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A Cuban farmer weeds beneath netting that protects tender plants from the sun. The crop is also protected by a home-made insect trap – a stake holding a square of wood or metal coated with used tractor grease. (Photo: Marcella Pedersen)

Message from the Editor...



For years, I've argued with some of my brothers about politics. It took most of those years to understand that we wanted similar outcomes, but thought it took different paths to get there. Our paths were

based on utterly different understandings of how people live and work together. My brothers don't want slackers and fraudsters exploiting welfare or EI, and think that if you work hard, then good for you - reap the benefits! I don't want people to exploit social supports either, but kids should not be too hungry to learn. Poverty should not so limit choices that the poor see no way to change their circumstances. Government is important, and does have a role to play in redistributing income. Paying taxes is the price we pay for living well together. Nor should random circumstances of birth, luck, genetics, etc. allow one person to be paid more than hundreds of the less fortunate can spend in their lifetimes. Even if those wealthy few share their good fortune, it is charity – ultimately demoralizing and patronizing to its recipients.

Which brings me to the point of this editorial. I've been thinking about why the NFU is so different

from other farm organizations, and – impossible – trying to come up with a relatively concise answer. After reading and reflecting a bit, I decided that if I had to choose one word, I would choose 'solidarity.' NFU members stand in solidarity every day, whether with their neighbours, fellow Canadians or friends and compañeras around the world, honouring our diversity and our common belief in a just, equitable society.

A declaration of solidarity is deeply political. We acknowledge that no matter our field of work, economic position, recreation, religion or politics, we need each other - monocultures inevitably fail. Our strength comes from working together, no matter where we live, what we do or earn, what our ethnic background, race or colour or any other descriptor that sorts and separates us from each other. It means that farmers who don't have anything to do with dairy stand solidly with their colleagues who actually have a chance to earn a living from their farming activities. It means that when supply management seems to get in the way of change or makes it hard to enter the business, we look to make things happen within supply management, rather than railing thoughtlessly against it. Which leads to the most important characteristic of solidarity: we do not follow blindly.

(continued on page 23...)

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. Harvest is just starting here in Saskatchewan and I hope you all have a successful and safe fall season. I would also like to thank you all for your support to this organization. As always, our reason for existence is to advance the wellbeing and interests of small and medium-sized family farmers.

Throughout the last few months, I have had the privilege of attending and speaking at numerous regional conventions. This year we used video via Skype for two conventions, which was a low-cost way for me to participate. Part of my presentation was a description of how the Harper government is using its One-for-One Rule to dismantle regulations. The example I used was in reference to the changes being made to the Canadian Grain Commission, in particular the elimination of inward inspection. Inward inspection was the continuous inspection of grain by the CGC as it arrived at terminal elevators from country elevators.

It served as an audit to make sure that grain bought in the country was actually graded the same as it was shipped to the terminals. This prevented grain being bought in the country at a lower grade and shipped out at a higher grade. The One-for-One Rule brought in by the Harper government on April 1st 2012, reads as follows: "The one-for-one rule requires that regulatory changes that increase administrative burden on business be offset with equal administrative burden reductions from within existing regulations." Essentially it is the elimination of regulations step-by-step.

Here is how it worked with the CGC and the end of inward inspection. Previously grain samples were held by the grain companies at terminal or port position for seven days, as the CGC was doing constant inspection and grading. However, the grain companies decided that with inward inspection eliminated and the CGC no longer doing that work,

they (the grain companies) should retain samples for 20 rather than seven days in case of problems. The federal government then calculated that the additional costs that grain companies would incur by holding samples an additional 13 days would amount to approximately \$500,000. Now, this in their own words would mean that further regulatory reductions would have to occur within 24 months to reduce the grain company's costs by \$500,000. What I am describing here is how this One-for-One Rule does not just lead to a reduction in the regulatory environment, but a continuous ratcheting away of our regulatory system based on a costing formula used by all departments.

The CGC is but one example of many where this system is used, but it applies to environment, health, and any other federal department. For many years, I argued that the federal government should do an analysis of what their actions in the areas of agriculture or transportation would cost farmers. This was never possible. It still isn't. One just received empty rhetoric about how it would be good for you, how the value chain would benefit, and anyway, farmers are viewed as simple consumers of ag products.

The other mechanism being used is the small business lens regarding the costs that regulatory changes impose on business. Unfortunately, small business seems to be Cargill, ADM and Bunge, as the CGC example shows. We should argue that policy be viewed through a farm prosperity lens, a human health lens, a rural community lens, an environmental sustainability lens, a democracy lens, an economic justice lens, and a food sovereignty lens. Why should these factors not be a consideration in the development of our regulatory and legislative policies? Indeed, we should demand it, and we should ask these questions each time we are contemplating or confronted with change.

In Solidarity, Terry Boehm



A message from the...



Women's President

— by Joan Brady

Empowering Women Worldwide

In recent years, the NFU Women's Advisory has fluctuated on the extent of our involvement with the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). With limited funds, but fully committed leadership, it has been difficult to find the resources necessary to participate. The Women's Advisory, however, does have an additional asset in that it has been included in the Mrs. Alfred Watt Memorial Fund, an investment that supports all Canadian members of the ACWW. The terms of the fund allow the Advisory to use the investment interest to participate in ACWW events. As a result, three women NFU members – myself as NFU Women's President; Women's Vice President, Kathleen Charpentier; and Saskatchewan Women's Advisor, Marcella Pedersen – will be travelling to Chennai, India to participate in the 27th Triennial ACWW conference.

The Associated Country Women of the World is an international membership organization supporting rural women and their families through education, training and community development programmes. Other Canadian members include the National and Provincial Women's Institutes as well as Les Cercles de Fermiers du Quebec. With Consultative Status at United Nations, ACWW gives women a voice at the International level through its links with United Nations agencies. ACWW has over 460 member societies active in over 70 countries.

The triennial conference theme is "Empowering Women Worldwide, Encourage, Educate and Enrich," and activities and priorities leading up to the conference have centered on the idea. A significant part of empowering women in the NFU's point of view is ensuring their participation in influencing the decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods. The principles of food sovereignty outline the changes to the food system necessary to empower food producers and communities. In particular, it emphasizes the important role women play and the need to break

down gender barriers. This message will be intentionally shared and recommended to member societies of the ACWW for further study and adoption. The ACWW has already indicated that it will be focusing efforts on 2014, designated by the United Nations as "The International Year of Family Farming." The UN General Assembly has recognized "that family farming and smallholder farming (where many of the farmers are women) are important for sustainable food production aimed at achieving world food security and eradicating poverty." Sharing the message of food sovereignty is imperative to expand peoples' understanding of food security, the definition of which is limited to ensuring access to or availability of food. The reality is far more complex. Instead, one must consider a host of underlying mechanisms and seek to achieve a fair, equitable and sustainable system for all.

Another benefit of attending the Triennial Conference will be our ability to network with other Canadian members of the ACWW, most notably the Women Institutes (WI). Many WI members and branches have initiatives that focus on food and local production, and that make a difference in their respective communities. For example, the Ontario WI developed a campaign supporting small abattoirs, lobbying government and informing citizens as well as participating in the broader campaign led by the NFU Region 3 (Ontario)/NFU-O. We have much to gain from a closer relationship with these Canadian women as we continue to strengthen the relationships begun during the ACWW Canada Area Conference held in Halifax in July 2011.

I look forward to passing on our experiences and new knowledge when we meet at the NFU National Convention in Ottawa in November, 2013. Until then I wish you the best in your farming endeavors and safety and happiness always.

In Union, Joan Brady



A message from the...



Cammie Harbottle,
Youth President

Youth

As the 44th National Convention approaches, we are looking forward to another chance to gather together youth from across the country. The national convention is one of only two chances that the youth have to meet face-to-face each year, and it is great to reconnect with old friends and meet new young farmers from across the country.

