and Technology Centre.
- A contribution was offered toward a training workshop on the harvesting of marine worms in the Bay of Fundy coastal zone. This initiative was carried out in partnership with Coastal Baits.
- The Department participated in a workshop bringing together scientists from several countries. The main objective was to compare and standardize the different known methods for determining the maturity and the reproductive cycle of female lobsters.

Acadian Peninsula Fisheries Council

The Council's mandate is to make recommendations to New Brunswick's Minister responsible for fisheries on emerging issues in the sector by seeking solutions to the challenges facing the industry while promoting greater diversification of the sector.

Highlights

- The committee set up by the Council to defend provincial shares, which brings together several stakeholders from the Acadian Peninsula, held a press briefing to call on DFO to respect provincial historic shares when making decisions on various fisheries. This activity was intended to serve as a cry of alarm and an appeal to solidarity, issued by the Acadian Peninsula community and its fishing industry, which cannot afford any more losses in terms of fisheries resource access and supply, with all the attendant destabilizing consequences.
- The Council commissioned a descriptive analysis of the herring processing industry on New Brunswick's east coast in order to complement the recent initiative involving the creation of an Acadian Peninsula round table on herring. The round table is under the auspices of the Marine Products Research and Development Centre and is assisted by the Council.

Fisheries Development Branch

The Branch plays a leading role in providing support to the harvesting, processing and marketing sectors to increase and maintain economic activity. Industry challenges related to competitiveness, fishery resource issues, market issues, border issues, diversification, labour and environmental issues are the main focus of the branch.

Representatives from this branch are located in five Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture offices located in Bouctouche, Caraquet, Wicklow, Fredericton and St. George.

Highlights

Value-Added

The Value-Added unit has the mandate to work with the seafood harvesting, seafood processing, agriculture processing and aquaculture industries of the province to improve competitiveness through product line extensions, new product development, new species development, business development, technology application, strategic alliances and market development.

- The efforts of industry and government in the past to extend product lines either through value added initiatives or raw material imports have resulted in continued increases in production values, exports and employment periods for plant workers. In the past year, efforts toward organic certification for plants with that vision and readiness took place. Efforts in processing technology to improve productivity and quality have continued with a renewed urgency in light of labour issues and the emergence of low-wage economies as competitors.

- The industry continues to aggressively pursue secondary processing activities based on market opportunities and alliances. The Value-Added unit continues to support and work with existing and new processors of value-added secondary processing type products in both development and market introduction. The ability of small- and medium-sized New Brunswick companies to compete and grow in this extremely competitive business represents both a huge challenge and immense opportunities.
- The unit has been active in working with New Brunswick companies as well as with outside investors to increase commercial utilization of waste materials from seafood processing. There are on-going efforts to attempt to increase the utilization of crustacean cook-water, shells, salmon waste, brine water, natural liquids and agricultural by-products.
- The unit was involved in two major efforts to improve management of plant effluents.

Aquaculture

Fisheries Development provides key processing and market development services to the growing aquaculture industry in New Brunswick.

- The group was involved in the establishment and expansion of two oyster processing and marketing organizations, one in the Acadian Peninsula and one in the southeast.
- Efforts continue in value-added initiatives in farmed salmon. Each year the proportion of salmon shipped from New Brunswick consists of more value-added items. The industry is now moving toward tertiary processed items and ready-to-eat offerings.

Market Development

The Fisheries Development Branch continues to be an active member of Trade Team New Brunswick, the Atlantic Canada Food Export Partnership and the Community Economic Development Agencies network (CEDAs) and uses the services of all members to ensure market and export services are provided to the seafood and agricultural processing sectors in the province.

- The Branch was active in the past year in market development issues related to most commercial fisheries and aquaculture species as well as most agriculture commodities in New Brunswick. The assistance provided ranged from hosting in-coming buyers, to market research, to participating at major industry trade events such as the Boston Seafood Show.
- New and existing companies looking to embark in new products or extensions of existing products are the focus of the unit's efforts in market development.

