

# THE Union farmer

QUARTERLY

Winter 2009-10



Vol. 15 Issue 4





# Terry Boehm elected NFU President at 40<sup>th</sup> National Convention

Terry Boehm of Allan, Saskatchewan, is the new President of the National Farmers Union (NFU). Boehm was elected at the NFU 40<sup>th</sup> national convention in Ottawa in November. Boehm, who has served for several years as NFU Vice-President, faced an electoral challenge from Jean-Eudes Chiasson of Rogersville, New Brunswick for the post. Boehm succeeds Stewart Wells, who stepped down as NFU President after 8 years at the helm of the national family farm organization.

Dave Lewington of Lavigne, Ontario was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the NFU in an election that saw three candidates vying for the position, and which required two ballots to determine the result. Colleen Ross of Iroquois, Ontario and Jean-Eudes Chiasson of Rogersville, NB were the other candidates in the election.

Don Mills of Granton, Ontario, is the NFU 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. Mills was acclaimed to the position, which will oversee the operations and finances of the organization. A constitutional amendment was passed at this NFU convention which added the post of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President.

Joan Brady of Dashwood, Ontario, was acclaimed as NFU Women's President.

Kalissa Regier of Laird, Saskatchewan, was elected by acclamation as NFU Youth President. She previously served three terms as NFU Youth Vice-President.

Kathleen Charpentier of Castor, Alberta, was chosen as the NFU Women's Vice-President.

Cammie Harbottle of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia was elected by acclamation as NFU Youth Vice-President.

The NFU was founded in 1969. It is a non-partisan, democratic, direct-membership family farm organization. It is the only farm organization in Canada incorporated under a special Act of Parliament.

The NFU Convention saw debate on about three dozen policy resolutions, and provided a forum for a number of keynote speakers. A highlight of the convention was the unveiling of the Campaign for New Farmers, an initiative launched by the NFU Youth.

—nfu—

## NATIONAL FARMERS UNION 40<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION

November 26<sup>TH</sup> – November 22<sup>TH</sup>, 2009, Ottawa, Ontario

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1	Welcomes, Steering Committee Report <u>Opening Address:</u> NFU President, Stewart Wells		
2	<u>Address:</u> Evelyn Potter & Jean Leahy, "NFU women: the conscience of the farm movement"		
3	<u>Reports:</u> 1) Board of Directors; 2) Youth President; 3) Women's President Questions of the Board of Directors		
4	<u>Public Meeting:</u> "Beyond Hunger and Profit: Grassroots Solutions to the Global Food Crisis"		
5	<u>Address:</u> Walden Bello & Larry Hill		
6	<u>Address:</u> Dr. Shiv Chopra – "Food Safety and the Public Interest"; P.E.I. Domestic Fair Trade Team		
7	Banquet and Awards		
8	<u>Reports:</u> 1) Women's Caucus; 2) Youth Caucus ; 3) International Program Committee NFU Youth Panel: Organizing NFU Locals		
9	<u>Address:</u> Birgit Muller – "Food, Property and Power: Agricultural Technologies as Global Policies and Practices"		
10	<u>Closing Address:</u> NFU National President		

DAY 1  
Session 1 - 4  
DAY 2  
Session 5 - 7  
DAY 3  
Session 8 - 10



# A message from the...



## President

- by Terry Boehm

Greetings to all NFU members. *Bonne année* and Best Wishes to all of you in the coming year.

I have just returned from our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention, which celebrated our past while at the same time debating and re-affirming the national character of our organization.

It is completely clear that farmers across the country, whether they are in the livestock or grain sectors, are facing difficulties. Those who raise hogs and cattle are in particular distress. Our friends in eastern Canada have had severe difficulties with their potato crops in recent years and the livestock processing plants in that region have closed down.

In other regions, the livestock sector, dominated by giant packing companies, has yielded predictable results: namely, the lowest returns to farmers in many decades. Meanwhile, GM contamination of flax has closed the biggest markets for Canadian flax, which are in Europe. Given this disaster, the prospect of GM wheat on the horizon is cause for concern. Monopoly or near-monopoly rail companies, grain companies, packing companies, and seed and chemical companies continue on their merry way, while farmers take on more debt. Canadian government policies continue to foster this situation.

This is where the NFU comes in. For while we analyze, educate, and recommend policy, we need to also form coalitions with broader society to form a counter-power and advance, not only our interests, but all of society's well-being. The NFU is made up of people like you. Together, we are your voice across the country calling for economic and social justice for farm families and beyond. The details of the crisis in different parts of the country may be different, but the principles that the NFU stands on are broad and truly national in scope.

Let us make no mistake. This is a struggle for power, and control of power, that we are all in. It will not be ceded easily. The stakes are very high and the wealth that can be extracted from the food system in general, and farmers in particular, is staggering. Those

who seek to totally control our seeds, our animals, and increasingly, the land we live on, are intent on expropriating for themselves this wealth which was created by farmers.

It is important to recognize that the struggle in one region of the country is all of ours, because the same mechanisms of control are being applied everywhere. Only the circumstances vary. So when we engage in issues around the Canadian Wheat Board, livestock, genetic engineering, rail transport, or international trade, what we are really doing is trying to maintain and expand farmers' power. Success on one issue, or in one region, can then benefit us all. We can build on that success and push forward in other areas.

With that in mind, I look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year. I sincerely hope that those of you who can, will actively take up the issues at hand in your community and your province. We are stronger when we all work together. I invite you to become involved in your organization, and work with your new Board and Executive.

*In Union,  
Terry Boehm, President*

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# *A message from the...*



## *Women's President*

- by Joan Brady

I have just attended my fourth NFU National Convention, and as is the habit of NFU conventions, I have much to think about. I am honored to have been elected as NFU National Women's President and I appreciate the past year spent as Women's Vice President under the tutelage of Colleen Ross. Colleen and I worked well together to both encourage the involvement of NFU women and stand up for the rights of farm families across this country and the world. I will certainly miss Colleen in her role as Women's President, but know that I can count her as my friend and a friend to the NFU. Colleen will always be strong, influential and an advocate for farm families wherever she goes.

Kathleen Charpentier, NFU National Women's Vice President, hails from Castor, Alberta, and recently hosted a retreat for NFU women at her farm. Kathleen and her husband Richard produce grass-fed beef, lamb and some poultry. She has a passion for producing nutrient-dense food and for communicating its benefits to farmers and consumers alike. I look forward to working with Kathleen in the year to come.

There are new and familiar faces in the Women's Advisory. Susan Fitzpatrick brings a great deal of youthful enthusiasm and insight to the role in Region 1. A new farmer, Susan fills a position that has been vacant for a while. In Region 3, Kim Delaney has brought her voice to the bi-weekly regional council meetings and has represented NFU on the FarmLine, a crisis hotline for farmers for the past 4 years. Kim hopes to continue in her role for one more year and then would like to step down and allow someone else to participate. I urge Ontario NFU members to consider encouraging a woman to replace her in 2011. In Region 5, Kate Storey of Grandview, Manitoba has replaced longtime advisory member Carol Masse. Thanks go to Carol for serving in that capacity and we look forward to the many skills that Kate brings to the advisory. In Region 6, Marcella Pedersen of Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, whom I am sure, has served in the capacity before, replaces Pat Godhe and Marilyn Gillis who have shared the role in recent years.

Acclamation of Kathleen Charpentier to the position of Women's Vice President has left the position of Region 7 women's advisor open, and I encourage women in the region to consider participating in the Women's Advisory as a way to both learn and grow and make a difference for Canadian farm families. In Region 8, Mandy Melynk is returning as Women's Advisor. Mandy is no stranger to leadership as she has served the national board as Youth Vice President in the past.

Current plans are fairly reliant on funding from Status of Women Canada's Community Fund. We have asked them to support a project that would see the Women's Advisory Committee develop and hold a series of workshops across the country. The focus of these workshops will be to provide women farmers with the skills and understanding required to engage in the community development process related to sustainable local food systems. There is a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for local food projects, and women farmers already have many skills that can be used to build sustainable community food systems. Well-versed in food production, food preparation and the issues surrounding food sovereignty, they are a significant resource to revitalize and stabilize the rural community. Often they work in relative isolation and would benefit from the experiences of other women, as well as increased skill sets in communication and leadership. Building the confidence and abilities of farm women will have a positive effect on their families, farms, communities and farm organizations.

I look forward to working with the great team of women on the Advisory Committee and I know that we will have a productive and effective year. Many thanks to all who have come forward to serve the NFU in leadership positions whether it is on a local, regional or national level. Together we are strong and each one of us plays a significant part in the success of the NFU.

