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**union farmer**

QUARTERLY

Spring 2012



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*Photo: Groenewegan's Dairy Barn. See article on page 15.  
(photo by Joan Brady)*

## Message from the Editor...



Kevin Wipf

It is no secret that the attack on democracy has been an underlying theme of the latest political struggles involving farm families in Canada. During the fall, the bill designed to kill the CWB, Bill C-18, was introduced into Parliament without a farmer vote first taking place, as required by the Canadian Wheat Board Act. It was then shoved through Parliament as quickly as possible, with debate shut down at every turn. Also, for well over a year Canada has been involved in secret, intensive negotiations with the European Union to conclude the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). The CETA is the most far reaching economic agreement Canada has ever considered. It is truly amazing that at no point have Canadians been told about its details, or been asked what they think. These are but two examples of how the democratic rights of Canadians are being undermined.

This attack on democracy touches every Canadian. Our democratic rights are at the very

core of what Canadians hold dear. They are part of our very identity. Yet, our democratic rights are disappearing from right beneath our noses.

As a national organization with members and associate members located across the country, the NFU is in a uniquely advantageous position to take a lead role in this struggle. The deeply ingrained democratic processes through which the NFU makes decisions, make us an excellent example for our fellow Canadians. It is crucial that the NFU does not allow these practices to become forgotten methods of governance. Never before has it been more important for the NFU to undertake grassroots organizing, and to strengthen its locals. We must not allow this attack on our democratic rights to take place unnoticed.

As NFU members we must start the conversation with our friends and neighbours. Invite them over for a pot luck meal, to enjoy each other's food and cooking, and to discuss these issues that only exist because of too much silence.

*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

Greetings. Spring is here and it is a time when those of us who grow crops turn our thoughts to seed. As many of you know, starting over a dozen years ago the NFU fought a very successful campaign to stop the introduction of UPOV'91 in Canada. Our Seed Saver campaign was broadly supported and we were able to prevent this form of so called Plant Breeder's Rights. UPOV'91 would have put in place mechanisms where seed saving, reuse, exchange, and selling among farmers and citizens could be effectively prevented if the provisions of UPOV'91 were used to their full extent. Unfortunately bad ideas never seem to go away, and sources in the Canadian Seed Growers Association and others are suggesting that it will be in place soon. With the Harper government's anti-farmer behaviour in other areas this is not so surprising, but nevertheless very disturbing.

As we all know those that control the seed, control the food that we eat, as well as the way we farm. There are tremendous powers being conferred on so called plant breeders, but the increasing reality is that these powers flow to the companies they work for. Farmer's and citizen's autonomy is being constantly eroded by granting extreme powers like UPOV'91, patents and other forms of rights without a fundamental understanding of the consequence. The common argument made is that we need these mechanisms, so that there is a return that makes it attractive enough for companies to engage in new research and varietal development. This argument is even being advanced by public institutions in some quarters because of the funding cuts they have experienced. The danger of such an argument is that it is simple and appears to be completely logical.

Let us review what sorts of powers UPOV'91 entails. First, it allows for the first time, double protection on a variety: patents and plant breeder's rights. Secondly it allows the collection of royalties at any point in the food system. Currently royalties can only be collected on protected varieties at the time of sale of actual seed. Under UPOV'91 royalties

including endpoint royalties could be collected not just on the seed, but on the entire crop of a particular variety at the time of sale of the crop, at the port, at the processing plant, seed cleaning plant, or even at a retail outlet for food, for example. In effect, the rights multiply as the seed is multiplied. Very lucrative indeed.

In Australia the endpoint royalties range from \$3.80 to \$1.70 for malt barley, \$2.50 for Durum wheat, \$2.00 for oats, and \$1.70 for wheat per tonne. In the example of one malt barley variety, this includes a \$3.00 breeder royalty and a \$0.80 management fee. For forage varieties that are harvested for hay, it costs \$3.64 to \$5.00 each time you cut the hay per hectare.

Proponents of this say there is no threat to farmers being able to save and reuse seed, because there is a farmer's exemption in UPOV'91 that allows seed saving. What they fail to tell you is this exemption is conditional, based on whether the signatory government is willing to grant it for a particular crop kind or variety. This makes farmers dependent on their government to be able to save and reuse seed, as they have always done as a fundamental basis of agriculture. What they also fail to tell you is that the breeder has exclusive privileges over the conditioning and stocking of the variety. Conditioning is the cleaning, packaging, sorting, grading, and treating of seed. Stocking is the storing and warehousing of seed for any purpose, including importing, selling, and exporting.

It is clear that when you can control the conditioning and stocking of seed, you can eliminate the farmer's privilege or simply make it unworkable. If a farmer can only clean seed under the authorization of the PBR holder, he/she is very quickly under their thumb. Furthermore, if you cannot store the seed (stocking) that you have just had cleaned, your so-called farmer's privilege is trumped again. The legislation in most countries where UPOV'91 is used also requires seed cleaners to keep records of what they cleaned, how much, and for whom. They have given up these records on demand.

*(continued on page 23...)*



# A message from the...



## Women's President

— by Joan Brady

As we await the last phase of consultation on the next Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), I thought it made some sense to check in with the process up to this point. We are entering the last year of the Growing Forward APF, and well into a year of consultation on the Growing Forward II APF. Equally relevant to the NFU's representation of farm families on upcoming and current issues, participating in this vision setting process allows us to be proactive in our approach.

Growing Forward II will guide federal agricultural policy for the next five year period, from 2013-18. These frameworks are an attempt to identify priority areas and upcoming strategies, to provide the industry with a vision “for a profitable, innovative, competitive, market-oriented agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products industry.”

Phase One in the consultation process happened in May and June 2010, and many NFU members, myself included, attended a full day, round table consultation. The NFU media release on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, called for a real analysis of farm income and debt levels to properly understand the current state of the sector. The NFU also called for a policy that considered both global and domestic markets, various scales of primary and processing production, and that also appreciated a strong, stable, domestic market as the critical mass to meet global opportunities. Many of those ideas were well reflected in the resulting report *Agriculture 2020 – As It Was Heard*, which can be found on line at [http://www4.agr.gc.ca/resources/prod/doc/pdf/21003\\_GF2\\_spring2010\\_eng.pdf](http://www4.agr.gc.ca/resources/prod/doc/pdf/21003_GF2_spring2010_eng.pdf).

Phase Two of the consultation invited participants to examine and discuss proposed policy areas that were identified in Phase One, and to analyze a discussion paper entitled *Charting the Way Forward to 2020*. This document can be found online at [http://www4.agr.gc.ca/resources/prod/doc/pdf/gf2\\_disc\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://www4.agr.gc.ca/resources/prod/doc/pdf/gf2_disc_paper_en.pdf). The discussion paper identified two broad outcomes:

- 1) *Competitiveness and Market Growth*: increased productivity, reduced costs, responsiveness to consumer demands and increasing market share both globally and domestically.
- 2) *Adaptability and Sustainability*: managing risk, anticipating change, adjusting to market and environmental pressures (climate change) and managing/maintaining our resources (natural, financial, people).

The key drivers to achieve these outcomes are innovation and a responsive institutional and physical infrastructure.

Again NFU members attended the consultations. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the NFU sent out a media release which critiqued the process, and commented on a pronounced absence of any discussion on domestic market opportunities. Although it was acknowledged in the *As it was Heard* report that a one size fits all approach will not work in such a complex industry, proposed solutions seemed to compliment the prescribed vision of less, but larger, globally-oriented farms.

(continued on page 22...)



Photo: Laretta Rice, Joan Brady and Ann Slater tour Groenewegen's organic dairy farm (see story on page 15).

