



Local 316,  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Save Our Seeds Rally to Draw Attention to Farmers' and Eaters' Rights with a March, a Guest Speaker and a Letter Writing Campaign**

KINGSTON -- Local National Farmers Union (NFU) members and eaters have organized a Save Our Seeds (SOS) Rally here for March 5 to help protect the rights of farmers to save and exchange their seeds. Proposed amendments to the Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) Act will mean that seed and food systems would become restructured by government and transnational seed corporations to increase corporate "rights" and control. This plan to restructure our seed and food systems is something that would affect both farmers and eaters alike.

"As farmers and eaters, we are bringing the seed issues to the public - a task that our federal government could be taking on more vigorously," said Peter Dowling, an NFU board member for Ontario. Dowling was referring to a largely corporate-led effort to amend the PBR Act. The NFU Save Our Seeds Rally was initiated to counter this effort.

There is a passive public consultation for the proposed PBR Act amendments through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency website. However, the federal government is not actively seeking out public opinion and the Save our Seeds Rally is being organized to raise public awareness and to gather support for local farmers. "The consultations for this virtually invisible process close March 8," said Dowling.

A day of action has been planned for Saturday afternoon March 5, beginning at 12:30 pm with a public march. The march will start in the Historic Farmers' Market Square in downtown Kingston, go through downtown and arrive back at City Hall.

The SOS Rally will then continue in Memorial Hall (in City Hall) with the letter-writing campaign, a central focus of the event. Letters to Andy Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, will be collected in a huge envelope and hand-delivered to the Minister in Ottawa. Local grassroots organizing has already produced several letters. However, the NFU local calls on the public to bring letters to the rally. It also invites interested people to write letters on the day of the rally. Letter-writing guidelines and materials will be provided at Memorial Hall.

At 2:30, guest speaker Pat Mooney, Executive Director of The ETC Group (Erosion, Technology and Concentration) and seminal expert on seed issues, will discuss the pressing issues in agricultural

biodiversity, Plant Breeders' Rights legislation, and the corporatization of our seed and food systems. Mooney will be able to bring a clear perspective to the current issues and answer questions from the public.

Mooney said recently in referring to Canada's attempt to overturn an international moratorium on genetic seed sterilization technology (known universally as Terminator), "The Canadian government is doing the dirty work for the multinational gene giants and the US government. Even Monsanto wasn't prepared to be this upfront and nasty. Canada is betraying Farmers' Rights and food sovereignty everywhere."

"If the Canadian government is willing to foster terminator technology, it needs a strong message from Canadians to put people ahead of corporate interests in what we eat." concluded Dowling.

For more information, or to contribute a letter to the NFU envelope, contact Peter Dowling (NFU Ontario Board Member) (613) 546-0869 or [dowling@sympatico.ca](mailto:dowling@sympatico.ca). The NFU local invites you to access our [sample letter from a farmer](#), [sample letter from a consumer](#), and our [event details](#). For more information on the event, visit [www.nfu.ca/on](http://www.nfu.ca/on).

For further information, or for an interview, please contact Peter Dowling, NFU Board member, at 546-0869 or [dowling@sympatico.ca](mailto:dowling@sympatico.ca)