*In Union,*

*Joan Brady, Women's President*



# A message from the...



## Youth President

- by Kalissa Regier

I would like to start this report with some well deserved thanks. The 40<sup>th</sup> convention of the NFU in Ottawa in November was an exceptional celebration. Thanks to everyone who was able to come. Thanks to the many members who donated to our silent auction tables and to those of you who bid on items and contributed to raising \$3721.26 for the NFU Women and Youth. Thanks to the NFU staff who is always taking care of things. I'm amazed at what can get accomplished by such a small number of dedicated people. I would also like to recognize Nigel Smith, of Elgin, Ontario for his three years as NFU Youth President, and Cammie Harbottle of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, who just became our new Youth Vice President.

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Ottawa, the NFU youth announced the launch of the Campaign for New Farmers. The idea developed out of our annual workshop in Battersea, Ontario last July and we've been making plans ever since. This campaign will be the platform of several projects within the NFU Youth in the coming years and will allow us to focus on meaningful solutions to the dilemmas we're faced with everyday as the next generation of Canadian farmers. We've broken the campaign into three areas of work: Awareness Raising, Education, Mentorship and Exchange, and Policy Analysis and Development. Throughout this winter, a dedicated team of NFU Youth members and associate members from across Canada will be developing the details of the campaign and its future projects. If you would like to become involved in this process, please let us know.



Cammie Harbottle

We're excited to announce that the 2010 Annual NFU Youth Workshop will be held from March 4-7 in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia! We are in the midst of planning the agenda and securing funding for 14 NFU Youth members to attend this workshop. The focus of this weekend

will be on learning about the initiatives of the local area, strengthening our network across the country and continue developing strategies for the Campaign for New Farmers. Space will be limited and there will be an emphasis on achieving geographical representation from each of the 6 regions. If you are interested in attending, please contact your youth officials, Kalissa Regier at [kjregier@gmail.com](mailto:kjregier@gmail.com) or Cammie Harbottle at [cammie@waldegrave.org](mailto:cammie@waldegrave.org).

On November 9, it was announced that Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture) planned to hold a series of roundtable discussions with farmers, agriculture students and academics from across the country to discuss the key challenges facing young farmers and the future of agriculture. Unfortunately, the NFU Youth were not able to attend any of the roundtable discussions.

"I believe Canada's young and future farmers have a unique perspective on the issues facing the agriculture industry," said Minister Blackburn. "These dialogues will be valuable in helping to bring their voices to the forefront and ensure their ideas are put into action."

I was encouraged by the Minister's comments and concerns for Canada's young and future farmers, and despite being unable to attend, the NFU Youth is quickly preparing a brief to deliver to Minister Blackburn that outlines our policy recommendations. We are confident that as the only farm organization in Canada that includes space for youth members on its board of directors and a 40 year history in doing so, the Minister will take our recommendations very seriously.

Our brief to Minister Blackburn will be based upon the premise that current agricultural policy in Canada is not addressing the needs of young farmers. This is evident when one looks at statistics that show the number of farmers under 35 has dropped by over 60% since 1991, a clearly unsustainable figure. The

(continued on page 6...)





*(Youth President's Report, from page 5)*

following are some recommendations for agriculture policy that the NFU Youth have outlined in the past that could help new farmers out, rather than weed them out:

- Fair access to affordable land and credit for new farmers. We would encourage the use of land banks and no-interest start up loans.
- A restructuring of federal support payments, possibly tied to provincial crop insurance. The current system through Agri-Invest, Agri-Stability and Agri-Recovery are too tedious and heavy on administrative costs and see little benefit to the small and medium sized producer.
- Provincial Crop Insurance needs to be strengthened and a program added specifically for new farmers that guarantees the cost of production plus wages for the first 5 years of farming.

- More public investment in research and development of alternative production systems that will promote environmental sustainability.
- An end to captive supply of cattle and promotion of local and regional food processing and marketing facilities.
- More investment in rural development and infrastructure.

I'm looking forward to developing these ideas further with the members of the NFU Youth and delivering a report to Minister Blackburn that recognizes his willingness to redesign our agriculture policy for a better future for our young and beginning farmers.

*In Union,  
Kalissa Regier, Youth President*

## *A message from the...*

### *1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

—Dave Lewington



Thank you to the members of the NFU for giving me the opportunity to work for you in the coming year. I enjoyed my past years on the NFU executive as Youth President, and I'm very much looking forward to working with the new board and executive in the coming year. I would also like to thank my wife, Chantal, for allowing me to run for the Vice President position and picking up the slack when I will be away from the farm!

For those that may not know me, I grew up on a hog/beef/cash crop farm in southern Ontario, farming with my parents and brother. Almost 6 years ago, I moved north to a farm near Lavigne, a small town about half way between Sudbury and North Bay. (Even though everyone now refers to me as being from Northern Ontario, I am still south of a lot of Ontario, as well as you folks from the west!) It was here that I eventually met Chantal. We now have a young family and operate a very diversified farm that includes poultry, beef, lamb, pigs, and an ever expanding market garden. Most of our livestock is marketed locally, and all of our produce is. We've

adopted the CSA (Community Shared Agriculture) model for selling about two thirds of our produce and during that process we've become huge fans of the CSA model because of the security and inspiration that it provides for us.

During the next few months I plan on spending some of my energy continuing to advocate for healthy, localized food systems, both on farmer's behalf and on behalf of the eaters. I also think that we have to remember that many of our members are not able to market their product directly to the public and so we have to continue to try to protect and/or improve the ability of the average family farm to make a living. So I will also be spending a fair amount of energy over the next while working on behalf of livestock farmers, and especially helping to work towards a ban on captive supplies in the beef and hog sectors.

Please don't hesitate to call or email me with your ideas and suggestions!

*In Union,  
Dave Lewington, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*





Pat Mooney

# Farmers hold the key to survival in uncertain times

Family farmers around the world hold the key to the survival of the planet, says Pat Mooney, Executive-Director of the ETC Group and a respected analyst of the global food system.

Speaking at the National Farmers Union 40<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Ottawa in late November, Mooney said while there is no shortage of bad news for family farmers in Canada and around the world, there is also reason for optimism. Family farmers, he said, are working to preserve the genetic diversity of plants and animals that will be so crucial to surviving the effects of climate change.

Mooney said it is projected that many countries will experience a 50% decline in yield of their major food crops in only ten years as a result of climate change. Only crops and animals that have sufficient genetic diversity will be able to withstand that environmental shock, he added.

Mooney recalled that the first time he spoke at an NFU convention, in 1978, he warned of the dangers of Plant Breeders Rights legislation, which would give chemical companies intellectual property rights over seed varieties, forcing farmers to pay royalties to the companies. “We had a problem and industry had an opportunity” at that time, he said. “The problem we had was world hunger – 500 million people were starving around the globe while farmers were going broke because they were not getting fair prices for their products.”

Industry, meanwhile, had an opportunity to consolidate the marketplace and “centralize the profit centres,” he stated. “In the 1970s, there were 7,000 different seed enterprises selling seeds to farmers, and 65 different pesticide companies.” The big corporate players convinced governments to grant patent protection on plant species, livestock breeds, and fish species; and it did not take long before the largest companies dominated the market. “Now, instead of 7,000 seed companies, we have 10 companies that control 67% of the global

seed market. But in fact, just 3 seed companies control over 50% of the market.”

And where there used to be 65 pesticide companies, there are now only 6 that account for “virtually 90% of the global pesticide market.” Mooney said the top three companies in each sector “are the same companies.” While these corporations always promote new technologies with the promise that they will feed the hungry, the end result is that the situation always gets worse. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the promise was biotechnology, now the promise is synthetic biology. “But now, instead of 500 million hungry people, we have a billion hungry people around the world, and a billion more who are malnourished beyond that, and another billion who are also being destroyed by the food system because they’re overweight or obese.”

Mooney said there are parallels between the situation in the 1970s and now. While corporations have gained patent protection on fully “one-quarter of the world’s biomass”, they are looking to cement their monopoly by ‘commodifying’ the remaining three-quarters of plant and animal DNA. The research on plant livestock breeding being done by these companies is aimed at satisfying the legal requirements of the patent office, “which means that they are breeding for uniformity – the exact opposite of what we’re going to need to survive,” said Mooney. “Diversity is needed, not uniformity, so we’re actually going down a path which is disastrous for the food system. If we’re going to get through the crisis ahead of us, we’re going to need the farmers. We’re going to need that diversity. There is no other way. The companies can’t do it. They will not succeed.”

Mooney said the other important point that is a source of hope for the future is the fact that farmers today are more organized than ever, and they are working together nationally and internationally toward a common goal. —nfu—



# CWB Chair warns that WTO deal will hurt farmers

—by Larry Hill

*The following is an edited version of the presentation Larry Hill, CWB Chair, made to the NFU 40<sup>th</sup> National Convention in Ottawa.*

Farmers are going to have to work together to keep the Canadian Wheat Board. The Doha Round of WTO talks have resumed in Geneva, and there's always a risk that a deal will move forward. The latest draft targets the CWB single desk directly. We need to make sure that the government of Canada speaks forcibly against this draft text, and get the elimination of the single desk off the table. Canada has already given up the borrowing guarantees and the guarantees on initial payments. They're not gone yet. But should a deal be signed, they will be eliminated.

