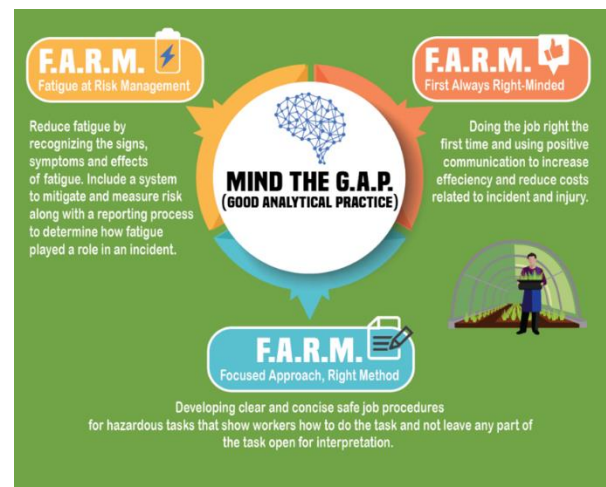




Mind the G.A.P! FARM-FARM-FARM

What does that mean? G.A.P stands for Good Analytical Practice, it's a tool to communicate your farm safety plan on farm to control hazards. It's a process for safety, and it's a process to engage your workers to have good safety procedures by using the SLOW part of their brain. The goal is to reduce incident injury rates on farm.

The following factsheet will inform you on how you can train your brain to be farm safe. To do so, we will explore the difference between the Slow and Fast brain, examine the three main components of Mind the GAP, and look into the courses available to Nova Scotia farmers through Farm Safety Nova Scotia to promote farm safety.



Farm Safety Nova Scotia (FSNS)

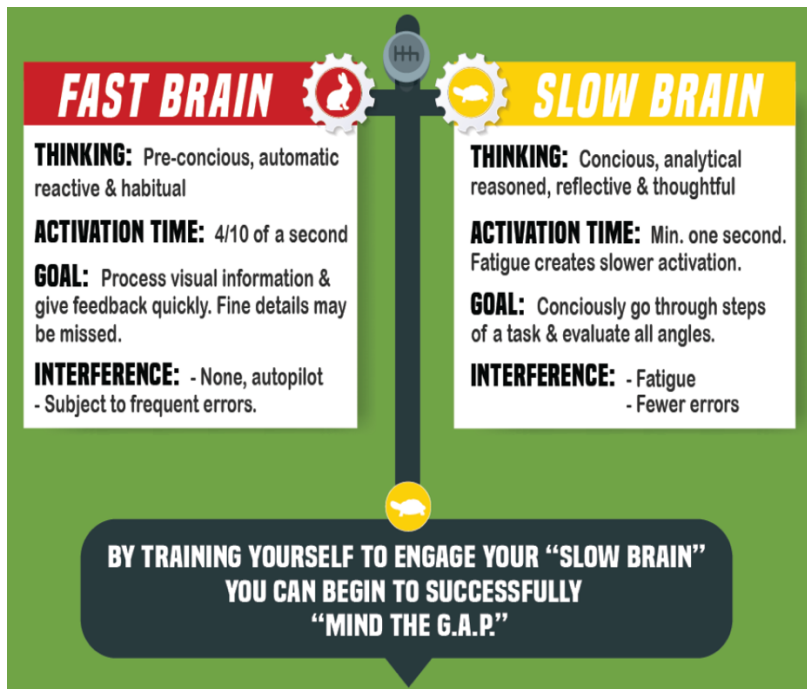


FSNS is a not-for-profit society that works with Nova Scotia farms to keep farmers, their families, and employees safe. They do this by offering a variety of tools and resources to help operate farms in a safe and productive manner. FSNS is industry driven and is committed to working in the best interests of its members.

The information provided in this factsheet was sourced directly from FSNS.

Fast Brain VS Slow Brain

There are two parts of your brain that you engage while completing tasks. Your Fast Brain, and your Slow Brain. For certain tasks, your fast brain will come in handy, and for other tasks your slow brain is more helpful. The fast brain is your preconscious, automatic, habitual thinking. It only takes four-tenths of a second to activate this part of your brain. Basically, you use this to process information quickly and give feedback, but during that time you miss a lot of fine details. There is really no interference for this part of the brain to activate, but it is subject to frequent errors.