# A message from the...



Cammie Harbottle

## Youth President and Youth Vice President



Paul Slomp

### Thoughts from a young farmer (and the Youth Vice President) ...

I have heard it said that "You are only young once, and if you work it right, once is enough" - no pressure...

For those of us who are young and beginning farmers, this world is an interesting minefield to navigate. Driven by the notion that the future of food must lie in the hands of those closest to the land, we venture forth into a field strewn with temptations of the "status quo." Realizing the critical need for change, we try to navigate a path from the world "as is" to a world that "should be." A quick glance at our world "as is" and it becomes quite clear that we are nearing a turning point. At a macro level, there are many indicators that we need to shift the ways in which we live, the ways in which we farm. Climate change; peak oil and our dependence fossil fuel energy; the financial crisis and our addiction to debt; the loss of prime agricultural land, and; the legal power of corporations over our political and knowledge systems are but the most obvious.

Domestically, the writing is also on the wall that change is a comin'. The crack down on collective marketing and bargaining structures, which put an end to our Canadian Wheat Board and now threatens supply management has made evident the erosion of our political processes.

Fortunately, visions of the world that "should be" are also emerging. People and farmers around the world - some driven by need, others driven by analysis - are coming together and organizing themselves at the grassroots. Guided by principles of cooperation and sovereignty, they are struggling to resist and overcome the oppressive structures of the world "as is".

La Via Campesina, an organization of 300 million farmers, is working to increase biodiversity, gender equity, critical skills and knowledge, and give a voice to farmers around the world. In Canada, the NFU, as a member of La Via Campesina, and through its endless work on agricultural policy, is part of this grassroots movement illuminating a world that "should be."

Another notable force for change is young people. Scattered across the country a number of young and new farmers are rising up. We are motivated by the love of the land, the joy of working with our hands, the opportunity to create change, and our desire to feed people. Many of us struggle to navigate the world "as is" in an effort to realize the world that "should be." Setting out, we are filled with questions: Who am I growing this food for? What is an appropriate scale of farming? How much debt load can and should we carry? Is the owning of farm land desirable/affordable? What kind of machinery should we be investing in? And, how do we ensure long term soil fertility? These questions are an opportunity for us to look to our elders for guidance.

In reflection one thing becomes certain, setting up or taking over a farm business today requires one who has their eyes wide open to the world around them. As I continue to meet innovative and determined young farmers across this country, I gather hope for the future...

*In solidarity,*

*Paul Slomp, Youth Vice President &*

*Cammie Harbottle, Youth President*

*(in the background changing diapers of our new NFU member)*



# Regional Reports



**REGION**

## ONE (PEI)



- by Randall Affleck

### Atlantic Beef Products

During the fall provincial election campaign when the Liberal's unveiled their agriculture platform, Women's District Director Edith Ling asked Premier Ghiz if re-elected would his government continue to provide funding to the Atlantic Beef Products Inc. (ABP), the Maritimes only federally inspected meat plant. Premier Ghiz committed that the plant was a priority of his government and would provide the necessary financial assistance.

The province currently allocates \$1.5 million to the beef processing plant as it tries to cater to more value added, high end, and niche markets, and becomes financially viable.

Finance Minister, Wes Sheridan, announced in December that the projected deficit for the year would exceed \$73 million, up considerably from the original projection of \$31 million. The higher cattle prices, the highest prices that ABP has ever paid for cattle, have led to the province spending \$3 million to support the plant. Now the province is reported to be taking a hard look at whether to continue funding the beef plant.

In the first year of the Ghiz government's first term, they closed the Island's only federally inspected hog plant. That decision virtually eliminated the hog industry on PEI, and all the spinoffs to the local economy.

I am really beginning to dislike the first year after an election. To quote Edith Ling, "To even consider withdrawing funding to the beef plant is outrageous!" Amen sister.

### Potato Market

United Potato Growers of Canada are telling growers on PEI that the province has 30 percent

fewer spuds than the same period last year. Shipment's, however, are 8 percent above the same period last year.

Farmers simply need cash and are moving their crop for a lot less money then they should be getting, given the market conditions this year. For sure the growers suffer economically as a result, but so does the local economy; all because farmers are indebted and cash strapped, and forced to take illogical short term measures to keep the sheriff at bay. As long as growers keep shipping, there is no need for the buyers to pay more.

Farmers as individuals really do not make the best macroeconomic decisions for themselves or other growers, in my view, and this is a perfect example where a single desk orderly marketing model would benefit farmers and the Canadian economy.

### Ethanol from Sugar Beets

Fifty acres of a genetically modified Round-Up resistant energy sugar beet developed by a German company was grown this past summer in Savage Harbour, PEI. An ethanol processing facility is to be constructed in Cornwall, PEI, and is expected to be producing ethanol by the end of January. The provincial government is contributing \$1.8 million in loans, grants and labour subsidies to the Nova Scotia company, Atlantec BioEnergy. The federal government is contributing \$340,000. Their new process is supposed to result in 10 units of energy coming out of a process that uses 1.5 units of energy going in.

### Twitter

Interesting social media where like minded crazies can find each other and network, swap interesting information and links. With some discipline, it does not need to become a time sucking monster either. Follow me if you are using it. See what type of mischief the NFU can cause in 2012.

*In Union, Randall Affleck*



**REGION**

**ONE (New Brunswick)**



- by Betty Brown

**A** new year and our erratic weather continues in

New Brunswick (NB). As I write this we have about four inches of snow, but have had lots of cold weather. Potato farmers continue to deal with the after effects of last year's weather.

We have completed three years as one of two accredited general farm organization in N.B., and have applied for reaccreditation.

We have hired Melanie Jellett as an Executive Director, working twenty hours per week to take over some of the administrative duties previously completed by Barb Somerville.

The NFU in NB and the Agricultural Alliance have been working in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of

Finance to simplify the fuel tax rebate for NB farmers. The regulatory amendments will include the following changes:

- implementation of a simplified annual report format for registered producers;
- a single application for the RPAP card and the purchaser's permit with one issued card;
- elimination of the current \$12.50 annual fee associated with the purchaser's permit;
- amendments to the current record keeping requirements.

Hopefully the time we have spent on this process will be of benefit to our farmers.

The annual NFU in NB district meeting will be held March 10<sup>th</sup> in Woodstock. This meeting is open to anyone. For more information contact Melanie by email at [nfu.nb.office@gmail.com](mailto:nfu.nb.office@gmail.com) or Betty by email or phone at [betron@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:betron@nbnet.nb.ca) or 278-5439.

*In Union, Betty Brown*

**NATIONAL FARMERS UNION 42<sup>ND</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION**

November 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – London, Ontario

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3	Reports - Board of Directors; Women's Pres.; Youth Pres.; National Farmers Foundation	
5	Public Event – Dr. David Montgomery	
6	Panel: Land Grabbing in Canada – Carl Cosack, Stephen Ogden, Dr. Sue Machum	
7	Address: Indigenous Perspectives on Land Issues – Ellen Gabriel	
8	Peter Eggers	
9	Banquet and Awards	
10	Reports - Women's Caucus; Youth Caucus; International Program Committee	
11	Address: Fight to Save Canadian Wheat Board – Allen Oberg	
12	Panel: Land Grabbing in Developing Countries – Devlin Kuyek, Anuradha Mittal, Lauren Ravon	
13	Closing	



## REGION

**THREE (Ontario)**

- by Ann Slater

First of all, I would like to extend a thank you to the NFU members from across the country who made the trip to London for the National Convention in November. The National Convention received a decent amount of coverage in the Ontario farm press with articles on topics like land grabbing, the sow stall resolution, and the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). During November and December, many Region 3 members and locals let politicians and the media know that Ontario farmers were also upset with the federal government's to dismantlement of the CWB.

