

THE  
**union farmer**

QUARTERLY

FALL 2011



Vol. 17 Issue 3



*Photo: NFU members join a pro-Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) single desk rally prior to a public meeting organized by the CWB's farmer-elected directors in Camrose, Alberta on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The standing-room only crowd in attendance was overwhelmingly pro-CWB.*

*- Photo by Kevin Wipf*

## Message from the Editor...



Kevin Wipf

Previously in this space I wrote how 2011 is the year of elections. There was the federal election, there are numerous provincial elections, and even a few leadership contests. It is a year when Canadians will have plenty of opportunity to express their will and shape their political system. In the future, historians may well point to 2011 as a truly unique year in Canadian history.

It must be noted though, that there is one election that hasn't been allowed to take place. There is one election that is actually being denied to those to whom it was promised. By law, no grain can be removed from the Canadian Wheat Board's (CWB) single desk without a farmer vote. Soon after his Conservative Party won a majority government in the federal election on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz declared that the federal government would introduce legislation in the fall to eliminate the CWB's single desk. He then marched into the CWB head office in Winnipeg for the first time since becoming Minister of Agriculture in 2007, and met for a mere twenty minutes with farmer elected CWB chair Allan Oberg and CEO Ian White to tell them in no uncertain terms, that the single desk was being eliminated and that it was up to them to come up with a solution.

Ritz has continued to act with such bravado ever since. When the farmer elected directors of the CWB decided to hold their own plebiscite to ask farmers where they stood on the question of maintaining the single desk, Ritz did his best to discourage farmers from participating and declared that he would not be recognize it. It is very troubling that a government, one that claims it is prepared to "govern for all Canadians," would not be interested in what farmers think about their plan. Clearly something is amiss.

In Canada, we pride ourselves on our democratic institutions. Ours is a land where different opinions can be expressed, and where citizens elect their governments. Western wheat and barley farmers pay for the operations of the CWB, and elect the directors to make decisions about how it should function on their behalf. Prairie wheat and barley farmers have never elected less than eight out of ten pro-single desk supporters as CWB directors. In early September a strong majority of farmers voted in favour of maintaining the single desk in the CWB's plebiscite, which it decided to hold when Ritz refused to do so himself. That this government is so willing to blatantly ignore the wishes of farmers, should serve as a warning to us all. What is next? Where will this government next set its sights? These questions are worth pondering. While the NFU joins its allies in defending the CWB, we must also be cognizant of the potential battles to come.

*In Solidarity, Kevin Wipf*

# union farmer quarterly

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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

**H**arvest is now underway and I hope it is fruitful for all of us. This summer I had the pleasure of visiting and meeting many Ontario National Farmers Union members while I was speaking in Ontario on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

This summer we have also had to deal with the federal government's announcement that they will end the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) in less than a year. We have been organizing in the West to counter the government's action. We participated in the CWB Director's meetings with farmers where the Chair and Directors have laid out clearly the fact that there is no so-called "dual market," and that once the CWB's single desk marketing advantage is destroyed there is no Wheat Board.

The ability to market wheat and barley through a single desk is what creates the CWB's advantage. The CWB has essentially no assets as it has not been allowed to own grain elevators or port terminals. One of the key questions asked by Allen Oberg, farmer-elected chair of the CWB, at the summer meetings was: "What would a private entity pay for the exclusive marketing rights to all of western Canadian wheat and barley?" This is the obvious advantage farmers now have as a consequence of the CWB with its single desk. However, Gerry Ritz is prepared to give this away to the largest grain companies in the world at the expense of the farmers and all Canadians who will lose the extra revenue the CWB returns every year. The premiums the CWB obtains for farmers have been proven in peer-reviewed academic studies time and again. It also brings equity into the business of grain marketing for farmers.

The CWB does not cost governments anything – it simply needs legislation to maintain the single desk structure.

What is critically important about this whole issue – not just regionally but nationally – is what kind of ability remains at the end of the day for farmers to organize and run institutions to bring them some economic justice and power in a world where other players are very large, organized, consolidated and wholly prepared to exploit farmers as far as they can?

The exploitation that took place 125 years ago by grain traders and others prompted farmers to form organizations, including the NFU's forerunners, to counter this economic injustice. We deal with near monopoly railways, grain companies, dairy processors, packing plants and potato processors on an ongoing basis. Exploitation does and will take place without legislation and organization to balance the power relationships.

Let us make no mistake – the dismantling of the CWB is about power and the ability of corporations to use that power to maximize not just reasonable profits, but extraction, from our farmers. We worked long and hard to get first the Manitoba Grain Act and then the Canada Grain Act to regulate grain inspection, grading and weighing. We created the Canadian Grain Commission with the mandate to "act in the grain producers interest" to make sure that an independent body was available to rule when issues of grain grades came up between farmers and grain companies. We created licensing and bonding requirements for grain companies to make sure that farmers got paid for their grain and contracts were honoured.

The CWB is a key piece of this system. It did not grow out of a vacuum but represents real solutions to real problems. Yet we now have a government that is willing to trample democracy in order to turn the clock back 100 years by eliminating the ability of farmers to organize their affairs to their advantage. The government has placed gag orders on the CWB for years to prevent it from talking about the advantages it brings to farmers. The government refuses to allow farmers to vote on whether or not they want the CWB to continue as their marketing agency.

In June 2008 our Prime Minister threatened that he would walk over anyone who got in the way of ending the CWB. This is why we cannot let the CWB go down, as all other mechanisms for farmer advantage and ordinary citizen rights are under attack in the process. What is next?

*Terry Boehm, President*



# A message from the...



## Women's President

— by Joan Brady

### Celebrating the Past for a Vibrant Future:

#### *Working for Farm Families, NFU Milestones Memories and More*

In 2010, the National Farmers Union (NFU) Women's Advisory produced a calendar to celebrate the role of women on the farm. It featured women members from across the country at work on the farm or in attendance at various events. It also outlined the principles of food sovereignty and included a number of recipes for simple healthy food. The calendar project had a dual purpose as a fundraiser for the NFU Women's Advisory and a way to raise the profile of the NFU in a positive way.

The second version of the NFU Women's Advisory sponsored calendar is underway. Slated for completion by the end of September – it will be available for order/distribution at that time. This year the calendar will feature various NFU campaigns and programs that have been successful in the past. The calendar and its featured topics are very much a tribute to the perseverance and dedication of NFU members both past and present.

One page celebrates the New Brunswick PVYn, 20 year, hard won court victory. In 2008, the New Brunswick Court of Appeal ruled the federal government negotiate a fair settlement for the 180 farmers, who suffered financial, emotional and personal loss, due to the federal

government's mishandling of the potato disease PVYn in the early 1980's. Another celebrates the efforts behind the rBST ban that ensures that the Canadian milk supply does not contain the controversial hormone. A more recent campaign that is profiled was the Prison Farm campaign where efforts continue to communicate concerns, protect an existing abattoir and salvage a portion of the award-winning prison dairy herd.

It is the Women's Advisory's hope that you will be encouraged and empowered by the stories outlined in the calendar. We hope that you will purchase calendars for your family and to give to others to share with them the NFU story. The calendars make a great promotional gift and can be used to give to speakers, local politicians or anyone else that may benefit from an introduction to the NFU, and a better understanding of the work we do for farm families.

*In Union,*

*Joan Brady, Women's President*

*(continued on page 5...)*



# To Get Your 2012 NFU Calendar

**Calendars will be available at the National Convention or from your regional Women's Advisor. Please contact them directly:**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Region 1 (Maritimes):</b>        | <b>Karen Fyfe (902)886-2993</b>         |
| <b>Region 3 (Ontario):</b>          | <b>Linda Laeppele (519)634-1033</b>     |
| <b>Region 5 (Manitoba):</b>         | <b>Kate Storey (204) 546-2099</b>       |
| <b>Region 6 (Saskatchewan):</b>     | <b>Marcella Pedersen (306) 398-2795</b> |
| <b>Region 7 (Alberta):</b>          | <b>Joyce Ollikka (780) 576-2239</b>     |
| <b>Women's President (Ontario):</b> | <b>Joan Brady (519) 237-3163</b>        |



**CELEBRATING THE PAST -  
FOR A VIBRANT FUTURE**

WORKING FOR FARM FAMILIES - NFU MILESTONES, MEMORIES & MORE!



# A message from the...



## Youth President

— Cammie Harbottle

This, more than any other I've experienced, has been a season of solidarity amongst farmers on the East coast. The extremely cool and wet weather has meant significant crop losses and low yields for fruit, vegetable, potato, and grain farmers alike. It has also meant major challenges for livestock producers with poor pastures and few windows for making hay.

Before becoming a member of the National Farmers Union (NFU), I was alone in my fields facing a crazy climate and even crazier economics. But now I am part of a network that not only shares these challenges but is tackling them head on, often in solidarity with farmers around the world. I have found it incredibly inspiring to meet and learn from people who have been working on farming issues and standing up for farmers like me for decades, making the vision of a socially and environmentally responsible, sustainable and resilient local food system here in Canada, a reality. I have seldom encountered the conviction, dedication, and commitment that I have found in the NFU. Each year I look forward to the national convention to see the old faces and meet many new, to be inspired and re-energized for another season of farming. By developing these personal relationships we continue to build the foundation of this great organization.

### National Convention 2011:

This year's convention, titled *For the Love of the Land*, will be here before we know it! It is being held November 24-26, at the Four Points by Sheraton, London, Ontario.

The national convention is one of only two chances that the youth get to meet face to face and is a great time to reconnect with old faces and meet new young farmers from across the country. We will be holding a youth caucus and have time to get together on a less formal basis. There are many exciting issues on the table for this year's caucus

meeting including: a follow up from our March 2011 NFU Youth Meeting in BC, the 'New Farmers Initiative', the 'Young Agrarians' and partnerships with others out west, the 2012 La Via Campesina youth camp, international opportunities for NFU youth, and a look forward to the year to come. It is a great time to build solidarity and networks amongst all of us young farmers and get excited about 2012!

If you have any thoughts or ideas on what you would like to be included on the agenda for the youth caucus meeting or otherwise, please be in touch with me, Cammie, at: [cammie@waldegrave.org](mailto:cammie@waldegrave.org). We would love to have your input and hope to see you there!

### Convention Bursaries Available:

Once again, there will be bursaries available to NFU youth to help cover the costs of attending the convention. There will be four bursaries of \$250.00 available to any youth member from across the country. If you are interested in applying, please email me at: [cammie@waldegrave.org](mailto:cammie@waldegrave.org) for more information or an application form. **The deadline for applications is October 23.** The youth are the future of the NFU so please encourage any young members to get in touch and come out.

*In Union, Cammie Harbottle*

### YOUTH SILENT AUCTION

Again this year there will be a silent auction held throughout the convention as a fun way to raise funds for the NFU Youth programming. The silent auction is member driven so if you have any items, hand made or otherwise, that you can donate to the auction we encourage you to bring them to convention. Last year, the generosity of members went toward the core funding of our annual youth gathering, which was a great success! Thank you for your continued support.



