

March 25, 2026

Minister Pat Finnigan
Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture & Fisheries
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1

Dear Minister Finnigan,

Subject: Phase-Out of Provincial Veterinary and Lab Services

On behalf of the Agriculture Alliance of New Brunswick and our membership, I am writing regarding the recent announcement to phase out provincial veterinary field and lab services for the agriculture sector.

We recognize the broader fiscal pressures facing government and appreciate the continued investments being made in agriculture, including recent commitments to sector growth. However, the proposed elimination of provincial veterinary services—without a defined transition plan or prior consultation—raises significant concern across our industry.

Access to reliable veterinary services is not optional; it is foundational to animal agriculture in New Brunswick:

- On-farm productivity and economic viability
- Animal welfare, particularly in emergency situations
- Food safety and public confidence
- Biosecurity and disease response capacity

As highlighted in our recent discussions, the current system fills critical gaps that private services cannot sustainably address, particularly in rural and remote regions.

Our members have identified several immediate risks associated with the current direction. These risks are not theoretical; they have already begun to materialize and will accelerate without timely intervention:

- Potential loss of veterinarians in the near term due to uncertainty
- Reduced or eliminated access to 24/7 emergency services
- Increased pressure on limited private veterinary capacity in rural areas
- Disruption to services that underpin food safety systems and public trust
- Risk to bilingual service delivery across the province

Our members are united in their commitment to working constructively with government. We are taking a measured and solutions-oriented approach because we believe a collaborative outcome is both achievable and necessary. We are not asking government to maintain the status quo, but rather to work with industry to design a sustainable path forward.

We recommend the following actions:

1. Engage in Direct Consultation with Livestock Commodities

Initiate focused discussions with livestock commodity organizations to ensure government has a clear understanding of current service reliance, regional vulnerabilities, and producer needs before further implementation steps are taken.

2. Co Develop a Transition Plan that Minimizes Disruption

Work with industry to design a phased transition that prioritizes continuity of essential services, particularly emergency response, rural coverage, laboratory access, and bilingual service delivery.

3. Identify and Plan for Service Disruptions in Advance

As part of the transition planning process, jointly identify where disruptions are most likely to occur and establish clear contingency measures to ensure producers know how and where services will be accessed if challenges arise during the transition.

4. Maintain Ongoing Dialogue Throughout the Transition

Ensure that livestock commodities remain engaged as the transition progresses, allowing government and industry to respond collaboratively to emerging issues and adjust plans as needed.

This is not a question of whether services should evolve, but how to do so responsibly—without compromising animal welfare, farm viability, or public confidence.

New Brunswick's agriculture sector is prepared to do their part in building a solution together. Producers are willing to adapt to new revenue neutral models, and work in partnership with government. We are awaiting detailed financial information to be provided by your department to support the development of a comprehensive proposal.

This letter has been developed and supported by the organizations listed below and we respectfully request a meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss a path forward.

Sincerely,



Danielle Connell
President
Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick

cc:

Karla Anderson – NB Draft Horse Association
 Katie Bleakney & Mike Bouma - Dairy Farmers of New Brunswick
 Denise Cassidy & Hans Kristensen - Porc NB Pork
 Kara Chisolm - NB Cattle Producers
 Jocelyn Donnelly - Young Farmers of NB
 Calvin Hicks – NB Sheep Breeders Association
 Sarah Loftus - Egg Farmers of New Brunswick
 Pierre Martin - Chicken & Turkey Farmers of New Brunswick
 Deanna Phelan – NB Equestrian Association

