



Excerpts from

NFU Presentation on Bill C-18 before the House of Commons Agriculture Committee, October 9, 2014

—by Terry Boehm

Canadian farmers and governments have a history of developing institutions to rebalance power.

Farmers fought against railways and grain companies. We have the *Canada Grains Act*, the *Canadian Grain Commission*, supply management, and we had the Canadian Wheat Board and the co-operative Wheat Pools. These institutions were developed to reduce exploitation of farmers. There was recognition that a balancing of power between those who would exploit farmers and the general public interest was needed – not only for farmers’ success but also for the economy of the country.

Our ancestors never imagined having seed wrestled away from them. Seed is hope in the future. It is powerful. With strengthened Plant Breeders’ Rights in Bill C-18, we are witnessing not the facilitation of innovation, but the granting of powerful tools to extract wealth from farmers and to transfer almost total control of seed to plant breeders and breeding companies. This is not in the public interest! It is in the interest of a limited number of seed companies that are continually consolidating. Our responsibility is to resist for the future – not to become quislings by endorsing extensive new rights for plant breeders and their increasingly corporate representatives.

Bill C-18 inverts the whole question of rights: it gives the breeder an extensive list of rights for saving, reusing, stocking, conditioning, importing, exporting new varieties, and the authorizing of any of these activities to be done by another party. These are the *exclusive rights* of the breeder. The farmer is given a mere *privilege* to save and reuse seed on his own holdings and to condition (clean, treat) the seed – which may be restricted or even revoked in the future. The farmer cannot stock seed: this is the

exclusive right of the breeder under the legislation. How can a farmer exercise his “privilege” if he cannot stock his seed? Many of us stock seed for years as insurance for when our crop is not suitable as seed due to adverse conditions or disease. In spite of what Minister Ritz and *Partners in Innovation* say, Bill C-18 gives the exclusive right to stock seed to the plant breeder alone.

In addition, C-18’s *farmers’ privilege* will be subject to “reasonable limits” which, as the Commissioner of Plant Breeders’ Rights stated, “could be determined by the size of the holding, the type of variety, the number of cycles of reproduction, remuneration proportion of harvested material, etc.” C-18 will accelerate the erosion of farmers’ control over seed, already seen in the variety registration system that lets breeders cancel good varieties.

So what C-18 really means is that over time, farmers lose the ability to save, reuse, exchange and sell seed. Seed is one of the few inputs that farmers can actually reproduce themselves. Farmers are not opposed to buying new varieties from time to time but we are opposed to the restrictions imposed by the mechanisms contained in Bill C-18, which is essentially UPOV ’91.

Partners in Innovation state that Plant Breeders’ Rights are not patents. This is true, but the powers that plant breeders will have under C-18 are even more extensive. In addition, C-18 allows a breeder to have both a patent and PBR on the same variety, which is not possible at present. Seed prices have not increased drastically with our current, much less restrictive, UPOV ’78-based Plant Breeders’ Rights system because a farmer could always use his own seed to buffer commercial seed prices. This option is eroded by C-18. The legislation also enables End Point Royalties and we could see, as in Australia, farmers paying royalties on their whole crop after harvest rather than the seed.

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Six Points about CETA

What is it? CETA is the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic & Trade Agreement (CETA). It is not a free trade agreement – it is constitutional-style document that affects matters only loosely related to trade, such as investor rights, intellectual property rights, buy-local food policies and domestic regulations. Negotiations were launched in May, 2009. On September 26, 2014 the final text was made available to the public – after announcing that both sides had signed off on the text – leaving no opportunity for public debate on an agreement that will undermine the ability of governments to act in the public interest.

It protects corporate profits while undermining public interests through ISDS.

In Chapter 10 of CETA, Canada and the EU commit to strong market access rules, prohibition of performance requirements, non-discriminatory treatment of foreign investors and high standards of investor protection. Through this chapter and the accompanying investor-state dispute settlement mechanism (ISDS), CETA grants foreign investors the special privilege to sue host governments and to claim compensation for all kinds of actions states undertake on behalf of their citizens. These cases will not be heard by domestic court systems but rather in front of appointed arbitration tribunals. ISDS is increasingly being used globally by multinational corporations to challenge environmental protection measures, public health regulations and other legislation enacted by governments in the public interest.