In December, I travelled to eastern Ontario to visit locals and members in that part of the province. My visit took me to several locals and farms, starting with a fabulous local food supper at Local 334's AGM in the Belleville area.

Oliver Haan, Local 334 President, is also the Zone 4 representative on the board of Ontario Pork. Zone 4 covers the area from Hwy 400 (which runs north from Toronto up through Barrie, for those of you not in Ontario) to the Quebec border. This is by far the largest zone within Ontario Pork, but it now has only 73 hog producers. Since 2005, there has been a 34 percent decrease in the number of pork producers across Ontario. As Oliver noted, this loss of hog producers leads to the loss of rural infrastructure and the decline of rural communities. Oliver also spoke about the Feeding a Hungry World: A Summit for Animal Agriculture conference he attended in the fall. One of the points brought forward at the conference was that most of society (96 percent) has a positive view of farmers. Part of the message at the summit was that corporate agribusiness could piggyback on the credibility and good image society has of family farms. It is part of our work, within the NFU, to use this positive view of farmers to build support for family farms.

The next day, I moved down the road to Local 316's New Farm Project Fall Gathering in the Kingston area. Much of the discussion at the Fall Gathering was around their project, *Plan to Grow: Scaling Up Local Food in Kingston & Countryside*. Discussions at the gathering centered around issues like farm viability and what is a viable farm, how to rebuild and maintain the middle (eg. small processors and abattoirs), preserving farmland, access to finances for new and small farms, strengthening farmer and community networks, and facilitating farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing.

My last stop in eastern Ontario, was Local 362, which covers several eastern Ontario counties and the City of Ottawa. Issues discussed during the meeting, included the actions of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, CETA, the dismantling of the CWB, the loss of small abattoirs, threats to supply management, and a proposed garbage dump in a community within their local.

In early January, I attended a meeting of Waterloo/Wellington Local 340. Local 340 is busy planning its annual Sustainable Farming Awards banquet when it will, once again, hand out awards for sustainable farming and barn preservation and to a future farmer. Again, there was discussion of the threats to supply management. But, there was also discussion of the importance of pushing for changes like the new entrant program, and the cap on quota prices implemented by the Dairy Farmers of Ontario in recent years. Local 340 is also keeping an eye on the ongoing efforts to stop the development of the Melancthon Quarry, which was highlighted at our National Convention.

Throughout the winter, there are a plethora of farm shows across the province. Thank you to the many NFU members and locals who draw attention to the work of the NFU at shows and events like the Ottawa Valley Farm Show, the East Central Farm Show in Lindsay, Eco-Farm Day, Grey-Bruce Farmers Week, the Western Fair Farm Show and the Southwest Ag Conference.

*In Union, Ann Slater*





## REGION

**FIVE (Manitoba)**

- by Ian Robson

Region 5 NFU members are very active and informed people who understand the need to join in the struggle to maintain our marketing structures like the CWB. Thank you to all who continue to send letters and take their own time and money to help defend the CWB. Proof that farmers understand the need to unite strongly to help capture extra value from the market was revealed by the results of the CWB's plebiscite held this past summer, where 62 percent of wheat farmers voted in favour of maintaining the single desk. Just like the details of a production contract matter, so too does the matter and form of government process. The law was upheld by Judge Campbell in his Section 47.1 ruling, that the federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz acted illegally by not consulting farmers before introducing Bill C-18 into Parliament. Those who believe in democracy should also uphold honesty. It is shameful for a government minister to claim that a vote of farmers is irrelevant.

The Minister is saying to farmers that our farm management is wrong, and it is not right to work with our neighbours to help to increase our grain prices. Why are there grain traders working together to find out what the seeded acres are, and estimate the production before the harvest? These traders like to buy low and sell high, taking their cut from the farmers incomes.

Grain traders love what the federal government has done to our CWB, and they boast their revenue will increase. Alliance Grain has a desire to acquire grain from farmers more cheaply. Such increased revenues come from the larger margins, basis, and potential low quality, larger tonnage crops that farmers would be talked into growing. Extra tonnage usually means lower prices. At a time of great financial upheaval and production increases in other parts of the world, the federal government is encouraging farmers to hire costly market advisers, instead of using a proven elected farmer directed single desk seller. The cost to shut down the new cwB 6.0 are to be taken on by the Canadian tax payer, whereas the operations of the farmer run CWB

cost them nothing. Indeed, the very definition of government waste is Bill C-18, the so called Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act. Now that taxpayers are on the hook, this issue has become a true concern for each Canadian, not just farmers.

The most telling comment from the Agriculture Minister has come regarding barley. Ritz suggested that the CWB was preventing the planting of barley acres, and that more acres of barley were needed to help to lower the price of barley to help cattle feeders. If this is the best Ritz can come up with for helping farmers, then we need a new Minister!

Farmers should be worried about crime. This is because you must pay patent fees and criminally high prices when purchasing seed and crop supplies. The new marketing craze for crop supplies is "one stop" bundles, with your production contract. The farmer faces very high risk, while the margin traders who purchase the crops we raise experience very low risk. Legions of paid analysts track the acres, weather conditions, and markets to provide advice to farmers. Good luck with timing your sales and weather conditions in 2012. Try to hold these market advisers to account for bad advice.

Sow stalls and confined chickens make life easy for an employee of an industry, but real farmers grow real food. The gap between retail food prices and farm gate prices, continues to increase. Cattle and hog prices are a bit better, but still do not make up for many years of losses while costs continue to rise.

Region 5 will be meeting with Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation, and will be encouraging them to introduce programs to help younger farmers get a start.

The new Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives is Ron Kostyshyn, a fellow farmer. He will need to listen to information on the issues, before making decisions. We thank previous Minister Struthers for his help with the defense of the CWB, because he recognizes its importance to the whole prairie region.

Canadian sovereignty is at risk from certain free trade deals that propose to limit government powers, in favor of corporate powers. Do we change our passports to read from the corporation that hires us?

Watch for notice of the Region 5 Convention, and please develop any policy resolution that you might like to present for discussion.

*In Union, Ian Robson*



## SIX (Saskatchewan)

### REGION



- by Ed Sagan

This summer and fall has been a busy year. The federal government in its wisdom were out to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). All we wanted was a vote in order to let the farmers decide the direction of the CWB. The CWB held its own vote and 62 percent of wheat farmers were in favour of retaining the single desk. The federal government knew they would lose if they held a plebiscite. In the December ruling in Winnipeg, the federal court judge ruled that the federal government was wrong to introduce Bill C-18. In the summer, I attended two regional meetings, one in Lumsden, Saskatchewan and the other in Onanole, Manitoba. Both meetings were very informative and well attended.

During the summer I also attended three CWB rallies. Two rallies were held before the CWB director's meetings in Dauphin, Manitoba and Regina, Saskatchewan. Terry Boehm held the third rally near his farm just outside of Allen, Saskatchewan. All of these rallies were very lively and well attended. Many of our farmers drove three hours or more to participate. I have to thank these people for going the extra mile to support this important cause.

As I write these words, our CWB directors are in Winnipeg attending two days of court hearings, hoping to get an injunction on Bill C-18. I hope the judge sees that we were right and the federal government was wrong in introducing this terrible bill.

During the summer and fall our Save the CWB Committee had conference calls every Tuesday morning, which kept our people informed and helped us to determine the direction that we wanted to follow. We appreciate that the time and effort that everyone put into these meetings.

On November 13-16<sup>th</sup>, I was invited to take part in a lobbying effort in Ottawa, where we spoke with many Senators from the represented parties. We had good success with the Liberal Senators, but not so with the Progressive Conservative and Conservative Senators.