# Regional Reports



## REGION

### ONE (PEI)



- by Randall Affleck

#### Regional Convention

Region 1 convention was held at Cornwall, Prince

Edward Island this year on one of the first sunny hay days of the July and August. There were presentations by the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission (IRAC) on the Lands Protection Act; Growing Forward by the Manager of the Agricultural Insurance Corporation on PEI; the Peoples Food Policy by Jean-Eudes Chiasson; National Farmers Union (NFU) Youth by Megan MacCallum; Temporary Foreign Workers by Jose Baker.

A full slate of officers was elected: National board members Betty Brown and Randall Affleck; Women's Advisory, Marion Drummond; Youth Advisory, Farrah Carter; and International Program Committee representative, Reg Phelan.

#### Snow Load Roof Damage

District 1 members have been lobbying the Province and Federal governments for compensation for snow load roof damage which occurred last winter. Inquires through the AgriRecovery office in Ottawa have resulted in a narrative that if affected farmers could have purchased insurance coverage for snow load then the AgriRecovery program does not apply. The primary insurance company for farms on PEI does not offer snow load as an insured peril, but it can be insured by others at a very high premium apparently. The District has been collecting pictures of the damaged buildings and is meeting with Provincial officials to resolve this issue.

#### Lands Protection Act Presentation

IRAC Commission Chair Maurice Rodgerson and Irene Callaghan Director of Land with the Commission presented to NFU Regional Convention on the Lands Protection Act. Eighty percent (80%) of Island land is privately owned.

The LPA permits individual ownership up to 1000 acres, farm corporate ownership up to 3000 acres and limits on non-resident ownership.

Disclosure statements must be completed within 75% of the land ownership limits. In 2010 there were 146 statements filed and this has been fairly consistent for the last decade.

Applications to exempt environmentally sensitive lands from the land ownership limits were permitted this past year. Only about 40 applications for 6,100 acres have been filed, of which 4,000 acres was forested. Interestingly, the Mr. Rodgerson stated that most of the 40 applicants were not required to file a disclosure statement and so were not limited in farmable land because of the limits.

Mineral rights are not regulated by IRAC. In fact the Government of PEI has recently granted 440,000 acres of mineral rights to a shale gas fracking company.

The revamped Provincial Nominee Program where foreign investors can gain citizenship by investing as owners in Island businesses (including farms) will need to be investigated by IRAC as to how it applies to land ownership rules under this program.

The NFU were instrumental in lobbying for the LPA in 1982.

#### Growing Forward Presentation

Dave Aiton, Manger of the PEI Agriculture Insurance Corporation presented to the NFU Regional Convention a history of the Growing Forward program on PEI and some updates on the Growing Forward 2 negotiations.

Agri-Invest on PEI currently have account balances of \$8.85 million dollars. When the NISA program was cancelled there were \$50 million in accounts.

The Agri-Stability program had 508 applications and paid out \$8.298 million in 2009. The number of farms enrolled in the program continues to decline.

Agri-Insurance insured 270,990 acres of crops this season; wheat 18,000 ac, soybeans 48,614 ac, barley 43,732, potato acreage by variety 44,000 ac,

*(continued on bottom of page 7...)*



# ONE (New Brunswick)

## REGION



- by Betty Brown

Summer is almost over and there is still a lot of work to be done. In my area of New Brunswick we had a late, cool spring for planting. In June we got seven inches of rain. We managed to get the first cut of new seeded cut and wrapped by middle of July, but are still trying to get the dry hay in and the second cut of new seeded is ready to cut. With so much rain blight has been reported in many potato fields and in tomato plants. Grain harvest has begun and farmers are experiencing problems with uneven ripening in many fields along with low yields.

2011 marks the end of a tradition decades old in Carleton County, N.B., and the annual potato school break. Students normally started school around August 20<sup>th</sup> in Carleton County and had 2 – 3 weeks off to work in the potato harvest. Farmers now use machines instead of people to pick potatoes by hand so the need for a large number of workers declined. For Carleton North High and the five nearby k-8 schools, the last remaining schools to observe this tradition, this is the last year for the

potato break. For many students this is the opportunity to earn extra money for college. It is also a great chance to learn about agriculture. Next year farmers will be forced to bring in more outside farm labourers and truck drivers for the harvest.

Again, this spring more farmers gave up or were forced out of beef, dairy, hog, and potato farming. Word of the disappearing number of farms is finally reaching consumers. I have had several conversations with customers at the local farm market and their question has been, “where are we going to get food to eat”?

National Farmers Union (NFU) in NB established The David Frost Memorial Scholarship with some of the funds received from the PVYn settlement and two young men attending Nova Scotia Agricultural College in September are the 2011 recipients.

We hired a summer student for member outreach, growth and promotion of buy local under the SEED grant.

Five members from NFU in NB traveled to PEI for Region 1 Convention August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Hurricane season is upon us and the east coast will probably get lots of rain just in time for the harvest season. Best of luck harvesting.

*In Union, Betty Brown*

*(Region 1 PEI, from page 6)*

potato acreage under whole farm 14,830 ac and potato seed 7,638 ac.

Agri-Recovery program paid out to \$10. 788 million under the potato assistance program for water damage in 2009.

The Advance Payment program made advances to 247 farms for \$37.7 million. Interest paid by governments on the first \$100,000 advance was \$303,504.

Growing Forward II discussions are leading to a less targeted program providing essentially disaster coverage with more private sector insurance and the elimination of the Agri-Recovery program.

### Temporary Foreign Workers

Josie Baker presented to the NFU Regional Convention on the beginning of a project she is working on a Temporary Foreign Work project through Cooper Institute.

There are currently 280,000 temporary foreign workers in Canada. In 2009 there were about 600 TFW on PEI but are working toward a goal of 5,000 by 2015.

Workers include a Seasonal Agricultural Workers program, Low Skilled Workers program and a program for truck drivers. Mexican farm workers can work in Canada for up to 8 months. Russian workers are at many fish plants on the Island.

A real weakness in the programs are that workers and their families cannot apply for citizenship status and do not have relationships with the communities they work in. It is a difficult program to regulate and the Labour Relations board only inspects work places based on complaints. Not surprisingly, workers who complain recently regarding a fish plant were fired and kicked out of their housing.

*In Union, Randall Affleck*



## REGION

**THREE (Ontario)**

- by Joe Dama (photo)  
and Ann Slater

**Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario:** This report, published in May, has become a valuable tool for discussions with politicians and other organizations working on food and farm issues in Ontario. It illustrates the current and emerging situation of Ontario farms and farmers by way of a series of graphs accompanied by brief explanations. Particularly striking are the charts showing how government program payments have shifted dramatically towards the biggest farms over the last 16 years. The report was written by our Policy and Research Director, Cathy Holtslander.

**Stakeholders Meeting with Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Carol Mitchell:** On June 22, Regional Coordinator, Joe Dama attended a stakeholders meeting with the Ontario Ag Minister. Backed by the report mentioned above, he was able to reiterate the NFU's position on the need for caps on all government programs, including Business Risk Management programs. Other issues he brought forward included the need to re-orient our ag policy from export first to domestic first, the impact CETA will have on the growing push for schools, universities, hospitals and the provincial government to implement local food purchasing policies, and the need for adequate 'Product of Canada' labelling of food.

**Risk Management Program:** In August and September, OMAFRA is holding information sessions on the new Ontario Risk Management Program for non-supply managed commodities. The program is supposed to work like an insurance program, with stable price support based on cost of production. As NFU members get out to the information sessions, we will be able to get a better idea of whether or not this program is likely to benefit family farms and whether or not OMAFRA has a good handle on the cost of production for various commodities.

**Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA):** A hot topic in Ontario over the

summer has been the right of OSPCA inspectors to come onto farms without a warrant and make judgment calls on the health of animals, without a full understanding of normal farm practices. Renfrew local president, Dave McKay, has taken the lead on this issue on behalf of the NFU, with a letter to the Ontario Farmer and to provincial politicians. Prior to May, 2009, the OSPCA was required to have a representative of a farm organization accompany it to farms. Dave is calling for the new Bill 50 to be revoked, and to once again make it mandatory that one or two independent farmers accompany OSPCA officers investigating complaints on farms.

**Mega Quarry in Melancthon Township:** The Highlands Companies, backed by a Boston-based hedge fund, the Baupost Group, started buying thousands of acres of prime potato growing land in Dufferin County in 2006. At the time, they said they were planning to become the largest potato farm in Ontario. They have now filed an application to develop a limestone quarry on 2,135 acres. The opposition to this mega quarry is growing in both rural and urban areas. With the Melancthon quarry as a backdrop, Region 3 has been able to draw attention to both the need to protect prime farmland from development and the implications of allowing foreign investment companies to buy up large tracts of our farmland.

**Other Local Activities:** Two locals – 316 (Kingston area) and 340 (Waterloo/Wellington area) participated in a tour of Ontario by German farmer and energy co-op leader, Hans-Detloff Feddersen in late June. Timed to coincide with the release of a report on Harvesting Clean Energy on Ontario Farms, the tour was organized by the Climate Action Network and told the story of the development of citizen-owned wind and solar co-ops in Germany.

Members of Local 316 continue to be active in the Save Our Prison Farms campaign in the Kingston region. Supporters have been holding a vigil outside the prison every Monday evening for a year as a reminder that closing the prison farm program was wrong. Prison farm supporters continue to lobby the government to restore the prison farm program, as valuable employment training and rehabilitation for inmates, as well as a source of food for the prison system.

*In Union, Joe Dama & Ann Slater*



## REGION

**FIVE (Manitoba)**

- by Ian Robson

Region 5 NFU held a membership and public information meeting in Winnipeg April 7, 2011 where National Farmers Union (NFU) President Terry Boehm explained that the proposed Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA- a free trade deal between Canada and the European Union (EU)) is not likely to provide farmers with the kind of market access benefits that the hype leads us to believe. These deals make profits for input suppliers but cost farmers more in lost income and extra costs.

Region 5 met with Minister of Agriculture Food and Rural Development Minister Hon. Stan Struthers to discuss the implications of the CETA deal to Manitoba. Crown Corporations like Manitoba HYDRO, to Municipal development projects, or even Medicare are affected by the CETA if Canada signs this Free Trade Deal. The Region discussed, with Minister Struthers, Provincial Abattoir meat inspection and suggested that these receive increased support because the proposed CETA deal would require that National Uniform Standards would be applied. Guess what? After the election of the new federal government and a cost cutting move by Federal Ag. Minister Ritz, this has come to pass even before the CETA deal is signed. This causes extra cost on the province to inspect these vital links between the farmer and the consumer. We have less confidence in the Federal Meat

inspection standards because it is paper based, whereas the present Provincial Meat Standards are still done by looking at the meat.

Region 5 Convention, held July 16, 2011 heard from Eldon Boon, Hudson Bay Route Association; John Sandborn, CWB Director from District 9; Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives Minister, Hon. Stan Struthers; and Ed Sagan, NFU Region 6 Coordinator, who spoke about NFU activities and the need to increase farmers' strength in the market place.

Bev Stow and Ian Robson were elected to the NFU National Board. Kate Storey was elected as NFU Women's Advisory Representative. Annalisa Schoppe was elected as NFU Youth Advisory Representative. There were several written resolutions brought forward for debate at this meeting, which will go forward to the National Convention in London Ontario.

