

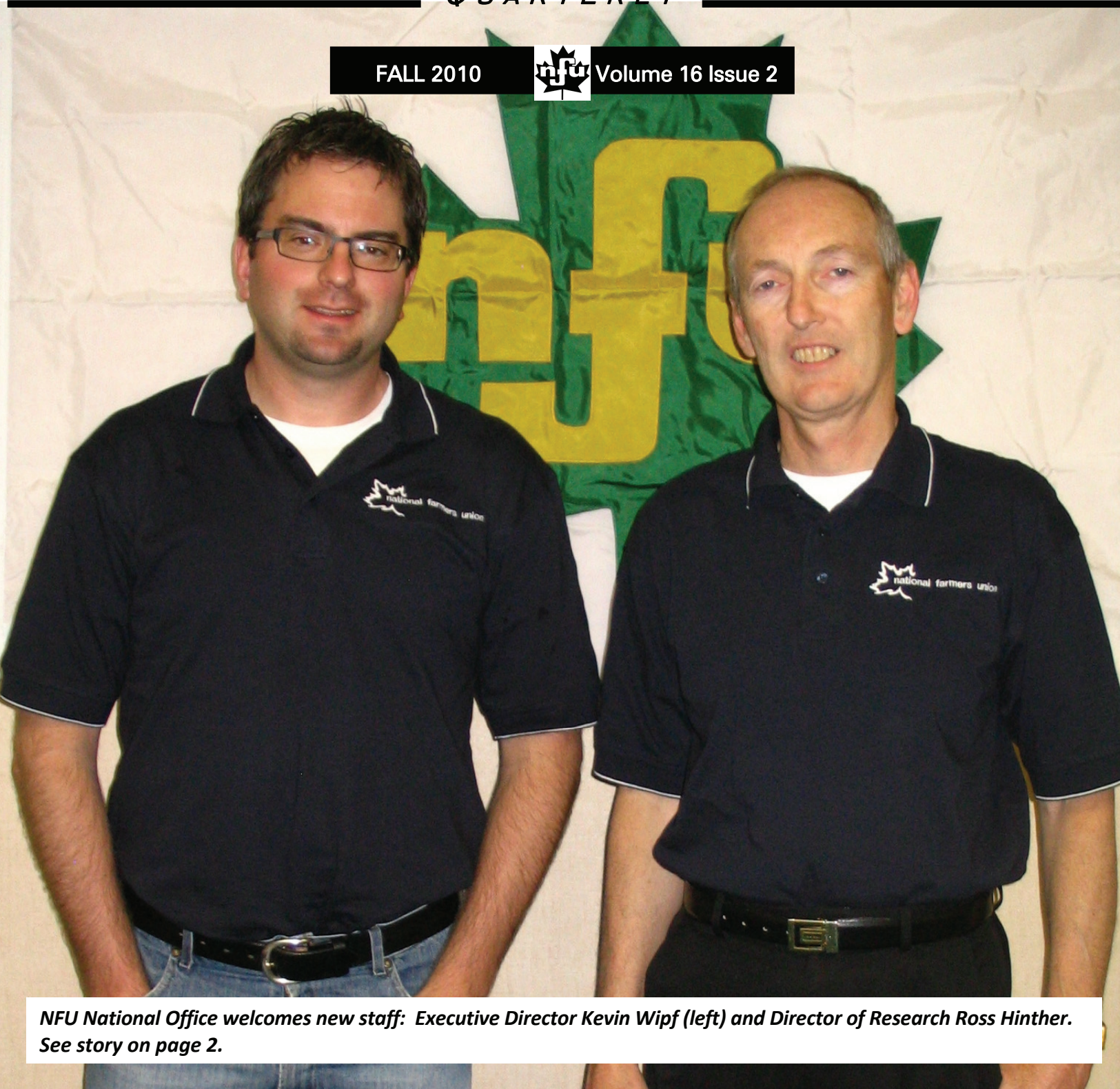
THE union farmer

QUARTERLY

FALL 2010



Volume 16 Issue 2



NFU National Office welcomes new staff: Executive Director Kevin Wipf (left) and Director of Research Ross Hinthner. See story on page 2.

On the Cover...

Kevin Wipf grew up working on his family's grain farm just a few miles to the North-West of Saskatoon. Kevin's great grandparents homesteaded the farm in 1907. Over the course of its existence, Acrefair farm has produced everything from wheat, barley, peas, and mustard, to milk, honey, fox, and poultry. Next year, the old big red dairy barn will turn 100!

After high school, Kevin pursued post-secondary education in various places across the country. His first stop was the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, where he worked towards his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. From there, he moved on to Waterloo, Ontario to obtain his Master of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Waterloo. Most recently, Kevin attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton to pursue his PhD and teach courses in public policy and Canadian politics and government.

Sports have always been a big part of Kevin's life. Growing up, he participated in competitive hockey, football, and track and field. These days, Kevin enjoys recreational hockey, running, cycling, and rollerblading.

Kevin is very excited to work for the NFU in its defence of family farms and sustainable agriculture, and he looks very forward to meeting NFU members from around Canada.

Ross Hinthier is a farmer and also has a background in Information Systems management.

Ross has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Saskatchewan. He began his computer career with the Government of Saskatchewan. After five years with the government, the last two as a management analyst, he left Regina for Saskatoon to work for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan as a Systems Analyst. The catalyst for the move was the family purchase of some farmland close to Saskatoon. The farm has been a mixed grain and cattle farm, as well as an organic grain farm. Ross spent 20 years with Potash, twelve of those years as Director of Information Systems. Upon leaving Potash, he did a stint for Cameco as an Information Technology contractor.

For the Past few years, Ross has devoted his time to the farm and volunteering. He is a currently on the Board of the Saskatchewan Health Coalition. He has enjoyed doing research, writing, and advocacy for the organization. The National Farmers Union provides an opportunity to combine those interests with his farming background.

Ross is looking forward to working for a great national organization, especially its members, staff, and the executive.

—nfu—

union farmer quarterly

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2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6

Telephone: 306-652-9465 — Fax: 306-664-6226 — E-mail: nfu@nfu.ca — Website: www.nfu.ca

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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.



A message from the...



National President

—by Terry Boehm

Hello NFU members. This has been a particularly trying time for many of us on the prairies trying to complete spring seeding.

For those of you who do not know, we are undergoing big changes at the National office, with almost a complete change in staff. We have benefited over the years with having very dedicated and long-term staff in National office. Terry Pugh, our former Executive Secretary, has moved on and left in early April. Terry was a very dedicated and hard working employee who contributed greatly to the NFU. Darrin Qualman, our Director of Research, will be leaving at the end of June. Darrin has also been a tremendous asset to the NFU with his thorough and thoughtful analysis. He also served as Executive Secretary prior to Terry Pugh coming on board. Lastly, our longest serving employee, Diane Neufeld, will be retiring at the end of June. Diane is our frontend person and secretary who has steadfastly served us through all the ups and downs of the Union. I would like to extend on behalf of us all heartfelt thanks to these people who have made the union function for all of us on a day-to-day basis. I think it is difficult for many to imagine how intense the work is for a small staff. All of our employees have served with grace and assiduity. All of these people have been extremely important to the NFU and for those that are leaving, I wish to extend my best wishes and gratitude. We are also pleased to welcome two new employees. Ross Hinthner is our new Director of Research and Kevin Wipf is our new Executive Director. We look forward to working with these two new people. I hope that while the work is intense, they will find their tenure with the NFU both interesting and enjoyable.

The activities of NFU never slow down. We will soon be shifting gears to launch a major campaign to fight many aspects of a trade deal largely being negotiated in secret by the federal government with the European Commission.

This agreement, known as CETA or the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement, is being negotiated at a breathtaking pace and is proposed to be in place sometime in 2011. This is the first trade agreement that specifically brings in the provinces and opens up their exclusive jurisdictions, as well as those of municipal levels of governance. For farmers, the inclusion of UPOV 91, the draconian form of Plant Breeders Rights legislation that we fought back a few years ago, is a centerpiece of this agreement. UPOV 91 would virtually eliminate a farmer's ability to save, reuse, exchange, and sell seed. I speak more directly about this in a further article I have written in this magazine about CETA.

The ability of local institutions to make decisions to procure locally-produced food is also impacted in this agreement. Indeed local procurement with conditions for local preference for employment etc. would all be opened up in this agreement. Local services like water delivery, Crown utilities, provincial insurance agencies could all be opened up under this agreement.