By reaching down to the municipal level, CETA threatens buy local policies and programs. Under CETA the EU has secured "unconditional access" to public procurement at all levels of government in Canada. This will substantially restrict most provincial and municipal government bodies, including schools, hospitals and universities, from using public spending to support local farmers, create good local jobs or address climate change. For all goods and services contracts – including food service contracts – above about \$330,000, municipal governments and government entities will be prohibited from adopting local content requirements or applying any other "offsets", which are defined as "any condition or undertaking that encourages local development". Governments are prohibited from dividing up proposed contracts into separate procurements.

It expands intellectual property rights enforcement tools. Both gene patents, used to protect ownership of genetically modified seeds, and plant breeder's rights are forms of intellectual property. Chapter 22 of CETA gives intellectual property rights holders, such as multinational seed companies, the ability to use the courts to seek injunctions against suspected infringers, including farmers suspected of selling farm-saved seed. Judges will also be granted the authority to order the precautionary seizure of assets, equipment and inventory of suspected infringers before the case is ever heard in court.

It will not open Europe's doors to genetically modified crops from Canada. The regulatory cooperation provisions provide new channels for industry to apply pressure to weaken EU food safety standards. In the bilateral cooperation chapter the EU has only agreed to discuss biotechnology issues, but not to lift any restrictions on GMOs.

There will be more cheese coming to Canada, but not significantly more beef or pork going to the EU. Without CETA, the EU gives Canada tariff-free access for over 23,000 tonnes of hormone-free beef – quota that we do not fill now. The EU imports most of its beef from South America. In 1991, Brazil banned the use of growth hormones in beef to maintain the European market. The EU's current exports of pork exceed Canada's total pork production. The EU prohibits pork produced with ractopamine, a growth promotor used by the Canadian pork industry. With a four percent increase in cheese coming from the EU, Canadian dairy farmers will lose market for the equivalent of all the milk produced in Nova Scotia. European dairy farmers obtain 40% of their income from state subsidies while Canadian dairy farmers receive their income from the marketplace under cost of production formula determined by milk marketing boards.

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For more information go to www.nfu.ca/issues/ or read [Making Sense of CETA: An Analysis of the Final Text of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement](#) by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, September 2014. It is available at www.policyalternatives.ca. The agriculture analysis was provided by the NFU.

CWB to sell itself, in secret and not necessarily to the highest bidder

In late 2011, the federal Conservative government rushed legislation through Parliament to destroy the single desk authority of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB).¹ The single desk authority was legislative power that ensured all prairie wheat and barley sold for export or for human consumption domestically was marketed in the interests of farmers, and that all proceeds of grain sales, net of operating costs, were returned to farmers each year, as retained earnings were not permitted. The CWB was not a grain company – it was an agent of prairie farmers that was empowered to market wheat and barley on their behalf. Western grain farmers' beneficial ownership² of the grain extended from farm gate to end use customer.

The CWB's single desk authority allowed it to organize sales and shipments of grain efficiently, serve all areas and farmers equitably and fairly, and consistently provide customers with product meeting their specifications. The CWB could segment³ the market to obtain premium pricing, and would then return blending benefits⁴ to the producers. The CWB built Canada's reputation as the world's premier source of high quality wheat and provided prairie farmers with guaranteed access to markets.

From 1998 until December 2011, ten of the CWB's 15 Directors were farmer-elected; the remaining five were appointed by the federal government. All prairie farmers who were actual producers who grew wheat, oats, barley, rye, flaxseed, and/or canola were eligible to vote and to run for the elected positions. The legislation that destroyed the single-desk authority, the *Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act*, eliminated the farmer-elected directors and mandated the government-appointed directors to turn the CWB into a private company or liquidate it by the end of 2017. The new CWB is not independent; it is subject to final control by the Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Finance, yet the new legislation declares that it is not a Crown corporation.