To make attending convention more affordable and more fun, we have found a great group accommodation in Ottawa about a seven to ten minute drive from Convention, (shuttles available) or about 40 minutes by bus, a 50 minute walk, or 20 minutes by bike. **Here is the deal:** 2 full bathrooms and 1 toilet/sink; use of kitchen, laundry, home-office (printer, screen, projector, supplies with high-speed wifi) as well as use of common spaces for workshopping, meetings and discussions. **We are booking the house from Nov 27 to Dec 1 (4 nights).** The more of us who to stay, the less it will cost per person (e.g. 5 people @ \$54.24/night or 20 people @ \$13.56/night), and the more fun it will be. We want to get as many of you as possible on board! Please let us know if you are interested.

Youth are planning to conduct another convention video project highlighting member's innovative and inspiring stories. We will explore the diverse ways that resistance is growing among farmers across the country.

If you have suggestions for the agenda of the youth caucus meeting or the video project, please contact Cammie at: cammie@waldegrave.org or Alex at: alexchisholmfletcher@gmail.com.

Convention Bursaries Available

You want to come to convention but are feeling inhibited by the cost of travel... **WAIT!** There are bursaries available to NFU youth to help cover the costs of attending the convention. Four bursaries of \$250 are available to any youth member from across the country and we would LOVE to be able to give out all four.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 15.

Email me at: cammie@waldegrave.org for more information or an application form. Youth are the future of the NFU so please encourage the young members you know to get in touch and come out to

convention. And for all of you youth out there...the NFU is working for our futures, so come and be a part of it (and meet some interesting and inspiring "old" farmers - by that I mean farmer-elders, with all due respect)!



Alex Fletcher,
Youth Vice President

Silent Auction

Bring your Christmas shopping lists! Once again there will be a silent auction during convention - a fun way to raise funds for the NFU Youth programming. The silent auction is member-driven so if you have any items to donate - handmade or otherwise - we encourage you to bring them along. Last year, the generosity of members provided funding for a significant part of our annual youth meetings.

Reconciliation and Farming

Recently, I talked to about reconciliation in the context of farming at The Centre for Small Farms, a place where farmers gather to talk and share knowledge – essentially to build relationships. I began to think about all of the relationships involved as we grow food and provide livelihoods for ourselves and our families, about relationships that are in dire need of reconciliation. I focused on the deep bond between farmers and their land; the connection between farmer/producer and eater/consumer; and our inter-relatedness with food itself.



I talked about my sense that we are at a critical juncture in all these interactions. Farmers, particularly small farmers, build the soil as a way to understand their land. Our relationship with food has gone from vital sustenance and celebration to something like fueling up at a gas station in the fastest way possible – with substances we know are destructive to us and the environment. We are experiencing first-hand the effects of climate change. When over 3 inches of rain falls in 24 hours (as it did last night), the winds exceed 150 km/hour, and we experience more frequent and intense tropical storms than ever before, something has gone awry.

But farmers, especially small farmers and the people who deeply value food production, are reclaiming and reconciling our various relationships through farmers markets, CSAs, family farm organizations, and celebrations. Our actions affirm that food is not just fuel, but rather part of the cycle of life. Savouring the earth's flavours on your fork is an act of reconciliation. As local food movements build, producers and consumers reconnect and celebrate food in all its diversity, reconciling health, the environment and our ethics on our dinner plate.

Our work as farmers is not done when we leave the bean patch, the pasture or the milking barn.

Reconciliation with the ecosystem, food, and farmers – indeed, all primary producers – is fundamental to our future. The road ahead is not straight or smooth, but with the help of organizations like the Centre and the NFU, we can walk it together. *[Ed. Note: the last four paragraphs are excerpts and paraphrases gathered and revised from a longer article submitted by Cammie Harbottle about her talk at the Centre for Small Farms.]*

In other Youth news...

We are strengthening our network and building on the NFU's alliance with Food Secure Canada (FSC) by engaging with their newly formed Youth Caucus. The FSC Youth Caucus includes Canadian youth (aged 30 and under) dedicated to zero hunger, a sustainable food system, and healthy and safe food. It will ensure youth representation in FSC's decision-making processes and throughout its networks. The Caucus will provide mentorship and leadership opportunities, and allow youth to strategise and mobilise around national food issues.

In Union, Cammie and Alex

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. A \$500 prize will be awarded to one essay in each age category for a non-fiction letter or essay 500-1000 words in length.
- Your essay should deal with the topic "What should governments do to help tomorrow's farmers succeed?" You may create your own title.
- Deadline for entries is October 15, 2013.
- The prizes of \$500.00 will be awarded at the NFU Convention in November 2013.
- All or some entries may be published by the National Farmers Union.

Send entries to the National Farmers Union:

By email: nfu@nfu.ca or

By mail: National Farmers Union, 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.



Regional Reports



ONE (PEI/New Brunswick)

REGION



- by Randall Affleck

Lands Protection Act:

Horace Carver Q.C., has been appointed by the Ghiz government as Commissioner under the Public Inquirers Act to study the adequacy of land holding limits, options for reducing red tape and other matters related to the Lands Protection Act (LPA).

The Carver Commission held many public consultations across the Island. The NFU presented an excellent brief to the Commission on Monday, April 8th in Charlottetown. You can listen to an audio recording of our presentation at the following web link: <http://bit.ly/1bxw9Ug>.

In a July 11th meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, George Webster indicated that the Report has been received by Government, but that he had not yet seen it. Ministry responsible for the LPA, is the Department of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

Task Force on Land Use Policy:

In an effort to develop a comprehensive land use policy on PEI, the Provincial Government has appointed a five-member Task Force on Land Use Policy to develop a policy document and have public consultations. Currently only 10% of Island lands are covered by official plans (municipalities) and the remaining 90% of land falls under the most basic provincial regulation.

The draft Provincial Land Use Policy document can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/16ZpEss>. The NFU also presented a brief (<http://bit.ly/126ksRS>) on May 2nd in Charlottetown.

Potato Bench Mark Study:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, in collaboration with the PEI Potato Board, have been working on a potato farm financial performance analysis, comparing the Maritimes to Western Canadian potato production. Sampling criteria required a majority of potato revenue, with three years usable data, between the years 2003 – 2010.

Farm income was measured before non-cash expenses. Cash expenses per acre in New Brunswick ranged from \$1032 - \$996 per acre; Prince Edward Island ranged between \$903 - \$1078/ac; and the West averaged \$832/ac. Yields in NB 232-274 cwt/ac; PEI 254 – 261 cwt/ac; and the west 275 cwt/ac. Total farms analyzed were NB 200; PEI 270 and 109 in the west (60 Alberta).

Thirteen (13%) percent of potato farms in the Maritimes failed to break even compared to 6% in the west. In 2010, the average equity values in the east were \$3.5 million versus \$9.0 million in the west. PEI had lower acreages and a lower value acreage mix on average.

Regional Convention:

Thirty-eight (38) people registered for this year's Region 1 convention in Cornwall, PEI. Jennifer Taylor from UPEI made a presentation on the 2011 Household Food Insecurity report; Don Jardine of the UPEI Climate Lab presented historical climate change data and forecasts for the Maritimes; Mark Austin, Chair of USC Canada, gave a presentation on their organizational work and Dave Aiton from the Provincial Government updated members on the changes to the new Growing Forward 2 programs. Our President, Terry Boehm, spoke in the afternoon via Skype on CETA, CGC regulatory changes and UPOV'91.

The following positions were filled: National Board members – Betty Brown and Randall Affleck; Women's Advisory – Marion Drummond; Youth Advisory – Farrah Carter; and IPC – Reg Phelan.

In Union, Randall Affleck



REGION

ONE (New Brunswick)



- by Jean-Eudes Chiasson

La décision de l'UNF N-B de supporter les producteurs de bleuets du N.-B. face à la venue possible d'Oxford Foods et à la concession de vastes étendues de terres à cette entreprise de Nouvelle-Écosse s'inscrit dans une démarche complémentaire aux positions prises antérieurement par notre organisation.

En tant que Président de l'Union nationale des fermiers au N.-B., il a été facile de faire la part des choses entre les paroles de Jean-Maurice Landry et du ministre Paul Robichaud.

