

National Office
2717 Wentz Ave.
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7K 4B6
Tel (306) 652-9465
Fax (306) 664-6226
E-Mail: nfu@nfu.ca



national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU DELEGATES AT FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CONFERENCE IN AFRICA

Three members of the National Farmers Union (NFU) are currently in the small African nation of Mali, participating in the World Forum for Food Sovereignty. The NFU delegates include Martha Robbins of Delisle, Saskatchewan; along with NFU Youth Vice-President Kalissa Regier of Laird, Saskatchewan and NFU Women's President Colleen Ross of Iroquois, Ontario.

This major global gathering, called "Nyéléni 2007", runs from February 23-27. It is taking place in Sélingué, a small town about 140 kilometres from Bamako, Mali.

"We're very excited to bring the Canadian family farm perspective into this amazing forum," said Martha Robbins, before leaving for Africa. "Although our situation is quite different than that of our African, Asian or South American counterparts, we all share the goal of building a healthier, fairer, ecologically-sustainable food system."

Over 500 women and men from 98 countries around the world are coming together in Mali to design global and local food systems which support family farmers and consumers rather than transnational companies. The forum is organized by an alliance of international social movements, including La Via Campesina, ROPPA (Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' organizations of West Africa), the World March of Women, the Food Sovereignty Network, and Friends of the Earth.

The forum's objective is to build a global political agenda for change. As Martha Robbins points out: "Food is an issue that affects every human being on the planet. In order to change the global food system, many sectors and people's organizations from all over the world are going to have to work together. Canadian farmers, consumers and policy makers can play an important part in this agenda for change."

The forum agenda and daily updates are available by logging on to www.nyeleni2007.org [click the language tab in the upper right corner to switch to English]. The conference is structured in a way that allows delegates to collaborate on a global strategy for implementing food sovereignty.

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*Please contact Via Campesina media contact Isabelle Delforge at 011-223-696-4635 (cell phone) to request a return call from Martha Robbins, Kalissa Regier or Colleen Ross.
Terry Pugh, NFU Executive-Secretary (306) 652-9465*

