

# Farm Technician Apprenticeship

## Why was the Farm Technician trade created?

The development of the Farm Technician trade was sparked by industry need. The lack of skilled labour was identified as a critical issue for Nova Scotia farms, and resulted in an NSFA policy on this very issue. The need for a farm specific trade was requested by the agriculture industry here in Nova Scotia, and we have had a significant amount of input, support, and guidance from countless farmers and commodities.

## How would this be a benefit to me and my operation?

It will provide comprehensive skills training that will allow both farm technicians and the farms they work on meet the technical, climatic, safety, and human resource challenges of the future. By combining classroom training with on-farm skills training farm technicians will have a unique education that will equip them for success.

## What skills would a Farm Technician have?

Farm Technicians work on farms that raise livestock and/or grow crops and fibres.

### Crops/fibres:

Farm Technicians are responsible for crop production activities such as:

- soil and nutrient management
- crop management
- integrated pest management.

Where applicable, they are involved in:

- packing
- grading
- storing
- shipping of food and farm products.

### Livestock:

Farm Technicians are responsible for herd/flock management including:

- health
- care and welfare
- breeding
- feeding
- environmental control

### General duties

- Farm management tasks and maintenance of properties such as buildings, farm grounds and storage facilities.
- Farm Technicians must safely operate, maintain and

adjust a various equipment such as tractors, forklifts, skid steers, loaders, and precision agriculture systems as well as various hand and power tools.

- They may also use various types of technology to increase overall efficiency and productivity including computers, robotics, programmable logic controllers (PLC) and mobile devices.

## What occupations could a Farm Technician do/ what roles would benefit from taking this training?

- Agricultural service contractors
- Farm supervisors
- Specialized livestock workers (e.g. herdspersons)
- Farm foreman/woman

## What is an apprentice?

An apprentice is an entry-level employee who takes part in a specialized training program with a skilled employer. Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training (learning from a certified Journeyperson) and technical training (in-class or virtual).

## Who is a journeyperson?

A journeyperson is someone who has obtained a certificate of qualification in a skilled trade. They are certified to train apprentices. Journeypersons pass on their knowledge and skills to apprentices.

## How many hours do I need in order to be a Journeyperson?

Those looking to become a journeyperson right away need 5400 hours in order to challenge the exam. This means you will not go through the apprenticeship pathway. A good example of this would be someone must have 5400 hours as a herdsperson already, in order to challenge the exam.

## What if I have the hours but would like a refresher before taking the exam?

Those with 5400 hours in can take the exam, however, if they want to take the refresher course they can do so to prepare for the exam. The refresher course is self-directed, which means it won't take place in a classroom, and should take 90 hours to complete.

## What is the cost associated with this?

Trade qualifier fee is \$740 but is being waived until November 2023.

The exam fee is \$148.18.

## How long does the apprenticeship training take?

The apprenticeship training that is set to begin in 2023, will take two years to complete.

## What is the Apprenticeship START Program?

Once an employer has someone on staff that is certified in the Farm technician trade, they can then proceed to register an apprentice to work under their supervision. It's at that time, when NS Apprenticeship Agency staff are completing the registration paperwork, that they will automatically register the employer for the START program, if they qualify.

The employer will receive \$2,500 for registering the apprentice, \$5,000 after they complete level 1 of their apprenticeship (1,800 hours work experience + level 1 technical training), \$5,000 after they complete level 2 of their apprenticeship (3,600 hours work experience + level 2 technical training) and a final completion payment of \$2,500, once they write their exam and become certified in the Farm Technician trade.

If the employer hires a diverse apprentice (women in non-traditional trades, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginal Nova Scotians, Immigrants and Persons with a Physical Disability), the two \$2,500 payments increase to two \$5,000 payments instead. The apprentice will need to self-identify under the Diversity Management section on their registration form, in order to be considered a diverse apprentice.

Depending on the apprentice, the employer (or farm) will receive between \$15,000 - \$20,000 per apprentice through the START program, throughout the whole apprenticeship program. Employers can only qualify for up to 10 apprentices for the START program at one time. Employers need to be registered through Nova Scotia Joint Stock Registry and have an 'active' status at the time of application.

## Questions?

For more information or to register for the Farm Technician refresher course or certification exam, contact Michelle Turner, Industry Training Consultant: [Michelle.Turner@novascotia.ca](mailto:Michelle.Turner@novascotia.ca) 902-679-4303.