Why are these government guarantees important? The Canadian Wheat Board borrowed about 3.8 billion dollars last year - 3.2 billion dollars came from debt financing on the money markets of the world, and about 600 million dollars were from earnings that were to be distributed to producers. The CWB does not have any retained earnings. The CWB gives all the money back to farmers every year. Now when you borrow 3.2 billion dollars, ratings matter. Canada and the Canadian Wheat Board have a Triple A rating. We're right at the top of the list.

The higher your rating, the lower the cost of borrowing money. If the Wheat Board doesn't have the government guarantee, we move down the list. The borrowing rate that the CWB faced in 2008 ranged from over 3.5% down to about 1%. Now if we move down the scale of credit ratings to the next lower level, it's going to cost another 27 million dollars to finance that same amount of capital through the year. And if we move further down the list, it's going to cost 107 million dollars which works out to 500 to 2000 dollars per permit book. Or if the Wheat Board handles about 20 million tonnes per year, it's 5 dollars a tonne to producers that you would not have in your pockets because of the loss of this government guarantee. And one of the things that I find really frustrating here is the Wheat Board has never, ever collected on the government guarantees for borrowings. It has cost the Government of Canada absolutely nothing to deliver that guarantee. And this is something that would be lost should a deal be signed.

The next step here is the loss of government guarantees on the initial payments – which are only used in catastrophic events. But it has happened 13 times in history, where you get a double whammy of the Canadian dollar rising dramatically and grain markets crashing, and things get so bad in the grain business that the initial payments cannot be met. So right now, the government backstops these payments. Should there be a loss, farmers do not have to cover the risk.

There are only three ways to remedy that. One is to have a very low initial payment, and that's not a very favourable thing to producers. Right now the government insists on about a 35% risk factor, and that puts the initial payments at a level that a lot of producers don't like. And if we did not have the guarantees, we would have to consider having an even higher risk factor than that. Another way is to buy expensive hedging products. And the final way is to have a large capital base to allow the Wheat Board to accept that risk. And all of these cost farmers money. It would cost somewhere between 500 million and 1 billion (\$1,000 million) dollars in a fund, to make sure that we would have these guarantees backstopped. That's a large amount of money. It would cost roughly 10,000 to 20,000 dollars per permit book to do this, and we would have to have that in order to have the same footing out in the world as some of our competitors.

So it's a very significant amount of money, and it's going to happen should the WTO be signed.

The Government of Canada has clearly stated that decisions regarding the CWB's marketing structure should be made in Canada. It should be up to farmers to decide the future of the CWB and the single desk. The only way to do that is to make sure that we exert pressure on the government to stand firm at the WTO. This is not the time to waver.

Success to a trade negotiator is to get what you want and give nothing up. We have given up a lot already, and we need to make sure that's all we get. And the longer we leave that out there, the more difficult it's going to be to get it changed. —nfu—





# Campaign for New Farmers a highlight of convention

—BY GRANT ROBERTSON

This year's Annual Convention of the National Farmers Union was a resounding success. The attendance was one of the highest in recent memory and certainly the largest I personally have witnessed. The attendance both during the convention, but certainly during the public event on the Thursday evening was so large hotel staff needed to find more and more chairs, filling the hall to near bursting.

There were many highlights to this year's convention including the election of new National President Terry Boehm of Allan, Saskatchewan.

And there were many other highlights to this 40<sup>th</sup> annual convention, including some reflecting on and honouring our founders; but, for me the real highlight was the launch, by NFU Youth, of the Campaign for New Farmers. Their energy, drive and passion was evident during the launch ceremony and they demonstrated conclusively why the NFU is quickly re-establishing itself and becoming a leading voice on the future of our food system in Ontario and across the country.

The National Farmers Union Youth Campaign for New Farmers is a broad-based, national campaign designed to create awareness around the alarming decrease in Canada's farm population, particularly those under the age of 35; and, the consequences this decrease has on all aspects of society. Its structure includes three areas:

- Policy analysis and development
- Partnership building and communications and
- Educational Programming

The sad reality is that the National Farmers Union Youth Campaign for New Farmers is badly needed. Government, and frankly organizations,

have done a terrible job of considering where new farmers will come from and how they will find the tools they need to ensure Canada's food system is viable and geared towards the long-term needs of farm families, our communities and this country. Let's not kid ourselves – the short-term priority mindset is all too prevalent in government and elsewhere and there is an abysmal record of failure.

Statistics Canada figures reveal that between 1991 and 2006, Canada lost over 60% of its farmers under the age of 35. In Ontario that figure is even higher. Too many Canadians are still unaware of the political and social barriers facing our farmers today. Barriers like access to capital, the social stigma of doing a job like farming when you could be doing something "important" like being a lawyer, and the high cost of entrance. Every family farm lost in Canada represents generations of lost knowledge that cannot be replaced with new technology. Farming needs to be a dignified and economically viable career choice for young Canadians.

Forget my position in the NFU; I want to thank these young leaders as a father of three farm kids for jumping into the massive hole left by the absence of leadership from government and other organizations. You can find out more at [www.nfu.ca/youth](http://www.nfu.ca/youth). —nfu—

*The National Farmers Union Youth Campaign for New Farmers is a broad-based, national campaign designed to create awareness around the alarming decrease in Canada's farm population, ...and, the consequences this decrease has on all aspects of society.*

## Thanks to NFU Ontario and New Brunswick

The National Farmers Union gratefully acknowledges the generous financial donations of \$1000 each from the Ontario NFU Bruce County Local, the Ontario NFU Oxford County Local, and the NFU in New Brunswick. The donations helped to defray the costs of the NFU national convention in Ottawa in November, 2009.



## Women are an integral part of the NFU, says Potter

Women are an integral part of the National Farmers Union, says Evelyn Potter, founding Women's President of the NFU from 1969 to 1974.

In a video presentation recorded prior to the NFU national convention, Potter, who was not able to attend the event because of ill health, said the organization's structure reflects the key role women have played in its history.

At a meeting in 1968, representatives of the BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario farmers' unions met to hammer out a constitution for the new national organization. "There was a heated debate related to women's positions," Potter told the convention. "The result was women's and youth positions were set out in the constitution to ensure that our women and young people would be involved in the organization. By creating these positions at that time, I believe we faced reality. We gave farm women the right to participate, to learn through experience and the opportunity for equal status."

She said in the first few years of organizing the NFU, it was usual to find only men present, with one or two women in the kitchen making coffee and preparing lunch. "They were hesitant to participate in the meeting. When the men were asked why they didn't bring their wives, they had various excuses, but mostly it was: 'I hadn't thought of it.' Remember, over forty years ago, most tractors didn't have radios. Therefore, who was listening to the radio for up-to-date information, farm news or prices? The woman was. She was informed. She

was knowledgeable, but she was not at the farm meetings."

Potter said the NFU's constitution was instrumental in "breaking barriers". She said one of the biggest successes of the organization in the early 1970s was the publication of a book on the food system entitled "Nature Feeds Us". The book was a collaborative effort that involved the "grassroots efforts" of hundreds of women in many communities across the country.

She said the historical contribution of farm women to Canada goes back many years. Women first gained the right to vote in 1918, and the first female MP, Agnes MacPhail, was elected in 1921. But it was not until 1929 that women were actually declared "persons" in the legal sense. The "Famous Five": Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Edwards, Nellie McClung and Irene Parlby, challenged the existing legal definition of "personhood" at the time.

"Throughout the years, because of necessity, women have contributed labour and management in order for the family farm to survive," Potter concluded. "They have taken on an increasing share of the farm work, and also work off the farm to supplement income. I know that in the NFU we need more women with conviction and courage. Remember those five women over 80 years ago, and their continued struggle for what they believed. It is the job of women to voice our strengths and move forward together, for women and men to work alongside each other, in union, to work for equality and justice."

—nfu—

## NFU women led the push for progressive social legislation

International Women's Year in 1975 was a watershed year for the women of the NFU, according to Jean Leahy, who served as NFU Women's President from 1975 to 1979.

"The recognition of women internationally gave us an opportunity to tackle an issue of importance for farm women," she told the NFU convention in Ottawa. "We chose matrimonial property legislation."

Leahy said at that time, many farm women across Canada realized that there was no law to state

that farm women had any right to share in the farm in the event of a divorce or legal separation. "The previous year there had been two court cases that woke us all up. In two separate cases, the women involved had contributed greatly to the farm operation, but ended up with nothing."

NFU women held workshops across the country to devise fairer legislation. The proposal that was eventually sent to every provincial government advocated an equal sharing of property acquired during

(continued on page 20...)