Quand le ministre Robichaud tente de ridiculiser et d'insinuer que M. Landry n'est pas représentatif des producteurs, il est facile de comprendre qui a raison dans ce dossier et qui nous devons supporter comme producteurs agricoles et comme citoyens de cette province.

Les efforts de ce groupe pour la création d'une coopérative, qui générerait l'ensemble des terres de la couronne allouées à la production agricole de bleuets dans la province, nous semble une solution viable à long terme afin de gérer la distribution du bien public.

Si les producteurs de bleuets du Nord-Est craignent la venue d'une usine de transformation dans leur région, ce n'est pas l'usine qui les effraye, car une usine leur donnerait accès à un marché de proximité, ce qui serait bénéfique pour eux, mais plutôt le transfert à l'entreprise Oxford Foods d'une grande étendue de terres de la couronne propices à la culture du bleuet.

Ce qui est effrayant, c'est que cette accapARATION de terre par un seul producteur- transformateur pourrait donner à cette corporation la possibilité de produire la majorité de ses besoins en bleuet et, par le fait même, créer un surplus sur le marché faisant chuter les prix considérablement et leur permettant de s'approvisionner à bien au-dessous du coût de production pour le reste de leurs besoins en bleuet.

Ceci pourrait aussi entraîner la chute de plusieurs autres producteurs et par le fait même réduire considérablement le prix des terres ou des baux de location, propices à la culture du bleuet dans cette région du N.-B. Ces terres par la suite deviendraient disponibles pour une accapARATION par l'usine de transformation ou un producteur affilié, à peu de frais.

Quand les politiciens regardent la grande agriculture et les usines de transformation, ils peuvent y voir des votes et leur réélection possible. Malheureusement, très souvent les petites et moyennes fermes créent tout autant sinon plus d'emploi que les grandes usines de transformation sans qu'on en fasse de cas dans les médias.

Si on ne peut nier que les usines de transformation et leurs constructions créent des emplois, souvent ces emplois et ces investissements sont de l'extérieur de la région et de la province, apportant très peu d'investissement du milieu de proximité, ainsi que les machineries spécialisées qui sont également fabriquées à l'extérieur.

Nous soutenons la création d'une coopérative comme prescrit par les producteurs de bleuets et devons mettre toute notre attention à voir sa réalisation. Nous souhaitons aussi que M. Olscamp, en tant que ministre, mette tout son poids afin de faciliter cette réalisation alors qu'il se targue d'être un tenant de la philosophie de Moses Coady, père des coopératives en Atlantique.

Le partage des ressources et de la richesse qui survient grâce aux coopératives semble plus lent que celui qui se produit grâce aux millions des grandes entreprises et qui font élire des députés. Mais ce partage assuré par les coopératives est aussi là pour durer, du fait que les gens qui y prennent part sont du milieu et ont à cœur le développement de leur petite entreprise et la continuité de la ferme et de leurs familles.

Souhaitons que la population verra au-delà des écrans de fumée émise par les politiciens désireux d'assurer leur réélection, et qu'elle soutiendra les efforts des producteurs qui désirent assurer une distribution équitable des richesses du milieu.

Jean-Eudes Chiasson
Président UNF-N-B



REGION THREE (Ontario)



- by John Sutherland

Over the past year, it has become increasingly evident that neonicotinoid treatments are adversely affecting bee populations in Ontario. At its March AGM, NFU-O members passed a resolution calling for the NFU and NFU-O to oppose the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. As per news reports this spring, the Schuitt family of Saugeen Country Honey experienced a massive die-off in 600 hives of over 37 million bees. Other members have also experienced die-offs on varying scales.

Canada's Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency has confirmed that neonicotinoid pesticides caused the widespread bee deaths in Ontario. Dozens of independent, peer-reviewed research studies have concluded that these pesticides pose a significant threat to bees and other wildlife, while providing minimal yield increases in the long run. Recently, the NFU-O Council approved the Friends of Pollinators Action Coalition's (FPAC) Statement of Principles and Purpose, and formed a subcommittee to look at the issue in more depth. The subcommittee will work with FPAC to call for a moratorium on the use of neonicotinoids. FPAC includes members such as the Ontario Beekeepers Association and the Sierra Club. The purpose of the coalition is to:

1. Ensure that regulators immediately reassess the bee and pollinator safety of all neonicotinoid pesticide products and suspend all conditional registrations until we understand how to manage the risks ... to honey bees, pollinators and other wildlife including birds and amphibians.
2. Ensure that beekeepers are compensated for losses caused by deaths, chronic disease or toxic residues in equipment resulting from neonicotinoid pesticide products beginning in ... 2012 and going forward.
3. Ensure that independent research is undertaken to determine threats of neonicotinoid use on long-

term soil, water and air-borne toxicity and pollinator health and whether the substitution of less toxic pesticides, [IPM] practices and/or organic farming practices can eliminate the pesticide's impact on honey bees and other pollinators.

4. Ensure that habitat for pollinators is created and maintained [in] urban and rural landscape by promoting planting of native plants wherever possible and by protecting existing habitat

The NFU-O made a submission to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) responding to a discussion paper on proposed amendments to Ontario's Meat Regulations. The amendments call for exemptions to certain food handling facilities depending on scale. Some regulations for abattoirs have been streamlined; for example, inspectors no longer need separate offices. Overall, the NFU-O supported the proposed amendments and encouraged OMAF to work with high schools and colleges "to develop [apprenticeship-based] training programs to encourage and train the next generation of butchers" and to continue to ensure that legislation and regulations allow small-scale abattoirs "to be profitable and provide service to ... farmers who depend on them."

Ontario's three general farm organizations met with OMAF staff and the Deputy Minister in July to discuss the *Farm Registration and Farm Organization Funding Act, 1993*, which governs stable funding and farm business registration programs and outlines criteria to accredit organizations. OMAF is looking at revising the Act over the next year. Council consulted members, including those involved when the Act was originally written and the NFU-O was originally incorporated, for input to our submission. We are recommending that ON farmers continue to be able to choose the farm organization that best represents them, and suggesting changes that will clarify the accreditation process and ensure that it is non-adversarial.

Finally, on September 10, the judicial review of the NFU-O's case against the Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal will be heard in Ottawa. We hope for a positive outcome, so that we can continue to work on behalf of ON farmers.

*John Sutherland, Fellow Member
& NFU-O President*



REGION

FIVE (Manitoba)



- by Ian Robson

Region 5 NFU Convention on July 20, 2013 was well-attended with good discussion about seeds, trade, supply management, the CWB and the Canadian Grain Commission. We had to make a change to the agenda, and thankfully, David Wiens, Vice-President of Dairy Farmers of Canada, was available. He said that consumers understand and support the Canadian system of supply management. He then explained the World Trade Organization's bizarre way of determining whether milk is subsidized. Because milk is perishable, it needs to be priced low for quick sales. The 'world milk price' is calculated based on the quantity of surplus milk from other countries – and remember, Canada has no surplus milk! The WTO takes this 'world' price and compares it to a country's internal price. If the internal milk price is higher, then that country is said to be subsidizing its milk price.

Canadian dairy farmers have benefited from pooling for decades. It's a standard that all farmers should look to, in terms of quality, reliable supply, and earning a decent income based on a formula that reflects cost of production. Currently, corporate interests suggest that Canadian milk is too expensive, and blame supply management even though Canadian milk prices are comparable with any other source and milk quality is high. Supply management, is under attack because corporations don't like farmers working together for their own benefit. The corporations suggest that without it, consumers would pay less for imported milk. Prices however, are only set by dairy councils for one litre containers of milk. In Manitoba, the dairy council sets the price for one litre containers of milk only.

The Convention passed several resolutions on various topics: rail safety; CWB post C-18; producer cars; and denouncing the nutrition experiments at

residential schools. We also recommended that Manitoba Agriculture Service Corporation be empowered to administer and distribute the new wheat and barley checkoff – all farmers' money – that Minister Ritz wants each province to establish in the wake of the killed CWB. Region 5 recognized Peter Galawan of Oak Lake with the 2013 NFU Grassroots Member Award for his work to help build the NFU by encouraging other farmers to join, think about and work for solutions to farm issues.