Those farmers who think that a trade agreement with Europe will open up that territory to imports of GM crops will be severely disappointed, as all European GM regulations are exempted in one of the Appendices. There is also a plan to add a chapter that specifically addresses State Trading Enterprises and Monopolies which will likely be very hostile to the Canadian Wheat Board given both the Harper government's and the European Commission's hostility to the CWB.

The European Commission has also been very hostile toward Canadian supply management systems and continues to be so in these negotiations. On reading the draft text, it is stunning in its scope and demands by the corporate world; whether it be in healthcare, copyrights, pharmaceuticals, telecommunication, food regulations, and beyond. This is a corporate bill of rights that rolls the MAI, WTO, and beyond into one sweeping agreement. We should not be fooled that Europe is a more progressive or friendlier regime to its citizens and that some of that will translate into this agreement between Canada and European Commission. In the coming months we will need to enlist all of you in this fight and we will be working with several organizations to push back. We have won these battles before and will again with all of us working together.

In solidarity, Terry Boehm



A message from the...



Women's President

— by Joan Brady

In my role as NFU Women's President, I am often asked to speak at various events and invited to offer the NFU perspective to various discussions. I was able to attend the district conventions in both PEI and New Brunswick earlier this year. It was very informative and inspiring to hear about the activity and issues that occupy NFU members in the Maritimes. I was also able to attend the Thunder Bay Spring Farm Conference and share the NFU Livestock brief with attending farmers on behalf of Region 3.

This spring, I responded to two invitations to participate in consultations with the federal government with varying degrees of success. The first was to participate in the Standing Committee on Agriculture's cross-country fact finding tour on young farmers. The directive was that the committee hoped to hear from individual farmers and not commodity or general farm organizations. I and other Ontario members offered a number of names of young farmers and others interested in the issue with the understanding that they would be representing themselves and not the NFU. When, I did not receive any response or information, I contacted the committee clerk to confirm my attendance.

At that point, I was notified that my presence and that of the other suggested farmers was not required. "Having heard from a number of NFU members in the Western Provinces, surely there was nothing new to present." I was frustrated at what appeared a double standard – farmers were required, but NFU members, all of whom must be farmers in order to achieve full membership, were not. I attended the consultation anyways. I appreciated the presentations of many of those in attendance but did note that a significant perspective was missing – one which would have been

communicated if some of the NFU-suggested farmers had been in attendance. I also noted that many of the presenters were in attendance as a result of a personal invitation from an attending MP, a real concern when the results are presented as a balanced and representative consultation.

I also attended the AG2020 consultations hosted by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. Together with other farm leaders, I heard presentations on the state of the industry by AAFC economists and heard once again the rhetoric that global markets, science and innovation, and a lower cost of production was the answer to all that ails agriculture in Canada. From an AAFC perspective, farm family income was on par with that of other Canadians and should not be of concern. Round table discussions followed and the presented information and past track records of programs critiqued.

The conclusions at my table were nearly unanimous: current programs don't work; to be effective global traders, we need a strong domestic industry; innovation requires a capacity for risk that does not exist on Canadian farms; and farm families cannot be compared with other families without considering their hours worked and high investments. Rumbblings of frustration about the very real possibility that this would be another empty consultation with little acknowledgement of concerns or criticism echoed throughout the room. AAFC appeared to listen and record and have promised further consultations in the New Year. Time will tell....

I have also heard the experiences of other NFU members that attended similar meetings with both the Standing Committee and the AG2020 consultations. Some were well met and others challenged for their viewpoints that did not meet the prescribed vision. Participating in these consultations is always a trying endeavor and often appears to be a useless exercise. But it is very important to be there and offer a real alternative. If the NFU does not speak, others will presume to speak for us. I want to thank everyone for their passion and vision in sharing their perspectives in this way. I encourage you to continue to be the sound of reason in a chaotic and confused world.

In solidarity, Joan Brady



A message from the...



Youth President

— Kalissa Regier

“Any fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius-and a lot of courage-to move in the opposite direction.”

—Albert Einstein

I'm a sucker for good quotes. This quote stands out for me as a good one to apply to farming today. Albert Einstein was a theoretical physicist, not a farmer, but I'm sure he struggled with some of the same ethical and philosophical questions that we all do. In the last 50 years, farming in Canada has generally gotten bigger, more complex, and certainly, when referring to the environment and human health, it has become more violent. Many farmers who have decided to remove themselves one way or another from this system likely understand Einstein's sentiments well when he talks of courage to move in the opposite direction. I guess it would be logical to say that the opposite direction would be smaller, simpler and more peaceful. For farmers, the question of farm size is often debated. What is a small farm and what's a big farm? One thing is certain, somewhere in between is probably medium sized. I heard somewhere that a small farmer is defined as someone who can farm 1000 acres but would rather farm 500, while a big farmer farms 2 acres and would rather farm 5. Perhaps it's more to do with the confinements of geography and ability to use common sense than actual numbers.

The Campaign for New Farmers

Our campaign continues to generate interest from across the country! We want to hear from you. Tell us a story about how you recently became involved with food and farming and we'll feature you in our next newsletter. Email pictures and a short story or join our mailing list at cnf2010@gmail.com. Also look for updates on www.nfu.ca.

Policies for Future Farmers

The NFU Youth recently put together a short report and list of policy recommendations for a study on young farmers and the future of Agriculture that is being conducted by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and

Agri-food. I've included some excerpts from that report below.

Financing and Insurance:

“Most farmers start out their careers as small farmers, they then grow larger according to need, desire or capacity. Therefore, the mechanisms that small farmers use to succeed on their farms are the same ones that new farmers will use when starting out their farming career. As these mechanisms are depleted, however, small farmers lose their ability to earn a living, and new farmers no longer have the security they needed to begin their career. The results are fewer and larger farms, as well as fewer new entrants into farming.”

Access to and Transfer of Land:

“Today, the total value of Canadian farm land and buildings is approximately \$250 billion. If, in order to accomplish transfer of that land to the next generation, 20% has to be refinanced over the next 10 to 20 years, that will add approximately \$50 billion to farmers' debt. If that happens, and debt approaches the \$100 billion to \$120 billion range, then even with relatively low interest rates total interest payable will range from \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year. Clearly, there is a pressing need to facilitate intergenerational transfers using non-debt incurring methods.”

Federal Support Programs:

“The historic push towards larger farms, more efficient production methods and farm managers who manage their farm as a business was seen by many as a major step towards higher

(continued on page 6...)



revenues on Canadian farms. However, with the AgriStability payment cap recently increased to \$3 million, we must ask whether increased farm size and better efficiency had this desired effect. Moreover, there is increasing concern regarding the long-term funding capacity for the current set of programs. Movement towards smaller sums of support funds directed over more farms will have more beneficial effects on small farms, rural communities and assure potential new entrants into farming that there is indeed some practical support for them in the future."

Recommendations by the NFU Youth are:

A federally-funded small loans program specifically for new farmers which is implemented by local lending institutions and/or rural municipalities.

A Land Bank or Land Trust system of tenure that guarantees a fair price to the seller, while offering new farmers affordable conditions of purchase.

A lower cap of \$500,000 on federal support programs to ensure more support gets to the most vulnerable farmers.

In Solidarity, Kalissa Regier



and Youth Vice President

— Cammie Harbottle

It's hard to believe that we are approaching summer solstice out here on the east coast. With over 7 inches of rain in the past week, even the earthworms are drowning in the fields. Many local farmers had their fields seeded early this year, with a warm and dry April. However, the past couple of weeks have been extremely wet, leaving standing water in many of those fields. Things are in full swing on my farm, and hopefully the soggy soil will not leave too much of a gap in vegetable production. This time of year the farmers' markets are bustling and the demand for local, organic produce in NS is ripe!

Over the past few months, I have been working to build networks in Nova Scotia for the NFU Youth and connect with potential coalition partners for the Campaign for New Farmers. I have spoken at several events, including a public consultation about the situation for beginning farmers hosted by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, a Slow Food Nova Scotia event, and a celebration of the International day of Peasant Struggle in Halifax. The latter event was organized by the Ecology Action Center (Halifax, NS), the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (thank you Lucy Sharratt!), and

a coalition of local groups organizing resistance to the G8. The event was in solidarity with La Via Campesina, the international small-scale farmers movement. The day was organized to "Say 'NO' to corporate control of agriculture and food." It involved distributing hand bills and information at the Halifax Farmers' Market followed by a march through the city to the commons where there was a feast of plenty for all and a series of speakers. Unfortunately, the keynote speaker, Gerard Choplin of La Via Campesina Europe, was unable to make it due to a last minute flight cancellation resulting from the ash of the Icelandic Volcano. Regardless, I think that the day was successful in its increase of public awareness around GMOs, corporate control over food and farmer struggles around the world. It was a small action in solidarity with a much larger movement.