Industry Challenges

During the past year, key challenges for the NB processing industry were brought to the forefront. The Branch was very active in working with industry to address environmental concerns with fish plant effluents, labour challenges, fishery resource issues, border issues and competition from low-wage economies.

Aquaculture Branch

The Aquaculture Branch's objective is to apply a total development approach in the aquaculture sector to maximize the value of the industry, and to improve its competitiveness and sustainability.

The Aquaculture Branch promotes the orderly development of the aquaculture industry in the province through a variety of programs and strategic investments. In carrying out this task, the Department provides fish health support for the salmon marine cage operations, freshwater hatcheries, and trout farms, as well as development support for alternative species efforts and the rockweed harvest.

Present Industry Status

In 2003-2004, production and value from the New Brunswick Aquaculture Industry was down slightly due to lower production, a higher valuation of the Canadian dollar, in addition to lower price in the salmon market.

Consultation

In the context of the Canada/New Brunswick Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Aquaculture Development, the Department organized and participated in meetings held at the various committee levels. Efforts focused on ensuring federal and provincial activities were coordinated to meet the changing development needs of industry.

The Branch participated in the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers' (CCFAM) Task Group on Aquaculture. Efforts in this regard have been focused on harmonization of federal and provincial agency information requirements with respect to the site application process, and investigation of the potential for business risk management programming for the aquaculture industry.

In order to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders in the Bay of Fundy, a forum was established in 2001. This forum continues to be an important tool in fostering communications and relaying pertinent information to the various stakeholder groups.

Strategic Development

The programs delivered by the Department are guided by policies and strategies relating to the culture of aquatic species. Development of criteria for the culture of alternate marine finfish species in the Bay of Fundy was initiated. Once finalized, this document will guide decisions relating to pre-commercial development of alternate species.

The legislative framework for orderly development of aquaculture activities in the province are regulated pursuant to the *Aquaculture Act and Regulation*. The Aquaculture Branch was active in the ongoing review of the *Aquaculture Act and Regulations* with the view to ensure applicability to recent fish health challenges facing the industry.

Alternate Species Development

The Department continues to support diversification projects in aquaculture. Several species including halibut, haddock, sturgeon, bar clams, quahogs and soft-shelled clams have been identified as candidate species on which to concentrate the Department's efforts. The Aquaculture Branch is involved in promoting, evaluating and monitoring research and development projects aimed at moving these species towards commercialization. This year has seen the movement of a sturgeon operation from research to commercial scale facilities, in addition to the placement of cod, haddock and halibut in a number of marine sites in the Bay of Fundy for grow out trial purposes.

Fish Health

A major ongoing effort of the Aquaculture Branch is concentrated on Fish Health management issues, in particular Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) in the salmon industry. Recent advancements in the management and control of ISA included synchronization of fallow periods within bays, accelerated removal of infected stocks, bio-security auditing of harvest vessels, and wharf use planning. These efforts, combined with the move towards single year class farming, have combined to result in a dramatic decrease in the number of ordered depopulations. Over 2.5 million fish in the 2002 year class of salmon were removed due to depopulation orders, while approximately 400,000 salmon in the 2003 year class were depopulated. Efforts were also made to collaborate with the state of Maine and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to harmonize fish health monitoring and management practices and increase the sharing of pertinent information between the provincial, state and federal agencies.

The Department plays a lead role in the control and management of ISA by delivering the ISA surveillance program for the salmon aquaculture industry in the Bay of Fundy. The Fish Health Technical Committee continued to provide strategic advice on fish health issues, playing an important role in providing recommendations on the overall management of ISA. Projects designed to improve the detection and diagnosis of the disease, further characterization of the causative agent, and potential for infection of alternate species such as haddock were supported jointly by the Department, Research and Productivity Council (RPC), Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC) and industry.

While the control of ISA was the major focus of the Branch, fish health services were also provided to trout and new species operations through the various regional offices and the Provincial Fish Health Laboratory facility located in Blacks Harbour. In addition, the Department's Fish Health Program was utilized by research facilities and industrial partners involved with alternate species. The Department's surveillance efforts for furunculosis and bacteria kidney disease in smolt prior to their transfer to sea cages continued as required by the *Aquaculture Act and Regulations*.