We've heard stories about the efforts of farmers to sell wheat individually in 2012-13. The big surprise is that some farmers chose to hold grain over; evidently the early prices were not good enough to sell. In other private/open markets, this action has proven to be hugely price-depressing – as it has been this time.

Region 5 was honoured to nominate Wilfred 'Butch' Harder to the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame for his work with the NFU, the Cooperatives, The POOLs, the Canola Growers, the CWB and other community groups (see page 13 in the *Quarterly*). Butch was inducted to the Hall of Fame at Winkler, Manitoba on July 10, 2013.

Like many farmers, R5 members think that GM alfalfa must not be released. It is the first GM perennial to be released and represents a new management challenge. This crop doesn't respect the rights of those who do not wish to grow it because of its potential to contaminate non-GM alfalfa - just as happened with Triffid flax. The government is proposing standards to allow low level presence of GM in crops, which would let seed companies off the hook for letting unapproved GM traits into Canada.

Region 5 expresses sympathies to the Proven family on the death of Harold Proven, a well-known long-time member who had served on the NFU Board. See page 23 for more.

Manitoba is challenged by flood damage, cuts to the employment and immigration programs, inflation, and now, an 8% sales tax. Compared to lots of places, though, Manitoba and Canada are still very good places to live.

In Union, Ian Robson



SIX (Saskatchewan)

REGION



- by Ed Sagan

We have had 10 inches of rain since spring. Crops are excellent, but the markets for grain are going downhill. Wheat and barley prices have gone down a lot since we lost the CWB on July 31, 2012. So much for the free market, and those who thought it was so good!

We had our Region 6 Annual Convention on July 26 and 27 at St. Michael's Retreat in Lumsden, where Ed Sagan (Regional Co-ordinator), Glenn Tait (National Board), Matt Gehl (National Board), Marcella Pedersen (Women's Advisory) and Karen Pedersen (International Program Committee) were elected to serve one-year terms. Bill Gehl, member and NFU rep to the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), addressed plant breeding issues, and provided updates about Friends of the Wheat Board and the Canadian Wheat Board Alliance. Lorne Scott, former NDP Environment Minister under Romanow and current reeve of Indian Head RM, talked about efforts of the Western Canadian Tree Nursery Coalition to take over and retain the value of the tree nursery to western Canada. Milton Dick, VP of the Agriculture Component of the Public Services Alliance of Canada, spoke about cuts to agriculture personnel, especially regarding the PRFA pasture. Cathy Sproule, NDP MLA, spoke about the increase in land leases fees, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) and environmental concerns. Terry Boehm, NFU President, talked about the changes to the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC), seed varieties, farmers' rights, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and UPOV '91. Naomi Beingessner presented results of her Master's research on land tenure, land prices and the difficulty of seeking land for tenure.

On July 20, I attended the Region 5 (Manitoba) Annual General Meeting on behalf of the National Board. The meeting was well attended.

In Solidarity, Ed Sagan

Glenn Tait, Region 6 Board Member

In July, Sonya and I represented the NFU at a booth at the annual Ness Creek Music Festival which takes place between Big River, SK and the Prince Albert National Park. Two to three thousand attended, gathering open areas and dispersed through the trees at Ness Creek campsite.

Not many farmers were there but many festival-goers were concerned with both food and the environment, so reception was good. Unlike at an ag show, most of the publications I brought were picked up. I also hosted an hour-long talk, *Food, Farming, and Sustainability*, which wandered over NFU positions on agriculture and trade.

Matt Gehl, Region 6 Board Member

Halfway through Harper's "majority" government, what of Canadian agriculture remains to be destroyed. The single desk is gone. The CGC and public plant breeding are being gutted. Public pastures and the shelterbelt program are being shuttered or offloaded, yet Ottawa ensures that seed companies benefit from international trade deals.

This government is not farmer-friendly: great for corporations – the 'industry' – but malicious to farmers. It is increasingly difficult for social movements to influence policy; Canadians are heard by the political machine only during elections. Our electoral system is broken, as evidenced when a third of voters elects a majority government. Our Upper Chamber is supposed to counter the Commons' partisanship, but recent bad news about Senators' expenses shows it as a money pit.

Getting rid of the Senate is not enough - we need electoral reform. Too many people cast votes in vain and lack choice in political parties. Proportional representation would make all votes equal, allowing smaller parties to get into the House.

Farmers represent a small, widely distributed percentage of the electorate, and our voices are drowned out by urban votes. We must reach out to urban residents and call for *all* major political parties to move towards proportional representation. Alone, Harper's government won't listen to us - they have their WCWGA and WBGA as obedient 'farm groups.'



EIGHT (B.C./Peace River)

REGION



- by Peter Eggers

On August 17, we had our regional convention (R8) in LaGlace in the shop on the Eggers farm. Our National President Terry Boehm addressed us via Skype. It worked very well, and caused a long discussion around seed and seed-saving.

Region 8 elections went as follows: Lisa Lundgard is reaffirmed as Youth Advisory member; Alex Fletcher as the International Program Committee member; the position of Women's Advisory remains vacant; and Dan Ferguson and Peter Eggers were reaffirmed as Region 8 National Board members.

Our next Region 8 convention will be held at the end of March, 2014 on Vancouver Island at a location to be determined. I will keep you posted.

The last subject discussed at the convention was about the soil mineral balancing that we (the Eggers) are doing on our farm. The significant part of our land's mineral imbalance is that calcium is present in too low amounts. Low phosphate, potassium and copper and high magnesium mean that plant production is handicapped.

After correction and working towards a better mineral balance, the results are amazing. In the photos shown, the yield on amended soil (Photo A) was 4.65 times higher than on the unamended soil (Photo B). You can see that the hay growing on the amended soil (A) is more lush, while the hay on the unamended soil (B) looks less healthy.

After 100 years of farming in this area of Region 8, liming and addressing real mineral deficiencies is still not common practice. Doing so not only provides better yields for the farmer, but also higher grain quality and higher nutritional value for people, and better animal health, with significantly less need for mineral supplementation for livestock. Erosion is also curbed due to better soil structure. I would call this a real win-win situation.

In Union, Peter Eggers

Photo A:

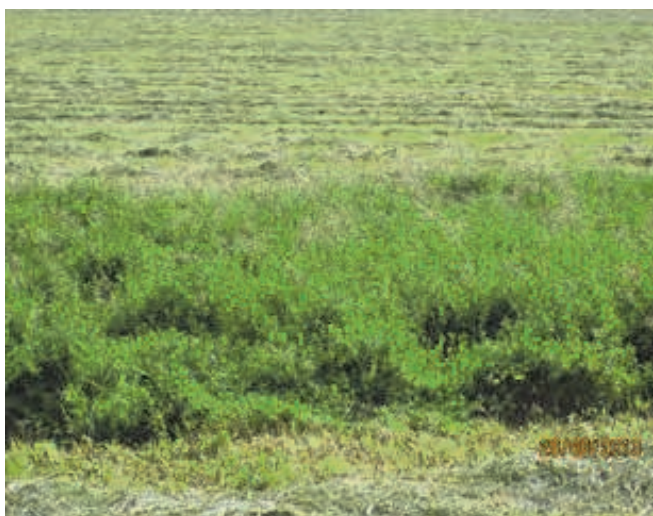


Photo B:



Alfalfa and meadow brome hay on amended soil (A) (i.e. mineral levels are being restored) and the untreated check (B) in the same field.



Long-time member inducted to MB Ag Hall of Fame

“Long-time NFU member, Wilfred ‘Butch’ Harder, was inducted to the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame on July 10, 2013 after being nominated by friends and colleagues in NFU Region 5 (Manitoba) and supported by others on the farm policy front. Regional Coordinator Ian Robson said, “Wilf has worked hard for farmers, and he deserves this honour. It was the least we could do to acknowledge his work.”