## Farmers' strength lies in organization, says NFU President

Farmers can't afford to rely on technological fixes to improve their economic situation, says the new President of the National Farmers Union. In his closing address to the NFU national convention in Ottawa, Terry Boehm said the only realistic, and proven, solution is for farmers to work together collectively to increase their market power.

"Technological innovation provides an initial advantage to a few players, but in the long run, the benefits are very quickly captured by those corporate players that are able to consolidate control over the technology, and use that power to extract greater wealth from farmers," he stated. "There's always some new technological solution – some magic bullet. For farmers, the end result is an accelerating treadmill that leaves us struggling to keep up. The problems just get bigger."

Boehm pointed to the increasing consolidation of the seed industry, where only 3 seed companies control over 50% of the global market. The largest of those companies, Monsanto, exercises tremendous control through intellectual property rights on plant genetic material. Biotechnology and genetic engineering are being superseded by nanotechnology – the reconstruction of matter at the molecular level. The potential for profit by corporations that control these new technologies is huge, he stated.

But the most disturbing aspect of this unconditional faith in technology, he added, is the notion that natural resources like soil, water, and air

are seen as mere raw materials to be exploited. "Proponents of this faith promote the concept of 'technological singularity' – the point where computers gain, and then surpass, the intelligence and subtlety of the human mind. The result, they suggest, would be a 'technological jump' that would make the industrial revolution look like a hiccup in historical terms."

Boehm said this "faith in computers to move beyond human capabilities, and faith in nanotechnology to manufacture any object from cheap raw materials – basically dirt – is a technical perspective that looks at land and soil as the ultimate cheap raw material, rather than as the fundamental basis for the survival of our species, and everything else on this planet." As the climate change situation and the economic crisis become more desperate, there will be increasing emphasis by politicians and corporations on these "pie-in-the-sky" technological fixes.

It is crucial for farmers to restore people's perspective, concluded the NFU President. "Farmers need to bring to the table the reality of what life is, of what soil is, and what community is all about. We need to rebuild farmers' political and economic power – and the way to do that is to work together, and also to work with our coalition partners. Farmers represent less than 1% of the population, but when we're organized, we can always achieve much more than our numbers suggest."

—nfu—

## Co-operative ethic builds better society, says outgoing NFU President

After 8 years at the helm of the National Farmers Union, outgoing NFU President Stewart Wells says he will always be committed to the ideals of the organization. "My head, my heart and my wallet will always remain with the NFU," he told delegates to the national convention in Ottawa.

Wells said people are faced with the choice of two different ways of living. "The first paradigm is that of competition – which leads inevitably to domination, indifference and contempt," he said. "This is the

paradigm we know best because we've been living it for the last thirty years in agriculture. These terms epitomize the so-called business model that describes farmers and farming in Canada."

This paradigm of competition has resulted, ironically, in a decrease in competition in the global marketplace as large corporations consolidate their monopoly power. One of the biggest companies, Monsanto, has recently instituted a blacklist – known as a "Violator Exclusion Policy" – that prohibits

(continued on page 20...)





# Therefore Be It Resolved ....

## RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE NFU'S 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup> TO NOVEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 – OTTAWA, ONTARIO

### **ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF THE CWB**

WHEREAS there has been consistent criticism of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) administrative costs, and

WHEREAS the authors of this criticism of CWB administrative costs appear to lack the capacity to compare CWB administrative costs to the costs (basis, etc) of the canola marketing system,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU will post annually on its website, a per tonne price comparison between CWB administration costs and the average basis on canola and will include other marketing costs associated with the marketing of canola.

### **CGC SYMPOSIUM**

WHEREAS the Canadian Grain Commission in its present state is an integral protection for farmers in the marketplace, and

WHEREAS the current Federal Government is currently proposing radical changes to both the mandate and function of the Act in the form of Bill C-13, and

WHEREAS it is important to make all farmers aware of the impact on their individual operations should some of these changes be implemented,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU approach the CWB and general farm organizations for the purpose of jointly sponsoring a symposium on:

1. The history of the Canadian Grain Commission;
2. Proposed changes to the mandate of the Canadian Grain Commission; and
3. What farmers require from the CGC.

### **NUCLEAR POWER**

WHEREAS the generation of nuclear power has not proven to be economically viable in any jurisdiction world-wide, and

WHEREAS radioactive waste generated by the industry will continue to cost taxpayers huge sums of money for centuries. This fact was recently recognized by the United States government, when the Obama Administration withdrew from any further public subsidization of the Yucca Mountain radioactive waste repository.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU call on the provincial and federal governments to suspend all development permits requested by Bruce Power or any other developers for nuclear power.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that both provincial and federal governments undertake a serious commitment to

sustainable and renewable energy development such as wind, solar, geo-thermal and bio-mass that demonstrates an actual reduction of green house gas emissions.

### **NATIONAL MEAT AUTHORITY**

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU promote the objects of the National Meat Authority policy as a solution for stable and fair incomes for cattle producers in Canada.

### **REINSTATEMENT OF KVD**

WHEREAS the removal of Kernel Visual Distinguishability (KVD) as a criteria for identifying wheat varieties was an ill-conceived move by the present Government in Ottawa,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the NFU demand that the Government of Canada reinstate KVD.

### **RAILROAD OVERCHARGING**

WHEREAS the railroads have been setting their grain freight rates to make sure they maximize their revenues – a practice which has resulted in farmers being overcharged,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby the Canadian Transport Commission (CTC) and the federal government to ensure that overcharges are paid back to producers by distributing the funds through the CWB Pool accounts.

### **FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR START-UP MEAT PROCESSING PLANTS**

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU seek federal and provincial government financial support to assist in feasibility studies and business plans for start-up meat processing plants within defined catchment areas outlined by farmers. These plants would utilize existing family-owned and operated abattoirs within a best case catchments area. The proposed new meat processing plant studies will look at both retrofitting recently-closed facilities or constructing new buildings to meet federal Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food plant certification.

### **COLLECTIVE MARKETING OF BEEF**

WHEREAS the power imbalance between farmers and packers is dramatic - Cargill and Tyson are many times larger than our biggest family farms,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU demand that governments work with farmers to create collective marketing agencies to offset this power imbalance.



### **FINANCIAL LOSSES FOR POTATO FARMERS**

WHEREAS it cost \$2,600 to grow an acre of potatoes in 2008, and

WHEREAS there is a disastrous financial loss from wet weather and rot in storage, the worst in the last fifty years,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU demand that the federal and provincial governments, on a 60/40 basis, compensate potato farmers for 2008 losses at \$1,100 per acre.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the horticulture growers be assisted in a similar manner.

### **CAPTIVE SUPPLY OF CATTLE**

WHEREAS two transnational companies, Cargill and XL, along with a small contribution from a Quebec packer, slaughter, and process 89 per cent of Canada's beef cattle, and

WHEREAS these beef packing corporations also own or control cattle on feed and finished cattle, in competition with feeders and farmers who are also trying to sell finished cattle,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union demand that the Federal Government impose a ban on captive supply and control of cattle.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all cattle must go through independent auctions or be sold by fixed-price contracts with full cost of production and full disclosure of the terms.

### **PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO POTASH MONOPOLY**

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union request a public inquiry into the monopoly of Saskatchewan potash captive supply and price fixing.

### **FOOD IMPORTS**

WHEREAS Canada has strict regulations on the production of food from farm gate to consumers' plates, and

WHEREAS food is being produced with much less stringent safety regulations in other countries, and this food is being imported into Canada,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union request the Federal Government to ensure that any food imported into Canada must meet Canadian standards.

### **PRODUCT-OF-CANADA LABELLING**

WHEREAS even though food is labelled "Product of Canada" there is no assurance that it was grown in Canada,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union request the Federal Government to change the labelling laws to reflect where the food was grown and processed and the labels reads "Grown and Processed in Canada" rather than "Product of Canada".

### **PRISON FARMS**

WHEREAS the Federal Government has decided to close six prison farms in Canada, and

WHEREAS supporters of the program say the involvement in this work has increased inmates' self-esteem and self-worth, and enhanced rehabilitation. Inmates have learned and practised taking responsibility, being punctual and working in a team atmosphere. They have learned mechanical skills and equipment operation in growing and processing farm products for themselves, and

WHEREAS there is a shortage of skilled farm labourers on Canadian farms, and

WHEREAS these farms produce not only enough food to feed themselves, but food for other institutions as well,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union lobby the Federal Government and the Correctional Service of Canada to rescind the order to close the six prison farms in Canada.

### **CANADA PENSION PLAN CONTRIBUTIONS AND INCOME SPLITTING**

WHEREAS farmers usually don't get an adequate wage for their work,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union advise their farm family members that they can split their earnings to be able to pay into the Canada Pension Plan.