The 70-year-old marketing institution, created through democratic processes and designed to serve farmers' interests, is now tasked with reshaping itself into

a member of the species it was originally intended to displace: a for-profit grain company that extracts wealth from farmers for the benefit of private share-holders. The measure of its success is no longer the near 100% return of the value of sales to the farmers who produced the grain, but the margin – the difference between the prices paid to farmers when purchasing grain and the price obtained from end-users when selling it. The new CWB is now simply another middle-man.

Dismantling Public Accountability – the Hidden Financial Reports

The government-appointed CWB directors have been at the helm since December 2011, and have been operating the entity as a grain company since August 1, 2012. Each year, the CWB is required to provide its audited financial statements to Parliament. The 2012-13 report was due on March 31, 2014. It was not tabled in Parliament as required by law, and after persistent inquiries from farmers and journalists were deflected and rebuffed by both the CWB and the Minister of Agriculture, the report finally surfaced in September 2014 – minus all financial information. Only the notes to the audited statement were released, and instead of being tabled in the House of Commons, the report had been submitted to the Parliamentary clerk.

The drafters of the "Marketing Freedom" Act had inserted a new clause under the CWB's reporting duties that allows the Minister to withhold information if he believes it could harm the CWB's commercial position. While the former single-desk CWB was fully transparent, the new CWB entity is cloaked in secrecy, ostensibly for business reasons. How the CWB used its government guarantee on financing, the 349 million public dollars allocated in 2012⁵ or farmer money – the contingency fund⁶ that had reached over \$145 million by July 31, 2012 – is all being hidden. Public accountability has been dismantled along with the single desk.

The single desk CWB fully covered its operating costs, obtained premium prices for Canadian wheat in export markets, managed risks, returned nearly 100% of the

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(CWB to sell itself, from page 3)

crop's value to farmers annually and prudently invested in assets that built its capacity to serve prairie grain farmers effectively. The CWB was not subsidized by tax dollars. The single desk CWB was a house that farmers built. Now that the demolition team has finished its work, the next step is to polish the rubble to make it attractive to an investment buyer.

Reshaping the CWB into a For-Profit Grain Company Behind Closed Doors

The government-appointed CWB directors plan to privatize it before the 2017 deadline. The process is, of course, being carried out behind closed doors. The widely reported initiative of the Farmers of North America (a private business owned by James Mann of Saskatoon)⁷ seeking to purchase the CWB's assets has drawn attention to the shortened timelines. Non-disclosure agreements mean that details of the bidding process are being kept secret. Absent a public tendering process, it has been necessary to seek out information from reliable third parties with varying degrees of access to relevant information. We have been able to discern the following:

- The government does not recognize any farmer equity in the CWB other than the "Farmer Trust" accounts initiated after August 1, 2012 for farmers that deliver grain to the CWB.
- The transaction is being handled by a third party, likely a large accounting firm.
- The government has set undisclosed criteria for a successful bid. These criteria may include investment that will add to the Canadian grain handling infrastructure.
- The dollar amount of the bid/proposed investment may not be an important factor.
- The new entity is to be re-branded.
- There is no disclosure of timelines.
- There is no disclosure of companies involved in bidding.
- No money will change hands. The government denies owning the CWB and denies any claim to ownership by prairie farmers whose grain sales over 70 years

provided the wealth that built all aspects of the CWB's assets (facilities and expertise). Thus, the CWB will sell itself, with the successful bidder keeping both the money used to purchase the CWB and the CWB's assets.

- The "sale" of the CWB will require approval by the Minister of Agriculture.

We do know that in January 2014 the federal government issued a tender to accounting firms to assess the value of the CWB's assets in the event of liquidation.⁸ This information could also be used to evaluate proposals from companies bidding on privatization. It also begs the question – if the CWB has no owner other than itself and it were to be liquidated instead of privatized – who would cash the cheque?

What has been lost?