Wilfred Harder was born and raised at Lowe Farm, Manitoba. In 1977, he married Joyce Recksiedler. They have one son, Dean Allen, married to Rose-Anne Harder, nee Nesbitt. On their 5000 acre farm at Lowe Farm, the Harder family produces wheat, barley, canola and specialty crops.

Wilf has been involved in farm policy issues at the local, provincial and national levels for most of his life. Early in his farming career he became involved in the Lowe Farm Co-op, the Canadian Auctioneers’ Association and the Carman Co-op Implements Committee. Wilf has been a member of the Canadian Seed Growers’ Association (CSGA) for over 30 years.

In 1987, Wilf was elected to the Advisory Committee of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) where he was Chair for four years. Following the CWB’s legislative restructuring in 1998, he served as a farmer-elected Director until 2004. As a long-time supporter of orderly marketing, Wilf was involved in organizing a number of farmer rallies in support of the CWB. During his time as an elected director of the CWB, Wilf served on the Protein Grading, Audit, and Farmer Relations Committees. He championed issues such as the marketing of fusarium-infected wheat and improving communications with farmers, labour unions, government and industry.

Wilf has been actively involved with the National Farmers Union (NFU) since 1969, holding several elected positions at the local, provincial and national levels.

While serving as an elected Director of Manitoba Pool Elevators, and later Agricore, Wilf was appointed to the boards of X-Can Grain, Western Co-op Fertilizers and the Canadian Co-

operative Association. Since 2005, he has been an elected Director of the Manitoba Canola Growers Association (MCGA). He has served on the MCGA’s Marketing Committee and as their representative on the executive of Keystone Agricultural Producers. In 2013, Wilf was elected Secretary of MCGA. In 2005, he was appointed by Manitoba Agriculture Minister Rosann Wowchuk to the board of the Manitoba Agriculture Services Corporation.



Butch Harder was nominated to the MB Ag Hall of Fame by the National Farmers Union, Region 5 (Manitoba), and inducted July 10, 2013.

In his community, Wilf has been an elected Member and Chair of the St. John’s Lutheran Church Council in Rosenfeld. He was an early supporter of the orderly development of land for housing and industrial use in the Lowe Farm area. Wilf gives freely of his time to help the community improve and grow.

Wilf has been awarded the *Distinguished Co-operator* Award by the Manitoba Co-op Council, the *Grassroots Leadership Citation* by the NFU and a *Thirty Year Long Service Certificate* by the CSGA. Wilf’s forthright manner and his ability to “call it as he sees it” have fostered positive change at all levels of society.

—nfu—

Source: Manitoba Hall of Fame, available at http://www.manitobaaghalloffame.com/media/2013_Wilfred_Harder.pdf



CO₂ Levels Hit 400 ppm for First Time in Human Existence

- by Darrin Qualman

For the first time in more than 800,000 years, carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in Earth's atmosphere have reached 400 parts per million (ppm). The units, parts per million, will not be familiar to everyone. But the units aren't important. What is important is that the last time CO₂ levels were this high, it was so long ago that our species, *Homo Sapiens*, did not exist. Important also is this: the rapid rise of CO₂ levels shows that human actions are the cause. No one can look at the graph below and come to any other conclusion.

Long-term normal CO₂ levels are below 300 ppm. Fossil fuel burning has dramatically raised levels. This graph shows us something stark and inescapable: unless we rapidly reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions, we risk pushing CO₂ levels above 500 ppm, or even 600—perhaps *doubling* normal concentrations.

The 400 ppm milestone was announced in May by the US Government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA released measurements of CO₂ levels collected at their Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii showing that average level for the week beginning May 26, 2013 exceeded 400 ppm — the first time a weekly average has exceeded this level. Mauna Loa data is the most widely cited CO₂ measure.

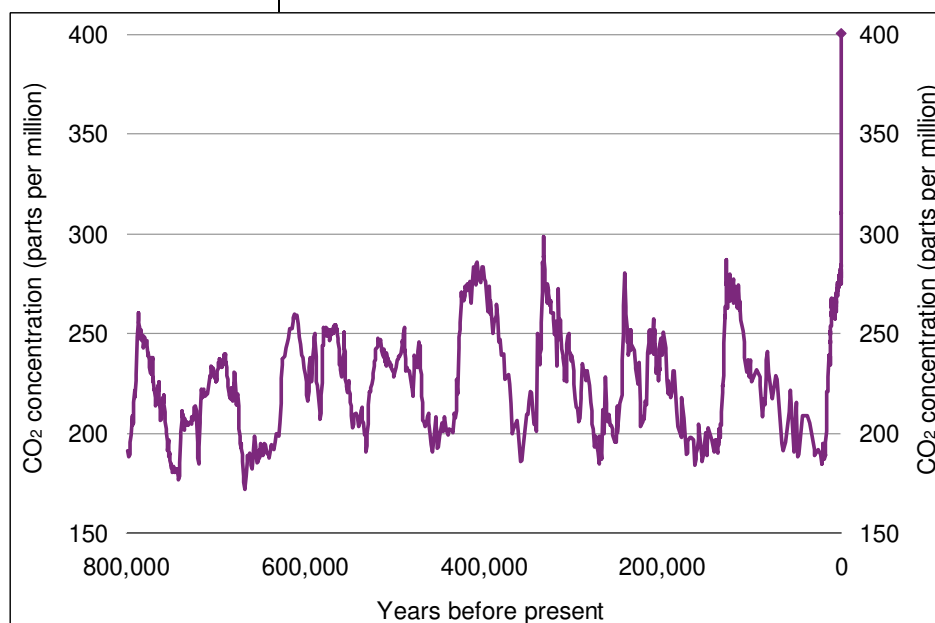
Measurements of CO₂ levels for recent decades come directly from air samples. Measurements of CO₂ levels for past centuries come from analysis of air trapped in bubbles in Antarctic ice. Scientists have taken air samples from multiple ice cores. Each core is sampled and analyzed at multiple research facilities using multiple techniques. Because of this duplicate testing and diversity of sampling methods,

there is extremely high agreement among scientists that ice-core data accurately reflects CO₂ levels in previous centuries. We can know past CO₂ levels with a high degree of certainty.

To understand the present, we must look at the long-term context. CO₂ levels are directly related to climate and temperature. Earth has gone through nine complete glaciation cycles, often called “ice ages,” over the past 800,000 years. (Those glaciation cycles correspond to the troughs in the graph below.) Nine times, our climate cooled, and ice sheets, kilometres thick, covered much of North America, Europe, and Asia. And nine times the Earth warmed, melted the ice, and restored a climate like the one we enjoy today.

Not once, however, in the past 800 millennia, not once in those nine tumultuous cooling and warming cycles, did CO₂ levels top 300 ppm. It is, therefore, impossible to overstate the gravity, significance, novelty, and menace of recent news that we have reached 400 ppm. Human activity is pushing our planet far beyond the normal and safe operating limits that have held for nearly a million years — the entire time our species has existed.

(continued on page 15...)



Sources: US government and scientific journal articles. See background.



Not only are CO₂ levels unprecedented in the past 800 millennia, the *rate* of increase is unprecedented. CO₂ levels have increased by 100 ppm in a century. Such an increase usually takes 10,000 years (one hundred centuries), according to ice core data. Humans are pushing up levels *100 times faster* than levels have risen at any time in the past 800,000 years. The rapid rise is visible in the graph—the line goes straight up. And the rate of increase is accelerating. In the 1960s, human activity pushed up CO₂ concentrations by 1 ppm per year. In the 1970s and 1980s, levels increased 1.5 ppm per year. Now, 2 ppm per year.

These high and rapidly rising CO₂ levels have already triggered rapid increases in temperature, extreme weather intensity, sea level, ocean acidification, and species extinction rates.

We are increasing CO₂ levels at an *accelerating* rate. We are warming and destabilizing our

atmosphere at an accelerating rate. It is impossible to overstate the danger of what we are doing. Alarm bells should be ringing all over the world. Words cannot convey how damaging continued CO₂-level increases will be to the long-term prospects for human cities and societies or to the natural ecosystems we rely on. We are looking down the barrel of the greatest threat that has ever imperiled our societies, economies, children and future. It is as if we have decided to set fire to our home, the Earth. Unless we extinguish that fire, all we hold dear will perish.