I was also able to participate in the Standing Committee on Agriculture hearing in Kentville, NS during May. There were three young women farmers and two older male farmers on the panel. It was a good mix of perspectives from a variety of sectors.

Over the coming months, I plan to work toward an NFU Nova Scotia meeting to coincide with Joan Brady's visit to the East coast. I will be in touch with local members and work on recruiting some new ones! We are also working on organizing a youth event for the annual convention, so we'll see what we can come up with between now and then...

In Union, Cammie Harbottle



Regional Reports



ONE (PEI)

REGION



- by Randall Affleck

Since this is the first regional report I have written since my previous stint as a NFU board member back in the 90s, let me briefly introduce myself. I am Randall Affleck, husband to Jackie, and father to Katie and Regan. We live and farm in Lower Bedeque, Prince Edward Island. My brother and I tend to the care of a fifty-cow dairy farm growing most of our own feed, with forty acres of organic cereals and soybeans for cash sale. We stopped growing seed and table stock potatoes back in 2004 at the bottom of the wave and took the memory with us. We are the 5th generation of our family to farm here and while our children are too young yet, we hope some of them will choose farming as their life's work too.

I was NFU District Director for PEI in 1993/94, and National Board member between 1995 and 2000. Between 1999 and 2009, I was one of nine producers on the Dairy Farmers of PEI board, a provincial organization with statutory authority to regulate the dairy industry on PEI within Canada's supply management system.



NFU meeting with Hon. Gail Shea.

(Back row l to r: Reg Phelan, Sally Bernard, Hon. Gail Shea.
Front row l to r: Randall Affleck, Elwyn Wyand, Edith Ling)



I am often confused with the legendary Ranald MacFarlane, previous board member from Prince Edward Island, the witty, soft spoken guy known for his quiet diplomatic way.

Now the news: On March 18th, the NFU on Prince Edward Island held their District convention electing Elwin Wyand as District Director, Edith Ling as Women's District Director and Sally Bernard as Youth District Director. Joan Brady, NFU Women's President, was our keynote speaker. Wade MacKinnon from the Department of Environment, made a presentation on enforcement issues regarding some of the province's environmental legislation. Paula Biggar, a MLA from the governing party, spoke to the convention in the morning and fielded questions for the Government. Two Cabinet Ministers showed up in the afternoon. District Treasurer Scott MacArthur presented his fortieth Treasurer's report! Regrettably for us, he decided to retire this year. Thank you so much Scott and Kay for all your work with the National Farmers Union.

On March 25th, the NFU on PEI met with the Provincial Standing Committee on Agriculture. We decided to put a particular focus on the cattle sector with our brief making nine recommendations to try and get more money flowing to the cattle farmers. Sadly, none of our recommendations made it into the final report. The committee chose to recommend the potential for race horse export, reforestation, recreational fishing, more agriculture in the school curriculum, changes to tax and energy policy, Atlantic cooperation, and that non-quota flock sizes remain at 299 birds.

On April 9th, the NFU met with Federal Fisheries Minister, the Hon. Gail Shea, and lobbied for Bill C-474 (the GM market impact assessment legislation) and the farm crisis, with particular emphasis on the livestock crisis.

(continued on page 8...)

ONE (New Brunswick)

REGION



- by Betty Brown

NFU in NB's third annual district meeting was held at the Florenceville Legion, Florenceville-Bristol, March 20th. It was a good meeting with several resolutions. Joan Brady and Cammie Harbottle from the National Board attended.

Our web site is being revamped and should be up and going by August. A newsletter will be printed and distributed in June.

Hot, dry weather, much different than last spring, has enabled New Brunswick farmers to finish planting their crops by the time they normally begin to plant. This year the ground is very dry due to below normal precipitation this winter. On the western side of the province, we were really dry until June 1st to June 3rd, and now have 1.4 inches and more

showers predicted for the weekend. Some farmers have managed to do the first cut of hay.

Farmgate prices remain below the cost of production for most crops, and cattle prices have not improved. Potato farmers had a disastrous 2009 year with weather-related tuber problems and low prices. This year, the processing growers face a severe cut to volume and a price decrease. The problem is, the only input cost to go down slightly, is fertilizer. The outlook for the fresh potato market is dismal as well. With the grim outlook, we have lost more farmers, many who gave up the battle.

Members of the executive have attended various government meetings in the last few months.

We continue to focus on the "buy local" campaign and membership recruitment.

NFU in NB is hosting the annual regional NFU meeting in the Grand Falls area August 7th.

As the summer season nears, I hope we have a better growing season than 2009.

In Union, Betty Brown

(Region 1 PEI, from page 7)

Cavendish Farms cut the processing contracts of 20 smaller potato growers in late February citing recessionary hard times and low demand. On April 12th, remaining process growers accepted their 2010 contract offer with a 25 cent per cwt reduction in the base price. In May, Cavendish Farms has apparently redistributed the 28 million lbs of the contracts cut from the 20 growers plus an additional 75 million lbs to the remaining 100 growers. Cavendish Farms staff also acted as land brokers trying to rent potato ground from farmers whose contract was cut to those farmers who accepted the redistributed contract increase. Sadly, many of the smaller growers were also younger farmers.

Cavendish Farms is also appealing the Potato Processing Contract Negotiation Order from the PEI Potato Board to the Natural Products Appeals Tribunal. This Order

requires that if no agreement can be reached with the processors prior to April 15th of each year that the outstanding issues would be referred to binding arbitration. Over the past two years, agreements have not been reached until June and July which is far too late for potato farmers as the potatoes had to be planted before they knew if they had a market for their potatoes or not.

On May 13th, Sally Bernard presented on behalf of the NFU to the Federal Standing Committee on Agriculture's study of Young Farmers and the Future of Agriculture in Canada. Sally promoted the Domestic Fair Trade concept that the NFU on PEI has been working on over this past winter.

According to Environment Canada, this has been the driest spring in 63 years. Planting was completed in record time this year. We received some very good rains in early June.

In Union, Randall Affleck



REGION

THREE (Ontario)

*Photo Unavailable**- by Sean McGivern*

As I sit and write this Regional Coordinator's report for the *Union Farmer Quarterly*, I can't help but ponder the current situation many farmers in this province and country find themselves in on a daily basis, with low prices for grains, oilseeds and livestock, downward commodity prices and upward input costs. Certainly, this is not a new story to any of you, but it begs the question: How much longer can this go on for?

This year China has delivered a 50 billion-dollar rural infrastructure funding program that put real money into the hands of its smallest farmers to help slow the mass migration of rural Chinese to the urban cities. These migrant farmers have been driven by an effort to find work and a better life. This program was designed to provide China's farmers with the money needed to buy the equipment necessary to make them more profitable and to ensure the long-term viability of Chinese agriculture. Such items as seed cleaners, bagging units, specialty planters and harvesting equipment were among some of the many items farmers purchased with their grant money.

Now contrast that with the types of ideas that are being floated around Ontario in regards to Business Risk Management (BRM) from various industry stakeholders, and we can see that the "give a man a fish and feed him for a day" parable is a rather costly one and it has no end in sight. Instead, we should be looking to see how we can be equipping everyone with a fishing pole and hook so they can feed themselves all their live-long-days. For many years now I have been writing and talking about a BRM program that was sustainable, long-term in scope, easily replicated in other provinces, and would also offer long-term environmental benefits to the greater society for generations to come. So far this type of an idea is not very popular among mainstream farming and agricultural groups. This type of a program would financially reward farmers for the many different types of environmental goods and services they already

provide, that are not only a benefit to them and their farm families but also to the greater well-being of our society. This type of a system would help to curb the over-production of farm commodities and help lead to an end of unsustainable farming practices that create the type of agricultural disasters that plague large-scale monoculture farming businesses.