Region 5 NFU members have attended the CWB information meetings that were held at Oak Bluff and Dauphin. These meetings allowed farmers to ask questions about Minister Ritz idea to remove the present CWB benefit and replace it with a

*(continued on page 30...)*



*Photo: NFU delegates attended the Region 5 (Manitoba) Annual Meeting on July 16, 2011 in Onanole, Manitoba.*

# SIX (Saskatchewan)

REGION



- by Ed Sagan (photo) and Kevin Wipf

Early in the spring I was asked if I would consider serving as Region 6 Coordinator for the NFU. Glenn Tait had to step aside when he decided to run in the federal election against Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. Although I knew I had big shoes to fill since Glenn had done a very admirable job as Regional Coordinator, I was honoured to be asked to serve the NFU membership in this capacity. I accepted immediately, and it was been a very rewarding experience ever since. Here's some of the events that have taken place since I began in my new role.

### Late Seeding

2011 began much as 2010 ended for many farmers in Saskatchewan. Heavy snowfall over the winter only compounded the high levels of moisture that had saturated the ground the previous year. Heavy rainfall in the spring meant that many farmers were not able to get into their fields until late May or even June. For many farmers in the southern and eastern areas of the province, the disaster continued and they were not

once again calling for a \$50 per acre payment for crop farmers and a \$150 per head payment for cattle farmers.

### Canadian Wheat Board

Soon after the Conservative Party won the federal election on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz declared that they would end the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB)'s single desk. He made this statement even though he had said before the election that farmers must decide the future of the CWB. Indeed, he knew then just as he knows now, that a farmer vote is required before any grain is taken away from the single desk. It's sure funny how quickly electoral success can make some men think about taking away the democratic rights of others. Mr Ritz, you should be ashamed of yourself.

As always, the NFU has led the charge in the battle against the Harper government's plans for the CWB. The NFU worked very hard to encourage farmers to participate in the plebiscite. We also worked very hard to promote the public meetings held by the CWB's farmer elected directors, and to organize pro-CWB demonstrations beforehand. We received very good media coverage, and I had many interviews. Our hard work paid off. All six meetings were a great success, and over 60 percent of farmers voted for maintaining the single desk.

### Region 6 Convention

The Region 6 convention was held in the beautiful town of Lumsden this year. All attendees stayed at the St. Michael's Retreat. We enjoyed excellent fellowship and meals. The presentations and discussions were also excellent.

*(continued on page 30...)*



*Photo: NFU delegates attended the Region 6 (Saskatchewan) Annual Meeting on July 5 and 6, 2011 at St. Michael's Retreat in Lumsden, Saskatchewan.*



## REGION

**SEVEN (Alberta)**

- by Jan Slomp

**EAST versus WEST**

In July, our family went on a trip to eastern Canada. After visiting relatives in Ontario and Quebec we moved on to the Maritime provinces.

As a farmer, one looks at agricultural activity and as the trip progressed we became more and more upset about how much farmland in the Maritimes wasn't farmed anymore, and what a high percentage of rural real estate was for sale or deserted.

We stayed for a week in one of the cottages of the Affleck's, in Bedeque, Prince Edward Island. While there, Randall gave proof of great hospitality by offering us, one at a time, a view of central Prince Edward Island from the air. After taking in the magnificent confederation bridge, the beauty of rolling hills and picturesque rural villages, Randall flew over the infamous McCain's, Cavendish farms, and Irving farms. He pointed out the little test plots on both farms, where new varieties were developed with government money. Both Irving's and Cavendish farms had beside the big potato processing plants, a large commercial bulk fertilizer and chemical outlet. Irving's farm also had bulk fuel distribution. It became clear that growing potatoes in the Maritimes means growing indebtedness to the company store. New Atlantic Beef Coop is struggling while a meat cutter in a large grocery store expressed pride when he confided with us, that the beef was from Lakeside Packers. Hog processing depends on capacity in Quebec. The presence of Amalgamated Island Farms with dairy processing centrally in Summerside and Charlottetown, is one of the

bright lights left of agriculture on PEI. They make among other things, very creamy ice cream that actually melts on a warm day.

In New Brunswick and in Nova Scotia it was common sight to see empty farm buildings, deteriorated fences and multiple year old standing hay, before bush would take over. If uncorrected, PEI is floating in that direction.

Back in the West, I realized that things at least "were" better, because settlers in the twenties and thirties had thrown off the shackles of feudalism, became world leaders in democratic development, fairness and equality. Former farmers on the prairies did demand a fair deal, formed coops and got transportation system regulation that delivered equity. The Pools, the Canadian Grain Commission and the CWB became the institutions on which equality was built.

After being an eyewitness of agricultural deterioration in the East, it becomes that much more infuriating to deal with a federal government violating the Canadian Wheat Board Act. At the well attended CWB meetings across the prairies in August, it became very clear that a clear majority of farmers want that single desk maintained. Farmers know that without the CWB, market values at the port will never come to the farm gate. Without the single desk selling of the CWB wheat acres will diminish in western Canada as PEI farmers know that growing potatoes for 8.5 cents a pound, while it costs 9 cents to grow, did diminish potato acres in Prince Edward Island.

With wheat acres down, current non board grains will be next in line for further deteriorating prices. Anti-CWB supporters will be free to sell hogs to one company, beef to one or two other companies and grain to the one company that owns an elevator within economic trucking distance. A deserted rural prairie region is next.

The gloves are off, and one farm leader informed me that since his son was a competent farmer he might have to go to jail over this looming battle. We all shall be that committed.

*(continued on page 13...)*



*(Region 7 Report, from page 12)*

## Regional Convention

On June 18, 2011, we had a well attended, successful regional convention in Hoadly. The many topics that were discussed were all overshadowed by the sword of Damocles over our head in the form of announced federal legislation to dismantle the single desk of the CWB. Two resolutions were passed pertaining the urgencies arising from the threat to the CWB. One was to give, from Region 7 membership, the NFU board and executive the mandate to do what ever lies in their power to save the single desk. The other resolution called on the NFU to urge provincial marketing boards for all supply managed sectors in Canada to express publicly solidarity with the CWB in its right to have a farmer plebiscite determine the future of the CWB and not the government, as the Wheat Board Act clearly stipulates. Supply management sectors in all provinces operate under that same protection of a farmer vote determining the future of the marketing boards.

A third resolution was passed about the Alberta Weed Act, it asks the NFU to object to the land expropriation measures in case of non compliance with the Act. Bill 36 and the Weed Act both have passed and both give the minister draconian expropriation rights “with or without compensation”. Land expropriation has become the latest fashion in Alberta legislation.

A resolution concerning the cattle sector crisis was passed, which committed the NFU to generating media releases, conducting farmer education, and carrying out a campaign in Alberta for farmers to divert their refundable check-off levy to the NFU.

The convention was closed with a pig roast very capable offered by chef’s Richard and Mark Griebel.

*In Solidarity, Jan Slomp*



Photo:

*Delegates at the Region 7 (Alberta) Annual Meeting, June 18, 2011 in Hoadly, Alberta.*



# The fight to save the CWB begins

— by Kevin Wipf, Executive Director

This summer, the National Farmers Union (NFU) launched one of the biggest political battles it has ever fought. It all began only two days after the federal election, in which the Conservative Party won a majority government. On May 4th Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced that the new government would be ending the CWB's single desk, and that the federal election had effectively served as a vote on the future of the CWB.

That Ritz and the Conservative Party had been long-standing opponents of the CWB, was no secret. However, it was truly galling that Ritz would so boldly go back on his word, and would ignore Section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, which requires that a farmer vote be conducted before any grain can be removed from the single desk. It smacked of the "Anyone who stands in our way will find that we will walk over you" warning to made by Harper himself to CWB supporters back in June of 2008, when pressed to comment on the fact that a Calgary judge had just ruled that his government had acted illegally in the way it carried out its barley plebiscite in 2006. To be sure, Harper and Ritz were clearly determined to do whatever it took to eliminate the CWB's single desk.

The fight was on.

The NFU swung into gear. In mid-June, several NFU members participated in a demonstration during the Western Canadian Crop Production Show in Regina. The event received good media coverage, and served to alert the many farmers on the grounds that Harper and Ritz were in fact not going to be walking over anybody.

A key moment came on June 28th, when the CWB's farmer elected directors announced that the CWB would hold its own plebiscite, since the federal government was not going to hold one as required by law. The vote would not be binding, but it would serve as an important political act that would provide the pro-CWB forces with a powerful card to play... *if* the results were favourable. Ballots began arriving in farmers' mailboxes on July 27th, and they had until August 24<sup>th</sup> to return them in the mail. Separate ballots were issued for wheat and barley, and both contained a clear and

unambiguous choice, which was endorsed by the three prairie provincial farm groups (Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, Agricultural Producers of Saskatchewan, and Keystone Agricultural Producers) and the NFU, back in 2006. The ballots asked farmers to choose between selling their wheat or barley through the CWB single desk system, or in the open market.

To support the plebiscite, the CWB's farmer elected directors announced that they would hold a series of public meetings throughout Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, in August. The main topic to be discussed was the implications of removing the CWB's single desk. In Saskatchewan the meetings were held in Regina and Saskatoon, in Manitoba the meetings were held in Oak Bluff and Dauphin, and in Alberta the meetings were held in Medicine Hat, Camrose, and later one was scheduled for Fahler in the Peace River region.

With the meeting dates set, the NFU swung into gear and worked hard to encourage farmers to attend. The NFU also helped to organize demonstrations before each of the meetings, outside of the buildings where they were being held. It was crucial to get the series of meetings off to a strong start, at the first one held in Regina on August 8th. That day two big grain trucks provided by the Friends of the CWB were parked on Albert Street out front of the Travelodge hotel. They were fitted with huge flag poles, where the Canadian flag and the Canadian Wheat Board flag flew. One of them was also mounted with a large sign that read "Support the Canadian Wheat Board for Ultimate Crop Protection." A group of farmers held up signs with slogans such as "With the CWB You Get All Your \$\$", "Farmer Majority Supports CWB", "Respect Farmers Respect Our Vote", and "CWB Is Best".

Before long a busload of farmers pulled up and joined in, and just as quickly several news cameras and journalists were on the scene conducting interviews and filming the activity. If that wasn't enough, one of the trucks turned up its speakers

*(continued on page 15...)*



and began to play the “Last Chance to Have Your Say” song about the plebiscite, which had only recently begun to go viral on YouTube.

Once 7:00 PM rolled around, the meeting was set to start everyone made their way into a large conference room in the hotel’s basement. Inside, a standing room only crowd assembled to hear the CWB farmer elected directors speak. Although it was hot and uncomfortable, the farmers listened intently to the compelling presentations. The directors challenged the audience to think about what a private company would be willing to pay for the exclusive right to market all of the wheat and barley for export and domestic human consumption grown on the prairies. He reminded farmers that they have that right already, through the CWB. The directors also pointed out that the CWB provides \$500 million in direct economic benefits, at a very minimum, to the prairie region. When including the indirect benefits, that number reaches \$1.5 billion. As the meeting went on, it became more and more clear that the vast majority of the farmers in the room were CWB supporters.