The most important asset of the CWB was its single desk authority, gone as of December 16, 2011. Since 2012, other key assets have been stripped: most significantly, over 75% of the Board's personnel – people who understood Canada's grain markets and production, had relationships with customers and end-users and who embodied the full range of expertise required for operations and management. The CWB has also lost access to high volumes of high quality grain, as farmers have little reason to deliver grain to the new CWB, and many of those who try have been penalized by competing companies when they have tried to do so. The CWB's international reputation for supplying quality-assured grain on time and on budget has suffered, with premium Asian customers publically expressing concerns about the Canadian grain trade's recent performance.

At privatization, the CWB will lose its AAA credit rating due to end of the government guarantee, making financing more expensive for the CWB itself and eliminating its ability to collect the difference between the old AAA credit rating and the commercial rate the CWB charged end-use customers. The government-appointed directors have purchased Mission Terminal at Thunder Bay, two inland grain terminals⁹ in Saskatchewan, and are building four inland terminals in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The annual audit's financial information, which is being kept secret, might have shed light on where the money to build and buy these facilities came from, as well as revealing the financial impact of CWB assets already liquidated or destroyed.

“Solving” the logistics problems

The apparent criterion requiring the successful bidder to invest in new infrastructure is a government attempt to change the channel by “solving” the logistics problems that crippled the grain system in 2013-14 with more and/or larger terminals. In fact, the **bottlenecks were not caused by lack of capacity or transportation problems, but were due to the lack of coordination resulting from the demise of the single desk.** Competition among both grain companies and farmers, each trying to be first in line, results in a stampede: the door is blocked and nobody gets through. Orderly marketing made efficient use of existing facilities, allowed for planned and prudent expansion, and provided assurance that everyone would get their turn and nobody would lose on price or access by waiting.

Furthermore, 2013-14’s bottlenecks benefited the grain companies immensely, as they were able to use them to justify charging a wide basis¹⁰, thus de-valuing farmers’ grain. The government’s push to increase inland terminal capacity by dangling a carrot in the form of the CWB’s assets as a reward would worsen farmers’ position. Additional storage capacity, when it is under the control of the grain companies instead of farmers, provides a “holding tank” for grain and functions the same way meat packers’ captive supply does for the beef industry – by depressing prices to the producer. The ability to store larger quantities of grain will increase a grain company’s buffer between farmers in the countryside and its end-use customers, creating room and time for it to increase its margin by buying as low as possible, then controlling the outward supply to maximize its selling price. The legislation to privatize the CWB might be better named the *Marketing Freedom for Grain Companies Act*.

Smoothing the way for increased foreign ownership of Canada's grain system

While the FNA offers members who pay annual access fees a service by providing generic farm inputs at discounted prices, it has recently entered a new arena, seeking investors to finance the purchase of the CWB’s physical assets. It has been promoting this initiative by suggesting that if they buy limited partnership shares in an FNA-led company, farmers will profit from the privatized CWB.¹¹ There is a strong implication – in media reports, more than in actual FNA material - that farmer-investor ownership would also mean control of the

company. However, securities regulations exclude limited partnership shareholders from any role in decision-making – that is the purview of the general partner.¹² Securities regulations also require limited partnership shares to be offered only to “accredited investors” – those with multi-million dollar net worth and/or consistent six-figure incomes.¹³ While some farmers would be eligible to invest, so would non-farmers, and there is no requirement for a general partner to disclose the ownership of limited partnership shares.

Whether farmers or not, investors in the new limited partnership will not be entitled to any role in the operation of the company for which the FNA is the successful bidder. Although several media outlets have mistakenly reported that the FNA is a co-operative, it is, in fact, a sole proprietorship. (see footnote 7) “Members” of FNA have no vote; they simply obtain a discount on the products FNA sells. Regardless of how the FNA – or for that matter, any other company that takes over the CWB’s assets – is structured, it will function as a profit-seeking private corporation. It will maximize returns to its own shareholders – not to farmers – even if some of its investors happen to also own farms and use the company’s services.