It is your Slow Brain that you want to engage to be safe on the farm. The slow part of the brain, this is where we do our conscious analytical reason, reflective, and thoughtful thinking. The bad news is that it takes approximately one second for this part of the brain to activate, and if you're fatigued, it takes even longer. Fatigue has been identified as key role in workplace incidents. This is especially concerning given between 39% and 67% of the world's workforce is sleep deprived. The objective of the slow brain is to work through steps, processes and evaluate the work you're doing. It results in fewer errors overall.

By training yourself to engage your slow brain you can begin to successfully mind the GAP.

Mind The Gap; F.A.R.M. (Fatigue At Risk Management)

Fatigue is like any other hazard on the farm. Fatigue results in slower reaction time which increases the risk of incidents. It can result in a lack of good judgment. You could become easily distracted, not be able to concentrate on the tasks, and result in poor quality of work.

The signs of fatigue include:

1. Continuous Yawning,
2. Nodding off,
3. Head bobbing,
4. Continuous rubbing of eyes,
5. Sneaking in naps,
6. Inability to concentrate on tasks,
7. Difficulty remembering things that normally come easy to you,
8. Forgetting to relay messages or communicate regularly,
9. Not able to anticipate hazards,
10. Increase in injury and incident rates,
11. Increase in errors and poor-quality work,
12. Quiet and withdrawn,
13. Lacking good energy levels,
14. Unmotivated.



There are quite a few implications of fatigue on mental health. Studies suggest that a goodnight's sleep helps foster both mental and emotional resilience. Also, sleep disruption wreaks havoc in the brain, impairing thinking and emotional regulation. Chronic sleep deprivation sets the stage for negative thinking and emotional vulnerability. Insomnia can actually amplify the effects of psychiatric disorders, as those with mental health problems are more likely to have insomnia or other sleep disorders.

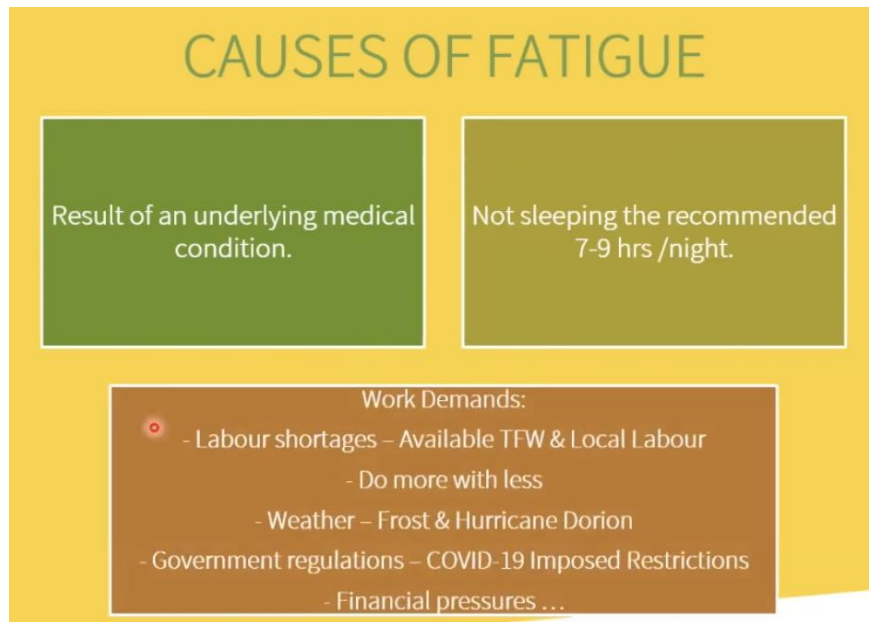
The good news is that treating a sleep disorder may alleviate the symptoms of mental health problem. It is amazing how important receiving the right about of sleep is.

There are a number of ways that you can reduce fatigue. First, it is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of fatigue. Knowing the effects of fatigue impairment has on you can help you develop a system to mitigate risk. It is a good idea to have an incident reporting process to gain information on how fatigue plays a role in incidents on your farm. Another tool is using a fatigue calculator.

- Links to [Fatigue Incident Report](#) and [Fatigue Calculator](#) that FSNS has created.

You may want to consider creating a fatigue risk management policy. This encompasses creating a policy on how you can work on your farm to mitigate the risk of fatigue. It defines fatigue and listing that responsibilities of the farmer and works on farm to mitigate the risks of fatigue.

- The following link provides a sample of a farm risk management policy created by FSNS. [Fatigue Risk Management Policy](#).