Technology Development / Transfer

With respect to fish health, the Department supported projects and research on various aspects of ISA including husbandry risk factors, identification techniques and strain characterization. Several projects aimed at improving the survival of haddock larvae were funded. A novel project looking to assess the use of aquaculture methodology to enhance the soft shell clam fishery in South Western New Brunswick was also supported by the Department. The application of, and development of expertise in, re-circulation technology was supported through a Masters level program at the University of New Brunswick's Department of Engineering. The Branch continued the delivery of projects related to the strategic needs of industry in all areas of aquaculture development.

Aquaculture — East Coast Branch

The mandate of the Branch is to contribute to the economic development of New Brunswick's east coast by encouraging economic diversification through aquaculture. To fulfill its mandate, the Branch has infrastructure and staff devoted to:

- supporting the establishment and expansion of sustainable, job-creating aquaculture companies by providing an industry-friendly environment, offering a wide range of technical and administrative services, and developing partnerships and planning tools, and
- conducting research activities aimed at improving culture techniques for traditional species and expanding the range of species that could potentially be farmed from both the technical and economic standpoints.

Aquaculture development

Highlights

- The Branch facilitated the realization of 12 projects involving the expansion or creation of shellfish aquaculture companies by ensuring delivery of the Acadian Peninsula economic development program for shellfish aquaculture. These development initiatives resulted in the creation of 34 direct seasonal jobs associated with mussel and oyster production.
- The Branch conducted or participated in 7 aquaculture research initiatives involving the development of culture techniques, interactions between aquaculture and the marine environment, and the development of alternate species.
- The Branch supported the Licensing and Enforcement Branch by conducting preliminary evaluations of more than 35 applications and participating in the review of the aquaculture site allocation policy. The Branch also participated in the establishment of an east coast bay management plan designed to ensure the orderly and equitable development of aquaculture.
- More than 40 evaluations concerning abnormally high winter shellfish mortalities were carried out by Branch staff, leading to the implementation of a compensation initiative for producers meeting the eligibility criteria.
- On the Department's initiative, numerous partnerships with federal and provincial agencies were established with a view to promoting recognition of aquaculture as a priority industry on the province's east coast. These actions supported the inclusion of aquaculture in the work plans or development strategies of the Community Economic Development Agencies network (CEDA) located along the coasts and the establishment of specific programs for aquaculture by the partner agencies and departments.
- A wide range of programs and administrative and technical services was offered to institutional and private stakeholders in the aquaculture industry. Services include the provision of expertise in all matters related to aquaculture, technical support for aquaculturists, delivery of the fish health program, and oyster spatfall prediction in the Buctouche, Miramichi, and Caraquet bays. In addition, Branch professionals participated in mollusc sampling in connection with a federal/provincial agreement relating to mollusc health assessment.

Aquaculture research

Highlights

- During 2003-2004, as part of an agreement surrounding the creation of the Coastal Zones Research Institute, DAFA's aquaculture research team composed of 12 biologists and technicians was transferred, by way of a loan of service, to the Shippagan campus of the Université de Moncton.

- The activities of the research team focused on:

Arctic char: Activities aimed at developing and implementing an arctic char genetic improvement management program in the Maritime provinces continued. Research on controlling inbreeding, maintaining genetic diversity, and improving the stock's zootechnical performance led to the selection of more than 300 broodstock and the production of 26 new third-generation families.

Haddock: Work on the genetic selection of broodstock and on probiotics continued. The Artemia disinfection technique developed at the Aquarium and Marine Centre make it possible to increase the percentage survival of haddock larvae in suboptimal environments. A total of 60,151 haddock weighing 12 g were transferred to a commercial partner.

Shellfish: Despite improvements to the Aquarium and Marine Centre's filtration system, it was not possible to produce molluscs using the shellfish hatchery. The field component of the research work aimed at improving culture techniques for quahaugs (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) continued.