On November 23-27<sup>th</sup> I attended the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual NFU Convention in London, Ontario. About 200 people attended. I have to thank the Executive for appointing me Coordinator for Region 6 once again.

I also have to thank my fellow Saskatchewan Board members Dixie Green and Glenn Tait for all of their advice and assistance, which has made my life much easier. Together we made an excellent team over the past year, serving the farmers of Saskatchewan. I look forward to working closely with them again this year.

Finally, I would very much like to thank the staff for their dedication and hard work over the past year. It has been a great pleasure to work with them also.

We have a lot of offshore investment in farmland in my area. This is becoming a growing concern, and you can be the NFU will be keeping a close watch.

Happy new year to everyone!

*In Solidarity, Ed Sagan*

## KEEP OUR CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD DVD's Available

Keep our Canadian Wheat Board DVD's are still available at the NFU National Office. This DVD was filmed at CWB Director's public meetings held in August 2011. Each clip provides important information from people who know what they are talking about – prairie farmers and farm families! We are asking for a donation of \$10 per DVD to help cover the costs of producing the DVD as well as postage and shipping.

You can order your copy by emailing [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca) or calling the office at 306-652-9465.



## REGION

**SEVEN (Alberta)**

- by Jan Slomp

**Canadian Wheat Board**

Our members have watched the federal government's actions against the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), in disbelief. Many wrote letters, and attended meetings and rallies, demanding that farmers be granted a vote to determine the future of CWB. Ritz and Harper have, like teenagers who are drunk with power, vandalized even a remote resemblance of a democratic process. The upside of the otherwise useless, newly passed, crime bill is that at least there will be enough cell space for these destructive criminals. That is, if our judicial system manages to uphold the law on this matter. Knowing the ruthlessness of the PM, it is only a matter of time before he also handcuffs the judicial system, in order to fully advance his agenda. We are all rooting for the court challenges called for by the dismissed elected CWB board members, Friends of the CWB, and CWB Alliance. Our lobbying efforts on Parliament Hill last fall showed us how the Harper government seized control of both the House and the Senate, by putting a time restriction on debate and limiting the budgets, to severely restrict House of Commons or Senate Standing Committee hearings. Both measures have formerly only been asked for in times of war, or periods of weak national unity. On the evening of the vote in the House of Commons, the rowdy cheering and howling of the Conservative members during the last stages of the debate and throughout the vote itself was so demeaning for opposition members and for us in the gallery, that I think it became a new low for humanity in Canada. I am still wondering if the Speaker was even in the House that day. The gallery on the other side was stacked with drummed up government supporters, people like WCWGA, who I am sure all enjoyed traveling, room and board, and a few drinks on the public's dime. Oh Canada!

**Change in Government**

Since the first of October, Alberta has a new Premier, and her name is Allison Redford. She has

worked abroad with the United Nations in the past, has a nice personality, and a reputable history. However, the one party state has not fundamentally changed. Soon after being freshly elected, she publicly announced that her government would be stopping the building of new (for export purpose) privately owned, publicly paid for, power lines. The next day she went back on her word, and retracted her statement.

With the provincial election looming we all have to remind our amnesia-prone neighbours around us, that if they do not like their car, acquiring that same car in a different colour will not improve anything. We need to elect a real alternative in Alberta.

**Energy Exploration Out of Control**

A few years ago Premier Ed Stelmach, under pressure to increase oil and gas royalty rates, announced a royalty review committee. The outcome was a recommendation of a very modest increase in royalties.

The Canadian Petroleum Producers Association organized a campaign, which involved reducing drilling activity to protest the higher royalties, and threatened the slow down of the economic boom. Stelmach quickly adjusted the rates, and Alberta never collected higher royalties. If there is some rumbling or a hiccup in the energy field, the government throws in some funds for public relations, infrastructure, or simply changes the condition before royalties are collected. Last year a royalty holiday was granted for deep well drilling. As a result, there is now a new wave of deep well drilling with massive fracking around our farms.

One NFU member reported intense, heavy, highway-like traffic on his dead end road. Many tankers with fracking fluids (nitrogen and dangerous carcinogenic cocktails with straight diesel fuel) mixed with water are pumped into the ground at extreme high pressures, to open up interconnecting seams of energy. On January 16<sup>th</sup> in Innisfail, the fracking of a well caused another nearby well to blow out with a huge spill of oil and fracking substance covering a farmer's field, and a large volume of polluted air hovering over the neighbourhood. That same day, a study was published by Cornell University Dr. Robert E. Oswald about the link

*(continued on page 12...)*

*(Region 7 Report, from page 12)*

between fracking waste water and mortality in farm animals. We lack environmental legislation and an independent regulatory body in Alberta, which would protect farmers and the general public from environmental damages caused by a too powerful, largely self regulated, and irresponsible, oil and gas industry.

### **Alberta Landowners Consultations**

The Tories are feeling the heat about Bills 19, 24, 36, and 50, which have been passed over the last few years. All of them restrict landowners' rights, and even prevent them from going to court in order to address the unfairness of a situation. A series of government consultation meetings have been held across the province, in order to appease the public before the next election. At the meeting in Rocky Mountain House, an angry crowd unequivocally made clear to the four Tory MLAs in attendance, that they would not accept anything but the scrapping of all of these bills. A summary of the consultation meetings due at the end of January will trigger some change in the legislation. It remains to be seen if those changes will just be window dressing with pretensions, or actually something more substantial.

### **Neighbour's Livestock Hauling**

A farmer in Fort McLeod was fined for delivering his neighbour's cattle to the auction market, while not having a commercial hauling license plate on his truck and trailer, only farm plates. The

Transportation Authority lacked the proper device to take a fuel sample from the truck, otherwise the fine would have been higher for using dyed fuel in a commercial venture. The NFU has sent a letter to the Ministries of Transportation and Agriculture in Alberta, objecting to this kind of harassment. Historically it is essential for farmers to work together when complicated jobs need to get done. The rounding up and loading of livestock goes better when enough people lend a hand, and hauling each other's cattle makes only more sense, as that creates efficiencies in getting the job done faster and within a desired time frame.

### **Expropriation of Land in Weed Control Act**

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, a letter was sent by the NFU to the Minister of Agriculture in Alberta. The letter outlined our objections the parts of the Weed Control Act and the Agriculture Service Board Act, where it states that the Minister has the ability to expropriate land in order to enforce the acts. Those kinds of measures are ultimately already possible through a long process of fines and fine collection. To explicitly mention those enforcements in every act is undermining the process of due diligence, and gives the Minister too much power. The objections are in line with the objections we expressed earlier against Bills 19, 24, 36, and 50.

*In Solidarity, Jan Slomp*

## *We Remember ...*

### **FORSBERG, WAYNE BRUCE**

Wayne Bruce Forsberg of Calmar, Alberta, passed away on January 8, 2012. Wayne and Shirley were the recipients of the NFU grassroots membership award for their love of farming, their outstanding dedication to their family and community and for their extensive support for the work of the NFU.

Wayne was comatose for a month from an acute meningitis attack in 2000, which made him loose both hands and feet. He was best characterized by how he embraced life after that - By regaining his driver's license, continuing to farm, fixing machinery, becoming internet savvy and being as generous to his surrounding as ever.

He refused to complain, was upbeat, positive and witty as was illustrated by his e-mail address "stumpy".

Wayne will be missed by wife Shirley, Kim (Chris), Marlene, Robert and Rodney and grandchildren.



# CETA getting tougher on Citizens with each SECRET Draft

- by Terry Boehm, NFU President

The striking thing about reading the various leaked drafts of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is that after nine major rounds of negotiations, the agreement is essentially getting worse for Canada and her citizens. This is not to say that it is particularly good for the ordinary European citizen, but it does give European corporate interests unprecedented access and ultimately control over the Canadian economy, down to the sub national level (provinces, territories, and municipalities).