*(continued on page 14...)*



*Photo: Grassroots Awards were presented at the NFU 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. The recipient of the Region 1 Grassroots Award was Urban Laughlin (middle), shown here with his wife Mary and former-NFU President Stewart Wells. Other recipients were Martin Driesse in Region 3, Fred Tait in Region 5, Eric Sagan in Region 6, Dale Fankhanel in Region 7, and Allan and Joan Scott in Region 8.*



### **TRUE PRODUCTION COST**

WHEREAS the current cost of production definition concerns only direct farm inputs and,

WHEREAS the New Brunswick Task Force Committee has spent almost a year looking at the profitability at the farm production level,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union work aggressively with the New Brunswick Task Force Committee to develop a definition for the full costs of production including land, labour, regulatory, marketing costs, etc., and a measuring tool (GPI) to monitor all costs and benefits and profitability at the farm level.

### **POTATO TESTING**

WHEREAS the potato testing sector is very important to Canadian agriculture with 30,000 ha produced by 800 seed growers with export value at \$41 million. There are currently 156 varieties of potatoes registered in Canada with seven new varieties registered each year, and

WHEREAS the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) proposal is to divide the variety registration system into three parts, and

WHEREAS Part 1 will include almost all of Canada's field crops and is subject to pre-registration testing, merit assessment and financial assistance,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union lobby Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to have potatoes placed in Part 1 of the CFIA variety registration system and continue to have financial support and be subject to pre-registration testing and merit assessment.

### **PRODUCER CAR LOADING SITES**

WHEREAS Canadian National Railway is now using the number of cars shipped from a siding as a gauge for deciding on that siding's closure or retention, and

WHEREAS this proposal is wholly inappropriate because it would allow the railways to violate the spirit and the intent of the *Canada Grain Act*, which fundamentally protects farmers' historic right to load producer cars, and

WHEREAS the use of producer cars is a competitive measure to keep elevation and handling charges under control, and to give farmers convenient and fair access to rail transport. When the possibility of producer cars disappears, these charges will escalate rapidly, and rail access for farmers will be severely crippled. Further, railways are attempting to destroy a measure that was put in place to curb their power, and

WHEREAS shipping grain by rail, rather than by truck, will minimize greenhouse gas emissions and help mitigate the negative effects of climate change,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU urge that the *Canada Transportation Act* (CTA) be amended to disallow the closure of sidings at the railways' sole discretion.

### **WIND AND SOLAR POWER**

WHEREAS the NFU has a policy on clean energy sources entitled "Wind Power", and

WHEREAS the NFU supports Advanced Renewable Tariffs, and

WHEREAS Advanced Renewable Tariffs are being used in Ontario by large transnational corporations to develop wind farms using subsidies from Canadian and Ontario governments, and

WHEREAS profits from these wind farms are going to leave the rural communities where these developments are located, and

WHEREAS farmers signing leases with these companies are signing away all their carbon credits, rights to build buildings twenty-five feet or higher, rights to develop any renewable generation of their own, and

WHEREAS a similar situation may exist with solar power generation,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU Policy on Wind Power (November 2004) be amended in the following ways:

1. Change the title of the section to: "Wind and Solar Power",
2. Add to the policy the following phrase: "Advanced Renewable Tariffs must be applied so that local communities will profit from the projects and Canadian manufacturers will produce at least seventy-five percent of the equipment."

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU, through its various national and regional newsletters and websites, warn all members not to sign leases for wind and solar installations before seeking legal advice.

### **ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS IN FOOD**

WHEREAS the ill health of artificial sweeteners and MSG, known as "excito-toxins", are becoming more apparent, and

WHEREAS other jurisdictions are working on overturning the approvals for these products,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU contact the proper authorities and state our support for overturning approvals for the artificial sweeteners known as "excito-toxins".

### **OIL AND GAS PIPELINE ABANDONMENT**

WHEREAS at present, oil and gas leases pay an annual compensation fee plus an initial one-time payment,

THEREFORE be it resolved that the NFU press the National Energy Board (NEB) to require pipeline companies to continue to pay a one-time lump-sum payment plus an annual fee negotiable at least every five years, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU request the NEB to require the pipeline companies to implement an "abandonment clause" to protect landowners from liability.





## **PUBLIC TRANSIT**

WHEREAS the most common response in Ontario and across Canada to increasing traffic volumes are expanded highways, and

WHEREAS expanded highways in prime agricultural areas always take farmland out of production, and

WHEREAS the declining petroleum supplies and the carbon emissions from private and commercial vehicles create a strong push for options that allow the movement of goods and people while decreasing dependence on fossil fuels, and

WHEREAS the population density of provinces like Ontario is similar to that of parts of Europe where public transit, especially rail-based transit, has long formed the backbone of an effective transportation network, and

WHEREAS in order for rural communities to remain economically healthy, industries from agriculture to tourism require effective links to regional urban centres, and

WHEREAS while habitually committed to our private vehicles, many Canadians are genuinely seeking options that reduce their carbon emission impact, and are looking to transportation system decision-makers to provide creative and innovative leadership,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union make it a policy to support the expansion of inter-city and community public transit, such as Via Rail, across the country and regional public transit systems like GO Transit, and to communicate this position broadly, including Via Rail, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Minister of Environment, and Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

## **CLOSURE OF PUBLIC POST OFFICES**

WHEREAS the federal government is allowing Canada Post to close public post offices in spite of a moratorium on closures in rural and small towns, and

WHEREAS the government expects Canada Post to inform people at least one month prior to closing, moving or amalgamating their public post office and explore options that address people's concerns, and

WHEREAS a month is an inadequate amount of time for a whole community to discuss a closure and explore options, and

WHEREAS public post offices connect communities throughout this vast land, helping us to overcome differences and distances, and

WHEREAS public post offices play a key role in our rural social and economic life by providing the infrastructure that healthy communities need to thrive and businesses need to grow,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the NFU call on the Government of Canada to instruct Canada Post to maintain and improve its network of public post offices and to consult with the public, their elected representatives, postal unions and other major stakeholders to develop a uniform and democratic process for making changes to this network.

## **WTO AND CWB**

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is party to the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations where the current draft text contains no benefits for Canadian farmers, and

WHEREAS the current WTO text's clauses undermine the viability of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) with the removal of the guarantees for initial payments and credit, and

WHEREAS western grain farmers will be seriously harmed by the further loss of CWB powers,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU demand that the Canadian Government rescind its agreement to remove CWB credit guarantees, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU demands the Canadian Government refuse any WTO agreement which harms the CWB.

## **CALCULATING FARM SUPPORT**

WHEREAS government programs such as Crop Insurance, and more recently Agri-Stability and Agri-Invest, were set up using traditional models – ie – the most recent 5-year farm production results using so-called Olympic averages - where the high and low years were not used. This only worked when weather patterns were more stable, and when the farmers might have one poor year out of five, and

WHEREAS with global warming creating more unstable weather, a farmer may encounter two or more years in a row of unfavourable weather resulting in farm production below historic averages for crops that were not able to be harvested, and

WHEREAS the above results in decreasing average farm production levels, which in turn lead to decreased government program support at a time when the farmer needs additional financial help,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU approach, and work with, various governments to develop new ways of calculating support levels in various government programs such as Crop Insurance, Agri-Stability and Agri-Invest.

—nfu—

*NFU President  
Terry Boehm,  
daughter Miranda,  
Women's President  
Joan Brady, and  
Youth President  
Kalissa Regier join  
together to cut the  
NFU's 40<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Cake.*



# On A Good Date

*Editor's note: Jan Slomp of Rimbey, Alberta, recently stepped down from the NFU Board of Directors. He had served on the Board for ten years. He offers his reflections on those past ten years.*

In the presence of a good date, after stumbling behaviour of first dates are passé, teenagers often experience opportunities to get other dates that look even better. The good date brings out action, self esteem, good looks, smarts and wit in the teen, camouflaging the otherwise obvious presence of pimples, insecurity, doubt and negative thought.

I have no illusions of grandeur in dating expertise, as it has been well over thirty-three years since I practiced. However, my experience of being an NFU Board member for the last ten years has been comparable to the sensation of youth, while on a good date, seeing doors going open for better dates yet. By hanging out around the Boardroom table you cannot avoid being fired up by a bunch of energetic people, representing all NFU regions, well-versed in facts and government deceptions, building a better tomorrow at community levels.

Fred Tait's "tickle trunk" full of analyses, humor, irony and wit expose many a humbug, hopping on the wrong foot. While he makes the light shine, we all walk in the aura of being funny. The work that is accomplished in the NFU office

always leaves you with the impression that there are more people working than there actually are. Terry Pugh does so much work that no matter how much credit was given to me, I would have flunked if he hadn't supported it with his organizing and writing. Where ever you go as NFU board member, the thorough research of Darrin Qualman makes "you" look smart. Civil society organizations are so welcoming to us because our looks have been spruced up by the compassion and beauty of Marie Hendricken, Evelyn Potter, Jean Leahy and Nettie Wiebe. The determination and energetic presence of youth in the NFU has always been my best antidote against aging.