Licensing and Compliance

The Branch is responsible for leasing and licensing functions under the *Aquaculture Act* and licensing under the *Fish Processing Act*. The Branch assumes overall responsibility for providing enforcement activities for all acts and their regulations under the administration of the Department. The Branch also oversees the operation of the three provincially owned Marine Service Centres and provides Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping services to various aquaculture and commercial fisheries stakeholders.

Highlights

- One new marine finfish (salmon) aquaculture site was approved and nine production increases were granted.
- With regard to marine shellfish aquaculture, three new sites were approved along with 15 vacant lots being leased, 28 licenses amended, and 18 lease renewals and 19 lease transfers authorized.
- Three new inland finfish licenses, two license amendments and 62 license renewals were approved.
- A total of 122 fish processing licenses were issued and six applications were refused.
- A revision to the East Coast Site Allocation Policy was initiated to reflect current practices of the industry.
- The Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture and Fisheries and Oceans Canada started a joint pilot project for Bay Management planning of aquaculture development on the East Coast
- The Branch initiated negotiations with the three Marine Service Centre operators to explore alternatives to current service delivery.
- A review of the *Aquaculture Act* was initiated. The review is to address matters of leasing and licensing, fish health and compliance and enforcement.
- The review of the *Fish Processing Act*, which started in 2002, was continued.
- A complaint reporting procedure and an investigation database to track compliance and enforcement activities were developed and implemented.
- A Compliance and Enforcement Policy was developed.
- A total of 60 investigations were carried by the Compliance and Enforcement personnel. Five charges were laid under the *Aquaculture Act* resulting in two convictions and three deferrals.
- Enforcement Activities were carried out under five acts: the *Aquaculture Act*, the *Apiary Inspection Act*, the *Livestock Operations Act*, the *Potato Disease Eradication Act* and the *Poultry Health Protection Act*.

Policy and Planning Branch

The Policy and Planning Branch is responsible for the provision of services and expertise to the Department in the areas of strategic planning, policy development, program evaluation, economic research, analysis and statistics along with fostering innovation in the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The Branch is also responsible for the co-ordination of trade policy, departmental federal/provincial/territorial relations and legislative development activities.

The Branch is responsible for the *Inshore Fisheries Representation Act* and the *Women's Institute and Institut féminin Act*.

Highlights

Strategic Planning

- The Branch continued to monitor the outstanding recommendations contained in the Agriculture Red Tape Review that could impact the agriculture sector from the government's perspective. Officials also analyzed the Department's current Acts and Regulations with a view to eliminating burdensome requirements to the business community under the direction of the Office of Red Tape Reduction, as well as being involved with various ad hoc committees.
- The Branch provided support and coordination in the preparation of Aquaculture Development Strategies for halibut, haddock, sturgeon and various shellfish species.
- The Policy and Planning Branch responded to issues surrounding the interactions between traditional fisheries and aquaculture through various activities:
 - Coordinated the Bay of Fundy Stakeholders Forum (two meetings per year) and provided follow-up between meetings;
 - Coordinated the completion of the Exclusion Zone Review process with industry to promote better communication and co-operation between sectors;
 - Participated in a review of a Decision Support Tool under development by the Saint Andrews Biological Station in an effort to promote an integrated approach to filling gaps in scientific knowledge of the interactions between the competing sectors.

Program Evaluation

- Officials participated on a Federal-Provincial Working Group to provide provincial input on measures of government support to the agriculture sector. This data is collected and provided to the Research and Analysis Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to calculate Producer Support Estimates. This data is then used for support measures exercises including the ones undertaken by the World Trade Organization.
- The Branch prepared a status report on the success of implementing recommendations resulting from a review of legislation by the Office of the Auditor General. Also staff assisted with the salmon aquaculture audit by providing input as required to the process.