Even with additional infrastructure, CWB’s existing and planned physical assets do not add up to the full range of facilities needed to run a successful grain company. Like other grain companies, it would be subject to the same logistical problems created when the single desk’s coordinating role was eliminated. Lacking west coast terminal¹⁴ access, it would be restricted to shipping through Thunder Bay during ice-free periods on the Great Lakes. **In the most probable scenario, a privatized and rebranded CWB would operate at a loss for a few years, followed by either bankruptcy or a fire sale to a larger company.** One of the “big three” currently operating in Canada (Swiss-based Glencore, owner of Viterra; US privately-owned Cargill; and privately-owned Richardson) or a new entry (e.g. China’s COFCO or Japan’s Marubeni, both increasing their international holdings in the grain trade), would no doubt be happy to add discount-priced former CWB facilities to its holdings. This is a familiar trajectory for farmers who invested in the industrialization of the hog sector following the elimination of single desk provincial hog marketing boards in the late 1990s. After investing their savings they watched local mega-barns go into bankruptcy, sold to larger companies at cents on the dollar by creditors.

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(CWB to sell itself, from page 5)

As private companies, Richardson and Cargill are not subject to stock market pressure to maintain high share prices, and can thus withstand periods of low profitability if necessary to gain market share and control. Glencore, while not private, is one of the world's largest corporations, involved in mining and oil as well as agriculture. It owns one-third of Canada's grain handling capacity and dominates South Australia's grain system, but does not depend on grain for its viability. Marubeni acquired the US grain company, Gaviola, in 2012 and recently entered a joint venture with Archer Daniels Midland to expand their port facilities in Portland, Oregon and Kalama, Washington¹⁵. COFCO is a state-owned food company that also has responsibilities regarding China's food security and domestic prices¹⁶, enabling it to accept reduced short-term commercial profitability in return for long-term political stability.

Far from gaining control in the grain industry, farmers who invested in FNA's proposed company would almost surely see their investment dollars used

to help grain companies enhance their profits at the expense of farm gate prices and smooth the way for increased foreign ownership of the Canadian grain system. Even if the FNA is able to raise enough money to "buy" the CWB assets, the federal government may refuse its bid without revealing the size of competing bids, then claim that farmers were not sufficiently interested in owning the privatized company.

The federal government unilaterally destroyed the single desk system that served farmers and all of Canada very well. The FNA's initiative, whether intentionally or not, has created a political shield that shifts farmers' attention from the economic disaster that Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz has set in motion. Private investment for private gain is no solution to the drastic loss of wealth and annual income all prairie grain farmers now face. The public relations value of the FNA's grain company initiative, perhaps coincidentally, serves both the federal government's and grain companies' interests very well. But farmers' interests? Not so much.

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Endnotes:

¹ An Act to reorganize the Canadian Wheat Board and to make consequential and related amendments to certain Acts, short title "Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act" <http://www.parl.gc.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&billId=5169698>

² A *beneficial owner* is entitled to the benefit of owning the property in question even though the title to that property is in another's name, usually in situations where the other acts as an intermediary (e.g. an agent, trustee) on behalf of the beneficial owner.

³ Because the single desk CWB controlled all wheat and barley exports from the prairies, it was able to offer specific grades of grain according to customer specifications to each customer (*market segment*) and obtain higher prices for farmers as a result.

⁴ To meet customer specifications, different qualities (grades) of grain may be mixed to obtain the highest market value possible, or the *blending benefit* for a given supply.

⁵ News Release - Harper Government Delivers Support for a Strong, Viable, Voluntary CWB, June 28, 2012

⁶ See note 22 on page 63 of the CWB Annual Report, 2011-12. <http://www.cwb.ca/uploads/documents/annualreports/CWB2011-12annualreport.pdf>

⁷ Entity No: 101085879, sole proprietorship doing business under the names "Farmers of North America" and "FNA". *Profile report*, Saskatchewan Corporate Registry, Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan.

⁸ *Tender Notice: A complete and thorough assessment and analysis of the Canadian Wheat Board's (CWB) assets and liabilities* (01B68-13-0120), https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-14-00581379?order=title_en&sort=asc

⁹ *Inland terminals* are regionally located high-volume grain storage and shipping points situated on the prairies.

¹⁰ *Basis* is the difference between a futures market price for a commodity and its local cash price. Basis levels are the prerogative of the grain buyer and are not subject to government regulation.