These types of ideas are not very popular with many large-scale farmers because they don't want to see caps on funding programs, they do not want to see the playing field leveled for small-scale producers and most of all the multinational corporations that they serve do not want to see this type of a system either. This type of a program might lead farmers to not over-produce the typical standard commodities at below cost of production and in turn it might require multinational companies to have to pay farmers a fair price for the goods they produce and we might see an end to the current supply of cheap food commodities that we are all so familiar with as farmers. If this were to happen then these companies might actually have to pay farmers a fair price for the goods they produce or risk the chance of missing out on crops or livestock because their companies were not competitive. They would then have to compete against well-delivered government-funded environmental programs that would enhance the quality of our food, our environment, our livelihoods and lead to a more and better ecological food system that starts right on our farms. I am not saying that I have all the answers, but I do know our current system is failing our family farmers miserably and it must be changed.

The NFU has always been known as a grassroots organization from its beginning but it can only continue in that direction if we truly operate like one. For this to happen, we need strong support and representation from all of our locals across the province. I want to put the call out to any members who feel they can serve the union in any form to come forth and be a part of advancing our cause and mission to create a better and more sustainable farming community from coast-to-coast. I have spent my first three

(continued on page 23...)

REGION

FIVE (Manitoba)

- by Ian Robson

Manitoba NFU representatives met with Manitoba Agricultural Service Corporation to discuss Crop Insurance and Farm Loan programs. Manitoba has a Bridging Generation Program to assist with farm land transfer within families. This was encouraged. Loan Programs are needed, and yet these do highlight the cost-price squeeze situation and suggest that bigger fixes are needed.

High debt levels indicate the need for farmers to work together to improve our selling power. We lost single-desk selling in hogs, and this is one reason hog prices are so low.

Livestock insurance schemes, based upon expensive premiums and a declining price trend, could be ineffective. A net zero benefit over time is not a solution to a cyclical price situation.

GMO crops like Triffid flax have caused market loss at farm gate prices and this negatively affects crop insurance coverage levels.

We encourage that Federal Bill C-474, recommending market impact assessment before release of GMO crops, is the prudent way forward. Prairie farmers have lost market revenue because Europe has the policy to not accept GMO canola.

Multi-national companies are trying hard to just release the next GMO crop into the environment, and then, well it is ...just live with it—a bit like thinking it was safe to drill for oil more than one mile under water.

Upon learning of gulf oiling, we find this spill will have an adverse effect upon migratory birds that prey upon our six legged crop pests right here.

Two-legged crop pests are busy at the WTO trying to chew upon the Canadian Wheat Board. We deserve better from our Federal Government.

When is our Ag Minister Gerry Ritz going to recover the farmers' money that was spent for 20 years to defend our CWB from USA trade challenges? We won every time, yet they do not pay us for our costs? How about recovering the cash for all our prairie farmers?

Speaking of getting young farmers interested in farming, the NFU made policy presentations to the Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee when it took evidence in Portage la Prairie. (You may read the entire evidence at the following web address: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=4481142&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=3>). I read what was said from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, and if I may say, the most critical and constructive discussion among farmers occurred at Portage la Prairie. Regulating competition and regulating the caps on farm programs allows a chance for suitably scaled farmers. Why do we feel we need to continually scale larger and larger? Other farm groups talked of fixing the farm subsidy programs or of ways to expand the farm.

Why do support programs exist? There was, and still is, a bigger problem of low farm gate prices. Our dairy farmer friend pointed out their system of supply management earns a living. Dairy farmers decided that cyclical income trend systems should become extinct.

I was glad to see a letter in the last *Union Farmer* recommending that farmers negotiate to sell our products. This will require us all to realize it can be done—(was done in a way briefly in 08-09)—when farmers refused to buy high-priced fertilizer until prices dropped. We have the raw product; we must do more negotiation and talk with each other before we sell or buy.

Somehow, the USA is able to set a floor price for some crops like \$6.00 LDP for Durum Wheat. I hear there was a shortage of seed and the US farmer is charged if they buy patented seed from a neighbour.

If you want to be charged for selling seed to your neighbour, then do nothing now and you will get it—oops—if you write the cheque to the NFU for membership (150.00/yr feels better each year) then we may all help the government to not make it illegal to sell seed to your neighbour. Yes, let's dance the tune that we would miss out on research and on new varieties. The government already did cut back, yet we need research investment. The prairies are too small a market for private and even large companies, so you will get the new variety at a big cost with these patents. What is the

(continued on page 23...)



REGION

SIX (Saskatchewan)

- by Glenn Tait

Greetings from the great Meota desert. OK, it's not all that dry, but while much of the rest of the province was trying to fit pontoons on the seeding equipment, farmers within 20 miles of here were finished about the same time as last year. Recent and imminent thundershowers promise a lush start to the year for those who managed to get some seed in.

As was part of the plan to raise the profile of the NFU and increase the membership, I booked a table at the Battleford's AgriMex. I wandered the aisles with my box load of paraphernalia and propaganda until I discovered that someone was already set up at table 61 where I was supposed to be. When I inquired at the office they replied, "Oh, didn't someone tell you? We're full!" They eventually found and returned my deposit cheque. I shall try to advertise us again, perhaps at the Saskatoon Farmers' Market, and I encourage all of you to wave the flag when you can too.

On April 12, President Terry Boehm and I met with Jonathan Greuel and Dan Schmeiser of the provincial Ministry of Agriculture. We discussed some topics that the NFU had taken positions on in news releases over the past year, and Terry spoke about some of the more worrying clauses in the proposed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). They were familiar with nearly all the points raised and were monitoring developments in most of them. The Saskatchewan Party (SP) justly criticized the former NDP government for their inaction on rail line abandonment, and now when producer car loading sites are threatened, the SP government is taking much more decisive steps. They wrote a letter! They

say they support the good things about the CWB and the CGC without actually saying what those good things are or how proposed federal changes will affect them, but they seem fine with the changes. The Saskatchewan Party has also adopted the Conservative position against Bill C-474 (market factors affecting variety registration) and the market-access-at-nearly-all-costs focus of CETA. One promising topic mentioned was rail service. The Ministries of Agriculture and of Highways are preparing a submission for the federal Level of Service Review panel. Jonathan Greuel wrote, "This submission supports Saskatchewan shippers in calling for adequate, timely and cost-effective rail service."

At the time of our meeting with the ag staffers, the surprise changes to the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act had not yet been announced. There appeared to be no consultations on whether or not the Act needed to be amended to sell the Crown land, and there may be no public or professional scrutiny of which particular bits of protected habitat may be on the block. Both the government and the potential purchasers are so profuse with their assurances that nothing will change that it seems to me that in order to save a lot of paperwork we should then change nothing.

In trying to follow various NFU hot topics like gene transfer in populations, synthetic life forms, international marketing strategies, and a plethora of others, it makes me glad of my level of education and urges me to tell others to go as far in school and college as they can. As U.S. president Teddy Roosevelt once said, "If you don't go to school you will end up stealing from boxcars. If you have a good university education you can steal the whole railroad."

In Union, Glenn Tait



REGION

SEVEN (Alberta)

- by Doug Scott

The last several months have been a busy time for NFU elected officials. As always, I am impressed with the amount of time that is volunteered by extremely busy individuals to this organization.

A number of activities have kept us busy in Alberta. Margo has worked tirelessly to enhance the profile of the National Farmers Union in Alberta with the hope that our membership will increase. She put together a brochure that profiled the NFU and highlighted the actions that we are engaged in. She also worked on a bumper sticker that we hoped to sell to raise funds for the region.

We attended the Beef Rally in Red Deer, Alberta, that saw the launch of the Class Action BSE suit against the Federal Government. Margo worked with Cameron Pallett on the wording of the petition.

We spoke at the Public Interest Alberta Conference in Edmonton in April and attended the Standing Committee on Agriculture meeting in Crossfield.

We also spent a delightful afternoon at Kathleen Charpentier's home in Castor with several other NFU members and engaged in a strategic planning session.

I was able to meet our new Agriculture Minister, Jack Hayden, at a Meet and Greet in Waskatenau.

We held a successful Regional Meeting in Calmar on June 5. Excellent speakers entertained us throughout the day. Ken Espheter updated us on the Battle River Alliance short-line railroad and invited us to attend the upcoming launch. Kudos to Ken and his mates for their tireless efforts in bringing this difficult project to fruition.

We also enjoyed an excellent presentation by Adrienne Herron, an animal welfare specialist with the Alberta Government, who spoke about the ancient contract we have with the animals that feed us. She reminded us of the importance of honoring this contract with our animals that have served us so well.