From there, the momentum grew. The many farmers who wanted to show their support for the CWB, joined in demonstrations before each meeting. Moreover, each and every meeting drew a standing room only crowd, and the majority of the farmers in each crowd were CWB supporters. The demonstrations garnered very good media attention, and several NFU members conducted interviews with TV, radio, and print media. Don Kossick and his crew captured these presentations and conducted many interviews of their own. These videos are available on the NFU website and YouTube. In the end, the meetings were very good moral boosters. It was very motivating and encouraging to stand and march in solidarity with fellow CWB supporters.

When the results of the plebiscite were finally announced on September 12<sup>th</sup>, all expectations were confirmed. The majority of farmers voted in favour of the status quo: 62 percent of wheat



*Photo: NFU President Terry Boehm prepares to ask a question at the CWB meeting in Camrose, Alberta, August 16, 2011. (photo by Don Kossick)*

farmers and 51 percent of barley farmers chose to continue to market their grain through the CWB single desk system, and the vote turnout was 56 percent. When one considers that the plebiscite was non-binding, Ritz did his best to discourage farmers from voting, and that the plebiscite was held in the late-summer early fall period, the participation was very impressive. It was higher than most mail-in ballot votes, including the recent HST mail-in vote held in British Columbia, and on par with the turnout in Ritz’ own riding in the federal election. In the end, the results conclusively proved two things: 1) that farmers are very interested in the CWB issue; and 2) that the majority of farmers are CWB single desk supporters.

In the immediate aftermath of the plebiscite, newspapers throughout the country included headlines that read “Majority of farmers vote to keep CWB.” Some papers that have been favourable to Ritz even started declaring that he owes farmers a coherent plan regarding how the CWB might survive without the single desk. As the CWB farmer elected directors pointed out time and again, the Harper government has never produced an economic study, nor a plan to show how exactly everything is supposed to work in the post-single desk world they dream of.

This fall the CWB will be front and center as the political parties return to the House of Commons and provincial elections are held in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. At some point in October, the federal Conservatives are planning to introduce legislation that will be designed to end the CWB’s single desk by August 2012.

Indeed, the fight has only just begun! —nfu—



# Raising awareness of CETA and its implications for farmers and local food procurement in Ontario

— by Ann Slater, Region 3 (Ontario) Board member

During the last week of June, National Farmers Union (NFU) President Terry Boehm took time away from his own farm, to come to Ontario to speak about the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), at public events and to the media. The public meetings were organized and hosted by the Perth/Oxford, Bruce and Hastings/Prince Edward/ Northumberland locals. The purpose of the tour was to increase awareness among local leaders, NFU members and the general public about CETA and its implications for farmers, and for the growing local food movement in Ontario.

On Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the tour, Larry Miller, Chair of the Parliamentary Agriculture Committee, Women's President, Joan Brady and Terry were all interviewed on the Bryan Allen show on AM 920 in Wingham. During his interview, Larry Miller argued that CETA would be a good thing for Canadian farmers and he challenged critics to show him something in the proposed trade deal with Europe that is bad for Canada. Terry and Joan were then able to put forth the NFU position that the deal will threaten buy-local programs, farmers' ability to keep their own seed, and the Canadian health system. Tuesday evening Bruce Local hosted a public event in Walkerton.

Prior to two public meetings in St. Marys on Wednesday, June 29, Terry and I stopped at the pick-your-own strawberry farm of Perth/Oxford Local vice-president, Andy Megens, for some fresh-picked strawberries. Andy told us that the message on their answering machine that day said, "We are closing early today to attend a National Farmers Union event in St. Marys." The afternoon meeting in St. Marys focused on the restrictions CETA will place on local food procurement policies, while the evening meeting was geared to the threat CETA poses to farmers. Local leaders from several neighbouring locals

attended both meetings, as they felt one session was not enough time to get a full understanding of the implications of this trade deal.

On Thursday, June 30, Terry and I joined the long-weekend traffic heading east of Toronto for the final stop on the tour – an evening meeting in Corbyville, just outside of Belleville. The Hastings/Prince Edward/Northumberland local is working with local chapters of the Council of Canadians and the Trade Justice Network to oppose CETA. Stuart Trew, the Trade Campaigner for the Council of Canadians, also spoke at the event.

All events received media coverage by local, weekly papers and regional farm papers. The Hastings/Prince Edward/Northumberland local sent invitations to their local MPPs, MPs and candidates in the Ontario election, although only the candidate for the Green Party attended the meeting.

The tour has led to further action around CETA across the NFU in Ontario. People left the public meetings with a desire to follow-up on action suggestions, including sending letters to MPs, municipalities and newspapers and passing on printed material to friends, family and the general public. Perth/Oxford local has posted letters to send to MPs and to local councils on its webpage. Renfrew local has written a resolution to be sent to all municipalities in Ontario asking them to voice their concerns about CETA to federal and provincial politicians. Hastings/Prince Edward/Northumberland local has continued to work with its partners to make local municipalities aware that the deal will undermine local purchasing policies. Many other locals are drawing attention to the implications of CETA through their participation in public events and shows.

Thank you to the three host locals and to the Middlesex, Huron, and 316 locals for helping to arrange media coverage and promote the tour.

—nfu—



# Cesium, Soil and Solidarity in Japan

— by Cathy Holtlander

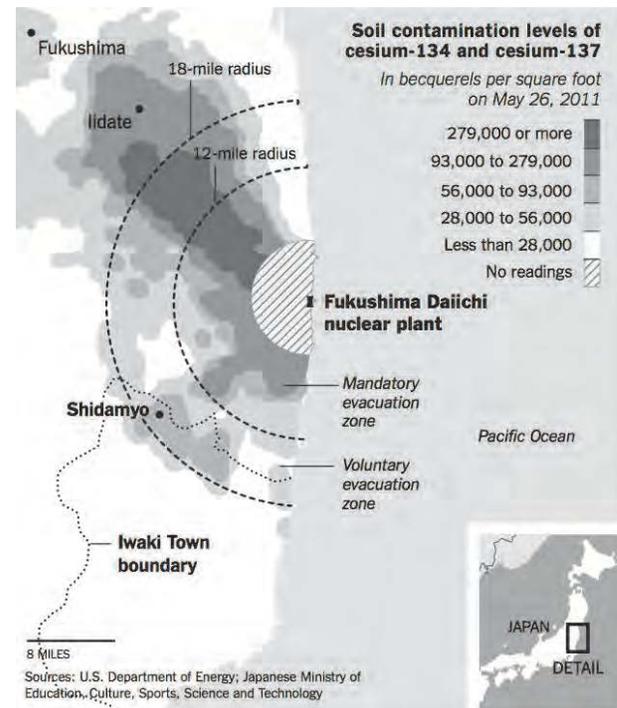
While the gaze of international media has turned to other crises, the nuclear disaster in Japan continues. TEPCO, the corporation that owns the damaged reactors, is trying to figure out how to decommission them. Apparently the containment vessels have ruptured. Water that was pumped in to cool the melted fuel is leaking out, contaminating groundwater and the ocean. TEPCO says it plans to install containment walls to stop the leaks so it can remove the fuel, but in order to do so it must fill the reactors with water to shield construction workers from extreme radiation. The company has admitted that it may require the invention of new technology to solve this dilemma.

The contamination of land and food, and the impact of radiation on health and the economy are still front and centre in Japan. On August 29 the government released a map of soils contaminated by radioactive Cesium 134 and 137. Eight percent of the measured area (including 34 communities) has higher levels than were found in the evacuation zone around Chernobyl after the disaster in the Ukraine. 8,300 hectares (over 20,000 acres) of Japanese rice land is now unfit for cultivation due to radioactive contamination of the soil.

Plant breeders are looking for cesium-resistant rice strains, but it is doubtful how effective this search could be since cesium is chemically similar to, and thus acts like potassium (the K in NPK fertilizer formulations), which is an essential element in cell metabolism. Cesium 134 and 137 result from splitting uranium atoms, and did not exist before the nuclear age. It has a half-life of about 30 years, emits beta then gamma radiation and accumulates in muscle tissue when ingested.

Sale of beef from Fukushima is no longer banned, but it is now being tested to ensure its radioactivity does not exceed 500 becquerels/kilogram. Testing capacity is limited, however because the same few labs must also screen vegetables for radiation, and could become overwhelmed with samples.

On August 31, farmers from 11 prefectures met with TEPCO's president to demand better compensation for beef, tea leaves and other products that have been banned from shipment or whose prices have plunged



due to radiation contamination. TEPCO said it was listening but would not commit, due to the number and magnitude of compensation payments it must make.

The Fukushima meltdown triggered huge changes in Japan's energy policy. Instead of opening new nuclear plants, Japan is fast-tracking renewable energy, and energy conservation has become a social movement, called "*setsuden*".

Several other countries are also revisiting their use of nuclear energy and setting renewable energy goals, post-Fukushima. In contrast, Canada still has reactors in New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec, reactor proposals for northern Alberta, and a new reactor research agenda recently announced by Saskatchewan. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization is seeking a location in the Canadian Shield to bury – and to eventually dig up and reprocess – high level nuclear waste from these reactors. All of these pose a danger to food and farmland if an accident happens.

The NFU has long advocated renewable energy. At the 2008 Convention we passed a policy to oppose the construction of any new nuclear facilities. We urge all levels of government to promote conservation and non-fossil fuel energy alternatives.

—nfu—



# CETA – a corporate charter for Canada?

— by Cathy Holtslander, Director of Research

**O**n the following two pages, we've reprinted the leaflet "Why We Don't Want CETA" for you to use.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is being negotiated behind closed doors by Canada and the European Union. In July both sides exchanged offers. "Easy" items were agreed upon, leaving only the more difficult items to resolve. The next meeting is in October and negotiations are expected to be done in 2012.

Intellectual property rights measures are among the remaining items. Precautionary seizure of farmers' assets – including land, crops, equipment and bank accounts -- if suspected of seed patent infringement, is still in play. In light of the Supreme Court's 2004 Schmeiser decision which upholds patent infringement claims regardless of how the GMO seed in question got into a farmer's field, this clause is truly chilling.

Another intellectual property rights issue is "geographical indications". The EU says labels such as "parmesan", "feta" and perhaps even "pizza" (the list has not been published) should be prohibited unless the product is made in its traditional location. This measure would have an economic impact on Canada's food processing industry, and might also be used as a wedge to pry open supply management.

Europe is pushing for access to Canada's supply managed sectors. The big Canadian food manufacturers also want access to cheaper ingredients. While the federal government has said that supply management is not on the table, that stance is contrary to their other free-market positions. The tariff reduction measures in CETA may well be used to break down the import controls that allow supply management to function.

CETA will have an investor-to-state dispute resolution mechanism allowing corporations to sue federal, provincial and local governments if they believe their rights to market access or profit-making under CETA have been violated. Decisions would be made by an appointed tribunal. The proposed mechanism is even more investor-friendly than NAFTA's. The EU rejected the European Parliament's recommendation to include corporate obligations around environmental, labour and social

responsibility to balance the rights they claim. Defending against even unfounded investor-to-state claims would be costly, especially for municipalities. The threat of these actions would tend to discipline our governments to avoid passing any law, policy or regulation that might motivate a company to sue.