Economic Research and Analysis

- Officials coordinated the preparation of correspondence, briefing material, briefing notes and background documents in response to matters addressed to senior management or to resolve issues impacting on the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- The Branch reviewed New Brunswick economic statistics published by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Statistics Canada, as well as Fisheries and Oceans Canada to ensure accuracy. The data was interpreted for senior management and provided to a wide variety of clients.
- Officials represented New Brunswick on the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee on Agricultural Statistics and the Canadian Farm Business Management Council.
- Branch officials completed an overview of Financial Credit Programs offered by applicable government departments (federal and provincial), as well as neighbouring jurisdictions applicable to the agriculture, commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Immigration

- The Branch is actively involved in the recruitment of new farmers and new immigrant entrepreneurs to New Brunswick. The Branch cooperates with the Department of Business New Brunswick and is BNB's advisor on questions of immigration proposals from farmers and entrepreneurs planning to open food related businesses. There are an increasing number of active cases on file and almost daily inquiries from all over the world. Dutch and Belgian Immigration Support Organisations are asking Department officials to cooperate with their promotion activities.

Federal-Provincial Relations

- Since the signing of the Canada/NB APF Agreement the federal government, provinces and territories have been discussing implementation processes, in consultation with industry, setting out program parameters and the respective sharing of costs to implement these programs over the next five years.
- The Branch provided coordination and support for the Minister and Deputy Minister's participation to Federal-Provincial-Territorial Agriculture Ministers meetings, meeting of the Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers and meetings of the Atlantic Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers.
- Officials coordinated a Federal-Provincial Working Committee that was established to provide advice and support the development and implementation of integrated marine planning processes throughout the coastal regions of the province.
- Branch officials represented the province on the Aquatic Invasive Species Task group formulated under the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers. This committee will deal with the development of a national strategy and provincial plan to reduce negative impacts of invasive aquatic species that create significant harm on native aquatic species.
- Branch officials were responsible for the coordination of the Department's input on Federal-Provincial Environmental reviews for projects that have an impact on the marine environment. In addition, reviews of applications for marine water lots were also coordinated. Departmental comments on applications for marine research and/or activities submitted for funding under the Provincial Environmental Trust Fund were reviewed and coordinated.

Trade Policy

- Representation on the Federal-Provincial Agriculture Trade Policy Committee was maintained and officials worked on numerous issues, including the oversight of Canada's negotiations at the World Trade Organization and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, as well as disputes under existing agreements.
- Officials developed a departmental position and participated in Government of Canada strategies and responses, in consultation with industry, on US regulations dealing with Country-of-Origin Labelling (US Farm Bill); the Bioterrorism Act and the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) border closures. On the latter issue, the Branch participated in advocacy efforts with the National Association of State Directors of Agriculture to obtain support to reopen the border to live cattle. Officials also participated in a number of other activities relating to Canada/US relations under the lead of other departments.
- The Branch worked with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to prepare program information for Canada's notification to the World Trade Organization on New Brunswick's Aggregate Measures of Support.
- Branch officials provided notification of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture subsidies to the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) as lead by Business New Brunswick. Officials also assisted Business New Brunswick in the development of the work plan as related to the wishes of the Council of Federations.
- Officials worked in conjunction with the Provinces-States Advisory Group of US/Canadian agricultural officials dealing with cross-border trade irritants. Specific concerns dealt with mutual recognition of seed laboratory accreditation. Officials also coordinated the annual meeting of the regional sub-committee of this group, the Northeast Commissioners and Eastern Canadian Ministers of Agriculture.

Legislative Issues

- Officials coordinated an internal review of legislation administered by the Department, identifying priorities for legislative and regulatory amendments.
- The Branch provided coordination and support for all matters concerning the Department relating to debatable motion(s) and /or tabling motion(s) during the session of the Legislative Assembly.
- The Branch coordinated responses to requests for information received by the Minister under the *Right to Information Act*. During fiscal year 2003-2004, 15 requests were received by the Minister. Of that number, one was granted in full, thirteen were granted in part, one was returned as no documents were identified in the possession of the Department with respect to the request.
- The Branch prepared Ministerial Orders as per the *Inshore Fisheries Representation Act* and its regulations.