Now the question is what is a European corporation? The answer is much broader than one would expect, even in an era dominated by transnational corporations. The Europeans define as European any corporation with an “effective and continuous link” with the economy of a member state. This definition essentially defines any business, no matter where it is headquartered, as an appropriate beneficiary of what CETA brings to large corporations. This means that when towns and villages, cities and provinces, hospitals and schools, universities and crown corporations, post their tenders for goods and services, they may have to accept bids and hire or buy not just from Europe, but from whatever business that has an “effective and continuous link.”

One of the worrisome things that has stood out throughout this process, has been the disallowance of offering any more favourable treatment to a local or national supplier of a good or service, than to a foreign supplier. This quite simply means that one could not implement “buy local” programs, or favour local businesses in any tender (subject to certain thresholds: \$130,000 for goods and services at the federal level,

\$355,000 for provinces and municipalities, and \$5,000,000 for construction at all levels). Exclusive local food purchasing programs would fall under this prohibition, and they would be subject to standardized certification programs as well. Local businesses and farmers who pay the taxes that make things function locally and nationally, cannot expect to be patronized by their own governments and institutions. Schools, hospitals, villages, universities, and governments would also have to post their tenders, and their intended tenders, in an elaborate electronic and paper process that makes them completely available internationally. The process demanded is described in 32 pages of text in the agreement. No small task for the local village council that wants to renovate the local water system or town hall!

What this agreement has always been about, is limiting the role of citizens and governments to conduct their affairs as they see fit. It is also fundamentally about making sure that large business interests (finance capital), has both unrestricted access to resources and minimal regulation. An example is in a clause similar to the resource controls in NAFTA. Under CETA (Article 50.1c) you can only restrict the consumption or extraction of exhaustible natural resources, if you restrict you own population and businesses as well. In another telling section (Article X.3) “Neither Party may impose limitations on: (iv) the participation of foreign capital in terms of maximum percentage limit on foreign shareholding or the total value of individual or aggregate foreign investment.” In the past we used to worry about foreign ownership and limit it, now we endorse it, and with CETA we will actually enforce it.

*(continued on page 14...)*



*(CETA getting tougher on citizens, from page 13)*

If one looks a little further at the draft text it goes on to say (Article X.9.3): “Neither Party may condition the receipt of an advantage.....in connection with an investment in its territory....on compliance with any of the following requirements.” Meaning the contract given to an investor cannot stipulate the following conditions:

- a) to achieve a given level or percentage of domestic content;
- b) to purchase, use or accord a preference to goods produced in its territory, or to purchase goods from producers in its territory;
- c) to relate in any way the volume or value of imports to the volume or value of exports or to the amount of foreign exchange inflows associated with such investment; or,
- d) to restrict the sales of goods or services in its territory that such investment produces or provides by relating such sales in any way to the volume or value of its exports or foreign exchange earnings.

Essentially we can no longer look at our balance of payments and take measures to alter them, and as such we are losing control of one of the fundamental tools of monetary policy. This is particularly dangerous, as exemplified at this very moment by capital outflows and national debt levels that many European nations are experiencing. Again, with CETA the nation-state is to disappear in the regulation of capital, its movement, and its action. The nation-state should, however, enforce the extraction tools that these economic players want.

One of the more powerful of these tools, are intellectual property rights. These instruments cannot exist without the state legislating and enforcing them. Some examples are copyrights, trademarks, patents, plant variety rights, designs, and geographical indications. In CETA we see a draconian set of enforcement measures to make

people comply with intellectual property rights. Even if infringement is only alleged, assets can be seized. Citizens could now go to prison if they violate some of these instruments. The idea of prison terms is new, and was not seen in earlier drafts. The language in the draft text now suggests that any violation of these intellectual property instruments could have criminal (prison terms) consequences.

Let us look at the farmer once again in reference to plant variety protection and patents. Under CETA, a farmer accused of having a protected plant variety or a gene patented variety of seed, could see his/her property seized and his/her bank accounts frozen. If convicted, his/her crop or seed and the implements for growing and harvesting the crop or cleaning the seed will be destroyed, at his/her expense. In addition, injunctions are to be issued to prevent an infringement from occurring. This could mean if farmers hired the services of a seed cleaner or cleaned seed themselves, they could be hit with an injunction and they could be accused of potentially infringing. At the end of the day, if that happens to a few farmers, fear of legal and even criminal consequences will lead people into a corner where they shut up, and pay up, for the corporate seeds they could just as well and cheaply produce themselves.

Extending the term of patents by the length of time a regulator takes to make a decision is still part of the agreement. Data supplied to the regulator is to be confidential and protected. The applicant is not to be responsible for consequences even if the applicant's data was in error. This protection is to apply to pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical manufacturers.

There are many more aspects of this agreement one could reference. But, when it is held up to the light of day, it is nothing more than a corporate bill of rights and a giant bill to be paid by the citizens of Canada and Europe. —nlu—



# Interest in local food leads to new on-farm dairies

-by Ann Slater, Region 3 Coordinator

On a snowy afternoon in January, I made my way to Francis, Kathie, Patrick and Olivia Groenewegen's organic dairy farm, located just north of Kingston. As I got closer, my attention was drawn away from their tell-tale NFU gate sign, by the sight of the new building being erected just past their laneway.

The Groenewegen's are part of a Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) pilot project designed to produce, market, and gauge the demand for dairy products made with milk from specific dairy herds. The building under construction is the new Limestone Organic Creamery. Later this year, the milk truck will pick up the milk from the Groenewegen's 30 cow holstein and jersey herd, and transport it just a few hundred metres to their 5,600 sq ft creamery. At the creamery, their milk will be processed and packed into glass bottles, ready for local milk drinkers.

As I found out on that mid-January afternoon, Sydenham Road, where Limestone Creamery will be located, is a busy road with five or six thousand cars passing each day, many on their way to and from work in Kingston. The Groenewegen's hope to encourage many of these passing vehicles to stop in to pick up their fresh milk, other dairy products supplied by the Organic Meadow Cooperative, their own home raised meat, and other local farm produce. In addition, they will have a home delivery service in Kingston, and hope local retailers and restaurants will stock and carry milk produced, processed, and bottled by the Groenewegen family. The old-fashioned milk delivery truck that will be used to deliver their bottles of milk, was purchased from a dairy farm in the United States. Each home will have a porch box to keep the milk cool, if the milk drinkers are not home when the bottles of fresh milk arrive.

Limestone Organic Creamery is one of a handful of on-farm dairy processors who are part of the DFO Project Origin pilot project. Jalon Farms in the Creemore area, will also be processing fluid milk in glass bottles, from their herd of Jersey cows. The other farms who are part of the pilot project

will be making cheese, including Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese from south of Woodstock, which held its grand opening on October 15, 2011. The five 'Project Origin' farms received a total of \$900,000 through the Rural Economic Development Plan, and some received additional funding and support from local initiatives such as Community Futures.

Francis Groenewegen first heard that DFO was looking for farmers who might be interested in on-farm processing, at a county milk committee meeting a few years ago. Kathie and Francis took over the dairy herd from Kathie's parents, and were beginning to think about how they could keep their children, Patrick and Olivia, involved in the family farm. After comparing what it would cost to expand the size of the dairy herd, and the cost to build an on-farm dairy, the family made the decision to move ahead with the creation of the Limestone Creamery. Kathie says it took a long time to both make the decision to move ahead, and to plan the new processing facility. She also says that the support from agencies like DFO, Community Futures Development Corporation, Organic Meadow Cooperative and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, around food safety regulations in setting up the plant, has been important in helping them plan, set up and prepare to get their creamery operating.