CETA would in practice amend our Constitution by limiting the powers of elected governments to make laws, bylaws, regulations and policy decisions that conflict with this treaty. Instead of Canadian courts deciding whether a controversial law is *ultra vires*, an unelected Tribunal could decide that a given law was in violation of CETA and order a government to pay restitution to a corporation and/or change its law.

While CETA restricts the scope of duly elected governments, it provides privileges and benefits to foreign investors, businesses and certain employees of these businesses. CETA accords "Most Favoured Nation" status to investors and investments from EU countries, requiring sub-national governments (provinces and municipalities) as well as the federal government, to give European businesses and their owners this status. Once CETA is adopted, the privileges given to European businesses, with the exception of access to government procurement, will be extended to businesses in the USA and Mexico as well, because they are entitled to "Most Favoured Nation" status by way of NAFTA.

Once negotiators agree upon the final wording CETA will be signed, and only then made public. There is no ratification process required for Parliament to approve the agreement. However, if laws need to be passed or amended to bring all or part of CETA into effect, bills will be brought before Parliament. Due to the federal government's majority, CETA may well be a done deal before we even see it.

The provinces and some municipalities are providing input, however, so MPs, MLAs and local councilors need to hear from us before all is finalized. Citizen action by people like yourself and our allies in Canada and Europe is needed to keep CETA from becoming a new "corporate charter" that defines Canada's future course.

The most recent leaked text is posted on our website at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)

—nfu—



## Our democracy is at risk.

The CETA agreement is being negotiated behind closed doors. The vast majority of Canadians have not been consulted. Both the EU and Canadian governments refuse to disclose their draft texts as each round of negotiation is completed. In spite of this we have been able to obtain leaked copies of the text.

The corporate rights claimed under CETA would be enforced via the infamous North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Chapter 11 investor protection mechanisms which give corporations the right to sue governments for lost profits. CETA goes further and also states that governments would be responsible for financially compensating corporations during times of war and civil strife.

Giving corporations the right to sue governments at every level for making decisions in the interest of Canadian citizens is profoundly undemocratic. Ultimately, CETA is a corporate bill of rights that would severely limit the power of our elected officials to act on our behalf. It is unlikely that the Agreement would lead to increased trade between Canada and the EU or in more market access for Canadian products and companies. Instead, CETA would limit the role of government to work in the public interest.

**CETA is good for corporations and bad for citizens.**

## What YOU can do

**to protect your seed, your farm, and your democratic rights from being bargained away in the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA):**

**1. Join and/or donate to the National Farmers Union to work on your behalf.** Family farm memberships are \$195.00. Non-farmers can join as associate members for \$65.00. Send memberships or donations by mail to: 2717 Wentz Avenue Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 or go online at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca).

**2. Sign the petition to stop CETA.** Download and print a copy from <http://www.nfu.ca/petitions/CETA-mar2011.pdf>.

**3. Write, phone, fax or email your federal, provincial and municipal leaders** to voice your concerns, including: the Prime Minister, the Minister of International Trade, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and your own Member of Parliament; the leaders of the opposition parties and their critics for Trade and Agriculture. *(Correspondence to Members of Parliament does not require a stamp. The address is: House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6. To send an email, go to [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca) and click on "Senators and Members" to find email addresses.)*

**4. Write, phone, fax or email your provincial and municipal leaders** to voice your concerns, including: the Premier of your Province; your municipal, school, and hospital representatives. **Send a copy to the NFU** at 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 or [ntfu@ntfu.ca](mailto:ntfu@ntfu.ca).

**5. Get the word out about the risks of CETA.** Inform your fellow citizens by email, Facebook and other social media, phone and fax!

# Why We Don't Want

# CETA

## Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

The Canadian government is currently negotiating an agreement with the European Union (EU), called the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement** or **CETA** for short.

CETA is the farthest reaching trade agreement Canada has ever negotiated. For the first time, an international trade agreement reaches beyond the federal level and into provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions, giving corporations more access and control over governments and government entities than ever before. CETA has deeply negative implications for the future of our family farms, our rural communities and our democracy.

**CETA is good for corporations and bad for Canadians.**

# If adopted with current European positions, CETA will:

## **Severely restrict farmers' ability to save, reuse, exchange and sell seed.**

CETA adds precautionary seizure provisions to intellectual property rights' enforcement. This means that farmers accused of having a patented gene in their crops or seed could lose their farms, crops, equipment and cash – simply for *alleged* infringement. The Agreement would extend precautionary seizure provisions to third parties. For example, the owner of a seed cleaning operation whose customer is accused of patent infringement could also have his/her property seized. These expanded intellectual property rights enforcement tools would increase corporate control of our farms, increase seed costs, and destroy farmers' autonomy.

## **Increase corporate patent rights for drugs and chemicals.**

The Europeans are calling for monopoly patent rights to be extended by the length of time it takes the regulator to approve a product, which would create pressure for hasty, and perhaps dangerous approvals. They also want to add more time to these patent rights if a minor use for a drug or chemical is found. Any data the company supplied to the regulator would also remain exclusive to the company for 10 to 13 years. These measures would hamper generic manufacturers and add huge costs to purchasers – including our Medicare system where drugs make up 50% of costs. CETA would transfer even more of our healthcare dollars to big pharmaceutical companies.

## **Undermine federal, provincial and municipal local purchasing policies.**

CETA would forbid all government entities including schools, hospitals, universities and municipalities from favouring local or domestic businesses. Governments would no longer be able to support local providers of goods and services through local procurement policies. For example, a government that wanted to support local agriculture by promoting local food would not be able to implement a policy favouring government purchasing of local food over imported food. This would be subject to certain thresholds -- some provinces are suggesting as low as \$25,000.

## **Lead to reduction in so-called "production and trade distorting domestic support".**

CETA signatories would agree to co-operate at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to reduce agriculture safety net measures. These negotiations also lay the groundwork and justification for dismantling our supply management system in the future.

Proponents of CETA argue that it would open up the European market to Canada's genetically-modified (GM) crops and hormone-treated beef. **This is false.**

Canadian negotiators are only pushing for EU GM contamination level standards to increase from 0.01% to 0.1%.

If Canada does obtain more market access, CETA also specifically exempts GM organisms. The European market has been closed to hormone-treated beef due to health concerns, and a trade agreement will not change consumers' opinions. If Canada wants access to the European beef market we could simply adopt equivalent standards and eliminate growth hormones from our production system.

## **Canadian agriculture has *nothing to gain* from this agreement and *everything to lose.***

For more information on CETA, see:

**National Farmers Union**  
**[www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)**

Listen to NFU President Terry Boehm's presentation on CETA from the 2010 NFU Convention

**[http://www.nfu.ca/mp3/2011\\_CETA.mp3](http://www.nfu.ca/mp3/2011_CETA.mp3)**

**Trade Justice Network**  
**[www.tradejustice.ca](http://www.tradejustice.ca)**

Open Civil Society Declaration on CETA  
**<http://tradejustice.ca/en/section/22>**

# Who is reaping the benefit of public support for agriculture?



- by Cathy Holtslander

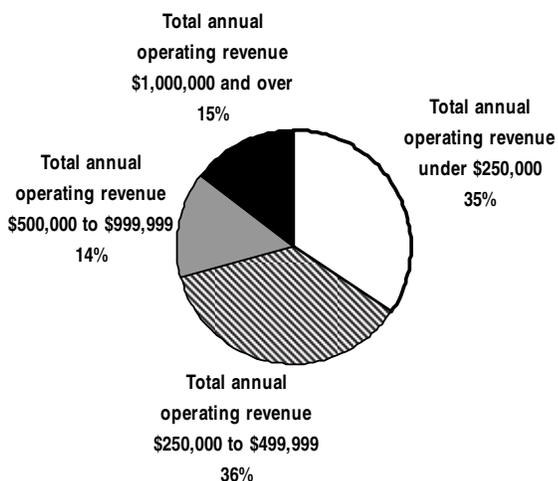
Recently the National Farmers Union (NFU) produced a report on the state of agriculture in Ontario using revenue and income numbers from Statistics Canada. One of our findings was that the proportion of farm income derived from the market compared with that from program payments<sup>1</sup> is a story of inequity: the largest Ontario farms obtain less of their income from the market and take more than their share of program payments.

The graphs below show that farms with a million dollars and more in annual gross revenues are deriving less and less of their income from the marketplace and more and more from government programs.

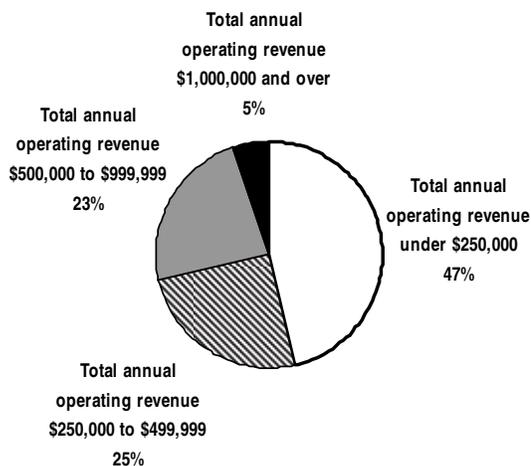
The claims that large units are more efficient are disproven by their weaker performance in the market compared with smaller farms, and their proportionately greater dependence on transfers of public money. Graphs 1 and 2 (below) show that between 1995 and 2008 the share of total market income adjusted for capital cost allowance obtained by the largest farms in Ontario fell from 15% to 5%, while the smaller operations increased their share from about one-third to nearly half of all agriculture dollars earned in the market.

(continued on page 22...)

**Graph 1:**  
Proportion of Net Market Income Adjusted for CCA Ontario 1995



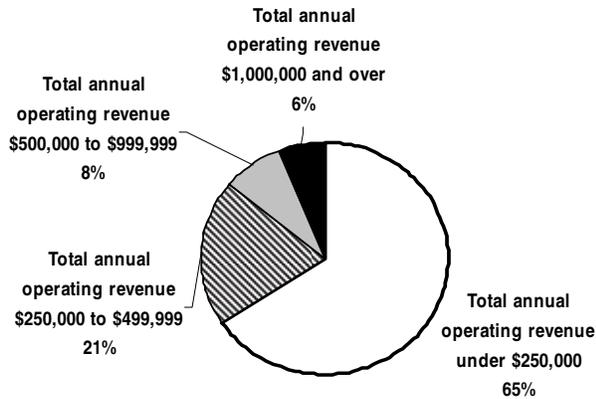
**Graph 2:**  
Proportion of Net Market Income Adjusted for CCA Ontario 2008



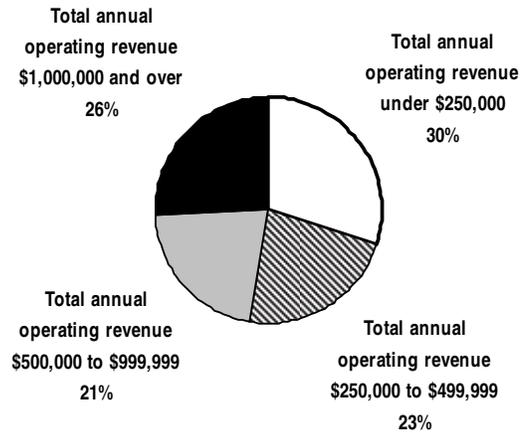
<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada defines program payments and insurance proceeds as income from: provincial stabilization programs; federal and provincial Business Risk Management and disaster assistance programs such as the Ontario Whole Farm Relief Program (OWFRP) and the Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program (OFIDP) in Ontario; the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program and the AgriStability Program, including interim payments; Gross Revenue Insurance Program (GRIP), now terminated; government payments and other subsidies (such as hog incentive programs, acreage payments, assistance for clearing land and government grants); aggregate amounts reported for subsidies, patronage dividends and reimbursements; and insurance proceeds from programs (private and government) for crops and livestock due to adverse weather conditions, disease or other reasons.



