GENDER, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Report and Plan from the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

April 01, 2018 - March 31, 2020
Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives

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Message from the Deputy Minister

Greetings,

Agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries are broad domains and are characterized with unique and sometimes overlapping issues. Program and policy excellence in these areas requires that the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries can assemble diverse ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives towards developing solutions to complex problems. As such, the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries aims to be an organization which is inclusive and a champion of the diversity-creativity-innovation relationship.

Based on the gender, diversity and inclusion priorities set for the Government of PEI by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has made contributions to: making equality a priority; supporting women in decision-making; encouraging diversity and inclusion; and supporting women’s economic status. Building on the foundation of the priority areas established by the Advisory Council, the Department has formulated a strategy to continue to work towards gender, diversity and inclusion targets.

Moving forward, the Department will encourage and support the development of an innovative, diverse, and inclusive workforce which enables the organization to realize the goals and priorities of Government. The Department will also be looking more closely at how its policies and programs impact underrepresented groups. It is through cultivating an environment of inclusivity for diverse backgrounds and perspectives that we will be better prepared to achieve success in agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries.

Sincerely,

John Jamieson
Deputy Minister, PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Prince Edward Island, Canada
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Introduction

Gender, diversity and inclusion are priorities for the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). Eliminating barriers for the inclusion of diverse opinions, perspectives, and backgrounds is understood as critical for making good decisions and good public policy in agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries. Gender equality is a key component of the Department’s overall diversity strategy.

This report describes the gender, diversity and inclusion activities the Department has completed to work towards the priority areas established by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women. This report also establishes an organizational diversity and inclusion plan for the Department; complete with targets, responsibilities, and alignment with the Advisory Council’s priority areas.

Background

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women is an arms-length government advisory agency. The nine members of Council are appointed by government to work for equality and to support women’s full and active participation in the social, legal, cultural, economic, and political spheres of life. The Advisory Council began in 1975 as an Order-in-Council. In 1988, it received full legislative standing with the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act. This Act continues to govern the Council’s structure and mandate. Part of the Council’s function is to recommend priority areas for Government to consider when planning programs and policies. Government’s progress towards these priority areas is published in the form of an Equality Report Card.

Key terms

Diversity – Diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, diversity is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Article 1).

Gender - Gender is a social classification based upon the personality traits, qualities, and social roles, responsibilities and relations expected and generally considered acceptable for and among a particular gender. “Woman,” “man,” “women,” “men,” “trans” and “non-binary” are some terms that relate to gender. Gender expectations, expressions and relations vary across cultures and across time. Gender expression and gender identity are traditionally expressed across a continuum from masculinity to femininity (PEI, Interministerial Women’s Secretariat, 2017).

Inclusion – Inclusion is an active process in which individuals, groups, organizations and societies view and approach diversity as a valued resource. Inclusive practices work to systemically foster social equality across multiple dimensions of identity. In an inclusive system, everyone is empowered as a full participant and contributor who feels - and is connected - to the larger collective without having to give up individual uniqueness, cherished identities, or vital qualities (Ferdman, 2014, 2017).

Sex - Sex is a biological classification of males and females based on differences in reproductive organs, physiology and anatomy, genes and hormones. “Male” and “female” and “intersex” are some terms that relate to sex (PEI, Interministerial Women’s Secretariat, 2017).

The 2015 Equality Report Card from the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women established gender, diversity and inclusion priority areas for the Government of PEI. Included were priorities for Departments to:

- *make equality a priority*
- *support women in decision-making;*
- *actively engage the increasingly diverse population*
- *support women’s economic status*

Throughout June 01, 2015 to December 31, 2017, the Department undertook several activities to work towards these priorities. Activities included:

The collective impact of these activities has resulted in gender, diversity and inclusion considerations being further entrenched in the way the Department conducts its business.
Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Make equality a priority

Making equality a priority requires commitment by an organization’s senior management (Kreitz, 2008, p. 105; Sabharwal, 2014, p. 3). Leadership must understand and value that ‘diversity’ includes different perspectives and approaches towards work and decision-making (McCann & Kohntopp, 2017, p. 354). The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women (2018) states that:

“We expect the provincial government to meet its commitments to analyze the effects of existing and proposed legislation, policy, and budgeting on everyday Island women and men and diverse groups. This means applying gender and diversity analysis in planning, evaluation, decision-making processes, management practices, and organizational culture” (p. 1).

The Department’s activities towards making equality a priority throughout June 01, 2015 to December 31, 2017 included:

The deputy head of the Department has communicated to staff the importance of considering gender, diversity and inclusion in the operation’s day-to-day activities.