We were pleased to have Allan Oberg, in his new role as chair of the Canadian Wheat Board, speak to us. Allan focused on the upcoming Director elections and encouraged us to take an active role in promoting single desk supporters.

Jan Slomp provided us with information on the raw milk issue and also spoke about possible changes to the quota system that would enable young farmers to purchase some quota at reduced rates.

Kathleen Charpentier highlighted activities she has engaged in over the past year in her role as Women's Vice-President.

Jan Slomp has returned to the National Board after a one year hiatus and will replace Margo Staniforth who resigned from her position. At our executive meeting in Saskatoon, Jan was appointed as Region 7 Coordinator.

I would like to thank Bob Patrick and his family for providing the excellent meal and their help in setting up the venue. I would also like to thank Margo for her work over the past year and welcome Jan back to the National Board.

Wishing you all a prosperous growing season.

In Solidarity, Doug Scott



EIGHT (B.C./Peace River)

REGION



- BY PETER EGGERS

Darrin Qualman's brief on corporate landownership with the title "Losing Our Grip" is quite worrisome. It discusses how financial pressures on the farm lead to the chain of events that could end up in the corporate-dominated landownership and farming model. It also shows that the current model of agriculture is not sustainable to be viable in the long term. Our decision-making has to be sound in three aspects: economically, environmentally, and socially. If we fail in only one of the three categories, we are not sustainable.

The United Nations did a study recently on the state of arable land on this planet. I came across it while I was on a visit in Europe. Here is what they found: between 1981 and 2004 we lost 25% of our arable land on this planet. Four main reasons cited were: chemical overuse on agricultural land, irrigation on agricultural land, overgrazing, and deforestation.

It looks to me that it is high time for us to make some serious decisions or change the way we make decisions. That goes for all levels of decision-making, for all people. I do know that the holistic decision-making model can address all of the issues.

Profitability: If we are profitable, our farms are not for sale and we have lots of farmers and vibrant communities. How do we accomplish that? We look at the whole system. Energy is one of the keys to long-term sustainability. We have to reverse the current model of agriculture where we convert fossil fuels into food, to one where we focus on the real renewable energy of the sun. We have to let the livestock back on the land in a planned grazing system which allows us to cut chemicals out. It reintroduces biodiversity which improves the water cycle, mineral cycle, energy flow,

and succession. Long-term fertility on the land has never been accomplished without the (proper) use of animals on the land. Think about the grasslands including our prairie region on this planet, and how it was so stable and had no weeds. Currently 70% of the grain grown in North America gets used to feed herbivores! What a waste of energy and soil, and cause of environmental degradation. We do that to facilitate profiteering in agriculture by business around us with all the problems it creates.

A large-scale, grass-based, biodiversity model that is rotated with small-scale grain production for our needs, has several benefits: it creates employment and improves food quality, especially protein and animal fats. This model would ease the financial burden on our health care system as well.

Grass in a holistic grown system sequesters far more carbon and would eliminate silly carbon capture and storage, taxpayer-subsidized corporate schemes. The Center for Holistic Management has done some work on carbon sequestration, and the results are amazing. Our water quality would improve immensely because the nutrients from the land stay largely on the land. This makes the land stable due to biodiversity. Moreover, it does not get concentrated in some location around intensive feeding operations, and removed from others' land which results in a nutrient deficit. The list of improvements is without limits and I could go on for a long time...but.

To me it looks like there is a case to be made to start to make decisions holistically and with that put the decision making into the hands of the people.

In Union, Peter Eggers



The Save Our Prison Farms Campaign

—by **Dianne Dowling**, president of **NFU Local 316**

Being involved in the Save Our Prison Farms campaign over the past 16 months has been both frustrating and invigorating -- a combination many NFU activists will recognize, I'm sure.

Frustrating trying to get information and responses from the federal government. Frustrating that Public Safety Canada says the prison farms have to go, when more than 90% of Canadians think they should stay. Frustrating (no -- infuriating) that the Harper government is committed to repeating the mistakes American states made in super-sizing their prisons and prison systems.

Invigorating because so much of the community supports the cause. Invigorating because of the friendships and experiences gained. Invigorating because the fight for better programming in prisons is a worthwhile fight. Invigorating because this issue combines so many perspectives -- it's a food and farm issue, a social justice issue, an environmental issue, an economic issue, and more.

In February 2009, the *Kingston Whig-Standard* revealed that the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) had decided to close the country's six prison farms -- one each in the Prairie provinces, two in Ontario (both within the city boundaries of Kingston) and one in New Brunswick. NFU members were concerned about the future of the farmland (over 1500 acres of some of the best farmland in the area) and the future of the abattoir at one of the prison farms, an abattoir that serves about 350 farmers in the Kingston region, and wholesale local meat to restaurants and meat shops.

CSC said the program will be closed by March 31, 2011, because it costs \$4.1 million annually, and the farm program did not give inmates employability skills, because few inmates who participated in the program obtained farm jobs upon release.

Stunning, eh? That the Conservatives have gone so far from their rural roots that they would say farming doesn't teach job skills. What's more, Public Safety officials said traditional farming is "out of date". Labour-intensive farming has been replaced by capital-intensive farming, they said. (I guess they haven't heard about the local food movement and the new farmers beginning small and diversified...)

We believe the prison farms provide an effective training and rehabilitation program that also produces food for the prison system

and helps support local farm suppliers, which, in turn, helps farmers in the area. We think there should be more prison farms, with a wider range of enterprises, such as green technology or demonstration projects.

In spite of sixteen months of demonstrations, hundreds of letters, signatures on petitions and phone calls, testifying at hearings of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security and that committee passing a motion to halt the shutdown and hold an independent, thorough study of the prison farm program, the government continues to stonewall us. They keep dismantling parts of the prison farm system, and at some of the sites, there is hardly anything left of the program.

"It's a done deal," they say.

Well, we aren't done.

We held a rally on June 6, with about 850 people attending. Our keynote speaker was Margaret Atwood, expressing strong opinions about the environment, conservation, climate change and the need for sustainable, diversified farming. Then about 1,000 of us marched to CSC regional headquarters in Kingston and taped our position statement to the door.

We are very concerned because CSC has said the prison farm dairy herds will be sold by the end of June. Hundreds of those attending the June 6 rally signed up to prevent, by civil disobedience if necessary, the removal of the cattle from the prison. On June 14, we set up a station to monitor the gates at Frontenac

(continued on page 19...)



Haitian Farmers Say “Burn Monsanto’s Seeds”:

Canadian groups support Haitian rejection of Monsanto’s seed donation

— The following is adapted from a joint press release from June 3, 2010, by: Peasant Mouvement of Papaye, One Land, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, Union Paysanne, National Farmers Union, Greenpeace, Action SOS Haiti, HAÏTI One Seed

On June 3rd, the NFU along with other farmer and environmental groups from across Canada stated their support for a farmer march in Haiti, organized to protest a donation of 475 tons of hybrid corn and vegetable seeds from the U.S.-based multinational biotechnology corporation Monsanto. The seeds will be distributed by the U.S. government aid agency to Haiti’s farmers.

So far, Monsanto has said that the donated corn seeds are not genetically modified but are hybrids, which means that they may not be suitable for replanting in subsequent seasons. By cultivating Monsanto’s corn, Haitian peasant farmers will be forced to make annual purchases of seeds.

Chavannes Jean-Baptist of the Peasant Movement of Papay (MPP) in Haiti called Monsanto’s donation “a new earthquake.” MPP organized the protest march and has called on all of Haiti’s farmers to burn Monsanto’s seeds. “If people start sending us hybrid seeds that’s the end of Haitian agriculture,” said Chavannes.

After the earthquake, much of Haiti’s rural seed stocks were used to help feed people who fled to rural areas from devastated towns and cities. In a message to Haitian farmers, Chavannes stated, “Monsanto is taking advantage of the earthquake...to open the country’s doors to this powerful company. We cannot accept this.”

In Canada, representatives from groups including Union Paysanne (a fellow member of La Via Campesina), Action SOS Haiti, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, HAÏTI: One Seed One Land, and Greenpeace held a symbolic solidarity action on June 4th outside the Haitian Consulate in Montreal and delivered a letter in support of the farmers.

“With friends like Monsanto and its governmental allies, who needs enemies,” said Benoit Griouard of Union Paysanne. “This so-called donation is an attack on Haitian farmers and the future of their local seeds.”