I have had the good fortune of representing the NFU at several La Via Campesina events.

The experience of seeing first-hand, the struggles of farmers across the world and the determination to elevate sustainable social and ecological policy as cornerstone in all they do, has been a lightning rod of humility for me.

While testosterone and machismo may be the driving forces of teenage male dating, compassion and humility are better ingredients for a longer lasting relationship anyways. There is no good date without a match-maker playing some part. Somewhere. Dale Fankhanel was there at the birth of my NFU membership, more than 20 years ago, he made the date happen, all the while supporting, grooming and down-to-earth talking on calls and endless miles. He was and is my best man.

A sincere thank you to all NFU'ers,

*Jan Slomp*

*P.S.: I am still looking for more dates as I can't get enough of it.*



*Photo: Members at the NFU 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention who were also in attendance at the NFU Founding Convention in 1969. (L to R) Don Kossick, David Ling, Stuart Thiesson, Jean Leahy, Urban Laughlin, Allan Scott, Ken Gidluck, Jim Phelps.*



# NFU Region 7 (Alberta) Report

—by Jan Slomp

Region 7 was represented with more than 20 people at Convention in Ottawa. Congratulations to: Kathleen Charpentier becoming National Women Vice President, Margo Staniforth for taking on the National Board position and becoming Region 7 Coordinator, and Doug Scott for accepting the National Board position as well as becoming part of National Executive.

At Region 7 convention last June, two resolutions were passed that mandated the NFU region to:

1. *Develop joint policy with Beef Industry Alliance regarding the refundable cattle check-off.*
2. *Meet with AFSC officials to create improvements to crop insurance.*

Doug Scott is leading the discussion around crop insurance among interested members (your input is appreciated!!) and in the coming months a clear plan will be distilled to be presented to AFSC in writing and by face-to-face meeting.

Iain Aitken is following the activities of Beef Industry Alliance and it has become questionable if we still want to pursue the development of a joint policy with them. In the NFU livestock report of 2008, Darrin's analysis of prices since 1989 come to about 50% of historic average in the 40 years prior to 1989. Cattle prices are so low this fall that I am pretty sure they are approaching 25% now. Farmers are increasingly disillusioned with government and the processor-embedded check-off organizations. At zone meeting(s) of ABP, several resolutions were passed that reflect NFU policy. By the time you read this, the ABP AGM in Calgary, which took place in mid-December, will be over. It will be interesting to see how many of those passed resolutions at zone meetings got a serious look at the AGM. With Tyson reporting losses in the last years of operation, in Canada, before Nielsen Brothers bought them out, it is imperative that a study is done Canada-wide, into who gets what from the increased consumer dollar spent on beef.

At the last region 7 convention, people volunteered to *write letters* to their *MPs*, *urging* them *to address captive supply* and have them committed to following political steps in the US, with similar measures in Canada. If you haven't written yet, please do so.

Ken Eshpeter reports that Battle River Railway new-gen Cooperative is now proceeding with offering various types of shares; Class A shares for people speculating on the increased value of the rail road; Class B shares for grain producers wanting access to services along the line and Class C shares for people who opt for a modest but guaranteed return, who are not going to use the facilities but who are ideologically buying into the concept of farmers having their own co-op to load and move grain cheaper and more efficiently. The new co-op has a few months to raise the capital needed. Given the fact that provincial and federal governments are merely catering to a world dominated by large transnationals, the forming of this co-op, with virtually no help from governments, is a great success. It offers direct value to farmers in the area and a great opportunity to *vote green and socially responsible with investment* dollars for every body else.

NFU grassroots award winner, Dale Fankhanel, is leading a producer car loading group around Duhamel. Progress is being made. With the Battle River Railway Co-op leading the way, NFU members all over the province should have a serious look for similar opportunities in their own locals.

Last-minute notice prevented us from participating in major food security events in Calgary and Edmonton last September. These events sprung from federal government-funded Food Security Policy Working Group. We missed an opportunity to present vital NFU policy in those crucial events, which were attended by predominantly non-farmers, who are well aware of the weaknesses in our over-processed, export-dominated food system and who are sympathetic to the well-being of family farmers. Relationships are

(continued on page 20...)





## Proposed WTO Agreement means higher costs for farmers

The text of the proposed agreement at the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations would eliminate the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) single desk. It would also dramatically increase costs to western farmers.

In a letter to International Trade Minister Stockwell Day, Glenn Tait, Saskatchewan Coordinator of the National Farmers Union (NFU) urged the federal government to “move quickly to get the CWB single desk off the table” at the WTO negotiations. He noted the draft text of the WTO agreement, if adopted, will eliminate the CWB single desk, without farmers having any say in the matter.

The Canadian government agreed to eliminate government guarantees on initial payments and CWB borrowing back in 2004, to take effect when a WTO deal was signed. The current “Doha Round” of the WTO talks has been ongoing for ten years, and Tait said farmers have already given up far too much.

The current WTO text targets the CWB single desk directly, and Tait said it is absolutely critical

that the federal government reject any WTO agreement which would undermine the CWB’s effectiveness in global markets on farmers’ behalf.

Tait said the loss of government guarantees on CWB borrowings could cost between \$27 million and \$107 million annually, depending on how far the CWB’s international credit rating declines. This would mean farmers would lose between \$500 and \$2000 per average permit book. Larger operators would, of course, lose much more. In addition, the elimination of government guarantees on initial payments will shift the cost of risk management directly onto farmers, resulting in additional costs of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per permit book.

At the recent NFU national convention in Ottawa, CWB Chair Larry Hill provided a detailed financial analysis of the cost to farmers resulting from the loss of government guarantees on borrowing and initial payments if the current text of the WTO agreement is signed.

—nfu—

## NFU President testifies before Commons Agriculture Committee regarding GM contamination

The devastating and sudden closure of the European market for Canadian flax exports due to contamination by a Genetically-Modified (GM) flax variety proves the current regulatory system needs to be strengthened, says Terry Boehm, President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

In testimony recently before the House of Commons Agriculture Committee in Ottawa, Boehm said Canadian farmers have borne the financial brunt of the market collapse. While the flax market disruption is bad, the potential for even worse calamities exists. With the possibility of GM wheat on the horizon, he said the likelihood of GM contamination in that crop could spell unprecedented disaster for the large Canadian export wheat market.

“It is critical that the system be reformed to prevent further market disasters,” stated Boehm. “It is imperative that new and existing GM crops be looked at through the lens of potential market harm. Recent changes to the variety registration system could

accelerate these market disasters for Canadian farmers. We have seen what GM contamination of flax has done, and surely no one should doubt what would happen to wheat if we allow GM varieties to be registered.”

Boehm said the current regulatory system would not stop any new GM varieties from “killing our markets.”

The NFU President said the recent approval of “Smartstax Corn” means this new GM variety of corn will likely be grown in Canada. “Smartstax has eight combined genetically-engineered traits. These GM traits have all been approved on an individual basis, but they have not been assessed with regard to the effect of those traits when combined with each other,” Boehm stated. “There has, so far, been no firm recognition on the part of the regulators that mixing genes might require further detailed scrutiny. If you mix two or three chemicals, which are perfectly safe individually, you can get toxic results in combination. Could this not happen with mixing genes?”

—nfu—



# Farm Leader slaughters pig at market to draw attention to Farm Crisis

Jean-Eudes Chiasson, Director (top elected official) of the National Farmers Union in New Brunswick, stepped off his small pork farm in Rogersville and into the limelight on Saturday morning, December 5, when he brought one of his pigs to market in Dieppe, NB.

Shortly before 9 AM, he and a small group of supportive farmers pulled into the parking lot, where he set up signs in French, stressing the desperate circumstances now faced by family farmers. He then got into the back of his one-ton truck, killed his pig, and began to butcher it, while a few bystanders watched and members of the media recorded the event.

Several market vendors and regular customers expressed their solidarity with the action. Paul Gagnon, Dieppe market treasurer, approached Chiasson and shook his hand. The former pig farmer said the point of farmers' markets is to bring the farm to the city and that's what Chiasson was doing in the back of his truck. Vendors from the market also expressed their support.

Chiasson pointed out that some remaining small scale producers can survive by selling their products at farmers' markets, but this is only helpful to those who are good at promoting themselves. "What is happening is we're losing very, very good producers that are not good at marketing," he said.

"People need a shock because they need to understand what's happening in society right now. Farmers are going out of business," he told the CBC.

Chiasson said a growing public demand for local food is helping. But he believes farmers need a new model. He suggests farmers band together to

establish farming cooperatives to manage prices and end competition so family farms can survive for future generations, he said.

"I commend Jean-Eudes for his action. I know that it is not a choice he made lightly. He is correct in bringing the desperate situation of family hog farmers to the attention of all Canadians," stated Joan Brady, NFU National Women's President. "At stake is the entire food system. Family farmers with their intimate knowledge of and reliance on the land are the best stewards of the environment and our best assurance for a safe and reliable food supply for the future."