**Graph 3:  
Proportion of Total Net Program Payments by Farm Size  
Ontario 1995**



**Graph 4:  
Proportion of Total Net Program Payments by Farm Size  
Ontario 2008**



Yet, as Graphs 3 and 4 show (above), during the same period, program payments shifted dramatically towards the biggest farms.

While they got 6% of program payments 16 years earlier, in 2008 the largest farms receive 26% while during the same period smaller farms’ share dropped from two-thirds to less than one-third of total program payments. Meanwhile, the total value of program payments rose from just over \$30 million per year to nearly \$150 million – a five-fold increase.

Looking at market income versus program payment income by sector, rather than farm revenue class, dairy, poultry and eggs, which are under supply management, obtained much larger proportions of their incomes from the market and relied less on support payments than other sectors such as grain and oilseeds, beef cattle and hogs. Oilseed and grain, beef and hogs have required the highest levels of program support in Ontario.

The number of farms in the over \$1 million annual revenue class tripled from 670 in 1995 to 2400 in 2008. The numbers of farms in the under \$250,000 per year revenue class dropped by 20%

during the same period going from 42,985 to 33,275 farms. It is reasonable to conclude that the way program payments have been delivered, as well as the export-oriented agriculture policies pursued since 1995, have contributed to a net loss of farms and an increase in the less efficient larger farms at the expense of the more efficient small and mid-sized farms.

The National Farmers Union’s position is that there needs to appropriate caps on program payments to ensure that public support goes to bona fide family farms instead of to large corporate operations.

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*For more information about the state of Ontario agriculture, please see the brief “Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario” which can be downloaded from the NFU website at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)*



# (IN)Equality Matters:

## *social justice and the economy*

A global economy that pushes millions of people into poverty and bankrupts countries is not only irrational but fundamentally unjust. What kind of society do we want, and how do we get there?

This is the question that Inter Pares, an international social justice organization, will be exploring in our upcoming cross-country tour – including stops in Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa – with renowned African scholar and activist Dr. Yao Graham, November 8-15, 2011.

Dr. Graham is the Coordinator of Third World Network – Africa, based in Ghana. He is an expert in international trade and taxation, particularly with respect to mining and petroleum development. In coordination with the National Farmers Union (NFU) in Saskatoon, and local organizations in each of the other cities, Dr. Graham, an Inter Pares staff member and a local community leader will engage in an exploration of inequality, and the mechanisms that perpetuate it in our communities and internationally.

There is growing economic disparity in Canada and around the world. Indeed, the current levels of economic inequality in both Canada and the United States have not been seen since 1929, the very cusp of a worldwide depression.

Before the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, 3.5 million Canadians lived in poverty; some estimates suggest this figure could increase by another 1.8 million by the end of 2011. And Southern countries are experiencing diminished export revenues, burgeoning unemployment rates, weakening commodity prices, and precipitous increases in food and energy prices. An additional 130 to 155 million people worldwide have been pushed into poverty.

National governments should be addressing these appalling inequalities through economic and social policies that promote the well-being of all. Instead, we see governments around the world supporting a global economy organized in the interests of financial speculators.

The campaign by financial and political elites against regulatory oversight of the banking system led to an economic collapse that continues to inflict enormous damage throughout the world. Everywhere, the subsequent bailout of banks and financial institutions is being paid for by cutbacks to social services, education, workers' pensions and healthcare.

Deepening economic inequality is not only a moral issue. Research from Richard Wilkinson's recently published book, *The Spirit Level: why equality is better for everyone*, convincingly argues that more egalitarian societies have significantly lower incidences of physical and mental health problems, addictions, crime, imprisonment, violence, and better child well-being outcomes. This research demonstrates what many of us intuitively know – more equal societies are happier and healthier and enjoy higher levels of social cohesion, trust and civic engagement.

On November 9, we invite you to join us to explore what we can do to foster greater equality, in our communities and internationally. For more information, including location, visit [www.interpares.ca](http://www.interpares.ca) or email us at [info@interpares.ca](mailto:info@interpares.ca). —nfu—

*The current levels of economic inequality in both Canada and the United States have not been seen since 1929, the very cusp of a worldwide depression.*

Mark your calendars!

## (IN)Equality Matters:

### *social justice and the economy*

**SASKATOON: Wednesday, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**  
Frances Morrison Library, 311-23<sup>rd</sup> St. E.

**TORONTO: Thursday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**

**MONTREAL: Monday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**

**OTTAWA: Tuesday, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**

*For venue locations (other than Saskatoon),  
please call Inter Pares toll-free at*

**1-866-563-4801**



# A quick guide to NFU Conventions



The National Farmers Union (NFU) National Convention is held every year as set out in our constitution. Policy decisions are made through a clearly defined democratic process at Convention, and the Executive, Board, and Locals are all bound to uphold them. National officers are elected at Convention. Some years there may also be constitutional amendments to consider. Convention offers a way for NFU members to meet face to face and to hear from speakers on issues of importance to our organization. It is similar to a regular conference in many ways, but if you are new to the NFU you may not be familiar with the governance aspect.

The National Farmers Union was founded after the farmers unions of BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI determined that having a national organization to advocate for the interests of all farmers in Canada in solidarity with each other was needed in order to effectively counter the power of agribusiness corporations and to influence federal and provincial policies in a constructive manner. As stated then:

*“The history of the farm union movement extends back to 1901. Since that time, many changes in business organization and farming have taken place. The major problems confronting farmers in our modern industrial society are national and international in nature. In order to successfully countervail the power of the large corporations which economically exploit them, farmers must take collective action on a national basis to strengthen their bargaining power in order to solve some of their problems.”* *Union Farmer*, October 1969.

The Founding Convention was held in July 1969 and later that year an Act of Parliament was passed which created the legal basis for the NFU. The NFU Constitution was created after lengthy study and consideration by the respective memberships and boards of the provincial unions in a process that thoroughly engaged their democratic structures and traditions.

**Resolutions:** The NFU’s Policy Statement compiles all policies -- including position statements, policy recommendations to government, action directives, etc. – that have been passed by a majority vote of delegates at previous national conventions. Each year members bring forward new policy

proposals in the form of resolutions for debate on the floor of Convention. Resolutions that pass are added to the NFU Policy Statement.

There are two ways that resolutions may be brought to Convention. Each NFU Region holds an annual Regional Convention where resolutions are debated and voted upon. Resolutions that have been passed at the regional level come forward to the national Convention. Resolutions from the floor of the Convention may also be presented as long as 2/3 of the delegates approve. The Convention elects a Resolutions Committee, which is responsible for coordinating the resolutions and deciding upon the order in which they will be considered.

Only delegates and elected officials may vote at Convention. A member can become a delegate by being elected by her/his local. Locals are entitled to elect one delegate for each 20 units of membership or major fraction thereof. A member who lives in an area where there is no active local may request delegate credentials from the national office at least 60 days prior to Convention, subject to approval by the Regional Coordinator.

Debate at Convention is done according to the rules of order published in *Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, New Edition* by O. Garfield Jones. The Convention Steering Committee recommends specific additional rules to deal with matters that are particular to our own Convention, which are adopted by a vote at the outset of Convention. These rules are then printed and distributed for reference. The goal is to have as many policy resolutions as possible heard and thoroughly debated with the least amount of time wasted.

**Elections:** The annual Convention also elects the President, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Presidents, Women’s President, Women’s Vice President, Youth President and Youth Vice President, all by secret ballot. One of the last items of business at Convention is the installation of officers – the Presidential and Vice Presidential officers as well as the Board members, Women’s Advisory Committee members and Youth Advisory Committee members who were elected at their own Regional Conventions. —nfu—

*This year, Convention will be held  
November 24-26, 2011 in London, Ontario.*



# United Nations makes unprecedented change

- by Kalissa Regier

With one sixth of the world's population without enough to eat, global grain price fluctuations and the recent surge in land grabbing, the United Nations Committee on World Food Security has been required to make some recent changes in its structure. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, members of social movements, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations are participating at the same level with governments and other international agencies in the development of global policy. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was established 37 years ago and until last year it was limited to an annual session held every October at the Food and Agriculture Organization's headquarters in Rome. Since October 2010, the newly reformed committee meets several times per year and has been formally opened up to members outside the UN. The hope for this reform is for the CFS to be the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for food security in the UN system. Until now, food security policy at the global level was being determined mostly by default by other agencies such as the World Trade Organization and World Bank, the G8/G20 and multinational corporations.

One pressing challenge since the beginning of the reform has been how to effectively engage members of

civil society in the work of the CFS. To help facilitate their participation, the Civil Society Mechanism was formed. A global coordination committee of 40 people representing different farmer and peasant organizations, women, youth, indigenous peoples and many other constituencies was established to bring the views and voice of their movements into the work of the CFS. The Civil Society Mechanism is autonomous from the CFS and prioritizes the involvement of small-scale food producers. Working groups within the mechanism are aligned with those of the CFS and some of the current topics as they relate to food security include Land Tenure, Price Volatility and Agricultural Investment. The mechanism began functioning in May of 2011 with 40 interim coordinators who will fill the positions until the October session of the CFS, where coordinators will be elected for one 2-year term for each of the constituencies and regions represented.

La Via Campesina has been involved in developing the plan for the Civil Society Mechanism. As the largest global movement of peasants and family farmers, members of La Via Campesina are active in the coordination committee as well as the working groups. Food Sovereignty forms the foundation for the work of La Via Campesina and as it differs from food security, a major part of the work of La Via Campesina in the CFS is to bring attention to the

many aspects of food sovereignty, which are not addressed when considering food security. For instance, when seeking food security, the CFS may endorse policies that encourage large-scale acquisitions of farmland by investment corporations that offer jobs, infrastructure and access to food for the people of a local community. In most cases this scenario results in rapid degradation of the social structure of the community, exploitation of the land for growing intensive commercial crops for export, few low paying jobs with the management coming in from other countries, and displacement of many local farmers. Land grabbing has become most common in areas that suffer the worst



*Photo: Members of La Via Campesina in a demonstration outside the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's headquarters in Rome – November 2009.*

*(continued on page 26...)*



*(United Nations makes unprecedented change, from page 25)*

from hunger and poverty, as a proposed solution to these problems. La Via Campesina and other civil society organizations heavily contest the issue of land grabbing, as it exacerbates the problems of hunger and poverty and directly threatens the livelihoods of rural communities.

