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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU MEMBERS ELECT DIRECTORS AT ONTARIO REGIONAL MEETING

National Farmers Union (NFU) delegates from across Ontario met in Woodstock March 31 and April 1 at the organization's regional convention. At the meeting, family farmers elected regional Directors, debated policy resolutions, and mapped out strategies for overcoming the farm income crisis.

Grant Robertson of Paisley, Ontario was acclaimed as the new NFU Regional Coordinator, a position within the NFU akin to a provincial president. In accepting the position Robertson stated, "There are many issues to focus on and I am excited to be taking on this new challenge at a time of such growth for the NFU in Ontario."

"One of the issues the NFU membership identified was the need for an audit of the Agriculture Ministry and agencies. Farmers in Ontario are one of our most efficient industries, exports have grown at a tremendous rate, and gross profit is on the rise, yet Ontario's farmers have just experienced the 5 worst years of realized net income on record," said Robertson. "There is a huge policy failure on the part of government in ensuring an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable food system. It's time to shed light on how farmers and the public have been failed by government."

Don Mills of Granton and Joe Dama of Leamington were also elected as Directors to represent Ontario on the NFU National Board of Directors. Mills, who served as NFU Coordinator for several years, is excited about his renewed role on the NFU National Executive. "It was a great thrill to go out on a high note," said Mills. "This year's AGM was the most successful yet. We have a strong team to work for Ontario's family farmers and this weekend renewed our determination to find positive solutions to make family farms viable again."

Also elected was Kim Delaney as the Women's Advisory Committee member. Caitlin Hall was chosen as the new Youth Advisory Committee member.

A highlight of the meeting was a presentation by Adrian Measner, former President and CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board, who was fired last November by federal Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl for standing up for Western Canadian farmers. Measner chronicled Minister of Agriculture Chuck Strahl's attack on the Canadian Wheat Board and farmers' market power. The next target is likely to be Canada's supply-management agencies.

Also in attendance was NFU National President Stewart Wells. “The NFU in Ontario is moving forward with policies and ideas that will benefit both family farmers and consumers,” said Wells. “We are pressing for the rights of farmers and citizens to save and re-use seed, as well as ensure that family farmers receive a fair share of the food dollar. We’re also working to increase market power through tools like supply management, I am proud of the clear positions held by the NFU.”

Colleen Ross, National Women’s President, focused on the international work of the NFU through the international farm organization *la Via Campesina*. Ross spoke about her recent trip to the country of Mali in Africa. “Over 500 representatives from more than 80 countries gathered to develop the Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Declaration,” said Ross. “Instead of pursuing the failed policies of the Agricultural Policy Framework in this country, governments should be looking to this document for inspiration for designing a real food policy for Canada and around the world.” (This document is available at www.nyeleni2007.org)

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