Innovation

- Branch representatives participated on three Innovation Team New Brunswick working groups. These groups were made up of representatives from various federal and provincial departments and agencies. The purpose of Innovation Team New Brunswick is to foster a culture of innovation in the province.
- Branch officials participated in several conferences on innovation and life sciences, including the International Conference on Technology Clusters in Montreal, a conference in Grand Manan entitled Innovative Research—From Biomass to Bioactives, and the ninth International Economic Forum of the Americas: Innovating in an Uncertain World.
- Branch staff also participated in the steering committee of the Aventis Biotech Challenge for New Brunswick high schools.

Development Funds

Total Development Fund

- During Fiscal Year 2003-2004, the Department funded 70 projects with contributions totalling \$1,941,330 through the Total Development Fund. The projects funded under this initiative supported research and development, knowledge transfer, technology adaptation and commercialization, innovation and other strategic initiatives aimed at further development of the agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food processing sectors.

Acadian Peninsula Economic Development Fund

- During Fiscal Year 2003-2004, the Department administered an allocation of \$667,902 to fund 14 projects with a total value of \$3,671,145 through the Acadian Peninsula Economic Development Fund. The Acadian Peninsula Economic Development Fund is five-year \$25 million Economic Development Fund. The purpose of the fund is to provide funding for economic and social development activities that are consistent with the objectives of the Action Plan for the economic and social renewal of the Acadian Peninsula. The fund is a complementary source of financial assistance to regular departmental budgets. The Regional Development Corporation provided the overall management of the fund.

Industry Statistics

Agriculture and Agri-Food 2003–2004

Primary Sector

Number of Farms	3034*
Total Farmland (acres)	958,899*
Land in crops (acres)	367,898*
Total farm capital	\$ 1,519,440,000*
Farm cash receipts (2003)	\$ 404 M

* 2001 Census, land in crops increased by 10.3 % over 1996, an increase of 21.7 % over 1991, reversing a long decline in land used for crops in New Brunswick.

Farm Cash Income and Total Income 1999 to 2003 (Million \$)					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total Farm Cash Receipts / Recettes agricoles totales	374	365	413	424	404
Expenses / Dépenses	286	306	322	358	363
Net cash income / Revenu monétaire net	88	60	89	66	40
Total Net income / Revenu total net	48	37	37	43	0

Land in crops / Five major crops (acres)		
	2002	2003
Potatoes	58,000	59,000
Barley	41,000	42,000
Blueberries	21,510	24,000
Oats	22,000	21,000
Wheat	12,500	14,000

Farm Cash Receipts / Five major commodities (value in \$ million)		
	2002	2003
Potatoes	126.8	101.3
Dairy	74.5	76.3
Hens & Chickens	37.0	43.5
Floriculture, Nursery	45.0	38.9
Hogs	27.6	31.0

Agri-Food Processing Sector 2003

Number of Processing Companies100
 Shipments of Processed Product \$ 1.2 B
 Processing Rate300 %
 Processing Employees (2001) 6,680

Exports of Agri-food Products		
By Country (\$ Million)		
	2002	2003
US	369.7	357.7
Japan	30.1	37.6
Korea	5.7	7.4
Philippines	2.1	7.4
Indonesia	1.6	5.7
China	0.4	4.3

Exports of Agri-food Products		
By Commodity		
	2002	2003
Processed Potatoes	178.9	234.3
Beer	43	43.2
Preparations of grain, pasta	48.5	42.1
Plants, live trees, foliage, etc.	46.4	41.2
Total Exports	430.1	459.6

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Commercial Landings

Species	Volume (MT)				Value (000\$ CDN)			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2000	2001	2002	2003
Lobster	7,538	8,270	7,560	7,101	80,852	93,835	91,246	84,968
Snow Crab	8,482	7,194	11,945	7,424	56,029	38,065	65,816	46,271
Herring	78,413	73,896	68,710	67,263	14,029	15,973	14,558	15,429
Shrimp	5,333	7,057	6,748	5,360	7,338	8,272	7,586	6,255
Scallops	2,300	2,377	2,521	2,537	5,021	4,081	3,543	3,610
Sea Urchin	1,408	1,460	1,189	1,226	3,693	4,014	3,315	3,445
Groundfish	1,684	1,842	1,923	595	2,035	2,258	2,573	940
Othe	8,430	21,862	23,790	20,608	7,186	10,668	9,459	8,161