This October 16-21<sup>st</sup> will mark the 37<sup>th</sup> annual session of the CFS where much of the work for the coming year will be planned. As the interim coordinator of the youth constituency representing La Via Campesina, I will be one of many representatives from social movement, farm organizations, and NGO's who will take part in the activities of the CFS as well as helping to further develop the organization of the Civil Society Mechanism. It remains to be seen if this new development in the highly bureaucratic world of the UN will result in positive change in the way global

policy is formed. Enormous challenges lay ahead for civil society participation in global governance, but one thing is certain, we now have official seats at the UN table to add to our important efforts on the ground and in the streets.

For more information, or to join a working group of the Civil Society Mechanism, please visit [www.cso4cfs.org](http://www.cso4cfs.org) —nfu—

*—Kalissa Regier is currently representing La Via Campesina as the interim coordinator for the youth constituency of the global Civil Society Mechanism, a representative body that facilitates the participation of civil society in the activities of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security. She attended the first meeting of the coordination committee in Cordoba, Spain in May 2011 as well as the Committee negotiations of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in Rome, Italy in July 2011.*

## Citizens Demand Food Sovereignty in Europe Now!

- by Kalissa Regier

From August 16th to 21st I attended Nyéléni Europe, the European Forum on Food Sovereignty in Krems, Austria. It was an inspiring event attended by 400 people from across Europe from diverse social movements, Civil Society Organizations, NGO's, including many farmers. Delegates speaking 18 different languages came from more than 30 countries to attend. It was an example of the incredible cultural diversity on a continent that is so often focused on the west. Many delegates attended from Eastern European countries such as Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Albania. This was a critical event for broadening the food sovereignty movement in these parts of Europe, which have often been overlooked.

We were a delegation of seven international guests from Asia, Latin America, Africa and North America, and had the opportunity to address the plenary to give greetings and add an international context to food sovereignty. We attended as full delegates and were integrated into the working groups to develop the content for the declaration. I had a chance to mention some of the struggles that we're facing now, such as the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement. As well, I made specific reference to "Resetting the Table - A People's Food Policy for Canada" that was released in April 2011, and brought a few copies to share. There was a genuine appreciation of the international guests showed by the European delegates and we all felt honored to be part of the event.

The methodology used was very close to the Nyéleni Forum held in Mali in 2007. Five working groups were formed with a balanced representation from the different constituencies, (producers, consumers, workers and NGO's), women, youth and the regions. The working groups were: 1) Models of Production 2) Markets/Food Chains 3) Working Conditions/Social Aspects 4) Access to Land and Resources 5) Public Policies. With between 50 and 80 people in each working group, it was necessary to divide into 20 different sub-groups, which were the key spaces for information exchange. Discussion papers for each working group and each of the sub-groups were provided by the steering committee well in advance of the forum. This three level approach proved to be very effective and inclusive. There was an enormous amount of work done by volunteers and the steering committee to maintain the pace of the forum. By the second last day, we had already agreed on the first draft of the declaration, which left the last half-day for refinement.

Four years ago in Nyéleni, Mali, the world came together to form the 6 pillars of food sovereignty. This laid the foundation for many people to begin identifying what food sovereignty means in their lives and their work and in their own regions. Nyéleni Europe was a great example of a region coming together, exchanging information and experiences and advancing the move towards food sovereignty in Europe. Nyéleni Europe was collaboratively organized by several European organizations including the European Coordination of La Via Campesina.

For more information on Nyéleni Europe and to read the declaration go to: [www.nyelenieurope.net](http://www.nyelenieurope.net)



# The Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing

The NFU would like to congratulate Amelia Haines (14 years old) of Peel, New Brunswick, and Rebecca Mills (17 years old) of St. Marys, Ontario, who are the final runner-ups of the inaugural Paul Beingessner Award. The Beingessner Award is given to the author (age 21 years or under) of the best 500-1000 word essay on agriculture and food issues in Canada. This year's theme was The Importance of Family Farms in Canada. The Beingessner Award is named after Paul Beingessner of Truax, Saskatchewan, who passed away in the spring of 2009 in a tragic farm accident. Described as the "god-father of modern shortline railways" by former NFU President Stewart Wells, Paul was instrumental in the founding of Saskatchewan's first shortline railway, Southern Rails Co-operative. Beingessner also worked with the Ministry of Highways Short Line Advisory Unit supporting the efforts of other farmers to start shortline railways, served as a Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Delegate, and was an ardent supporter of the Canadian Wheat Board. In his later years, Beingessner was perhaps best known for his weekly column on farming and transportation issues with a social justice focus featured in papers across Western Canada.

Below are Amelia Haines' and Rebecca Mills' essays:

## *Importance of Family Farms in Canada — by Amelia Haines*

*The old-fashioned potato digger churned furiously as my Grandfather steered his tractor over several slightly wet potato hills. I watched in awe as dozens of potatoes fell into the fresh top soil. Adjusting my work gloves, I hurriedly began dumping handfuls of potatoes into 10lb bags trying to keep pace with my uncle . . .*

Growing up in a rural area of New Brunswick, my favorite place in the entire world was my Grandfather's potato farm. I spent many summers happily exploring the small brook that ran from Grampie's lake, watching young calves scamper throughout the pasture, and eagerly learning about harvesting potatoes. Being too young to actually become a crew member on the potato harvester, I continued to expand on my farming knowledge by asking questions and simply observing. From a young age I wanted to be a farmer, just like Grampie. As I grew older, it became apparent I had inherited my Grandfather's love of the land.

I believe anyone in Canada who has the opportunity to live on a family farm is very fortunate. Many enriching and character-building day-to-day experiences on family farms have helped to shape who we are individually and how we impact our communities. Daily lessons in hard work, perseverance, dedication, strong values, community life and spirit, knowledge of plants

and animals, respect for nature and our environment, as well as many, many more, have all impacted our society in positive ways. Without the existence of family-operated farms many of these lessons will be lost to future generations.

In New Brunswick, much of the acreage that our ancestors toiled to clear has slowly disappeared as, one by one, our family farms have ceased to exist. Larger farms have swallowed the smaller ones, and now even the larger farms are in danger. The number of family farms in Canada is dwindling as well and soon our main food producers will be large corporations. Are they in the agricultural business because they love it and it's in their blood and it makes them who they are? I don't think so. When the average Canadian shopper visits the produce section of their local grocery store I feel they deserve quality products grown by farmers who take pride in what they produce and sell, not by large companies who care only about the bottom line.

Farming is what I and thousand of other young Canadians are meant to do. It isn't just a job to us, it is a way of life. A way of life that is sadly disappearing right along with the family farms. The reality hits me hard - I may never get the chance to fulfill my destiny of following in my Grandfather's footsteps.

—nfu—



## Importance of Family Farms in Canada — by Rebecca Mills

*“As the farmer who won the lottery said when asked what he was going to do with his winnings, “Keep farming until it is all gone.”- Anonymous.*

It is difficult to find a person more proud, and at the same time modest, than a farmer. Farming is not a job to a farmer, it is a lifestyle, a passion, a dedication and especially in the case of family farms, it is tradition. It is rising at 6:00am 365 days of the year and working until the sun sets that evening; through wind, rain, snow and sleet it is getting the task done because cows need to be milked, fields ploughed and mouths fed, even if the weather, machinery or livestock does not cooperate. It is dirt under the nails, grease on the hands, tears in the pants, pennies in the pockets and a smile on the face. It is a way of life for Canada's family farmers and it always has been.

Under Laurier's Liberal government in 1896 Sir Clifford Sifton, Minister of Immigration, solidified Canada's foundation when he began the mass immigration campaign titled “The Last Best West”. Over a period of eighteen years three million settlers, mainly western Europeans, left behind the known for the unknown and started a new life in Canada's vast Prairie Provinces. These brave people strengthened the lifestyle of the family farm and provided Canada with the opportunity to advance into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as a powerful nation. Since then Canada has certainly expanded economically, culturally and socially and as Canada advances, so has the face of Canadian agriculture. Approximately 98% of farms in Canada are family farms, even as the number of farms decline, as has occurred steadily for the past 55 years and this is not the only change Canadian farmers have experienced. But what has never changed is the importance of family farms in our nation.

The family farm, not only because of its roots, has benefited Canada in many aspects. As of 2006 there were 124 560 farm families in Canada ranging from families of two to over seven people. Farming provides a source of income for these families and stimulates the economy through the buying and selling of such products and the products and labourers needed to operate a farm; in 2006 dairy farmers employed 50 800 people compared to General Motors Canada who employed 22 000 people. To put it in a simple perspective, for every dollar a Canadian farmer earns in gross sales he or she has paid out 0.83 to 0.91¢ in operating expenses. This is just an average, and while it does represent the struggle farmers face it also represents how much money farmers fuel in the Canadian economy. Farmers are like miners, and loggers. They use

the raw materials Mother Nature has granted them to make a living and without the primary industry there is no secondary or tertiary industry, let alone jobs or trade. The Canadian economy needs our family farms.

More obviously, family farms provide Canadians and international markets with food. Family farms tend to be smaller scale farms and more often are involved in mixed farming but they do not necessarily need to fit either of these criteria. Often because of their size, family farms are the force behind the local food movement. They are the men, women and children who have introduced the now trendy concept which eating locally embodies; knowing where your food comes from, how it is made and developing a relationship between farmer and consumer. Family farms are important to Canada because they fill empty stomachs at home and around the world.

Family farms are not just important to the industry or the economy but also the family. A family farm represents how a family can all work together to provide for themselves. It begins at a very early age riding on dad's knee when he drives the tractor and continues to develop with age. And like any other family they do not always get along but it is all apart of the family bonding experience. Family farming is not a ‘me’ experience, it is a ‘we’ experience. We picked those stones, we planted those seeds, we fed those people. It is an education for children so one day maybe they too can carry on the tradition because they are the future of farming. It also teaches children to be patient, dedicated, proud, resourceful, optimistic, generous, a jack of all trades and how to endure hard labour. Like the pride a teacher experiences when their class graduates, a farm parent encounters that same pride when their son or daughter buys their own farm or inherits the family farm so they can take what they learned and pass it along to their children. As the average age of the farmer in Canada increases, 52 in 2006, and less young people enter the business (9.2% of all farmers were under 35 in 2006) many question the future of the family farm and farming altogether. The appeal of life in urban areas and pursuing post secondary education may lure away some farm children but the most passionate will remain, the farm will always be home and the memories and lessons learned will last a lifetime.

Canada needs family farms. Our population, economy and culture was built upon family farms and while the industry may appear to be less important now because only 2% of the population chooses to be involved in agriculture, the importance has not dwindled. Our economy needs family farms, and our stomachs need family farms. Canadians need family farms. Families need family farms; its tradition, it's the future and its home.

—nftu—



# Know Your National Farmers Foundation

Your **National Farmers Foundation** was established under the Canadian Corporation Act in April 1987 through sponsorship of the National Farmers Union. While registered as a Foundation, it did not receive charitable tax deductible status until 1998.

The N.F.F. is managed by a five-member voluntary Board which operates at arm's length and independent from the NFU. The N.F.F. Board evaluates applications from individuals and reputable organizations requesting funding for specific education and organization projects.

Under Canada Revenue Agency rules, 80% of all individual donations must be expended for projects. Our ability to make grants are, therefore, highly dependent upon individual donations received from members each year.

