



 **CANADIAN**
 **AGRICULTURAL**
 **PARTNERSHIP**
Innovate. Grow. Prosper.

Blue Bay Farms

*Helping keep farms
in the green*



Canada

Farm dedicated to improving the soil



With the bay that lends its name to their third generation potato farm in Anglo Rustico never far in the background, the Nieuwhof family has always understood the vital importance of protecting both the land and water for future generations.

That is why Blue Bay Farms was among the first to sign up for the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Program when it was established by the province over a decade ago. The program offers financial assistance to retire sensitive land from production with the goal of preventing soil erosion, improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat and is funded by the federal and provincial governments under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

Kayla Nieuwhof is the office administrator and special projects coordinator for the farm and the farm's involvement in the ALUS program has recently come under her supervision. When she reviewed the projects implemented on the farm during the past the decade plus, one theme is key -- soil protection and enhancement.

"The soil is key to everything we do on this farm," Kayla said. "Without healthy soil, we are in big trouble. It is as simple as that."

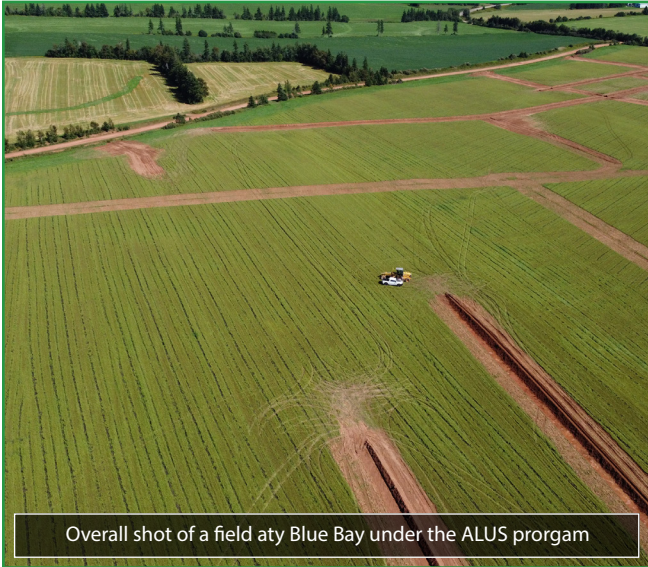
She praises the work of her father-in-law, Randall Nieuwhof, who spearheaded the farm's initial involvement in the program. Kayla said Blue Bay Farms now has 79 acres under the program, and she noted "The goals of the program align really well with the goals we have on our farm-- protecting our topsoil, protecting the quality of our waterways, and encouraging diverse wildlife habitat."

Kayla said Blue Bay Farms has been able to expand its buffer zones beyond the regulated 15 metres as well as retire land in a high-sloped areas. They have also established erosion control structures such as berms and terraces that help to conserve soil, prevent runoff, and create wildlife habitat.



She said the farm is eager to help the public understand more about agriculture and has participated in events like Open Farm Day in the past. Kayla described the event as a great way to reach members of the non-farming public, especially the younger generation.

Kayla said people not only want to know how their food is grown but what steps are being taken on a farm to protect the environment for future generations and "ALUS is a big part of that. What we are doing now will have a positive impact for years to come."



She said the work done under the ALUS program is a major part of the farm's environmental program. It goes hand in hand with other efforts through the Agriculture Stewardship Program and the Soil First Farming initiative of the Department of Agriculture and Land.

"We have added waterways and berms that are perpendicular to the planted rows that capture water and direct its flow in order to minimize impacts on the field," she explained.

There are also terraces parallel to the slope, some with trees and others just grass and "we find those are great wildlife corridors through the fields." By working in concert with nature, Kayla said it is easier to manage the water on the field and create wildlife habitat.

In one of the areas with an extended buffer zone, Kayla said they are working with a local watershed group to plant some trees and improve habitat. She shares her father-in-law's opinion that "this is a great program" and hopes the farm will continue to be involved in the ALUS program for a long time to come.

"We can certainly see the difference it has made every day," she said.