Hopefully the growing interest in local food will lead to success for the Groenewegen family and the other dairy farms who are part of this pilot project, designed to create opportunities for on-farm dairy processing. The NFU needs to keep an eye on these projects, and on the interest they create among eaters and drinkers looking for dairy products produced locally and from specific farms. If these projects are successful, we need to be prepared to push the DFO and other marketing boards to create more opportunities for on-farm processing and direct-to-consumer marketing of local farm produce within supply management. —nfu—



# Safe Food – from the viewpoint of farmers

-by Ann Slater, Region 3 Coordinator

As farmers we are all committed to raising and growing safe food for people to eat, whether we are selling our farm produce directly to eaters or to larger buyers. At the same time, many of us run into food safety standards and regulations implemented by governments, institutions, or private buyers, which make it difficult, and sometimes even impossible, for us to sell our safe and healthy food to local customers. At our 42<sup>nd</sup> National Convention we passed a resolution calling on the NFU to develop a comprehensive policy on food safety standards, to enable farmers to increase their ability to engage in local and direct markets.

As part of our work on the above resolution, Joan Brady and I made a mid-January trip to Renfrew County in eastern Ontario, to talk about food safety with farmers and local food activists. Many NFU members in Renfrew are involved in some type of direct marketing, whether that be direct from the farm freezer sales, farmers' markets, tourism events, like Taste of the Valley, or the Ottawa Valley Food Coop. Along with the beef and lamb that Renfrew County is known for, NFU members also raise pork and poultry, grow vegetables, apples, grains and hemp, and prepare processed food for the local market.



*Photo: NFU members and others attend food safety policy consultation in Renfrew County.*

We started the discussion by thinking about what we as farmers consider quality food, keeping in mind that quality food should also be safe food. Some of the words the farmers in Renfrew County used to describe quality food are: flavourful, organic/ecologically sustainable, nutrient-rich, fresh, free of additives/

preservatives/ hormones/ pesticides, homemade, fairly traded, and clean.

Some of the points the group felt should be addressed in a food safety policy or regulation included:

- lean, healthy farming practices;
- low stress and humane transportation of livestock;
- financial support from governments to help small, local abattoirs renovate and upgrade;
- farmer access, within a reasonable distance, to inspected processing facilities for all foods;
- recognition and acknowledgement of traditional artisanal skills in food processing;
- promotion of farmers' markets and buy local, including at supermarkets;
- producer accountability, traceability, and record-keeping;
- accurate labelling of all foods, so that consumers can make informed choices;
- increase consumer understanding that healthy eating takes more preparation time.

In May 2011 GRAIN, a small, international non-profit organization that works to support small farmers, released a report titled *Food Safety For Whom? Corporate Wealth Versus People's Health*. Food safety sounds like it is about protecting people's health, but what is done in the name of food safety is more often about increasing corporate control of food and farming. As the GRAIN report notes, governments usually set up the framework for food safety, but the actual standards are more often developed by the private sector.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) recently began a systematic review of its regulatory frameworks for food safety, plant health, and animal health. During this review, whose interests will be given the first priority in the discussions of food safety?

Over the coming year we will keep an eye on CFIA's review of its food safety framework, as well as continue our work to develop an NFU policy on food safety and local, direct markets. If you have thoughts or comments please get in touch with either Joan Brady or myself. —nfu—





# United Nations Annual Session in Rome – Update on the Committee on World Food Security

-by Kalissa Regier

The United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) held its 37<sup>th</sup> annual session at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, Italy from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. Since the reform of the committee in 2009, participants from outside governments have played a key role in designing the work of the committee. A strong delegation from civil society was participating, including many members of La Via Campesina, organized for the first time by the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM). The CSM consists of a coordination committee from 11 different constituencies and 14 regions around the world.

During the week, hundreds of UN member states and participants of the CFS gathered to debate broad based policy needs to address massive hunger and malnutrition in a time of plenty. Policy roundtables, independent side events and a multitude of bilateral meetings filled the six day annual session.

The roundtable discussions were based on many levels of work within the CFS. They included reports released in 2011 by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Price Volatility and Food Security, and Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture, as well as several world renowned panellists. Roundtables were held on three topics: Gender, Food Security and Nutrition; Small-holder Sensitive Investment in Agriculture; and Food Price Volatility.

While the roundtable discussions focussed on building the work for 2012, the debate was deepened during the roundtable on Food Price Volatility, when the issue of international trade arose. Many connections have been made between the trade liberalization regime of the past 40 years, and the rising levels of rural poverty in developing nations. Yet governments in the CFS are clearly reluctant to have a serious discussion about trade policies, without resorting to the recommendations of the G8 and G20. With the World Trade

Organization (WTO) stalled and an increase in bilateral trade deals under way, any discussion of how trade is affecting the food security and food sovereignty of countries should be happening in a multilateral, multistakeholder venue, such as the CFS. This issue will undoubtedly spill over into the coming year.

The work of the CFS is ongoing throughout the year. The work plan for 2012 is already underway with the release of the first draft of the Global Strategic Framework (GSF). The GSF should establish criteria, including standards of good practice, clear policies, and an outline of clear roles for various actors such as policy makers, civil society, financial institutions, and UN agencies. Broad consultations on the Global Strategic Framework will be taking place around the world this spring at the five regional conferences of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Also in store for 2012 is the final round of negotiations on the text of the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests. Policy reform on land tenure and the governance of tenure are necessary for most areas in the world, given the recent increase in investment in farmland by foreign investors, ongoing human rights abuses, and growing hunger and poverty. Although the negotiations were originally expected to finalize quickly during July 2011, they are now heading into their third full week in March 2012.

—nfu—

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To follow the work of the Civil Society Mechanism or join a working group for 2012, please see: [www.cso4cfs.org](http://www.cso4cfs.org)

To read the reports from CFS 37 and to follow the work of the CFS, please see: [www.fao.org/cfs](http://www.fao.org/cfs)

*Kalissa Regier is representing La Via Campesina as a coordinator for the youth constituency of the Civil Society Mechanism and a member of the Advisory Group for the Committee on World Food Security.*



# Co-operating to build food sovereignty

- by Cathy Holtslander, NFU Director of Research and Policy

I like to buy my meat and vegetables at the Saskatoon Farmers Market. It's a place where I can get food straight from the farmers who grew or raised it – and have a good visit with them while I'm at it. Our market has been going for nearly 40 years, and it has a great reputation for quality and integrity. And it's a co-op. One product that isn't available there is milk – so I go to Steep Hill, an organic food co-operative established in 1978, where I can buy some Organic Meadow milk, and what the heck, some of La Siembra's Camino cocoa powder too – its minus 43 with the wind chill, and even though it's a "dry cold" a cup of hot chocolate would be nice! Organic Meadow is a marketing co-op of organic dairy farmers, and La Siembra is a worker co-operative that deals in fair trade foods grown on family farms in southern countries. On my way home I stop to fill up with gas at the Co-op Gas station. I pick up a copy of "Planet S", Saskatoon's biweekly news and entertainment magazine -- owned and operated by a multi-stakeholder co-operative. Getting short on cash, I swing by my co-operative financial institution, Affinity Credit Union, and use the ATM. It's a satisfying to do business with these co-operatives because it allows me to get what I need while supporting communities. It also gives me a warm fuzzy feeling to know that the money I spend at co-operatives won't end up further enriching the wealthy "1%" and the giant corporations they own.