Through department-wide e-mails, the Deputy Minister has communicated to all staff that diversity and inclusion is a priority

The deputy head of the Department has reiterated to DAF agencies, boards, and commissions that gender, diversity and inclusion in board management is important

To further communicate the importance of making equality a priority, the Deputy Minister directed communication to the Chairpersons of the Department’s boards which reiterated the importance of gender and diversity in the context of board governance and management.

‘Diversity’ and ‘inclusion’ have been added to the Department’s strategic plan

The Department’s strategic plan now includes an explicit commitment to diversity and inclusion. As per the strategic plan, the Department has committed to “encourage and support the development of an innovative, diverse, and inclusive workforce which enables the organization to realize the goals and priorities of Government” (DAF Strategic Plan)

Gender and diversity have been prioritized in cost-shared agriculture programming with the federal government

The Department will be delivering a suite of agriculture programs on PEI in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2018-2023). When developing the cost-shared programs, the Department has committed to “considering the needs of under-represented groups … including women, youth, persons with a disability and Indigenous People” (Canadian Agriculture Partnership).

A biennial gender and diversity analysis of cost-shared agriculture programming has been mandated

The Deputy Minister has mandated the Policy Section to complete a gender and diversity analysis of all cost-shared agriculture programs (every two years). This will allow the Department to continuously understand the gender and diversity implications of programs and adjust administration as needed. The analysis process includes consultations with staff members as well as external clients.

A ‘gender and diversity’ section was added to the Ministerial Transition Binder

Ministerial Transition Binders are created to provide information to new Ministers following cabinet shuffles. This year the Department added a ‘gender and diversity’ section to the DAF’s Transition Binder. The gender and diversity section informs new DAF Ministers of the various ongoing gender, diversity, and inclusion activities of the Department. Providing this information to Ministers helps to entrench gender, diversity, and inclusion priorities at the most senior level of leadership.
Support women in decision-making

To make support for women in decision-making a priority requires that organizations work to institute changes which are constant, concrete, and concerted at all levels (Seo, Huang & Han, 2017, p. 52).

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women (2018) states that:

“We expect the provincial government to actively encourage women’s advancement in areas where women have been under-represented. We expect the provincial government to break down barriers to women’s leadership in elected and appointed decision-making. We expect government to be a model employer of women in the public sector, given their work is essential to delivering public services and their income is a foundation for families’ incomes and the provincial economy” (p. 1).

The Department’s activities towards making support for women in decision-making a priority throughout June 01, 2015 to December 31, 2017 included:

The Department has supported gender and diversity training for members of the Department’s agencies, boards, and commissions

Through communication with the Chairpersons, the Deputy Minister has encouraged its arms-length Boards to complete gender and diversity analysis training to improve capacity to make decisions using a gender and diversity lens.

The Department invested in the PEI Women’s Institute

The Department has continued to provide operational support to the PEI Women’s Institute. From 2015 to 2017, the Department invested $288,000 to support the Institute in achieving its goals for women in the agriculture sector on PEI. The Institute works to stimulate leadership among women and promote a greater understanding and appreciation of farmers and the agricultural industry in the province.

The Department supported the “Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference.”

Through the Department’s Business Development Program, the Department provided funding for women from the Department and the agriculture community to attend the Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference in 2017. The purpose of the conference was to bring together women in agriculture and their allies to discuss community, career, and industry-related topics.
Encourage diversity and inclusion

Making gender and diversity analysis a priority requires that organizations incorporate gender, diversity and inclusion considerations into policymaking and bureaucratic practice (Scala & Paterson, 2017, p. 427). Best practice encourages organizations to incorporate gender, diversity and inclusion considerations from the beginning of policy and program planning (Johnson, Greaves & Repta, 2009, p. 9).

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women (2018) states that:

“We expect the provincial government to actively engage our increasingly diverse population and to take special measures to include diverse and vulnerable groups in the social, cultural, economic, and democratic life of the Province. We expect government to meaningfully consult and consciously include and accommodate diverse groups in its programs and services” (p. 4).

The Department’s activities towards making diversity and inclusion a priority throughout June 01, 2015 to December 31, 2017 included:

The deputy head of the Department encouraged all staff to complete gender and diversity analysis training. Through e-mail communication, the Deputy Minister encouraged all staff to complete the Status of Women Canada’s online gender and diversity analysis training. Human resources has tracked course completion rates to monitor the Department’s knowledge and capacity to conduct this type of analysis. As of the publishing of this report, 24 staff members have completed the training.

The Department participated in a First Nations outreach session to better understand the needs of Indigenous peoples with respect to agriculture programs. The Department participated in a First Nations outreach session to support the development of programs for the Canadian Agriculture Partnership initiative with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Feedback from the session indicated that the Department should increase communication to Indigenous peoples with respect to its programs and eligibility requirements.