¹¹ FNA's website says: "We must move quickly to ensure farmers can become majority owners in a major grain handling company, capture margins up the value chain, and inject badly needed competition into this industry." <http://fna.ca/grain/information-statement/>

¹² In *Lehndorff*, Justice Farley of the Ontario Court wrote: "... The limited partners leave the running of the business to the general partner and in that respect the care, custody and the maintenance of the property, assets and undertaking of the limited partnership in which the limited partners and the general partner hold an interest." <http://www.duhaime.org/LegalDictionary/L/LimitedPartnership.aspx>

¹³ The FNA is seeking non-binding commitments from accredited investors that meet the following financial requirements: an individual who, either alone or with a spouse, beneficially owns financial assets having an aggregate realizable value that before taxes, but net of any related liabilities, exceeds \$1,000,000; an individual whose net income before taxes exceeded \$200,000 in each of the two most recent calendar years or whose net income before taxes combined with that of a spouse exceeded \$300,000 in each of the two most recent calendar years and who, in either case, reasonably expects to exceed that net income level in the current calendar year; individual who, either alone or with a spouse, has net assets of at least \$5,000,000; a person, other than an individual or investment fund, that has net assets of at least \$5,000,000 as shown on its most recently prepared financial statements; a person in respect of which all of the owners of interests, direct, indirect or beneficial, except the voting securities required by law to be owned by directors, are persons that are described in 1, 2, 3 or 4 above or are otherwise accredited investors (within the meaning of securities legislation). <http://fna.ca/grain/commitment-letter/>

¹⁴ The Port of Vancouver is fully built up – there is no possibility of adding another grain terminal there. The only grain terminal at Prince Rupert is jointly owned by Cargill, Richardson and Viterra.

¹⁵ *Marubeni and ADM Bolster Export Joint Venture in U.S. Pacific Northwest*, October 1, 2014. <https://www.marubeni.com/news/2014/release/00040.html>

¹⁶ *Implementing the country's macroeconomic control policies*, COFCO website. <http://www.cofco.com/en/csr/20546.html>

Bill C-18 Petition Campaign Update – October 2014

Our Bill C-18 Petition Campaign has been very successful so far. As of October 24, 71 petitions had been presented in the House of Commons and 53 had been filed with the Clerk of the House for a total of 124 petitions delivered to Parliament. 61 MPs have presented one or more petitions. Excluding Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, 27 percent of all MPs have presented petitions on Bill C-18.

Let's keep the pressure on! If you have petitions signed please get them to an MP as soon as possible. And do what you can to get more petitions signed and submit them to an MP. Remember you only need 25 signatures to get your petition presented in the House.

If your MP has not yet filed or presented the petition you submitted, please contact him/her to ask when this will be done. If your MP has done so, arrange a meeting with him/her or phone to discuss the Bill, the reasons why you want it to be defeated and answer any questions he/she might have. MP Contact information is available on the Parliamentary Website at <http://www.parl.gc.ca> under the Senators and Members tab.

The NFU website updates the list MPs who have presented or filed C-18 petitions. See <http://www.nfu.ca/issue/petitions-presented-parliament>

Members of Parliament presenting or filing petitions		
Province	Number of MPs	Percent of Province's MPs
British Columbia	13	36%
Alberta	8	29%
Saskatchewan	6	43%
Manitoba	3	21%
Ontario	21	20%
Quebec	0	0
New Brunswick	1	10%
Nova Scotia	3	11%
Newfoundland and Labrador	0	0
Prince Edward Island	3	75%

Members of Parliament presenting or filing petitions		
Party	Number of MPs	Percent of Party's MPs
Conservative Party	42	26%
NDP	11	11%
Liberal Party	6	16%
Green Party	1	50%

Petitions by Party			
	Presented to House	Filed with Clerk	Total
Conservative Party	38	51	89
NDP	23	2	25
Liberal Party	8	0	8
Green Party	2	0	2