Mind The Gap; F.A.R.M. (First Always Right-Minded)

This section concerns workplace culture. The key to delivering a strong safety program is positive reinforcement according to *The Relationship Between Engagement at Work and Organization Outcomes* by Harter et al. Gallup, April 2016. They noticed there's a clear connection between safety, culture and safe work performance. The study showed a 78% higher success rate in businesses had an engaged workforce. 70% of those had fewer incident and 41% had less absenteeism.

The following are outcomes you can expect from implementing the First Always Right-Mined strategy:

- Increased farm sustainability,
- Doing the job right the first time,
- Increased efficiency,
- Employees will take ownership of their roles,
- Reduce costs related to incidents and injury.

Change your Message From:	Change Your Message To:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgant Tonnes • Hurry Up • Get It Done • I Don't Have Time • It's Common Sence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Your Time to Focus • Think It Through • Ask Questions • Ask For Help




Mind The Gap; F.A.R.M. (Focus Approach Right-Method)

This is where we develop our safe work practices and job procedures that align our policies. Policies are where you write your commitments down and explain how you intend to deliver on your commitments. Policies help keep a consistent message which results in consistent outcomes. It is important to make sure everything you want to communicate consistently is written down and workers have access to this written information. Clear, concise, safe work practices and safe job procedures. Safe work practices are the do's and don'ts of hazardous task. Safe job procedures are step-by-step instructions for performing tasks. Company health and safety policy is your general overall commitment to health and safety on the farm.

- You can find templates from FSNS to create these documents for the different jobs on your farm [here](#).


Below is an example of how to communicate the GAP to your employees.

Example:



Johnny standing on a ladder with one foot on the ladder and the other on a tree limb. Say "Hey Johnny, Mind the GAP." Johnny says "What?"

- You say, "Mind the GAP. Good Analytical Practice." In our Safe Work Practice for ladders, it mentions we should keep both feet on the ladder to prevent the ladder from tipping over. Your thoughts?"
- Johnny says, "well, there was just one branch that I couldn't quite reach so I thought I would be quick and do this. It would take too much time to get down and move the ladder for just one cut."
- You say, "at ABC Farm, we Mind the GAP and it is OK to take the time and follow the safe work practice to make sure we don't get hurt and we go home at the end of the day in the same condition we arrived."



Building A Farm Safety Plan

Again, FSNS provides a lot of information on how to make a farm safety plan on their website (see link below).

- **Section 1** provides information on the importance of a farm safety plan, as well as the legislative components.
- **Section 2** guides you through the process of completing a self-assessment. This shows you the components you will need to incorporate into your farm safety plan.
 - Within this section you will find green squares with large light green checkmarks over them. This references the workbook which has templates that correspond with the page number on which the check mark is found.

You can find these workbooks by clicking on the provided link which will bring you to the home page "[Build a Farm Safety Plan](#)". Scroll down and click on the link to the section you are working on to bring you to the Workbooks. In all there are 5 sections in this document prepared by FSNS.



It is important to note that farms with over 20 employees are required to have a full safety plan. Those with 5 or less employees are not legislated to have a safety plan, those with 5 to 20 are only required to have safety policies. That being said, it is a good practice for all farms to have safety plans in place to decrease the risk of on farm incidents.

FSNS has created a commodity specific guide to creating a farm safety plan for Christmas tree growers. This resource should be consulted when filling out your worksheets as it touches on the specific safety needs within our industry. For instance, farm safety plans specific information in regard to shearing, woodchippers, and Christmas tree bailers. [A Christmas Tree Growers Guide to your Farm Safety Plan](#)

Hiring a Health & Safety Consultant

Especially for larger farms, the process of creating a farm safety plan may seem daunting. Luckily, there are Health & Safety Consultants that can be hired to help advise and guide you through the process of creating and implementing a farm safety plan. FSNS has resources on their website to help you hire a Health & Safety Consultant.

- Their fourteen tips to understand the scope of your farm safety plan and how to hire the right Health and Safety Consultant: [Health & Safety Consultant](#).

Questions and Contact Information

If you have any questions, FSNS has a number of different channels that you can contact them through. You can receive frequent updates on what FSNS is up to by subscribing to one or more of their social media channels.

Address:

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7 Atlantic Central Drive
East Mountain, N.S. B6L 2Z2

Office hours are Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Phone Number: (902) 893-2293

Fax Number: (902) 893-7063

Email: info@farmsafetyns.ca

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Facebook: [@farmsafetyns](https://www.facebook.com/farmsafetyns)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPjpy7Edm-v58KfntjBiAQg>