Brady, who farms in Dashwood, Ontario, added, "In some jurisdictions, mine included, family hog farmers have been devastated enough to take their own lives. The result of three years of below cost of production pricing has left them so indebted that they cannot see hope for the future." Brady further pointed out that food production is not just a farm issue – it is an issue for anyone who eats.

The National Farmers Union, established in 1969 by an Act of Parliament, works toward the development of economic and social policies that will maintain the family farm as the primary food-producing unit in Canada.

In Ottawa the previous weekend at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the National Farmers Union, Chiasson had issued a call for action to farmers from across Canada. Chiasson has served as Director (top elected official) of the National Farmers Union in NB since March, 2007. The NFU in NB is one of two accredited general farm organizations in the province, serving farmers from all commodity groups. —nfu—

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Please note that in the insert in this issue entitled: *National Farmers Union: Working for farm families for 40 years*, there is an error on page 2 in the first paragraph. The sentence should actually read: "The NFU was formed in 1969 through a merger of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, the Ontario Farmers Union, the British Columbia Farmers Union, and the Manitoba Farmers Union."



*(NFU women led the push..., from page 10)*

the marriage. "Every legislature eventually enacted new matrimonial property legislation," said Leahy. "They didn't adopt all our ideas, but there were great improvements."

She said even within the NFU, the idea made some members uncomfortable at the time. "Many women realized they did not have their names on any property," she said. "So there were some arguments. But as always, there was a farm union member, in this case, George Hickie of Saskatchewan, who would say just the right thing. He said: 'I always assumed that Mary owned half the farm. I'm sick to think that if something happened to me, she may have to fight for it.' So the changes were welcomed."

She said NFU women in the 1970s also pushed for legislation to allow farm women to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan. "That is now a godsend in retirement for older women."

She said the big challenge now is to protect Canada's universal public health care system. "We must insist that the federal government force the provinces to abide by the Canada Health Act," she stated. "We owe it to those who worked so hard to set this up, not to let it be destroyed." She said as early as 1913, women in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association advocated that the government implement a universal public health care system.

—nfu—

*(Co-operative ethic builds better society, from page 11)*

selected farmers from being able to access Monsanto's seed and chemical products. "Under this system, Monsanto and other companies will quickly be able to decide who farms in Canada, and who doesn't, under the conventional system," stated Wells.

He noted that farmers in Canada are struggling under a \$60 billion debt load – equal to the debt of the entire Government of Canada. But the country's 200,000 farmers are only earning \$125 million annually from the markets alone. "It would take 480 years to pay off that principle, even if you applied every cent of net farm income from agricultural production," he said. "Clearly, it's not sustainable."

The second paradigm is that of co-operation – which encourages solidarity, compassion and respect.

The NFU is an example of this second paradigm, Wells stated. "The golden age of farming in Canada extended from about 1945 to 1985 – a time when farmers' marketing boards, grain handling cooperatives, supply-management agencies, co-operatives and credit unions, and farmers' unions were very strong," he said. "Forty years ago, provincial farmers' unions came together to create the National Farmers Union. This was a natural extension of this paradigm of co-operation."

He concluded that the ethic of cooperation will enable people to dedicate themselves to build a better Canada and to work towards a stronger farming community made up of family farmers.

—nfu—

*(Region 7 Report, from page 17)*

established to make sure these type of events are attended in the future, as they are prime vehicles for forwarding the world-wide La Via Campesina concept of Food Sovereignty and the broader societal support needed for NFU policy.

Despite large opposition, provincial Bill 50 got passed in the last week of November. The Bill grants the Infrastructure Minister totalitarian power over expanding the power grid. All kinds of safeguards in the old legislation, warranting developments for public interest, have been removed. The "transmission" portion of a power bill in Alberta was based on a value of the grid at \$2 billion, with \$16 billion in power infrastructure project now getting the green light, a

transmission portion of a power bill will go up eight-fold. Not because powering Alberta needs that, it is simply about facilitating export capacity building, immediately benefitting companies owning transmission lines and coal-fired generators while paving the way for nuclear generation as well. As ratepayers can not expect any benefits, all of this infrastructure can be built on their expense. Joe Anglin, on behalf of Lavesta Area Group, travelled the province, presented evidence of this scam in dozens of meetings. He has generated several groups behind the momentum to bring the Alberta government to court as soon as a project goes ahead. The city of Calgary, Enmax and the Industrial Power Consumers of Alberta all are very upset with the passing of Bill 50.

—nfu—





# Review of National Farmers Foundation Programs 2008-09

—by Stuart Thiesson, National Farmers Foundation Treasurer

The operating year for the National Farmers Foundation runs from October 1 to September 30. In the period October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009, our revenue from donations was \$7,153 and income from investment interest was \$3,944, for a total of \$11,097.

This represented a decline of over \$4,000 in donations from the previous year. In spite of the income decline, we funded \$8,000 in projects, representing an increase of 17% over the previous year. As a result, we recorded a loss of \$319 for the year. It is apparent we cannot fund projects to the extent that we record financial losses in future.

As a matter of interest, 39.7% of our donations were received as memorials for deceased members. They are a major source of our income.

We remind members that all donations to the NFF have charitable status for deductions from income tax. We urge all members to include annual donations to the Foundation as part of your charitable gifts. The amount of our donation income determines the availability of projects funding. In this past year, we provided \$5,000 to NFU Youth for a summer workshop; \$3,000 to the Cooper Institute in Charlottetown to sponsor Caribbean farmers to Prince Edward Island as an educational project. In addition, we funded the cost of a telephone conference between NFU members and US farmers to discuss problems in the livestock industry.

Below is a review of donations made since our last report.

## **DONATIONS:**

William Jaffray, Scarborough, ON; Betty Brannan, Galiano, BC; Merv Johnson, Victoria, BC; Harold Helm, Rosetown, SK; R.A. Bradford, Orillia, ON; Dewey Cummins, Hazelton, BC; R. Bruce Jones, Maple Ridge, BC; J. Douglas McMurtry, Winnipeg, MB; Arthur Millward, Winnipeg, MB; Joan Davis, New Westminster, BC; Tibor Kiss, St. Catherines, ON; Helen Reynolds, Winnipeg, MB; Grey Sisters of Immaculate Conception, Pembroke, ON; All Charities Campaign, Winnipeg, MB; Ann J. Gammell, Calgary, AB; Doug McEachern, Action, ON; Raymond Morris, Salmon Arm, BC; Alan B. Tanenbaum, Toronto, ON; Hugh Lynnes, Swift Current, SK; Valdis Macins, Kenora, ON; Rev. Lewis Murray, Stewiacke, NS; Estate of Charles Hamilton, Oxbow, SK; Urban and Mary Laughlin, Summerside, PE.

## **MEMORIAL DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF:**

Pauline MacDonald – Urban and Mary Laughlin; Douglas Lalond – Margaret Elder; Allan Pattison – Marcella Pedersen; Joyce Dowling – Marcella Pedersen; Mary Reed – Theresa Wolfwood; Darcy Ollikka – Urban Laughlin, Marcella Pedersen, Jane Gerlach, Marie Ann Roberge; Paul Beingessner – Marcella Pedersen, George Calvin; R. McFarlane – Marcella Pedersen; Bonnie Currie – Valerie Norris, City of Cambridge Planning Services Social Committee, Southwest Naturalists Inc., Sandra Hill, Henry and Joyce Neufeld, M. Pedersen, Urban Laughlin, Emma Phillips, Hugh Lynnes, Dorothy Robertson, Edson and Margaret Shaver, Norris Currie, David Wotherspoon, Keith Anderson, Anne Nisbet, Eva Renwick, Patricia Thistlewaite, Audrey Jorgenson, Lester Jorgenson, Clifford Phillips, Ken and Dianne Hymers, Lorie Tait; Jack Stephenson – Lois Weber, Marcella Pedersen, Grace Richards, Walter Zunti, Vilda Laing; Emery Grudnizki – Nina Grudnizki; Lloyd Stanhope – Vilda Laing.

We thank all donors for your support this past year. For your convenience, donor envelopes are inserted with this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly*. Since we do not make direct letter appeals for funds, we urge you to accept this report as our periodic appeal. Our charitable foundation registered number 882622368RR qualifies all donations as income tax exempt.

We look forward to your continued valuable support.

**National Farmers Foundation (c/o NFU),  
2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6**



## We Remember ...

### LLOYD STANHOPE



**Lloyd Stanhope**, a former NFU National Board Member and NFU Regional Coordinator for Saskatchewan, passed away at Moosomin, Saskatchewan on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at the age of 73 years. Lloyd's family would like to extend sincere thanks to the many NFU members from Saskatchewan and Manitoba who travelled to Moosomin to attend his funeral.