“Haiti’s farmers are telling us that the future of Haiti depends on local production with local seeds and local knowledge, for local consumption,” said Colleen



10,000 Haitian farmers march to protest Monsanto’s seed donation. Photo courtesy of CBAN’s website www.cban.ca

Ross of the NFU, “This is called food sovereignty and we support Haiti’s farmers in their struggle.”

“Our people will never be autonomous if Haiti has to suffer through what is called generosity but makes us dependent on corporate control in agricultural production,” said Catherine Thélémaque of Action SOS Haiti in Montreal.

“Food sovereignty cannot be attained with hybrid or genetically modified seeds” said Sebastien Roux, Coordinator of the Quebec group HAÏTI: One Seed One Land which has already sent more than \$15,000 worth of organic and open-pollinated seeds to Haiti. “We strongly denounce this shipment of seeds from Monsanto which will jeopardize the future of Haitian agriculture.”

Canadians were responding to a call for international solidarity from Haiti’s peasant movement which is asking all people to “Struggle against Monsanto and its accomplices.”

“Haitian farmers are building their own, locally-relevant ecological farming solutions and are resisting dependence on the false solutions promoted by multinationals like Monsanto,” said Eric Darier, Agriculture campaigner for Greenpeace Canada.

“Monsanto’s corporate give-away of seeds will secure a future for Monsanto, not for Haiti’s farmers,” said Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network. —nfu—



Corporations and investors buying up Canadian farmland: NFU releases report on land grabbing

In countries around the world, including Canada, corporations, investors, and foreign interests are buying up farmland. On June 7, the NFU released the first report of its kind documenting Canadian developments in a global land grab.

The NFU report gives ten specific examples of agribusiness and investment companies buying Canadian land. It gives details of these companies and their practices and thus illuminates the rapidly accelerating transfer of land ownership from family farmers and local citizens to foreign interests, investors, and corporations.

The report also details the role of Canadian federal and provincial governments in facilitating the farmland buy-up. For example, Crown agency Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is acting as the main financier of one of the country's biggest farmland investment companies—providing multi-million dollar loans to Assiniboia Capital, a company that has already bought up 100,000 acres of farmland.

NFU President Terry Boehm told a well-attended news conference in Saskatoon on June 7: “There have been two primary models of land ownership and food production over the centuries. In one, land is held broadly, owned by farmers and other local citizens. In another, a relatively small number of elites owned the land and those who worked it and grew the food were sharecroppers and serfs. Canada has, until recently, embraced the first model. But a corporate and investor farmland buy-up means that we may be in the opening stages of a rapid move to the latter model. Unless we act, our land may soon be owned by modern-day lords and barons, with disastrous consequences for all Canadians. There can be no Food Sovereignty or democratic control of our food system if national and global elites have snatched up the land on which we grow our food.”

—nfu—

The NFU report, *Losing Our Grip: How a Corporate Farmland Buy-up, Rising Farm Debt, and Agribusiness Financing of Inputs Threaten Family Farms and Food Sovereignty* is available on-line at www.nfu.ca/land_report or by calling (306) 652-9465.

NFU Report also details debt and agribusiness input financing

The NFU's June 7 report also looks at rising farm debt levels and the trend for farmers to get more and more of their input financing from agribusiness companies and input sellers.

The report notes that farm debt stands at \$64 billion—double the level of 11 years ago. The ratio of debt to net income has risen dramatically. In the 1970s, for every dollar of net income farmers earned, they had to carry, on average, \$3.40 in debt. Over the most recent decade, for every dollar of net income farmers earned, they had to carry, on average, \$23.25 in debt—seven times the level of the 1970s. To earn a net income dollar today, farmers must borrow and risk seven times as much debt as they did in the 1970s, and three times as much as in the '80s.

NFU President Terry Boehm commented: “Governments must acknowledge their role in creating the farm debt crisis. Federal and provincial governments have created policies and legislation which allow corporations to externalize costs to farmers. For example, when bad legislation empowers railways to externalize costs, those costs do not disappear—we can locate them today if we search the debt column of the farm financial ledger. Similarly, policies and legislation that empower seed and input companies have the effect of increasing farmers' costs and indebtedness. The farm debt crisis is a reflection and an outgrowth of a farm policy crisis. Governments must immediately deal with both crises.”

The NFU report included several policy recommendations to deal with the debt crisis and corporate and investor land grabbing. The report is available on-line at www.nfu.ca/land_report or by calling (306) 652-9465.



Enviropig™: This little GM piggy will bring down the market

—by Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)



The first genetically modified (GM) food animal could be soon approved for human consumption in Canada. If marketed, the GM pig will create even more hardship for hog farmers as it will undoubtedly start a new crisis of consumer confidence in pork products in Canada, not to mention in our export markets. Canadians have indicated that they don't want more GM foods on their tables and consumers are still asking for mandatory labelling.

The so-called "Enviropig™" was genetically engineered at the University of Guelph to produce less phosphorus in its feces. The transgenic pig, with the help of genetic material from a mouse and E-coli bacteria, produces the enzyme phytase in its salivary glands in order to digest plant phosphorus more efficiently. Environment Canada has just approved the reproduction of the pig in confined facilities and the University of Guelph is now waiting for approval from Health Canada. The University has also asked for approval in the US.

University of Guelph researchers claim their GM pig will reduce feed costs and lessen the environmental and economic problems caused by phosphorus over-production. But farmers already have an apparently cost-neutral technological solution: A phytase supplement in hog feed is currently used by about 70% of hog producers in Quebec, where environmental regulations have forced farmers to cut phosphorous pollution. The use of the feed supplement is also now being adopted in Ontario. According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, use of the supplement with dietary changes can cut phosphorous by up to 50%. (Factsheet, Nutritional Strategies to Decrease Nutrients in Swine Manure.)

A patented transgenic pig will not be cheaper than the existing feed supplement. Experience with GM crops tells us that corporate owners will squeeze farmers' profits through Technology Use Fees or other charges. Enviropig™ looks pricey even without factoring in the cost of a global consumer controversy over GM pork.

Ontario Pork holds the trademark "Enviropig™" and is the only outside private investor. Ontario Pork

has already provided \$1.371 million for the development of Enviropig™ and in 2007 committed further funding for "the safety testing leading to eventual commercialization." Do Ontario farmers know that their check-off funds are being used to fund this GM pig? Is this what Ontario hog farmers want? What do other provincial hog marketing associations think about Enviropig?

In March, NFU members in Ontario passed a resolution to oppose the commercial production of Enviropig and to request that Ontario Pork and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture withdraw support for Enviropig and that U of Guelph shut down the project immediately. The NFU also resolved to "request that these financial resources be redirected to research that fits the real needs of hog producers in Ontario and Canada."

The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), of which the NFU is a founding member, has just launched its first action to stop Enviropig™. CBAN is encouraging people to write to the Minister of Health and ask her to ensure that Enviropig™ is never approved for human consumption.

The NFU has developed solutions to the farm income crisis that include hog producers. Together we hope this campaign will open the debate to develop sensible solutions to the ailing hog industry and for all farm sectors.

Please share your experience and thoughts: contact Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network 613 234 1273 ext 6.

For more information on Enviropig™ and the campaign, go to www.cban.ca/enviropig. You can also see the University of Guelph Enviropig page at www.uoguelph.ca/enviropig.

—nfu—



CETA/UPOV steamroller set to crush farmers

—by Terry Boehm, NFU President

Canada and the European Union (EU) are negotiating a new “free trade” agreement, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

This Agreement with the EU is no small matter for farmers. The CETA, if implemented, will, as much as the NAFTA or WTO, transform Canadian agriculture and farms. And not for the better. The CETA will further intensify Canada’s farm income crisis.

The CETA would mean many changes, but none would be more negative or sweeping than its effect to extinguish farmers’ rights to save and re-use seeds. Worse, the Agreement would give farm-crushing enforcement powers to any corporation that asserted a farmer had infringed the company’s intellectual property rights (IPRs).

The CETA would require Canada to implement the “UPOV ’91” version of Plant Breeders’ Rights (PBR). That version of UPOV (the International Convention for the Protection of New Plant Varieties) would virtually eliminate farmers’ rights to save, reuse, and sell seed. (Intellectual Property chapter, page 249.)

How would UPOV ’91 do this? One way is to give PBR holders control over who can “condition” seed (they can ban seed cleaning by non-authorized persons) and who could stock the seed (i.e. storage and binning). UPOV ’91 would also give the PBR holder the power to collect royalties at any point in the food chain—so-called “cascade rights.” Cascade rights mean that if seed companies neglect to collect royalties from farmers, companies can collect those royalties down-stream, from grain companies or processors. Such provisions will create a chill among grain handlers and processors, leading to pressure on farmers to use more purchased seed.