A reserve fund was established when the Foundation was first created from donations received from religious groups, labour unions, wills and bequests. These donations were not subject to the C.R.A. 80% rule, but interest earnings are used to fund projects and operating expenses. The reserve fund is currently \$109,000 of which amount \$19,000 is invested in the NFU Property Consortium and the balance in GIC's.

Since charitable status was granted in 1998, the Foundation has been able to fund over 20 projects totalling more than \$60,000, including assistance for such programs as the Region 3 Ontario History Project; Region 3 Revitalization; International Program Committee; Duck Creek (Region 6) History of Louis McNamee; N.B. Education Program; Caribbean Fair Trade Awareness; and NFU Youth Workshops.

The potential for many more worthwhile projects is very real. That is why we urge all members to include the N.F.F. as one of your **charities of choice!**

## **Since our last report, the following donations have been received:**

**Donations:** Victor R. Wellish, Willowdale, ON; Alan B. Tanenbaum, Toronto, ON; John Roney, Whitby, ON; John Oberg, Forestburg, AB; Annette Desmarais, Saskatoon, SK; Karen Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Phyllis Creighton, Toronto, ON; Yvonne Schmitz, Calgary, AB; George Rogers, Dundas, ON; Westdale United Church, Hamilton, ON; Joann Phillips, Sooke, BC; R. Bruce Jones, Maple Ridge, BC; Wayne Field, Liberty, SK; J. Michael Watts, Goderich, ON; Margaret Pointing, Mississauga, ON; Dawn Vermette, Charlottetown, PE; Jan Noppe, Penticton, BC; H. Galloway, Nanaimo, BC; R.W. Hyatt, Thetis Island, BC; Barbara Fawcett, St. Pauls, ON; Erna Zinn, Langley, BC; Lyle Hall, London, ON; Betty Brannan, Galiano, BC; Joseph Legatt, Pathlow, SK; Siegfried Kleinau, Binbrook, ON; Peter Garstang, Burlington, ON; Edward McGleese, Edmonton, AB; John Smith, Charlottetown, PE; Elizabeth Peters, Thunder Bay, ON; Charles Benjamin, Croton, ON; Vivien Hylands Hostetler, Cobolt, ON; Valana Strandberg, Burnaby, BC; Stella Pierce, Halifax, NS; Adele Armin, Toronto, ON; Arthur Millward, Winnipeg, MB; Raymond Morris, Salmon Arm, BC; Shirley Courtis, Mont Royal, PQ; Yvonne Schmitz, Calgary, AB; Aylmer Baker, Granum, AB; Maria Heynen, Ottawa, ON; Stanley Nowicki, Peterborough, ON; Gay Martel, Capreol, ON; G.M. Gamache, Coquitlam, BC; Doreen Delacherois, Revelstoke, BC; Gil Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Ann Gibson, Toronto, ON; Urban and Mary Laughlin, Summerside, PE; All Charities Campaign, Winnipeg, MB; Tibor Kiss, St. Catherines, ON; Ray Morris, Salmon Arm, BC.

**Memorial Donations - In Memory Of:** John Calvin – George Calvin, New Norway, AB; Cliff Phillips – Henry and Joyce Neufeld, Waldeck, SK; Doris Blodgett, Abbey, SK; NFU Region 6 District 3; Catherine Christie, Seoul, Korea; Elmer Laird – Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Theresa Guggenmos – Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Winifred, Ed and Glen Miller – Margaret Miller, Regina, SK; Kurt Kleim – Joyce and Henry Neufeld, Waldeck, SK; Dan Palsech – Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Joseph Clarkson – Theresa Davies, Regina, SK; Homer Beach – John Warnock, Regina, SK; Janet Skutnitsky – Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Ina Miller – Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Joe Weiss – Leona Gom, White Rock, BC; John Clair – Mary Denson, Thunder Bay, ON; Gilbert Anderson – Joyce Ollikka, Newbrook, AB; Gary DeRoo, Carey Wakelin, Mary Konaschuk – Vilda Laing, Cut Knife, SK; Seymour Smith – Patricia Hymers, Swift Current, SK; George Roth – Robert Gehl, Regina, SK; Douglas Lelond – Margaret Elder, Oak Lake, MB.

***We thank all donors for their support for the programs we have helped fund.***

***As a charitable foundation (Registered Number 882622368RR) all donations are income-tax deductible.***

**Our donation envelope is included in this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly*.**

We look forward to your valued support! Thank you!

**National Farmers Foundation**

**2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 4B6**



# **The Western farm market power:**

## *50 years of progress and 50 years of regress*

**F**or me as a farmer, the prospect of an elected Canadian Government denying farmers a say in arguably, the most important question in the history of farming in Western Canada is alarming.

Without the marketing and representative power of the Canadian Wheat Board, Prairie grain farmers would be a scattered bunch of thousands peddling their wares to a tiny handful of powerful grain buyers, expert at playing farmers off against each other.

It is sad that farmers, who bear the capital costs, the production costs, plus a now hefty portion of cost and responsibility as the grain moves along the marketing system, are largely disregarded or allowed only token participation in the formulation of national agricultural policy.

When we began farming in the early 1960s, we inherited legislated access to producer cars, the benefits of the Crow Freight Rate, farmer-owned Prairie Pool co-operative elevator systems, a well-funded Canadian Grain Commission, a world class national research and quality controlled public seed program, and the CWB. These had been developed gradually as a result of intolerable grain marketing conditions in the early 20th century.

In 2011, only one remains. The Crow and the Pools are gone, the research is being starved and/or turned over to the private conglomerates (creating enormous new seed cost for farmers), and the CGC, under a fee freeze since 1994, has been ordered by the Harper government to balance its books without government funding. The CWB is fighting for its life.

### **Downloaded Enormous Expense**

In the post-Crow/post-Pool era the new "streamlined" and "efficient" grain transportation system has downloaded enormous expense to farmers in increased cost of hauling, purchase of heavy highway freighters, and wear and tear on farm-tax-maintained roads, and to the general public in highway fatalities as heavy freight meant for rail is transferred to roads designed for cars.

Farmers are also left paying for the new system and demolition of the old one and buying new on farm grain storage as the new system routinely fails to

match the handling capabilities of the old one. Under all these "improvements" farm exports have tripled, but real farm incomes have been halved, and farm debt has doubled over the past two decades.

For the first time in their decades-long battle to eliminate the CWB, the private grain trade at long last has this biggest prize of all in its sights.

Despite international tribunals finding CWB to be non-trade distorting, and despite consistently competitive CWB returns, the fact remains the grain giants have been obsessed with fond memories of the good old pre-CGC, pre-CWB days when they enjoyed unregulated grades, dockage, weights, and margins which they got to keep. Now a more than corporation-friendly federal government has a majority in Ottawa and is prepared to repeal Canadian law, and deny farmers a say in the matter of their Board's future.

And then there are the enormous collateral losses when a major player in a carefully evolved and integrated system is suddenly eliminated.

Should the feds and their coalition succeed in axing the CWB, the grain giants would be rid of those pesky producer cars – a legislated right of prairie farmers rendered inoperable without the CWB to coordinate car supply and act as a selling agent at port terminals. This, in turn, would kill the fledgling short-line rail companies currently up and running or in process of development across the West.

These lines – purchased at great cost by local farmers and a necessity for producer car movement, allow grain to escape expensive line elevator handling systems and keep \$1200 to \$1800 per car out of greedy corporate hands and back in rural communities. There would then be no need for those equally pesky trucking premiums now used to lure grain past the producer car loading sites.

Railways could see a loosening of restrictions on freight charges. Ritz has already stated publicly that he would be willing to pay more.

What is really going on here?

A politically engineered expropriation without compensation for the benefit of private corporations

*(continued on page 31...)*



*(Western farm market power, from page 30)*

of the Western Canadian grain business - one of the few in the world still owned and controlled by the farmers who grow the product.

The Conservative/grain company/rail coalition agenda appears set to repeal Canadian law in order to rob Western farmers of their right to decide on the future of a marketing agency they own – regardless of potential fallout and market chaos.

The CWB cannot survive in any useful form without single desk. Without the assured supply of a monopoly, the Board would be unable to make

forward sales to take advantage of market peaks.

Since unenforceable farmer contracts are not bankable, there would be severe limitations in CWB cash and credit availability.

Author Raj Patel observes in his book *Stuffed and Starved* that "The modern food system is being designed to siphon wealth from rural areas, with just enough left to keep people quiet." —nfu—

*If you would like to receive the longer version of this article, please contact the NFU office.*

*(Region 5 Report, from page 10)*

more expensive private market system that Mr. Ritz has not described. Mr. Ritz would increase our cost of grain marketing for no measurable benefit. Supply and demand have never been in balance on grain and the result is low prices. The Ritz proposal is make farmers compete against farmers, this is not helpful because we know that one extra bushel of canola or one more pig makes the prices drop. The confused Mr. Ritz has not explained how he can establish a strong viable CWB while killing the very benefit of the CWB. He is either uninformed of the CWB operations, or is making deals to increase the profitability of elevator companies who make money from margins upon our grain.

Farmers must rely upon each other to battle for better prices in the market place. The CWB

and Marketing Boards help us in this service. Both of these institutions are at risk from the new federal government.

Region 5 kindly asks you to take action by letters and by demonstrating to inform the public and your MP of the benefits that the CWB, the CGC, CIGI, Churchill, and Producer Cars provide to farmers.

Please volunteer to help the National Farmers Union. Be sure to book yourself into attending the NFU National Convention. Contact myself, Ian Robson, Region 5 Coordinator 204-858-2479 or Bev Stow, Board Member, at 204-745-3252.

*In Union, Ian Robson*

*(Region 6 Report, from page 11)*

NFU President Terry Boehm gave an excellent presentation on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and how it will threaten farmers' rights to use their own seed and local food systems. The NFU has led the way in raising concern about CETA, and most of this work has been carried out by President Boehm.

Delegates also heard a presentation given by CWB Director Kyle Komeychuk. Komeychuk told farmers about how Ritz visited the CWB head office in Regina for the first time and gave the CWB its marching orders. The meeting was only 20min long. Komeychuk also talked about the decision made by the CWB directors to hold the plebiscite and how important it was going to be for farmers to vote. A resolution was passed committing the NFU to lobby the Wall government about the CWB issue.

**Saskatchewan Election**

Saskatchewan voters will head to the polls on November 7<sup>th</sup>. We must act on our resolution passed in Lumsden and pressure Premier Wall to stand up to the Harper government and defend the CWB's single desk, just as he did on the Potash issue. Always remind Wall that he supports the single desk for Potash, therefore he must support it for farmers who clearly demonstrated that they want it maintained in the recent plebiscite. We also need to get NDP leader Dwain Lingenfelter to declare his unequivocal support for the CWB. Lingenfelter has been far too quiet on this issue.

It is very important that we all work very hard to make the CWB a key issue in this campaign.

*In Union, Ed Sagan*



## NFU BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICES

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Region 3: RR 5, 5420 Hwy #6 N., Suite 229, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2 Ph: 1-888-832-9638; Email: office@nfontario.ca

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

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## NFU 42<sup>nd</sup> National Convention

# NOVEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> TO 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2011



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