Lloyd was born to Arthur and Gladys Stanhope on March 24, 1936. He moved to what was the Joseph Fisher farm with his family when he was eight years old. His schooling took place at Glen Logan in Wilke, Hilburn and then graduated from Moosomin. His love of drafting took him to Regina to work for Imperial Oil where he drew seismic maps. He then went to Ottawa to make topographical maps for the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. He also drafted up plans for Moosomin's Lyric Theatre.

Eventually, farming ran so strong through his veins that he moved back home to farm with his brother Norm. They later purchased more land and the home farm. He met Clara Ellen Thall and they married in 1971. They raised their four children: Joanne, Randy, Steven and Donna, on the family farm. Many of life's valuable lessons were learned on that farm. Lloyd was also a pilot and loved to take family and friends for a ride, and even the family dog, Boomer, loved to go.

He was a National Director, and later Regional Coordinator for the National Farmers Union, and also served as Saskatchewan Farm Crisis chairman, helping many farm families along the way. A lot of miles, friends and a few speeding tickets, were created during this time. During the last thirty years of farming, Lloyd and Clara have worked hard and taken pride in becoming organic grain farmers, and later organic cattle too. They farmed until last year before retiring to Moosomin.

In May of 2009, Lloyd was diagnosed with a cancerous esophageal tumour, and after his surgery in July his health continued to decline. Although he was a fighter, he went on to a better place, and was surrounded by his family at the end.

Some more of Lloyd's interests included: reading, watching the news, trying to solve the world's problems. He always had a project of some sort on the go. He built a spiral staircase in their stone house on the farm from an old horse rake wheel and drill pipe. He built signs for his youngest daughter's business out of five-inch nails and rebar, and a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary name sign for Clara's sister and her husband. He loved shopping at the "man store" (Princess Auto or Peavey Mart) and auction sales. He also loved a bargain, playing cards or crib with family or neighbours. He was a humanitarian – helping those in need whenever he could. He loved doing anything with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He always had a smile or a funny face or that special wave. Lloyd was a good, honest, hard-working man. His family and friends will always cherish those treasured memories.



### MARY GLEAVE

**Mary May Gleave** passed away October 21, 2009 in Mississauga, Ontario at the age of 92. Mary was predeceased by her beloved husband Alfred P. Gleave, who served as President of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, and who also served many years as a Member of Parliament.

Mary will be sadly missed by her many friends in Ottawa, Saskatoon, Vancouver, Victoria and Great Britain.



### ISABEL MUZICHUK



**Isabel Muzichuk** of Buchanan, Saskatchewan, passed away December 8, 2009 after a brief illness. Isabel was an active member of the NFU. She was one of the first, and most active people in Saskatchewan to oppose industrial hog barns. She was active in trying to stop the Rama barn, and continued her activism through Hogwatch Saskatchewan and with Beyond Factory Farming. She was also very active in protecting our water, and was involved in the union movement through her career in nursing and as a retiree.

Isabel wasn't one to use the internet - rather she would phone and talk to people or get in her car and go to meetings. Her insight, dedication, and passion for justice have made a big contribution to our community, and her spritely humour, enthusiasm and laughter will be missed by all who knew her.



## We Remember ...

### ELIGOR SCHNEIDER

**Eligor Schneider** passed away June 6, 2009 at Leader, Saskatchewan. Eligor was a grandson of immigrants Andrew and Ursula (Risling) Schneider and was born on January 12, 1925 to Jacob and Eulalia (Sehn) Schneider. He was the oldest of five children: Mike (Rose), Mary (Albert) Schwengler, Frank (Elizabeth) and Tony (Darlene).

Eligor grew up on the family farm in Fox Valley. He attended Keebleville School until Grade 6, after which time he had to help with farm work. The family attended Krassna Church where he was a mass server and fire man, tending to the fire in the church stove, making sure church was warm for mass. Eligor played accordion at house parties and dances, getting paid between \$1.50 and \$2 for playing from 10 PM until the wee hours of the morning, usually 4 or 5 AM. It was a house party where he met Rose Marie (Ries). It was after one of these dances when Eligor gave Rose Marie a card that read: "If you want to go out with me keep the card, but if you don't, just give it back to me." She promptly put it into her pocket. After going together for a year and a half, they were married on November 11, 1946 at St. Johnsburg Church. They moved a house from the Anton Sehn farm and together they farmed, milked cows and raised chickens, pigs and cows.

They had nine children: Rennie (Lorraine), Jack (Marie), Leo (Irene), Janet (Harry) Poulos, Joe (Kathy), Adeline (Neil) Wingenbach, Eligor (Paulette), Rosemary (Rob) Hnatuck and Anita. Eligor has many grandchildren and several great-grandchildren that filled his life with happiness.

Eligor was a long-time member of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union and the National Farmers Union. He served many years as President of Local 637. They retired from farming in September of 1981 and moved into town. They didn't slow down, though, by any means, as the feel of the soil was still itching and Eligor took up the hobby of gardening. Soon the lot beside them was purchased and they were growing enough produce for all their children, as well as the entire town. Eligor was always inventing some type of gadget. Sometimes his wife would just shake her head and smile at him and sometimes they actually would be useful. He made windmills, airplanes and flowers which were made from bottle caps in glass vases for his granddaughters. He could also fix almost anything with a tube of silicone. He led a very devout and prayerful life. He always had a rosary in his hand, daily mass when it was offered, or watched it on TV. Even in the hospital, he led the rosary with his wife at his side. He was one of the most honest people you would have ever met. He would tell you the truth, even if you didn't want to hear it. But he was also very kind-hearted, religious, stubborn, hard-working, strong-willed, creative and loving as well. He loved his wife and family very much and he will be deeply missed.

## union farmer quarterly

### Official publication of the National Farmers Union

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PRINTED AT ST. PETER'S PRESS, MUENSTER, SK. AGREEMENT NO. 40063391, POSTAGE PAID AT MUENSTER, SASKATCHEWAN.

#### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE:

Members \$ 15.00; Non-Members \$25.00; Institutions \$35.00  
(price includes monthly newsletter and quarterly magazine)

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

Editor: Terry Pugh  Layout / Design: Joan Lange

*We believe a strong rural community in Canada is an essential part of our national culture. In the National Farmers Union, we work collectively to strengthen the farm community by: building ties between farmers in all parts of Canada, with farmers in other countries and with non-farm people; ensuring all people have access to an adequate, nutritious and safely-produced food supply; promoting equity for women and young people in the farming community; promoting social support systems that permit people in farming communities a good quality of life; promoting the development and maintenance of a Canadian infrastructure to serve Canadian goals in food production and trade; and helping governments to form fair and constructive policies related to food production and food trade.*





## NFU BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICES

### Regional Offices:

Region 1: Tax: 559 Route 390, Rowena, NB E7H 4N2 Ph: (506) 273-4328

Financial Services: 120 Bishop Dr., Summerside, PEI C1N 5Z8 Ph: (902) 436-1872

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### NFU INCOME TAX SERVICE 2010 MANITOBA RURAL VISIT SCHEDULE

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>HOTEL</u>	<u>DATES</u>
SWAN RIVER	SUPER 8	FEBRUARY 16 <sup>TH</sup> & 17 <sup>TH</sup>
ROBLIN	ROBLIN MOTOR INN	FEBRUARY 18 <sup>TH</sup> TO 24 <sup>TH</sup>
GRANDVIEW	---	FEBRUARY 25 <sup>TH</sup>
MORDEN	MORDEN MOTOR INN	MARCH 3 <sup>RD</sup> TO 10 <sup>TH</sup>
MELITA	---	MARCH 1 <sup>ST</sup>
KILLARNEY	---	MARCH 2 <sup>ND</sup>
ARBORG	ZANS FAMILY INN	MARCH 15 <sup>TH</sup> TO 18 <sup>TH</sup>
FISHER BRANCH	INTERLAKE MOTOR HOTEL	MARCH 15 <sup>TH</sup> AND 16 <sup>TH</sup>
MINNEDOSA	GATEWAY MOTEL	MARCH 22 <sup>ND</sup> AND 23 <sup>RD</sup>
SHOAL LAKE	BUFFALO PLAINS INN	MARCH 22 <sup>ND</sup> TO 24 <sup>TH</sup>
RUSSELL	RUSSELL INN	MARCH 25 <sup>TH</sup> AND 26 <sup>TH</sup>
VIRDEN	---	MARCH 24 <sup>TH</sup>
TREHERNE	CREEKSIDE HIDEAWAY MOTEL	MARCH 29 <sup>TH</sup> TO 31 <sup>ST</sup>
GLADSTONE	GLADSTONE HOTEL	MARCH 29 <sup>TH</sup> AND 30 <sup>TH</sup>
PORTAGE	CANAD INNS	APRIL 5 <sup>TH</sup> TO 8 <sup>TH</sup>
CYPRESS RIVER		APRIL 12 <sup>TH</sup> AND 13 <sup>TH</sup>