



Precision Agriculture Research Team lead by Dr. Zaman launched an initiative to develop cost-effective innovative precision technologies for Atlantic wild blueberries at Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, Dalhousie University (DAL-AC) in 2007 (<http://www.dal.ca/precisionag>). “By providing a platform that can be used by **university, industry partners, and government** to support intensive agricultural data science research, Precision Agriculture Program will help position Atlantic Canada as a leader in the agriculture economy for years to come. The research contains training of graduate/undergraduate student and postdoctoral fellow, and the continuing “lifelong” applied education of producers and industry representatives. Dr. Travis Esau recently developed an economic and management tool for assessing wild blueberry production costs and financial feasibility. The PA team at DAL- AC is actively involved in developing and transferring viable technologies including publications in scientific journals and growers’ magazines, fact sheets, radio and TV talks, presenting in national, international and industry meetings, and demonstrating the technologies in farmers’ field days.

One of the PA research projects “Improving efficiency of commercial wild blueberry harvester using precision agriculture technologies” was completed in September 2017. This project was a part of a multidisciplinary research effort at DAL-AC in collaboration with **Doug Bragg Enterprises**, Collingwood, NS and Wild Blueberry Producers Association. The implementation of Precision Ag. Technologies improved harvester efficiency, increased berry yield and quality reducing cost of production. (<https://www.dal.ca/sites/precision-agriculture/Publications.html>).

Based on the significant achievements of this project, NS Department of Agriculture launched a Harvester Efficiency Program to support the wild blueberry industry (<https://novascotia.ca/programs/wild-blueberry-harvest-efficiency/>).

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP - HARVESTER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

The governments of Canada and Nova Scotia are committed to ensuring farmers and processors have the tools they need to innovate, grow and prosper. The Canadian Agricultural Partnership agreement is part of a commitment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to promote productivity and profitability for the sector. The programs are designed to help the industry position itself to respond to future opportunities and to realize its full potential as a significant contributor to the economy. The partnership is a five-year, \$3-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments that aims to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector and ensure continued innovation, growth and prosperity. The partnership includes \$1 billion for federal activities and programs, and \$2 billion in cost shared programs delivered by provinces and territories on a 60-40 basis. In Nova Scotia, \$37 million will be invested through provincially delivered programs focusing on Markets and Trade; Science, Research and Innovation; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change; Risk Management; Value Added Agriculture and Agri-Food Processing; and Public Trust. In addition to cost-shared strategic initiatives, the partnership includes several business risk-management programs to help farmers manage risks that threaten the viability of their farms.

WILD BLUEBERRY HARVESTER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Wild Blueberry Harvest Efficiency Program supports the adoption of efficient harvester technology to increase blueberry producers' harvest and field handling efficiency resulting in an increase in crop yield. The support provided by this program will also allow growers to increase their competitive advantage.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Each applicant may be eligible for 75% funding assistance under Canadian Agricultural Partnership to a maximum of \$20,000 per harvester. It allows farmers, machinery manufacturers and processors at all levels, ranging from small family-run operations to large agri-businesses, to achieve significant improvements in farming efficiency.