Today, Canada’s PBR legislation is based on UPOV ’78. That standard is adequate for full compliance with all international obligations, including the WTO’s TRIPs agreement (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights). There is no reason Canada needs to implement UPOV ’91. UPOV ’78 gives farmers latitude to save, reuse, and sell seeds. UPOV ’91 does not, because the so-called “farmers privilege” in UPOV ’91 is

trumped by other provisions. The inclusion of UPOV ’91 in the CETA is unnecessary, and harmful to farmers. It is one poison pill among many contained in the CETA.

Further, the CETA goes beyond even the draconian powers of UPOV ’91 and includes additional Intellectual Property “protections” that will give seed companies the power to seize crops, farms, and seeding and harvest equipment, and freeze bank accounts if companies suspect infringement by a farmer. CETA’s IPR Chapter (Article 19, Paragraph 3, page 252.) states: “In the case of infringement committed on a commercial scale . . . the judicial authorities may order the precautionary seizure of the movable and immovable property of the alleged infringer, including blocking his/her bank accounts and other assets.” Article 23 goes on to state that an infringer may be required to publicize the decision, including prominent advertising of the decision at the infringer’s expense. Thus, biotech, pharmaceutical, pesticide, seed, and grain companies will gain powerful tools to force farmers to buy seeds at high prices on company terms, because even being *accused* of infringement could destroy a farmer. With powers such as those contained in CETA/UPOV, seed companies will gain significant power over who farms and how.

With regard to farm support programs, the CETA states: “The Parties agree to co-operate in WTO agriculture negotiations in order to achieve a substantial reduction of production and trade distorting domestic support” (Article 10, Paragraph 6, page 20). This means that Canadian farm support programs will be cut. Further, programs such as supply management—which allow dairy, poultry, and egg producers to earn a decent living (in sharp contrast to the grain, cattle, and hog sectors)—will come under attack. There is also a proposal to add a CETA chapter on State Trading Enterprises, which will undoubtedly take aim at the Canadian Wheat

(continued on page 19...)



(CEDA/UPOV, from page 18)

Board. The EU has not masked its hostility to this farmer-controlled marketer. Nor has the Canadian government. Transnational grain companies will be the beneficiaries of this agreement; farmers will be the losers.

Finally food safety will suffer under the CETA, which states: "official certificates or attestations shall be accepted without regular audit/inspection of the exporting parties' certification system, unless non compliance has been notified or at the start of a new trade."

The costs are high. But what of the benefits? Canadian farmers who produce GM crops are going to be severely disappointed if they think that European markets will open up for their crops as a result of the CETA, because the Agreement

says all European GM regulations are exempted from its provisions (Article 3, Appendix 1b, page 50). Cattle producers have nothing to gain. The WTO has already ruled Europe's ban on Canadian beef illegal; but the EU accepted the ruling and chose to pay the fine rather than accept our meat. As a "market access agreement," the CETA fails miserably.

The CETA's intent and effect is to erode food safety, end supports to farmers, and make sure intellectual property rights' holders have powerful tools to control our food system, via control of seeds and other technologies. The wealth that companies will be able to extract from farmers and other citizens is enormous. The CETA/UPOV agreement represents a massive transfer of power and wealth, and thus, it must not be allowed. The public interest is clearly absent in spirit and letter of this Agreement. There is no reason we should sign it, ample reason we should reject it. —nfu—

(Save Our Prison Farms, from page 14)

Institution to watch for cattle trucks. The next day, dozens of us went to Ottawa to join First Nations peoples and federal opposition MPs in a demonstration on Parliament Hill.

By the time you are reading this report, the Save Our Prison Farms campaign may still be struggling to get the federal government to reverse its decision. Or

maybe we will have won some concessions or even the whole cause.

Whatever happens, when the next federal election is held, we will be at every possible meeting in this area, reminding everyone which party decided to close the prison farms, and then didn't listen and didn't respond to the majority of local people who oppose that decision.

See www.saveourprisonfarms.ca for more information. —nfu—

The NFU is on Twitter!

Be sure to check out the NFU webpage to follow the 'NFUcanada' tweets regarding our organization's activities and information on issues of interest to us. Twitter is a

social media tool that allows individuals and organizations to build networks, stay updated regarding each other's activities and concerns, and to get their message out. The best part about Twitter is that it's easy to use and only requires statements that are one or two lines long. Therefore, posting updates - known as "tweets" - is not too demanding, a characteristic that keeps people engaged. Is there a person or organization whose activities you would like to follow? Chances are they are posting regular updates on Twitter. Consider opening a Twitter account of your own in order to follow them and to post updates of your own. Also, don't forget to tell people that the NFU is on Twitter and encourage them to join our network. The bigger our network, the more we are able to spread our message.



Supporting a True Agricultural Revolution

This article, by Hans Herren, originally appeared in the May 12 issue of Embassy, a Canadian foreign policy newsweekly. Herren was co-chair of the International Assessment on Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD), a process that included hundreds of the world's top agricultural scientists and analysts. He is a 1995 World Food Prize laureate, and currently president of the Millennium Institute.

It is heartening that the international community is finally paying attention to small farmers—the people who produce the majority of the world's food, safeguard our ecosystems, yet are the majority of the world's poor. Everybody agrees that if we want to address the food crisis, we need to invest in small-holder agriculture. Yet what kind of help do these farmers need?

Most of the buzz these days is around a “Green Revolution” for Africa, using essentially the same thinking we saw for Asia three decades ago. The Green Revolution in Asia was premised on a single dimension: increasing agricultural yields through modern technology to boost food production and feed people. And it was indeed successful.

Yet we now know that this partial success came at a great cost: Badly depleted soils and water supplies, lost crop diversity, poisoned ecosystems and farmers becoming indebted from the high costs of inputs increased inequity and accelerated rural-tourban migration. In addition, we weren't calculating the carbon footprint of high-input agriculture, but today we know that this industrial form of agriculture is responsible for up to 14 per cent of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions—not counting the deforestation that adds another 18 per cent.

Despite a series of high-level food summits since 2008, the hunger/poverty nexus remains more serious than ever. The question we keep hearing today is how will the world increase food production by 70

percent to meet rising food demands and feed more than a billion hungry people?

But a growing consensus is asking whether this is the right question. From 2004 to 2008, 400 of the world's top agricultural scientists, through the International Assessment on Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), asked a different question: How do we rethink our global food system so that it can feed people, create healthy communities and economies, and sustain the planet?

The IAASTD, which I co-chaired, asked a complex question because we don't live in a one-dimensional world. Food, climate and economic problems are all related. And, if we looked simply at food production, that would be business as usual. The global experience with food, finance and economics tells us that business as usual is not an option.

So what should we learn from the IAASTD?

We reached the conclusion that to achieve food security we must take into account the multi-functionality of agriculture. In other words, the link between farming and a wide range of other development sectors.

Beyond food production, we need to invest in technologies that blend farmer knowledge and innovation with formal science. We need to support an agriculture that fosters rural economies; that restores, not erodes, biological diversity and soil fertility; and builds resilient food systems that can withstand shocks like climate change.

Of course, no discussion on ending hunger is complete without asking bigger questions about how our food system is organized. We could significantly reduce hunger by enacting policies and practices that ensure equitable access to food, reduce food waste and post-

(continued on page 22...)



Bill C-27: Taking aim at the CWB and farmer democracy

—by Stewart Wells, NFU former-President

In May, the federal government introduced legislation intending to change the voting rules in future elections for the Board of Directors of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). The CWB markets about \$6 Billion dollars worth of grain on behalf of western farmers, and in 1998 control of the CWB was handed over to farmers it serves. Since 2006, the Conservative government has been systematically working to wrest control of the CWB away from farmers.

The new legislation (Bill C-27) is a significant departure from existing CWB voting rules. C-27's new rules would impose arbitrary production minimums on voting criteria instead of treating farmers equally. The equivalent change to Canada's general elections would be to say that if you earn more than \$40,000 per year you can vote, but if you earn less than \$40,000 you can't.

C-27 goes even further, however, and attempts to do two things at the same time: 1. take smaller producers off of the voters' list (even if they market their grain through the CWB and thereby help pay the costs of running the CWB), and 2. add other larger producers to the voters' list (even if they do not deliver any grain to the CWB and, therefore, do not pay any of the costs associated with marketing or the election process).