—nfu—

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Backgrounder to 400 ppm editorial

Data Sources:

800,000 years ago - 1913

Ice core samples, Dome C, Antarctica (Monnin et al. 2001; Siegenthaler et al. 2005; Luethi et al.) and Vostok, Antarctica (Petit et al. 1999; Pepin et al. 2001; Raynaud et al. 2005)

ftp://ftp.ncdc.noaa.gov/pub/data/paleo/icecore/antarctica/epica_domec/edc-co2-2008.xls

1832 - 1978

Ice core samples, Law Dome, Antarctica <http://cdiac.ornl.gov/ftp/trends/co2/lawdome.smoothed.yr20>

1959 - 2013

Direct atmospheric measurements, Mauna Loa Observatory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (United States Department of Commerce)

ftp://ftp.cmdl.noaa.gov/ccg/co2/trends/co2_annmean_mlo.txt

ftp://ftp.cmdl.noaa.gov/ccg/co2/trends/co2_weekly_mlo.txt

Long-term CO₂ data in the graph comes from core samples taken from the Antarctic ice cap. Air bubbles in the ice layers preserve CO₂ concentrations from past millennia. To ensure accuracy, CO₂ concentrations in ice cores are sampled by multiple methods at multiple research faculties.

Units in this release and in the graph are in parts per million (ppm). Parts per million is a measure like percent. Percent means, in effect, parts per hundred—two percent is two parts per hundred.

Recent CO₂ level data is available at:

<http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/dv/iadv/graph.php?code=MLO&program=ccgg&type=ts>

http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/dv/data/index.php?site=mlo&category=Greenhouse%2BGases¶meter_name=Carbon%2BDioxide&frequency=Daily%2BAverages

Daily Mauna Loa - <http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/weekly.html>

Daily Mauna Loa (to end of 2012 only) –

ftp://aftp.cmdl.noaa.gov/data/trace_gases/co2/in-situ/surface/mlo/co2_mlo_surface-insitu_1_ccgg_day.txt

Weekly Mauna Loa (1 week behind) – ftp://ftp.cmdl.noaa.gov/ccg/co2/trends/co2_weekly_mlo.txt



NFU Women attend International Conference

La Via Campesina 6th Conference - Jakarta, Indonesia, June 6 to 12, 2013

-by Nettie Wiebe

"In the course of its two decade history, the Via Campesina has become one of the most dynamic, broadly based, important movements in the world, embracing unparalleled diversity while struggling in solidarity for food sovereignty, social and political justice and the protection of land and life.

Women have been key participants and leaders in the Via Campesina. In fact, the role of women in the Via Campesina is part of what makes this movement unique both in the history of peasant movements and among other international social movements and organizations.

It is my view that the work, perspectives, analysis, energy, leadership and presence of women in the Via Campesina has fundamentally shaped and strengthened our movement."

Excerpt from "Women of the Via Campesina: Creating and Occupying our Rightful Spaces" by Nettie Wiebe

The Jakarta Call

"We, La Via Campesina, call rural and urban organizations and social movements to transform and build a new society based on food sovereignty and justice. We gather here strengthened by the spirit of our friends and leaders and all those whose courage and commitment to our struggle inspires us. La Via Campesina, an international peasant movement, gathers more than 200 million peasants, small-scale producers, landless, women, youth, indigenous, migrants, and farm and food workers, from 183 organizations and 88 countries.

As people of the land, we are vital actors not only in the construction of a distinct agricultural model, but also in building a fair, diverse and egalitarian world. We feed humanity and care for nature. Future generations depend on us to protect the earth.

Today, more than ever, another world is necessary. The destruction of our world, through overexploitation and dispossession of people and the appropriation of natural resources, is resulting in the current climate crisis and deep inequalities which endanger human kind and life itself. La Via



North American delegates met several times during the 6th Conference to discuss regional positions, issues and input to bring to the Assembly. (Photo courtesy Stephanie Wang)

Campesina says a resounding NO to this corporate-driven destruction.

We are building new relationships between human beings and nature based on solidarity, cooperation and complementarity. At the heart of our struggle is an ethic of life. La Via Campesina is committed to giving visibility to all of the local struggles around the world, ensuring that these are understood from international perspectives and integrated into a global movement for food sovereignty, social change and self-determination for the peoples of the world."

(continued on page 17...)



Reflections on Jakarta

-by Eva Reshak

For my first experience with the La Via Campesina (LVC), the 6th Conference was a great introduction to the organization. The agenda was packed and many subjects were new to me - I'm still trying to grasp some of it. In general, the conference was motivating, and being able to meet farmers from all over the world was a tremendous gift. Key subjects discussed were about ending women violence, GMO opposition, agroecology and migrant workers.

The Youth Assembly was held before the main conference started. During lunch we were able to go and visit the agroecology village where I participated in a liquid manure-making workshop.

Youth delegates talked about their respective experiences and hardships. I was touched when listening to Japanese farmers who lived near the Fukushima nuclear power plant and had to leave their farms behind. Hearing of these disasters is heartbreaking, but they are all returning to farm life - just not on their affected farms. Some have had to start all over, and it will take many years before they are able to return to their family farms - if ever they can return.

Another story that touched me was this Japanese girl who farms. She grew up on a farm and wasn't interested in the family business until

recently. She hides this from her parents because they do not see it as a viable way to make a living. She hopes one day that she'll be able to share her passion for farming with them.

During the Youth Assembly, five main themes were discussed; food sovereignty, climate change and agroecology, land grabbing, migration and health. Youth met as we could throughout the convention to continue discussions, and by the end of the conference, we decided to divide the topics among the different regions. North America will be responsible for the work around climate change and agroecology as well as migration.

The Youth Assembly ended with us gathering for a march for the opening of the agroecology village, which show-cased seeds, organizing and methods of farm production from many different countries.

In conclusion, the 6th Conference of the La Via Campesina was great - motivating, but exhausting! I was very tired coming back to the Canadian east coast. Even though many of the delegates spoke English, I wish I was better in Spanish because that would have allowed me to connect with many more farmers. My Jakarta LVC experience left me motivated to continue the production path that I have chosen and happy to know that we aren't alone in our little corner of the world.

—nfu—

Former NFU President and Women's President Nettie Wiebe addresses the Youth Assembly about the challenges that are awaiting them as future farmers, but more importantly about their potential to transform the global food system and achieve true food sovereignty.

(Photo courtesy Stephanie Wang)



Lost: Billion Dollar Protein Premium

- by Glenn Tait, Region 6 Board Member

It appears that the loss of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is about three times as costly for prairie farmers as we thought it would be. When Australia lost its wheat board, we saw a temporary dip in the world price of wheat and then a settling out of Australian wheat \$20 per tonne lower compared to its closest competitor. Predictions for the drop in the Canadian price post-CWB were about the same. Were we off!

Hauling good high protein wheat to the elevator this past year we noticed not a drop, but the near complete disappearance, of a protein premium. Determining exactly how much we really should have been paid required some research.

It took a phone call to the help desk, but the difficult-to-navigate Statistics Canada website yielded the monthly price of feed wheat in Saskatchewan. The price of CWB exports is no longer on the web, so another phone call to the CWB office was needed to determine the historical price of the ubiquitous #2 Hard Red Spring - 14.5% protein, which I then backed off to account for freight and elevation from North Battleford. I arbitrarily started at August 2005 and, with Sonya's help, graphed and compared the lines from each source. As you can see, the price gap varies, but it averages \$79/T and is never less than about \$40/T.

This past crop year, the price of feed wheat was at times perversely higher than the price of good #2, but averaged \$3/T less than the estimate of the average price of #2 - 14.5% obtained from some local elevator managers. That's a drop of \$76/T from the premium we normally received from the CWB. Expressing that as a loss of income, the average farm here lost about \$75,000 last year, and the nation lost \$1.1 billion.