Salmon Industry

Year/ Année	Number of sites	Volume (MT)	Value (000\$ CDN)
1979	1	6	40
1984	5	255	2,948
1989	49	4,500	42,075
1994	67	11,836	91,000
1998	78	14,232	106,678
1999	87	22,000	150,000
2000	96	29,100	181,500
2001	96	33,900	180,010
2002	96	38,900	194,500
2003	98	33,100	179,000

Aquaculture Industry

Species	Volume (MT)				Value (000\$ CDN)			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2000	2001	2002	2003
Salmon	29,100	33,900	38,900	33,100	181,500	180,010	194,500	179,000
Trout *	550	550	550	550	6,100	6,000	6,100	6,100
Oysters	620	744	1,235	2,350	1,700	772	1,173	2,500
Mussels	750	439	637	453	825	522	801	600

* Estimation

Seafood Exports - Countries by Value

Country	Value (\$ CDN)			
	2000	2001	2002	2003
US	701,009,000	763,889,000	743,144,000	703,716,000
Japan	69,778,000	60,479,000	78,313,000	53,951,000
Dominic. Republic	11,048,000	13,619,000	16,778,000	14,188,000
Denmark	5,259,000	2,235,000	4,994,000	NA
Belgium	8,905,000	3,079,000	4,065,000	2,677,000
Other Caribbean	3,358,000	4,359,000	4,741,000	2,651,000
France	4,006,000	7,472,000	6,872,000	2,639,000
United Kingdom	5,911,000	4,966,000	2,765,000	1,437,000
Other	9,392,000	27,176,000	21,986,000	13,241,000
Total	818,666,000	882,915,000	883,658,000	794,500,000

Seafood Exports by Species

Species	Value (\$ CDN)			
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Lobster	386,303,000	400,673,000	403,941,000	412,488,000
Salmon	138,289,000	215,828,000	223,579,000	147,037,000
Crab	108,766,000	109,798,000	116,306,000	106,251,000
Herring	48,751,000	90,357,000	53,534,000	45,480,000
Sardine	39,968,000	NA	16,972,000	20,871,000
Shrimp	17,987,000	21,003,000	19,046,000	14,643,000
Other	78,602,000	43,306,000	50,280,000	47,702,000
Total	818,666,000	880,965,000	883,658,000	794,472,000

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

This division provides Senior Management and departmental staff with services in the areas of human resources, financial services, information technology and records management to support the continued development of the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Human Resources Services Branch

Human Resources Services provide a wide range of consultative services such as: staffing, labor relations and classification/reclassification activities; administration of all departmental pay and benefit plans, including both regular and casual payrolls and all other human resources related services.

Highlights:

- Seventeen competitions were processed during the fiscal year. Student employment initiatives resulted in forty students gaining meaningful employment experiences.
- Eleven employees were enrolled in language training offered by the Province.

Information Technology and Records Management Branch

The goal of the Information Technology and Records Management Branch is to ensure that departmental data and records are secure and easily retrievable, to provide technical support to all staff, and to maintain, acquire, develop and implement computer hardware, software, and telecommunication systems to support departmental clients in achieving their business objectives.

Highlights:

- During 2003-2004, the Information Technology section's major focus was the continued development of an integrated Veterinary Records System to enhance food safety monitoring. This system, once fully implemented, will handle veterinary records, inventory, and billing for the province's veterinarians.
- Other systems and software solutions implemented and/or upgraded over the past year were:

License Tracking System – department-wide system implementation completed;

Dairy Lab System – upgraded to maintain currency with new dairy testing standards;

Farm Portrait – implemented a system to track farm production and environmental data;

Records Management – implemented an automated records management system within the Records Center;

Crop Insurance – extensive upgrades to accommodate the addition of several new crops.