A gender and diversity analysis of all cost-shared agriculture programs was completed. The Department completed a gender and diversity analysis of it cost-shared programs in agriculture. The analysis involved collecting feedback from program leads on the gender, diversity and inclusion implications of programs. The analysis was coordinated with Government’s Interministerial Women’s Secretariat and resulted in a better understanding of how programs impact underrepresented groups.

Program documents and guidelines were translated into Farsi and Mandarin so that the Department could better serve clients whose first language is other than English and French. In responding to the changing demographics of the province as well as the Department’s clients, the Future Farmer Program guidelines were translated into Farsi and Mandarin and posted to the Department’s website.

The Department maintains an active role on the PEI Public Service Commission’s Diversity Advisory Committee. The Department continues to maintain an active role on the PEI Public Service Commission’s Diversity Advisory Committee. Recently the Department provided evidence-based recommendations to the Committee through an analysis of peer-reviewed literature on organizational diversity and inclusion.
Support women’s economic status

Making support for women’s economic status a priority requires that organizations consider the economic impacts that policies may have on women and commit to policy “design with gender in mind” (Bryan, Bernier, Twyman, et al., 2017).

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women (2018) states that:

“We expect the provincial government to set a high priority on improving the health, dignity, and wellbeing of economically vulnerable Islanders and to work towards a province where everyone has a livable income. Livable income means that people are able to meet their basic needs in good health and dignity and can also deal with emergencies. We expect responsive and flexible social programs and an effective cross-governmental provincial strategy to reduce or eliminate poverty” (p.5).

The Department’s activities towards making support for women’s economic status a priority throughout June 01, 2015 to December 31, 2017 included:

The department supported 17 community food security projects through its Community Food Security and Food Education program

Through a commitment of $120,000, the Department funded 17 community food security projects. Projects activities were targeted at individuals who are often considered underrepresented or vulnerable in terms of their access to the local food system. The program was administered through cross-governmental cooperation, particularly with the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture. External partners included Abegweit First Nation and the PEI Home and School Federation.
## Gender, diversity and inclusion plan (2018-2020)

The department has established several gender, diversity and inclusion objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>DAF’s Target (Completed by Mar 31, 2020)</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make equality a priority</td>
<td>Make DAF's commitment to gender equality, diversity and inclusion more explicit</td>
<td>100 per cent of all program guidelines include a statement on DAF's position towards gender, diversity, and inclusion</td>
<td><strong>Policy Section</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100 per cent of all job advertisements include a statement on DAF's position towards gender, diversity, and inclusion</td>
<td><strong>Human Resource Section</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply gender and diversity analysis</td>
<td>Improve DAF's capacity to complete gender and diversity-based analysis</td>
<td>100 per cent of management completed training</td>
<td><strong>All Directors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 per cent of staff completed training</td>
<td><strong>Human Resource Section</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understand DAF’s program impacts on gender, diversity and inclusion</td>
<td>A full gender and diversity analysis of DAF's programs which includes the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders.</td>
<td><strong>Policy Section</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Meaningfully include Indigenous people in programming</td>
<td>A program information sharing event with organizations representing Indigenous peoples on PEI.</td>
<td><strong>Policy Section</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Communications Section</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage diversity and inclusion</td>
<td>Increase diverse and vulnerable groups' representation on DAF's boards</td>
<td>A communication campaign targeted at people who are often considered diverse and/or vulnerable and focused on encouraging their participation in DAF's boards.</td>
<td><strong>Deputy Minister’s Office</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Policy Section</strong></td>
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<td>Invest program dollars in activities which encourage women's participation in agriculture.</td>
<td><strong>Policy and Agriculture Resources Division</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase targeted employment recruitment towards diverse talent</td>
<td>Communication targeted at people who are often underrepresented focused on encouraging their application to employment positions at the Department.</td>
<td><strong>Human Resource Section</strong></td>
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<td>Complete a focus group with women to identify barriers and enablers for participation in boards</td>
<td><strong>Policy Section</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support women in decision-making</td>
<td>Increase representation of women on DAF's boards</td>
<td>A communication campaign targeted at women and focused on encouraging women's participation in DAF's boards.</td>
<td><strong>Deputy Minister’s Office</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s health / Violence prevention</td>
<td>Strengthen mental health support services for families</td>
<td>Increase financial support for mental health programming for families</td>
<td><strong>Policy and Agriculture Resources Division</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority areas are based on those established by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women following the 2015 Equality Report. Priority areas are subject to change depending on the strategy adopted by the Advisory Council.
REFERENCES