A similar minimum-tonnage production requirement is not employed by western commodity organizations such as the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers or the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association. These other organizations don't ask how much you grow, and they don't allow farmers to vote unless they are selling their kind of grain into the system; only canola growers vote in canola organization elections, only pulse growers vote in pulse grower elections, and so on.

Bill C-27 must be seen in the context of a government action plan to destroy the CWB. Other actions already taken by the government against western farmers include: 1. Firing the CWB CEO without cause in 2006 and then forcing farmers to pay the costs of the resulting severance package; 2. Muzzling the CWB with

a gag order, notwithstanding the fact that the Board is controlled by 10 elected farmers (of a total Board of 15); 3. Stacking the Board of Directors in the government's favour by making partisan appointments to the Board; 4. Issuing Ministerial letters of instruction to over-ride the CWB Act and change voting rules; 5. Passing a Cabinet Order designed to seriously weaken the CWB's marketing advantages (this order was ruled illegal and over-turned by the Federal Court); 6. Removing spending limits for third parties during elections, but restricting the actual farmer candidates spending to just \$15,000; and 7. Using taxpayer money—via western Conservative MPs—to campaign on behalf of anti-CWB candidates during the 2008 elections. (Offending MPs then broke the election rules by refusing to register as third party interveners and refusing to reveal how much money they spent.)

Bill C-27 is simply another government assault on farmers and the CWB, with a goal of destroying the fairness and equity upon which the CWB is based. The best and only democratic option for compiling the CWB voters' list is "user pay—user vote." In other words, only producers—large and small—who market wheat and barley through the CWB, and thereby pay its costs, should be eligible to vote.

The government did not bring C-27 forward for 2nd Reading in the House of Commons before their summer break. I encourage all NFU members to register their opposition to C-27 before the fall sitting of Parliament.

—nfu—



(*Supporting a True Agricultural Revolution*, from page 20)

harvest losses, build vibrant local markets, and redirect the land and resources increasingly being used to feed cars, animals and industrial processes, to nourish humans. All this while supporting small holder farmers so they can maintain ownership of their own productive resources and be the stewards of the land that will sustain the generations to come.

The evidence in support of low input, ecological or “conservation” agriculture is undeniable, from the IAASTD to the Union of Concerned Scientists to a recent UNCTAD report that states: “Organic agriculture can be more conducive to food security in Africa than most conventional production systems, and is more likely to be sustainable in the long term.” And evidence that sustainable, ecologically based agriculture can provide the nutrition and income to the billion plus poor and hungry of today, and the 2 billion newcomers by 2050, is now well proven.

Here lies a great opportunity for Canada to affect a different kind of revolution. Canada’s recently released Food Security Strategy contains some heartening elements. It states that the current agricultural paradigm is not sustainable, and that we need to look beyond food production in order to affect real transformation in the food system. So the best thing Canada could do is to focus its modest aid resources in the areas that we know will have the greatest long-term impact: ecological, organic and conservation agriculture, an agriculture that is in harmony with its environment, the people that practice it and those who enjoy its multiple benefits.

What we need more than another Green Revolution is an agro-ecological evolution.

—nfu—

We Remember ...

MARGARET HAYWARD



MARGARET LETTIE HAYWARD was born in Sifton Municipality on September 10, 1919. Margaret worked in Sudbury where she met and married Kenneth Roy Daniel Hayward on January 26, 1941. In 1947, Margaret and Ken moved back to Sinclair where they farmed and raised their three children, Darlene, Bryan and Jacie. When Kenneth passed on in 1978, Margaret continued the farming operation. The farm is a testament to their love of making new life year after year.

In 2007 Margaret received the Grassroots Leadership Citation Award for her work as a canvasser, convention delegate, Women’s District Director and Women’s Advisory Committee member. As of 2010, Margaret was a member of the National Farmers Union for 41 years.

Margaret was a provincial government appointee to the Manitoba Farm Machinery Board in the 1980s. Margaret has been an active community member of several groups including the United Church Women, The Ladies Auxillary, the Melita Rural Life Support Group and most recently the Reston Seniors Curling Club, the Reston Drop-In Centre and the South West Dance Club.

Margaret kept a clear connection with her ever-growing family of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Margaret’s Philosophy on Life and Farming

“For me, it’s never really been just about the money. There’s always something different going on, we’re always building something, there’s always something to look forward to. It’s a way of life I love and I can’t imagine doing anything else, and certainly not retiring! When people retire, if they haven’t got hobbies, or a social life to keep them active, they just sit down and deteriorate. You have to keep your mind active and you need a purpose in life.”

(Excerpt from “Eighty-six and still farming” by Donna Anderson, Agriculture Today March 25, 2006).

“The goal, I guess, is just to live a good life. To have enough money to pay the bills and to have a purpose, to leave something behind for my family.”

(Excerpt from “Widow remains free to do what she wants” by Eliza Barlow, The Brandon Sun, August 7, 2003).

(Region 3 Report, from page 9)

months in office meeting with many members, politicians, farm groups, government agencies, and our Regional Council in an effort to help build a stronger organization from the ground up.

I am a coordinator who is very much on the ground and accessible to our membership in any way that can be a benefit to the greater farming community. Yes, there are many issues and many that I will never get a chance to work on, as there are just far too many and never enough time to do

everything. But I will endeavor to do my best and serve this organization to the best of my capacity.

I always look forward to working with our membership and can be reached by email at coordinator@nfuontario.ca.

Let us build together a strong and prosperous farming community.

In Union, Sean McGivern

(Region 5 Report, from page 9)

situation at Winnipeg Cereal Research Lab.? It needs funding from the public because the public is a beneficiary of food security.

Let's measure the speed that Stockwell Day took to cut the Assistant Grain Commissioners' jobs—nano seconds. ACGC act in farmers' interests to keep the CGC following the Act and checking on bonding or grading or contracts.

It is too bad that the Prison Farm in Manitoba is now closed. It seems that all accountability from this federal government is at a low ebb.

The Federal Government is doing Vision 2020 Agriculture consultations with each province based upon their documented assessment of the current state of farming. Our representative will be one voice among many traders, processors, and retailers who will want their share of the future.

Please check out www.cbc.ca/ideas and listen to pod cast 'Have Your Meat and Eat It Too', May 17, 24, 31, 2010. Cheap, subsidized US corn and soy keep mega feedlots and hog barns in business and this may be why the WTO and NAFTA have been ineffective at increasing farm gate prices. Programs also mention challenges that we have with super bacteria.

The Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council is a fund of money available by application and overseen by an elected board of directors. Our Manitoba NFU Women's Advisory representative Kate Storey served on this board and wished to continue. We were not successful in re-electing her

to the board. We encourage MRAC to see the need to research super bacteria, support local food processors, abattoirs, farmers' markets, organic production, and crop research to build a local demand for local food. According to their keynote speaker, GMO is the only answer even if it depends on expensive oil and inputs.

On July 15, 2010, at Portage la Prairie, Jake Schulz will be inducted posthumously to the Manitoba Agriculture Hall of Fame.

We express condolences to the Hayward family on the death of Margaret, mother, farmer, community member, and NFU member of Sinclair, Manitoba.

On Saturday, July 24, 2010, Region 5 will be holding their Regional Convention from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the Seniors' Drop-In Centre at Onanole, Manitoba. Please plan to attend. There will be a potluck barbeque supper to follow (please bring cutlery and lawn chairs). Hon. Stan Struthers, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, is confirmed to speak. We will also have reports, elections, and a Canadian Wheat Board update. This year we have at least one youth who is interested in becoming the Manitoba NFU Youth Advisory Committee representative.

The farmers refrain... We wish for the ideal weather conditions but must make use of whatever Mother Nature sends to us.

In Union, Ian Robson



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

Region 3: RR#2, Godfrey, ON K0H 1T0 Ph: 888-273-5545 (in Ont.) or (613) 273-5545 (outside Ont.)

Region 5: Newdale Shopping Centre, 2999B Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2H5 Ph: (204) 261-0500

Region 6: 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 Ph: (306) 652-9465

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Youth Advisory Committee: *Erin Fyfe*, Breadalbane, PE; *Caitlin Hall*, Palmerston, ON; *Krysta Chickak*, Smoky Lake, AB; *Lara Smith*, Rycroft, AB.



NFU 41ST Annual Convention



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