- The Branch continued to standardize and upgrade its technology infrastructure ensuring that departmental employees have access to computer technology that is current and standard within both the Department and the Government of New Brunswick.
- In terms of applications, a great deal of effort went into upgrading each to maintain currency with the newly-upgraded office productivity software. Branch staff was also actively involved in government-wide committees established to improve the management of information and technology.
- During the past year, regional telecommunications linkages were upgraded to improve system performance.
- The Records Management unit continued to offer centralized records management services for head office and supported a decentralized service for regional offices. It also provided mail distribution for the Department.

Financial Services Branch

The role of the Financial Services Branch is to ensure that the Department can achieve its overall objectives through the sound management of departmental financial resources. This is accomplished by providing the Department with

accounting services, financial planning, budget monitoring, revenue collection and reporting, and administrative support services.

The Branch must ensure that all financial documents comply with the travel regulations, the Public Purchasing Act and the *Financial Administration Act* while maintaining consistency and accuracy within an acceptable period of time.

It is the responsibility of the Branch to be the liaison with the Office of the Comptroller and the Department of Finance in matters relating to government regulations and policy, and budget preparation.

This Branch must maintain the records management system for all-original pay documents and act as the facilitator for the automated financial systems. The Branch is also responsible for the collection and reporting of revenue owed to the Department. This involves the management of the Accounts Receivable/ Collection and Credit Policy of the Department.

Details of Expenditures for the fiscal year 2003-2004

Program	Main Estimates (000) \$	Wage Settlement (000) \$	Amended Budget (000) \$	Expenditures (000) \$	Variance (Under) Over (000) \$
Corporate Services	4,216.0	4.8	4,220.8	4,744.9	524.1
PROGRAM TOTAL	4,216.0	4.8	4,220.8	4,744.9	524.1
Agriculture Development and Innovation					
Agriculture Development	3,178.0	3.8	3,181.8	2,928.1	(253.7)
Land Development	2,323.0	4.0	2,327.0	2,062.2	(264.8)
Potato Development	1,721.0	2.9	1,723.9	1,711.1	(12.8)
Safety Nets	8,457.0		8,457.0	6,683.0	(1,774.0)
Veterinary Services	3,374.0	3.4	3,377.4	3,580.3	202.9
Farm Products Commission	259.0		259.0	302.0	43.0
PROGRAM TOTAL	19,312.0	14.1	19,326.1	17,266.7	(2,059.4)
Fisheries, Aquaculture and Policy					
Commercial Fisheries and Value Added	1,292.0		1,292.0	1,311.4	19.4
Aquaculture	1,616.0	2.2	1,618.2	1,411.7	(206.5)
Marine Centre – Research and Aquaculture Development – East Coast	1,546.0		1,546.0	1,887.3	341.3
Policy and Planning Branch	671.0		671.0	695.4	24.4
Licensing and Compliance	0.0	0.3	0.3	1,255.1	1,254.8
PROGRAM TOTAL	5,125.0	2.5	5,127.5	6,560.9	1,433.4
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	28,653.0	21.4	28,674.4	28,572.5	(101.9)*

* The under-expenditure of \$(101,900) represents a freeze of funds as requested by Board of Management and overall decrease in operating expenditures.

Communications Branch

This Branch provides ongoing relations with the media and public about the Department's programs and policies.

The Branch is responsible for promotion of the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture industries in New Brunswick. The Branch coordinates the Department's communications activities and advises senior officials on communication-related matters, while setting day-to-day communications priorities, writing speeches and issuing news releases. Staff also provides editorial and proofreading services on various departmental documents, and coordinates content for the production of the Department's annual report and maintains and updates the content of the Department's website.

Highlights:

- The staff organized news conferences as well as other promotional events. The staff produced speeches, ministerial statements for the Legislative Assembly, briefing notes, speaking points, news releases, and feature articles on various agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture activities and initiatives.
- The Branch published "Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectors in Review 2002."