The co-operative business model provides a genuine alternative for producers as well as consumers. In a co-operative people pool their resources, skills and knowledge to run a business that benefits both the members and the community at large – and by working together members also spread the risks, making the

business's inevitable ups and downs manageable. Co-ops are governed by a board of directors made up of elected members, which provides accountability and responsibility for decision-making. Co-operatives are based in values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. They are all required to adhere to internationally recognized co-operative principles, including democratic governance, giving back to the community and involving members in the economic activities of the co-op – for example, by returning profits to members in the form of patronage dividends based on their usage of the co-op. (See full list on next page).

You probably already belong to at least one co-operative yourself. 33% of Canadians are members of credit unions. Canadian co-operatives have 18 million members altogether. Most people are aware of large retail co-ops such as "The Co-op" that sell groceries and gas, or Mountain Equipment Co-op that sells outdoor gear. Less visible are worker co-operatives where the employees own and run the business, and producer co-ops where farmers join forces to market their products, build processing infrastructure, or jointly purchase inputs, equipment or land. Another type is the multi-stakeholder co-op, which brings together individual consumers, producers, workers and/or organizations that share a common interest in the success of the enterprise.

It strikes me that co-op principles fit very well with the principles of food sovereignty. Both focus on community, people working together, economic justice and democratic empowerment. Co-operatives can be a very practical tool to put food sovereignty into action in Canada. What happens when we combine co-op principles with the pillars of food sovereignty?

(continued on page 19...)



2012 is the United Nations *International Year of Co-operatives*. The NFU would like to celebrate it by publishing stories about our members who are involved in food and agriculture co-operatives. Please contact me at [holtslander@nfu.ca](mailto:holtslander@nfu.ca) about any co-operative story you would like to share.



### Pillars of Food Sovereignty:

- Focuses on Food for People
- Values Food Providers
- Localises Food Systems
- Puts Control Locally
- Builds Knowledge and Skills
- Works with Nature

*Developed at Nyéléni 2007*

### Co-operative Principles:

1. **Voluntary and Open Membership:** Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
2. **Democratic Member Control:** Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.
3. **Member Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
4. **Autonomy and Independence:** Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter to agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.
5. **Education, Training and Information:** Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.
6. **Co-operation among Co-operatives:** Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
7. **Concern for Community:** Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

*- Adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance, September 23, 1995*

For more information see:

International Year of Co-operatives - <http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

Canadian Co-operative Association - <http://www.coopscanada.coop/>

Canadian Worker Co-op Federation - <http://www.canadianworker.coop/>

"Building Community: Creating Social and Economic Well-Being," a virtual exhibit by the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives -

<http://usaskstudies.coop/exhibit/>

CCA's page on Agricultural Co-ops - <http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/orphan/AgriculturalCoops>

CCA's page on Food Co-ops - <http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/orphan/LocalFood>



# Grains, Trains, and Democracy

## The Canadian Wheat Board in 2012

—by Stewart Wells

*“Canadians should understand that at stake here is not just a technical point of law, but the integrity of parliamentary government.”*

Peter Russell—Professor Emeritus of Political Science,  
University of Toronto, December 2011

The Farmers Union has always been front and center in the struggle to gain fair returns for the labour and expertise provided by farm families. And naturally the fight to use the market power provided by collective marketing has always been a centerpiece of the work of Farmers Union members.

When it comes to the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), the Farmers Union has always felt a special sense of proprietary ownership in its creation. In 1923 the upstart Farmers Union of Canada invited a California lawyer by the name of Aaron Sapiro to visit Western Canada to talk about coops and better ways to market grain.

According to historian Garry Fairbairn “No one in Saskatchewan had ever seen his like before. Even many who later saw John Diefenbaker and Tommy Douglas in their full glory said they never again saw the equal of Aaron Sapiro on a public platform.”

Samuel W. Yates, historian of the pool movement, wrote “In the month of August, in the year 1923, there came to the Province of Saskatchewan a missionary...he passed like a

brilliant meteor from point to point, leaving behind him, as it were, a trail of light stretching like the tail of a comet across the heavens.”

And from Sapiro himself, here is the central question that still resonates with us today:

*When will you learn that you are not dealing with wheat? What you are dealing with is human lives, what your children will eat, what your children will wear, how you will pay the doctor, how you will send them to school, whether you will have taxes to pay for roads, whether you will even have taxes enough to start and pay off the national debt. It is not wheat at all! It is all of your standard of life wrapped up in the doings of a little gang of men at Winnipeg, a larger gang of men at Chicago, and a cleverer gang of men at Liverpool.*

By bringing Sapiro to Canada, the Farmers Union helped develop the unstoppable farmer-force that resulted in the formation of the CWB.

*(continued on page 21...)*



*(Grains, Trains, and Democracy, from page 20)*

For decades after the creation of the single desk in 1943 - and spurred on by their rural constituents - every Liberal and Conservative MP supported the CWB in votes in the House of Commons.

In 1998, the Liberal government made significant changes to the CWB by turning the marketing organization into a true partnership with the farmers of Western Canada. Farmers continued to pay all of the operational costs of the CWB, but for the first time farmers were elected by their peers to hold the majority position on the Board of Directors. And farmers were guaranteed by law that no significant marketing changes could be made without a vote of the farmers in the CWB region. These changes were precedent-setting.

Enter Stephen Harper. When the Harper government tabled legislation on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, it became clear that they would rip up the partnership agreement with the farmers, end the farmer control, destroy the single desk marketing advantages, and run away with all of the assets. By December 15<sup>th</sup>, all of this had happened.

So by December 16<sup>th</sup>, the battle was focused even more clearly in the courtrooms of the nation.

In June of 2011, the Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board had initiated a legal action based on Section 47.1 of the 1998 Act. The Friends argued that the government must follow 47.1, which meant consulting with the CWB Board of Directors, and more importantly, conducting a vote of the farmers that would be affected by the proposed changes. However, as the actual legislation had not yet been introduced, the Federal Court could not hear the case.

After the legislation had been tabled, the CWB itself initiated legal action. This action was joined with the earlier action from the Friends, and the case was heard on December 6<sup>th</sup> in Federal Court. Justice Campbell ruled that the Minister of Agriculture had broken the law by introducing his Bill without first holding a vote of the farmers affected and consulting with the CWB.

Unfortunately for all involved, the Harper government ignored this Federal Court ruling and moved ahead with the dismantling of the CWB. (This is apparently only the third time in

Canadian history that the federal government has ignored a ruling of the Federal Court—all three instances have occurred since 2006.)

The federal government has appealed this ruling and the issue could be in front of the Federal Court of Appeal a few months from now.

After the government signaled that it would ignore the Federal Court and move ahead with the destruction of the CWB, the CWB itself and the eight individual single desk-supporting Directors asked a Manitoba court to grant a stay of implementation (injunction) of the new Bill. The immediate “stay” was denied by the Manitoba court on December 16<sup>th</sup>, but this issue was heard by the Manitoba Court again on January 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, and at the time of writing this decision is still pending. (The CWB withdrew from this action on the morning of December 16<sup>th</sup> when it fell under the total control of the Minister of Agriculture.)

Also, a Saskatchewan-based legal firm filed a class action claim for \$15 billion in early January. This claim, or others like it, cannot be decided until the other cases have cleared the courts.

There will certainly be more court dates and legal wrangling ahead. And our legal system runs on money as well as some very talented lawyers. If we want a fair hearing on any of these cases, we have to be prepared to invest on the basis of “many hands make light work”.

Fifty dollars (\$50) per NFU member would be a significant help to the cause. Hopefully NFU members inside the CWB region would recognize the benefits of a generous donation ranging anywhere from 25 cents per acre to \$1 per acre.

**There are lots of good reasons to donate to this essential legal work.**

**Here are two:**

1. It is important to defend the “guilty” ruling against the federal government at the Federal Court of Appeal—a case which should be heard in a few months. Other legal actions, aimed at getting the CWB back or any future compensation claims, will be helped by all the courts recognizing that this Harper government has acted illegally.

*(continued on page 22...)*



*(Grains, Trains, and Democracy, from page 21)*

2. We believe it does matter if a Parliamentary government has to follow the law. After all, if law makers do not have to follow the law, why should anyone else? To support the Harper government's disregard for the laws and statutes of Canada is to support anarchy and tyranny. Scholars are already writing that Canada no longer enjoys "rule OF law" — now the anti-CWB Bill shows that we have "rule By law"—the same system as China. This is deeply disturbing.

I can think of very few principles more important than having one's government follow the law.

*Thanking you all in advance for your support,  
Stewart Wells*

**To have your say and to stand up for Canada, the "rule OF law", and the NFU's rich history of raising farming incomes, please donate today to the NFU's CWB legal fund.**

Simply mail your cheque to the NFU Office, 2717 Wentz Ave, Saskatoon, Sk., S7K 4B6.  
Be sure to include a note saying that this donation is for the CWB legal fund.

**OR**

you can use the secure credit card system on the NFU's website at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca).  
Again, be sure to include a note saying that this donation should be used for the CWB legal work.

*(Women's President Message, from page 4)*

Phase Three is being proposed for January to March 2012. At the time of this writing, I have been unable to find out any details. But, as I reflect on the constraints of government policy and the lost opportunities of a misdirected vision, I believe it is crucial for us to attempt to influence the process in any way we can. The NFU has a powerful perspective to offer, and although I know that often we have to defend our right to participate, it is crucial to our farm businesses and rural communities that we share that perspective.

Take some time to read the reports, particularly *As it was Heard*. I believe that it is an accurate record of the discussion in Phase One, and clearly reflects the farm vision for our industry. On the other hand, *Charting the Way Forward*, is an interesting exercise in translation in some cases, and perhaps allows for some understanding on how the mind of government

works. It will be interesting to understand the effects of the last round of discussion on the resulting document. Finally, if given the opportunity to participate in Phase Three of the consultation, please do so. During this final phase, all levels of governments and industry stakeholders will focus on the development of program options that support the policy priorities.

Five years may not seem like a critical period of time, unless you consider that between 2001 and 2006, 15,000 farm families exited the industry. Be proactive and contribute to the vision for the next five years, so that 2013-18 will be years of prosperity and stability for farm families and the rural and urban communities that rely on us for their food both here and abroad.

*In Union,  
Joan Brady, Women's President*



*(Report from the President, from page 3)*

Interestingly, in the anti-Canadian Wheat Board legislation just rammed through Parliament this past December, there is a clause (59) amending the Canada Grain Act (Section 55, subsection 1), by adding (1.1) that declares that "Every flour mill, feed mill, feed warehouse and seed cleaning mill is a work for the general advantage of Canada". The Act formerly stated only elevators were works for the general advantage of Canada. Adding in seed cleaners means that their records must be now available to inspectors, and that they may require licensing. This may seem in and of itself somewhat benign, but it really opens all the doors for a UPOV'91 regime that requires access to records in order to exert control for the PBR holders. Royalties and restrictions will flow through this system, and of course the companies will know exactly what a farmer is growing by variety.

We have already seen changes to the variety registration system, which make new varieties easier to register with reduced testing requirements. What many do not know is that there has been a move to cancel, or deregister, varieties so that they can no longer be grown by farmers, unless they are willing to accept the lowest grade for their crop and naturally the lowest price. For example, the real haste to cancel varieties has been in canola where there are virtually no varieties left that do not have gene patents. Every one knows that canola seed prices have risen

exponentially under this system. It now costs \$10.00 per pound for canola seed, making it an extremely expensive crop to plant. UPOV'91 will put in place mechanisms where farmers could also be charged royalties on every bushel of crop they sell, as well as the exorbitant prices they pay for seed (the so called double protection of PBR and patents).

Ultimately what we see here is just another mechanism justified on false pretenses, put forward to enable massive economic extraction from farmers. We will all be told that there is no alternative, and that we need this for innovation to take place. What this is really about is shifting power away from citizens, and redefining the public interest to be the corporate interest. This interest has only one goal: extract the maximum amount of capital from farmers and the land itself.

We cannot let our economic and social interests, as well as environmental interests, be thwarted and perverted by legislation based on UPOV'91. We need to remember that it is not and should not be a crime to expect fair prices, and to save, reuse, exchange seed with a neighbor, or to sell it. We cannot let seed become a tool for oppression, but need to keep it our hands as the symbol of hope that it has always been.

*Terry Boehm, President*

## **The Paul Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing**

*Working with the Family of Paul Beingessner, the National Farmers Union has established an annual literary prize in honour of Paul and his contribution to rural and agricultural journalism. Paul Beingessner was a farmer, an activist, and a writer who defended Canada's family farms until his tragic death in a farm accident in the spring of 2009. His widely-read and respected weekly columns brought a fresh and progressive perspective to rural and farm issues.*

*Young writers are encouraged to submit their work to the Paul Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing.*

### **Award Criteria and Details:**

- There will be two age categories – 15 years and under, and 16 years to 21 years. An award in the amount of \$500 will be awarded to one essay in each age category for a non-fiction letter or essay 500-1000 words in length.
- The theme for 2012 will be *Cooperatives – An Exercise in Democracy*.
- Deadline for entries is September 30, 2012.
- The prizes of \$500.00 will be awarded at the NFU Convention in November 2012.
- All or some entries may be published by the National Farmers Union.
- Send entries to the National Farmers Union by email to [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca) or by mail to 2717 Wentz Ave., Saskatoon, SK, S7K 4B6 (*We will confirm that we received your email submission within a week. If you do not get a confirmation email, please resend your entry or phone the office at (306) 652-9465.*)



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## NATIONAL FARMERS UNION FINANCIAL SERVICES

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### NFU INCOME TAX SERVICE 2011 MANITOBA RURAL VISIT SCHEDULE

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>HOTEL</u>	<u>DATES</u>
SWAN RIVER	SUPER 8 MOTOR HOTEL	FEBRUARY 15 <sup>TH</sup> & 16 <sup>TH</sup>
ROBLIN	ROBLIN MOTOR INN	FEBRUARY 17 <sup>TH</sup> TO 24 <sup>TH</sup>
MELITA	---	FEBRUARY 28 <sup>TH</sup>
KILLARNEY	---	MARCH 1 <sup>ST</sup> AND 2 <sup>ND</sup>
MORDEN	MORDEN MOTOR INN	MARCH 3 <sup>RD</sup> TO 10 <sup>TH</sup>
ARBORG	ZANS FAMILY INN	MARCH 14 <sup>TH</sup> TO 16 <sup>TH</sup>
SHOAL LAKE	---	MARCH 21 <sup>ST</sup>
RUSSELL	RUSSELL INN	MARCH 22 <sup>ND</sup> TO 24 <sup>TH</sup>
TREHERNE	CREEKSIDE HIDEAWAY MOTEL	MARCH 28 <sup>TH</sup> TO 31 <sup>ST</sup>
PORTAGE	CANAD INNS	APRIL 4 <sup>TH</sup> TO 8 <sup>TH</sup>
FISHER BRANCH	FISHER BRANCH MOTOR HOTEL	APRIL 11 <sup>TH</sup> AND 12 <sup>TH</sup>
MINNEDOSA	GATEWAY MOTEL	APRIL 13 <sup>TH</sup> & 14 <sup>TH</sup>
CYPRESS RIVER	---	APRIL 11 <sup>TH</sup> TO 13 <sup>TH</sup>

\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS FOR TAX OFFICE. IT IS IN THE SAME BUILDING, BUT NOW LOCATED UPSTAIRS. \*\*\*