



**MAKING A FARM BUSINESS SUCCEED TODAY --
BALANCING ECONOMICS, ECOLOGY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ON THE FARM**

November 2, 2009

Kingston -- Following a successful year of support for farmers and aspiring farmers, the National Farmers Union New Farm Project will hold its second annual Fall Gathering, Saturday, November 21.

"At this year's Fall Gathering, participants will hear from local farmers about how to balance economics, ecology and quality of life on the farm," said Ian Stutt, project co-ordinator. Stutt said the event, to be held at the Golden Links Hall, Harrowsmith, will include a description of how the project can help farmers, as well as themed and open discussions. It will be "a cross between an AGM, a social networking opportunity and a celebration," he said.

Besides farmers and aspiring farmers, people involved in other parts of the food system (for instance, processing, distribution and retailing) are invited to attend.

Initiated by NFU Local 316 (Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Counties and Kingston), the project reaches beyond those boundaries into neighbouring counties.

About 110 people attended the 2008 Fall Gathering, when the project was only three months underway. People learned about the scope of the project, and helped develop direction for the 2009 year.

"We will be hearing the stories of farmers, interns and other participants in the project," said Andrea Cumpson, NFU Local 316 president. "People are excited to make connections with others in similar situations, to get new ideas and to know they are not alone in their challenges and successes."

"At last year's Fall Gathering, and throughout the year, it has been very inspiring and hopeful to see so many people optimistic about the future of farming in our area, and so willing to work on rebuilding our local food system," Cumpson said.

The day's program will run from 9 am to 3:30 pm, with a local food lunch and snacks. There is no registration fee, but organizers suggest participants donate between \$2 and \$20, to help cover costs for the event.

The NFU New Farm Project, which aims to build farm capacity and farm community, runs from 2008 until 2012 and is funded by Heifer International, a non-profit organization whose goal is to help end world hunger and poverty through self-reliance, sustainability and environmental responsibility.

A major accomplishment of the first year was establishing an eastern Ontario chapter of CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training), matching ten farmer mentors with 18 interns interested in a future in farming. As well, the project organized workshops on specific topics (eg. small flock sheep husbandry, beekeeping, running a Community Supported Agriculture garden, cheesemaking and woodlot management), helped sponsor people wishing to attend farm-related workshops and conferences, and purchased small equipment to be shared among farmers (eg. poultry processing equipment, roto-tillers and seed broadcasters).

Pre-registration is required by Nov. 16, to assist in planning for the event. To register online, go to www.nfu.newfarmproject.ca or call 613-541-0869.

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Visit www.nfu.newfarmproject.ca for information about the project overall.

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