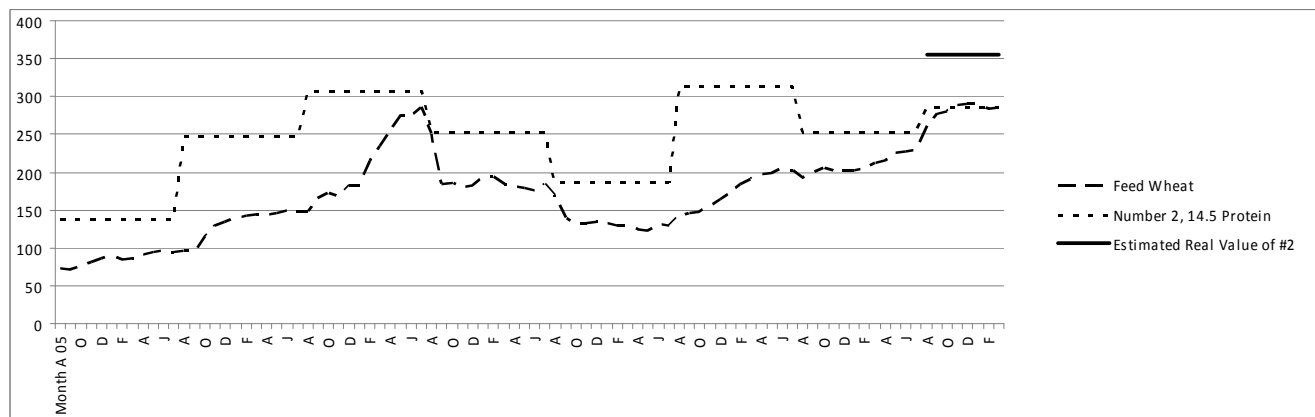
Open market promoters (profiteers?) say that the reason for the collapse of the protein premium is the shortage of and high price of corn this past year. Though the commodities are surely connected, the corn excuse is a red herring. Looking back, we see that corn has been at or near record prices since July 2010, yet the 2010-2011 crop year showed a protein premium of well over \$100/T. Apologists say that the price gap also collapsed in the U.S. so it had to collapse here too. Well, that's kind of obvious! The only entity that could have maintained a Canadian price higher than the American price was the CWB.

The price gap is forecast to return part-way to normal next year, but then it wasn't forecast to up and vanish last year.

—ntu—

An earlier version of this article was published as a letter to the editor in The Western Producer and Manitoba Co-operator.

Estimated Real Value of #2 – 14.5% Protein Wheat



Cuba tour teaches surprising lesson

- by Marcella Pedersen, Region 6 Women's Advisor

Cuba is a world leader in sustainable organic farming, and I wanted to see for myself how Cuban farmers are managing to thrive. In February, I joined Wendy Holm's fifteenth annual Cuba Farmer-to-Farmer Tour to see how Cuban farmers are managing to thrive. Wendy has long-standing connections with the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP - Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños) and co-operatives in Cuba, and arranged for us to visit a dairy co-op, credit services co-ops, market co-ops, urban organic farms, a show cattle farm and farmers' markets. A visit to a crocodile preserve farm was a last-minute substitution because of scheduling difficulties.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, imports that supported Cuban high-input, export-based industrialized farming came to an abrupt end. The ensuing 'special period' was marked by the loss of 80 per cent of foreign trade, and

rampant hunger and malnutrition among citizens. The Cuban government changed its focus from growing for export to growing for domestic consumption by developing urban farms, encouraging migration from urban to rural areas and changing state farms to co-ops, which now comprise 80% of Cuban farms.

Without commercial agricultural inputs, Cubans focused on production practices such as intercropping, composting and vermicomposting, crop rotations, etc. By 1995, the food shortage had ended, and in 2002, urban farms and gardens were feeding city populations, and school curricula included lessons on local food production and ecological issues. Rural farms also produced enough to feed themselves, including beans and traditional roots and tubers.

Today, Cuban agriculture produces 12 calories of food for every calorie of energy invested. Canada, however, uses 12 calories of energy to produce 1 calorie of food. As for the 'Happiness Factor' of Cubans - it's very high - young people reportedly rate 50 - 50 on the measure.

Besides learning about organic agriculture, I also learned something about my own health. I've had eczema for about 15 years, but it completely cleared up in Cuba! Then we stayed the last three days in five-star hotels that served the same processed foods we have here. When we left on the third day, my eczema had broken out again. Between this and my reading "Seeds of Deception" by Jeffrey M. Smith and my Cuban experience, I decided to stop using GM canola oil. It wasn't hard to change to olive and coconut oil because I am a "from scratch" cook. I've discovered that the eczema breaks out when I travel or eat elsewhere, but clears up again after I get home. I'm convinced that GM canola, corn and soy products cause my eczema, and would like to hear from others with similar experiences. Please email me at gilmar@sasktel.net.

Organic is the only way to go for better health and, as Cuba has discovered, the best way to achieve true food sovereignty.

—ntu—



*Photo:
Marcella in a
Cuban urban
Garden.*



"Farmer's Privileges" a hollow promise under UPOV'91

-by Terry Boehm

The particular problems with this so-called concession are those of scope. While on the one hand UPOV'91 speaks of a farmer's privilege to save and reuse seeds, on the other hand it confers a great deal of control to the holder of Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR). The key right is to extend control over propagating material, the harvested material and even processed material through so-called cascading rights that will allow breeders to collect royalties in many and varied ways, including when a farmer sells his crop. The object is to make farm-saved seed uneconomic when its use can cause royalties to be collected. The other problem is the breeder's rights on propagating material (seeds) which are the way to control multiplication, conditioning (cleaning, treating, etc.) for seeding and the sale, exporting, importing and stocking of the same. This leaves virtually no chance for the farmer to use harvested material for seeding when the breeder can intervene at the conditioning or cleaning stage.

Under UPOV '91, the burden to prove variety shifts to the farmer. For example, the farmer would have to prove he did not have company X's variety in any dispute. Threats of court action will cause farmers to try to avoid this dilemma by purchasing certified seeds. The gene patent dispute in the Percy Schmeiser case confirms this. The fact is that most canola farmers in western Canada purchase seed at very high prices, in no small part to avoid litigation.

As control extends through stronger PBR's, an increasingly concentrated seed industry will use contracts that do not allow farm-saved seed as a stipulation for access to new varieties. In all of this, it should be noted that these are transitional measures which facilitate final control of seed, and ultimately, agriculture and the food we eat.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A FARMERS' SEED ACT (DRAFT)

"Canadians recognize the inherent rights of farmers—derived from thousands of years of custom and tradition—to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds. Current and newly-proposed restrictions on farmers' traditional practices—resulting from commercial contracts, identity preservation (IP) systems, and/or legislation—criminalize these ancient practices and harm farmers, citizens, and society in general.

Canadians call on Parliament to refrain from making any changes to the *Seeds Act* or to the *Plant Breeders' Rights Act* that would further restrict farmers' rights or add to farmers' costs. Further, we call on Parliament to enshrine, in legislation, the inalienable rights of farmers and other Canadians to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds." (Source: Preamble to the NFU Save Our Seeds Campaign Petition)

Farmers' Rights (Source: Article 9 - International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture)

- 9.1 The Contracting Parties recognize the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world, particularly those in the centres of origin and crop diversity, have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources which constitute the basis of food and agriculture production throughout the world.
- 9.2 The Contracting Parties agree that the responsibility for realizing Farmers' Rights, as they relate to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, rests with national governments. In accordance with their needs



and priorities, each Contracting Party should, as appropriate, and subject to its national legislation, take measures to protect and promote Farmers' Rights, including:

- a) protection of traditional knowledge relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;
- b) the right to equitably participate in sharing benefits arising from the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; and
- c) the right to participate in making decisions, at the national level, on matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

9.3 Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted to limit any rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material, subject to national law and as appropriate."