Members of Parliament who have presented or filed petitions			
Member of Parliament	Province	Member of Parliament	Province
Hon. Laurie Hawn Mr. Blaine Calkins Mr. Earl Dreeshen Mr. LaVar Payne Mr. Leon Benoit Mr. Blake Richards Mr. Brian Storseth Ms. Linda Duncan	Alberta	Mr. Bruce Stanton Mr. Charlie Angus Mr. Craig Scott Mr. Dave MacKenzie Mr. David Tilson Mr. Del Mastro Mr. Gary Schellenberger Mr. Gordon Brown	Ontario
Hon. Ron Cannan Mr. Dan Albas Mr. Alex Atamanenko Mr. John Duncan Mr. James Lunney Mr. Colin Mayes Mr. Murray Rankin Mr. Randy Kamp Mr. Andrew Saxton Mr. John Weston Mr. David Wilks Mrs. Cathy McLeod Ms. Elizabeth May Ms. Jean Crowder	British Columbia	Mr. Harold Albrecht Mr. Jay Aspin Mr. John Rafferty Mr. Daryl Kramp Mr. Malcolm Allen Mr. Matthew Kellway Mr. Gordan O'Connor Mr. Patrick Brown Mr. Pierre Lemieux Mr. Rick Norlock Mr. Scott Reid Mr. David Sweet Mr. Ted Hsu Ms. Irene Mathysen	
Mr. Ted Falk Mr. James Bezan Ms. Joyce Bateman	Manitoba	Hon. Gerry Ritz Hon. Ralph Goodale Mr. Garry Breitkreuz Mr. Randy Hoback Mr. Maurice Vellacott Mr. Brad Trost	Sask.
Hon. Mark Eying Mr. Greg Kerr Ms. Megan Leslie	Nova Scotia	Mr. Mike Allen	New Brunswick
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay Hon. Wayne Easter Mr. Sean Casey	Prince Edward Island		

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Some organizations are lulled into complacency, believing there are no other options and that the changes due to C-18 will not be so bad. I think they are victims of short-term thinking and brain-washing. There is another way. I stand on 10,000 years of seed variety development developed by farmers. The NFU proposes an alternative: our *Fundamental Principles of a Farmers Seed Act* would guarantee the right for farmers to exchange and sell seed without restriction by contracts and other mechanisms, including UPOV.

There are many ways to develop the new plant varieties we will need that do not involve UPOV, including participatory plant breeding and reinvestment in public breeding. Innovation takes place on the farm with plant breeders in a co-operative setting, not by facilitating revenue extraction tools and the loss of farmer's autonomy that Bill C-18 is making possible.

In closing, those who control seed, control the food system and ultimately people. Do we trust a few consolidated multinational seed companies with that power? — nfu—

The brief the NFU submitted to the Committee, as well as Terry Boehm's full presentation in audio and text format are posted on our website at <http://www.nfu.ca/issues/save-our-seed>

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45th Annual National NFU Convention

The Hilton Garden Inn – Saskatoon - November 27 to 29, 2014

This year's Convention theme, *Claiming our Livelihoods*, highlights the need for public policy that re-establishes a fair economic playing field - one that strengthens opportunities for family farmers and re-establishes public interest and food sovereignty. Come to meet with farmers from all across Canada to learn, discuss and share ideas so we can act together on the important issues that affect us.

Presentations and panel discussions, elections of national officers, reports from elected officials and caucuses are on the program. Issues will be presented as resolutions for debate and voting, which, if passed, become the NFU's positions on public policy matters. Special meetings of youth, women and members involved in international cooperation are also part of the agenda. On Wednesday, Nov. 26 at 8 PM there will be a special screening of *Til the Cows Come Home*, a documentary about the campaign to save the prison farms, with Dianne Dowling of the Kingston NFU Local there to introduce the film.

Everyone is welcome to attend NFU Conventions, whether you are a family farm member, associate member, visitor or media. There is no advance registration - daily or full convention fees are payable at the door. When you are packing, bring a few items to donate to the NFU Youth Silent Auction table. This is an annual fundraiser that helps support youth activities throughout the year. Please invite friends and neighbours to attend as well.



Teresa Healy will give the keynote address, *Canada at a Crossroads: Reflections on Canada's Conservative government 2008-2014*.

For detailed program information, see <http://www.nfu.ca/about/45th-annual-convention>