A Farmers' Seed Act would allow farmers to retain customary use of seed, and at a minimum, must include:

1. Cleaning, Conditioning and Stocking
 - a. No restrictions on seed cleaning and conditioning
 - b. No liability for cleaning protected varieties
 - c. No restrictions on stocking
 - d. No requirement for seed cleaners to give out client lists
2. Royalties, Gene Patents and PBRs
 - a. Royalties only possible at time of seed sale; no endpoint royalties or cascading rights
 - b. When PBR term ends, varieties are clearly in the public domain and available for unrestricted use
 - c. A public appeal mechanism – i.e., to prevent registration of unwanted GM varieties or deregistration of older, but still used and useful conventional varieties, etc.

3. Research and Public Interest

- a. A market harm test
- b. Full field testing and merit requirements for new varieties

4. Dispute Settlement

- a. No inspections or taking of samples on farmers' land and of their crops without the farmer's explicit permission, as well as the presence of, and verification of sampling and testing by a neutral third party
- b. Binding public commission (similar to the role of the CGC in settling grain grading disputes) to settle disputes (i.e. patent, PBR infringement, etc.) between farmers and companies – no court required

5. Variety Registration/Deregistration

- a. Cancellation of varietal registration cannot be made by registrants (rationale must be evidence-based and varieties cannot be cancelled for the sole reason of forcing farmers to buy new varieties)
- b. No need to be an accredited plant breeder to register a variety
- c. Unrestricted access to seed cleaning equipment and parts
- d. No restriction on establishment of new seed cleaning plants
- e. Mechanisms to facilitate the use of land races (for example, Red Fife wheat)

We know that the more diverse and critical the input to any process, the stronger the result – and in this case, we need to establish the strongest possible framework for a Farmers' Seed Act.

I would be very interested in hearing comments and suggestions from members. Email me at centaur2@sasktel or call 306-255-2880. —ntu—



Convention 2013: A Sneak Peek

November (Date TBD) - Secrets of Successful Lobbying: The NFU Takes It to the Hill

- Information sessions by screencast and conference call

When you talk, does your MP listen? Do you get what you want, or do you come away having heard the same old tired party lines that sound great, but promise little? Do you wonder how to be persistent without being bombastic? How to re-take control of the meeting if – when – the MP takes over? How to convince rather than dictate? Lobbying a politician or senior bureaucrat can be challenging. Learn how to keep a conversation with MPs focused on YOUR points, and to get straight answers to your questions and requests.

Because this year's Annual National Convention will be in Ottawa, the NFU will lobby key MPs and senior bureaucrats on the morning of November 28. We want to have as many three-person teams on the Hill as we can put together. Each team will include a member who knows the Hill and has done a lot of lobbying, and new(ish) and youth members.

About three to four weeks before convention, interested members can take advantage of the opportunity to participate in one or more lobby information sessions via screencast and conference call. You'll hear members with years of lobby experience share stories and tips about what works and doesn't work when meeting with politicians, and have the chance to discuss or ask questions.

TO INDICATE YOUR INTEREST in participating in the pre-convention lobby information sessions and the Lobby Day, please send an email to nfu@nfu.ca with the subject line NFU TAKES IT TO THE HILL and your contact information in the body of the email. You can also call the office at 306-652-9465 and give your name and contact information. Participants will need to have high-speed internet service. For more information, talk to a member of the Executive or the Board, or call Carla Roppel or Cathy Holtslander at National Office.

Thursday, November 28 (7 to 8:30 pm) - Our Communities. Our country. Our world. Our economy.*

- A public event featuring Jim Stanford, PhD, economist with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)

How can people effectively navigate this increasingly globalized and fragmented world, where corporate power trumps that of elected governments? What can we do when we are systematically stripped of our democratic right to the information we need to provide feedback and make recommendations about policy decisions that profoundly affect our government's ability to act in our best interests; when our dissent and resist becomes criminalized or labelled as terrorism; when governments enact legislation with the specific intent to crush organized resistance and dissent, such as labour unions provide?

CAW economist Jim Stanford will talk about these and other economic and political factors that affect how Canadians organize themselves to represent their interests, recreate democratic processes, and reclaim and transform an economic system that has been hijacked by global corporate tycoons. He will tell the story of how two unions, CAW and CEP (Communications, Energy and Paperworkers), began to talk about doing things differently, how that conversation ultimately resulted in the formation of UNIFOR, Canada's newest and largest labour union, and what the NFU might learn from Unifor's experience.

(*Title TBC)

Other panels will include:

- The Role of Resistance & Dissent in Healthy Societies
- Seed Sovereignty: Building Strong Foundations
- "Feeding the World" – Exposing Corporate Spin
- Big Oil v. Food Sovereignty: Threats to Food, Land and Water
- Rooted in Resistance: Food Sovereignty, Farmers & Farm Labour
- Our Seeds, Ourselves: Resisting Corporate Control of Seeds
- Farm Practice as Political Strategy

**Visit the NFU website at www.nfu.ca regularly
for the latest information about these panels and more!**

Congratulations!!

The National Farmers Union congratulates long-time members Harold and Jeanne Culberson of Waterville, Carleton County, NB, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 30, 2013. The many friends and family members who joined them for the party included their daughter Cheryl and sons Reid and Ross and their families, who support the NFU in NB with their farm memberships. Harold and Jeanne are past winners of the NFU Grassroots Leadership Citation and are still actively engaged in the NFU. Best wishes can be sent to: haroldculberson@hotmail.com



(Message from the Editor, from page 2)

We challenge, question, discuss, debate, read – willing to learn and perhaps even change our mind, always trying harder to understand what and why, where and how; always respecting our diversity and savouring our common humanity.

Now, back to my dear brothers; our difference, I think, is rooted in my belief in solidarity. I respectfully resist – as do you – the seeming inevitability of corporate consolidation and the erosion of democratic process and our rights as citizens, despite assertions that as individuals and an organization, we are out of touch with the real world and want to stop progress. We just don't

buy the story that if you work hard enough, things will fall your way. Does it really happen that way for everyone, and if not, why not? We don't believe that the form of "progress" on sale these days is going to float all ships equally. There may not be enough life rafts for everyone, and the wealthy have dibs on what's available. Our task, then, is to redefine "progress" in ways that assure the success of families, friends and communities.

So if to me, solidarity is a key source of strength of the NFU, what is it for you? What else makes the NFU different? Might make for an interesting argu..., I mean, debate – maybe, discussion? —nfu—

We Remember ...

JOHN DELLA BOSCA

Hastings, Prince Edward, Northumberland Local 334 mourns the sudden passing of a passionate farmer and farm leader - John Della Bosca - on June 23.

John's commitment and hard work on sustainable farming and food production will be greatly missed. John was the principal driver around the creation of a micro grant for up and coming farmers co-funded by the NFU Local and Slow Food. Our hearts and prayers go to Gerri and John's family.

John will be missed by both the Local and the agriculture community as a whole.



Harold Proven (January 15, 1926 to July 16 2013)

Long-time NFU member Harold Proven, died peacefully with family at his side on July 16. The NFU offers condolences to Harold's wife of 65 years, Isabella; his five sons, Garry (Debra), David, Randall, Richard (Amy) and Douglas (Cindy); 16 grandchildren and great grandchildren; numerous nieces, nephews and cousins; and many friends.

Harold was a charter member of NFU Local 516, and filled elected positions as local Vice-President, District 6 Director and Region 5 (Manitoba) Coordinator throughout his years of involvement with the National Farmers union.

Committed to peace, social justice and human rights, Harold was also involved in a number of other civil society organizations, like the Marquis Project, Eco-justice and the Council of Canadians, and travelled widely to China, Cuba and throughout Canada. Harold was honored with several awards, including the Global Citizenship Award and the NFU Grassroots Leadership Citation.

Harold touched many lives and we will all miss him.



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NFU 44th National Convention

NOVEMBER 27TH TO 30TH, 2013



Travelodge Ottawa Hotel & Conference Centre, 1376 Carling Avenue

Ottawa, Ontario

Convention Theme : Growing Resistance

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NEW THIS YEAR!

"Organizing Campaigns: Building a Social Movement" Workshop

Wednesday, November 27, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM