

quarterly union farmer

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Celebrating 50 Years



NFU Archives 1970: First NFU Board and Advisory Members

Back Row (l to r): Ken Singleton (MB), A.B. Pierce (BC), Jerry Huzevka (ON), Bob Cheshire (AB), Jim Phelps (SK), Frank Dietz (SK), Vic Althouse (SK), Alfred Neiforth (NS), Bert Simmons (BC), Wilfred (Butch) Harder (MB), Bill Langdon (ON), Walter Spak (AB). *Middle Row (l to r):* Jim Mayne (PE), name unavailable, Blake Sanford (ON), Jack McCloy (SK), Vivian Phelps (SK), John Brooks (PE), Gloria Paquette (AB), Jean Leahy (BC), Phil Schwarz (MB), John Palamarchuk (MB), Maurice Letourneau (AB). *Front Row (l to r):* Winnie Miller (SK), Stu Affleck (PE), Kae Dyck (MB), Walter Miller (ON), Evelyn Potter (SK), Roy Atkinson (SK), Peter Twynstra (ON), Janet Kramer (MB), Otto Pruess (ON), Evelyn Prosser (ON), name unavailable.

NEW THIS YEAR!

CONVENTION ADVANCE REGISTRATION

Register Early and Save!

See back cover for details

NFU 50th Annual Convention

Celebration

SEE PAGE 13 FOR INFORMATION

Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms.
Des communautés solidaires et des politiques sensées pour une agriculture durable.

Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

Another growing season is well under way, and it has proven to be a challenging one across most of the country. The west has faced extreme drought, while the east has seen extreme rainfall. In both cases it has led to poor crop and pasture/hay conditions for many farmers, causing uncertainty and stress in our agricultural communities.

The problems that we are individually confronting are as varied as the country in which we farm, but we have all likely lived through a situation such as our fellow members are experiencing. As always, we hope that nature will turn a kinder face towards us, allowing us to salvage the best possible result from the situations that our farms face.

While weather is the variable that we deal with every day,

climate is the shifting framework within which our weather occurs. There is scientific consensus that in addition to the natural fluctuations in our climate, the activities of humans have created additional factors that are negatively affecting our ability to live and thrive on our planet. The National Farmers Union has been concerned about this issue since it came into the public consciousness decades ago. Following direction from its members at National Convention, the NFU is partnering with like-minded organizations to examine the causes and solutions to this massive threat to our livelihood, and our very survival.

Nature is not the only risk with which farmers have to contend. Our federal and provincial politicians are always serving up an array of issues that affect farmers' livelihoods, some for the better, but many for the worse.

While Seed Sovereignty has faded into the background as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the multi-national seed companies wait for farmers' resistance to cool, it is still very active as these players continue their work to strip our rights to use our own seed and funnel money and control of this essential resource into corporate hands. Another matter of grave concern is the attack on the Canadian Grain Commission, where once again plans are underway to transfer control and profit to corporations at the expense of farmers.

So read on, and learn what the National Farmers Union is doing to enhance our livelihoods. We hope that nature provides you a prosperous season.

—by Cam Goff, VP Policy on behalf of the Editorial Advisory Committee

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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 Katie Ward, NFU National President

As I read the news these days, in between this year's experiment with pasture lambing and a very delayed haying season, I am confronted with constant reminders of uncertainty and the stresses current events cause to all of us. One definition of uncertainty is the stress caused by knowing that there are things out there that we do not know, and our brains crave information like our bodies crave food and air. While it might sound strange, I actually find a measure of comfort in this description – because as farmers, we know what it takes to produce food and satisfy that existential need. Despite the topsy-turvy world these days, farmers have developed unique coping skills to help us keep on keeping on until the rain comes to break a drought, or until the rain finally stops and the crops can start to grow again when the heat arrives.

We are all faced with upheaval and uncertainty and not just in farming. Having a strong community of like-minded people to support us and working together can help ease the burdens we shoulder, both in farming and in wondering which direction our society is heading. Just like

national, regional, district and local conventions and meetings are important for both solidarity and for shaping the future of our Union, upcoming national and provincial elections are an important opportunity to talk to your neighbours and future representatives about the challenges you face and – this is the critical part – what you want to see happen in the future.

Having a hopeful vision of the future – or at least, trusting that together we can find that vision – is a powerful antidote to the fear and anger that uncertainty can bring. Many of you will have read Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine* a number of years ago, but it lays out the general premise that when surprising bad things happen (a shock to the system of our body politic, if you will), folks with ulterior motives (generally, greed and hatred) use the upheaval and fear to steamroll over opposition and impose measures that remove democratic control and roll back human rights gains. We need to fight this fear and uncertainty with hope and trust, that together we are stronger as a society, just like I am stronger as a farmer if I have a good relationship with my neighbours that I can call for help with a task that I just cannot do alone.

Your Board of Directors at the National Farmers Union is

working to help you with this. We are developing a series of fact sheets about current agricultural concerns and hot topics, which you can use to talk to your neighbours at the coffee shop, or to talk to candidates when they come around asking for your vote. You will be able to print them off our website and take along to use as prompts for asking questions at all-candidate's meetings this fall. I am proud to be a member of the National Farmers Union in our 50th year, helping to continue this democratic struggle to make sure that the voices of everyday farmers get heard despite all the uncertainty and fear in the world that is pulling us in so many different directions.

Every growing season has its ups and downs, its “what if’s” and its “oh no’s”, just like every winter has those days when it gives you a kick when you are down. But as hard as it is some days to deal with just one more blow, we always find a way to pick ourselves up and take a step forward. So information, hope, and trust are what I am planning to use to fight the stress caused by the uncertainty that seems to be our new normal these days. It is a real comfort to know that the Union is there fighting with me, just like it is for you.

—In Solidarity, Katie Ward



A Message from Toby Malloy, NFU National Women's President

*How do we create
community and
provide a multitude
of opportunities to feel
connected and
supported?*

Hello everyone. Welcome to summer, such as it is! On May 30th we had our first Women's Caucus phone call, which I have been reflecting on since with gratitude and appreciation. We were small in number but the conversation was lively, rich and soulfully nutrient-dense! We covered a lot of ground including the interface between the varied roles of agricultural women, on and off the farm, and questions like how do we show up for ourselves and each other? How do we create community and provide a multitude of opportunities to feel connected and supported? This led to a brainstorming discussion about informal and formal gatherings, retreats and mini-retreats, locally, regionally and nationally. We talked about the possibility of connecting through social media, mentorship and the importance of having fun! We are planning to schedule another call closer to autumn and would love your input and ideas about creating and strengthening connections and the work of the Women's Advisory in the coming year. Please feel free to email, text, call or drop me a line.

Speaking of gratitude and appreciation, the Region 7 Convention in June gave me a chance to visit with female members, some who have been NFU members for many years and some relatively new to the NFU. It was a wonderful reminder of the contributions and hard work of women involved in agriculture and those who support us in our work. I've also had an opportunity to learn about the work of Evelyn Potter, the NFU's first Women's President, who travelled to China in 1971 as a "peasant representative" in a diplomatic mission aimed at building relationships and encouraging communication between Canada and China. A recent show at the Diefenbaker Center: *China through Saskatchewan Eyes: Evelyn Potter's 1971 Journey*, celebrates her ability to capture some of the essence of a remarkable time in our history, China's history and Evelyn Potter's own experience, through photographs and a

narrative that comes from integrity and thoughtful, insightful respectful, curious inquiry.

Evelyn Potter was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame and recognized for her work with the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), the Canada Council for Rural Development and the Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Council. As an advocate for women's rights she was instrumental in the enactment of Matrimonial Property Rights legislation in Saskatchewan. I haven't had the pleasure of meeting Evelyn Potter but I feel connected to and deeply affected by her contributions, by the profound difference she's made in the lives of so many people.

We are so rich with amazing women! And, on that note, whether I've met you yet or not, I want you to know that I am grateful to you and for all that you do, day in and day out. Wherever you are, in the garden, in the office, on the tractor, on the subway, in the barn, the box stall, in the kitchen, the board room, the classroom, the playground, the back country, the shop, the art studio, etc., I appreciate you. Thank you.

—In Solidarity, Toby Malloy



A Message from Stuart Oke, NFU National Youth President

As I am writing this in mid-July we are currently going through a summer heat wave in Western Quebec. For the past two weeks we have had consistent temperatures in the 30-33 degree range. I find this time of year always goes by in a flash and by the time I lift my head up it is September. With all the work there is to do on the farm at this time of year it can sometimes be a struggle to continue the work of the NFU with phone calls and emails from the field and quick dashes into Ottawa to meet with organizations or politicians. Summer is often a difficult time to do our organizing work and we have long seen the government take advantage of this by choosing to announce agricultural policy and decisions at this time of year when many of us are at our busiest.

That being said in the past few months there have been many developments in a number of areas we have been watching and promoting. In early June, I was happy to ditch my farm clothes for a morning and don a suit to provide testimony to the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and speak in strong support of proposed legislation which would establish a National Local Food Day in Canada. In addition, the long awaited National Food Policy has finally been announced including funds

to help develop further local food infrastructure such as abattoirs, food hubs, and other processing facilities. The NFU strongly lobbied for these funds. We have yet to see the support for new farmers that we also called to be included. A National Food Policy council has been created to help inform government policies in the future. The NFU will be seeking a seat at the table to make sure family farms and not corporate interests are represented within this space.

In its current form, the Green New Deal is not a concrete set of policies but a larger framework which acknowledges the size of the problem we are facing and the urgency needed to address it.

Finally, since the release of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report I have been hearing from NFU youth across the country about their efforts to fight climate change. The report gives just 12 years for fundamental action to be taken in order to prevent the severe global consequences that come from warming beyond 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Many NFU youth are actively involved in community level and national discussions surrounding 'The Green New Deal'. This principle-based movement takes its name

and concept from the American 'New Deal', a 1930's era series of programs and projects which is largely recognized as the tool by which the great depression was ended. 'The Green New Deal' identifies climate change as the existential threat that it is and seeks to create a fundamental shift in Canadian society to mitigate the increasingly severe effects of climate change.

In its current form, the Green New Deal is not a concrete set of policies but a larger framework which acknowledges the size of the problem we are facing and the urgency needed to address it. It challenges politicians, farmers and members of the public to create a holistic and diverse set of solutions which will touch all aspects of Canadian society. We know agriculture is the 6th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Canada and accordingly it is imperative that we join these conversations. The NFU is actively exploring practises and systems which allow us to use our farms to help mitigate the effects of climate change while we operate our farms. We are all so dependent on the weather and as it becomes increasingly unstable and unpredictable farmers will bear much of the risk as droughts, flooding, and high winds serve to make our jobs more difficult. The time to act decisively is now. As we head into federal elections this fall I encourage everyone to question their candidates on this issue.

—In Solidarity, Stuart Oke

REGIONAL REPORTS

Region 1: District 1

Province of Prince Edward Island

—by Reg Phelan, Coordinator



Prince Edward Island has a new minority government that promises to work collaboratively. During the election, there were a number of forums held with the party leaders: on land; on environment; and on agriculture. These forums were well attended and a number of promises were made. Three of the party leaders agreed that the spirit of the Lands Protection Act should be enforced and a system of Land Banking be put in place.

The recent Throne Speech said, "Our vision for the Province is one where land ownership and stewardship is secured in the hands of future generations of Islanders. To that end, over the next six months we will consult on the establishment of a Land Bank that helps keep land in appropriate use across the province." Kevin Arsenault has been hired by the provincial government to work on this and he is to report to the government by mid-September.

We had a meeting with the new Minister of Agriculture and Land and have a meeting set-up with the Green Party critic.

The NFU Region 1 convention will be held in PEI this year and is being planned for the latter part of September. ■



Region 1: District 2

Provinces of New Brunswick & Nova Scotia

— by Riley Côté-DeMerchant, Region 1 Board Member

In June the , the NFU in NB was re-accredited for another four years as a general farm organization in New Brunswick. We are glad to have the re-accreditation behind us for another four years. There are only two general farm organizations in New Brunswick, so having the NFU as an option when farmers register their farms each year is important, especially as the NFU often views issues in a different light and in general I think we can all agree choice is good.

On April 10th, 2019 we had our annual District Two AGM. We had good attendance and

farmers representing a range of commodities. A few highlights of the event were: Jessie MacInnis presenting on her recent trip to the United Nations and the UN adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants; Terry Boehm's pre-recorded video explaining the Seed Sovereignty issue; and a presentation on proposed changes to the New Brunswick FLIP (Farm Land Identification Program). We also had presentations on a few other topics – an especially hot one in the province is the use of pesticides, most specifically glyphosate which is used in forestry in NB.

I am not sure as to their presence in other parts of the country, but in June, vegan and

anti-meat billboards and advertising started appearing in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Billboards were sponsored in Moncton and advertising was purchased on buses in Fredericton. Pierre-Olivier Brassard, an NFU-NB member in wrote a media release in response to these advertising campaigns. An excerpt from this reads, "A food system which oppresses and abuses farmers is, in fact, more apt to engender and multiply the abuse of livestock animals. The NFU reiterates that the images seen in the sensationalist video shared by the Vegan Education Group is but the symptom of a dysfunctional industrial food system and that these same images only represent a tiny fraction, if not practically none, of the reality of dairy farms in New Brunswick". The full press release can be found at <http://nfunb.org/en/>.

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The NFU-NB is very proud and pleased to announce we will be hosting the Youth meeting of the La Via Campesina North America, November 11 – 15, 2019. Please check <http://nfunb.org/en/> or <https://viacampesina.org/en/> for more details at the date approaches.

On a final note, in much of New Brunswick we had a cool wet spring - warmer than last year, but very much wetter. The wetness is a continuation of the fall when many farmers had a difficult time getting their autumn crops out of the field and into storage. That being said,

after a dry summer across the region last year many are appreciating the wet weather. Hay and silage crops are being replenished and things are growing well. A few crops may be a bit behind, but as the weather varies from year to year, what is normal? ▪



Region 3/NFU-O: Province of Ontario

— by Don Ciparis, Coordinator

Ontario crop producers struggled with cold, wet planting conditions this spring, the likes of which many had never seen before. The lack of meaningful drying conditions was also a factor in this very backward spring, and those producers on heavier soils were the slowest to finish planting. Ontario's unseeded fields could hit 60,000 to 100,000 acres this year. In 2018, provincial crop insurer Agricorp recorded only 5,494 unseeded acres. The 2013 to 2017 annual unseeded average was 35,000 - truly significant production loss numbers in the historical context.

The challenges to farmers posed by our climatic patterns in Ontario have highlighted the benefits of adapting farm practices to mitigate climate change. The NFU-Ontario received funding from the federal Ministry of Environment and Climate

Change to host kitchen table meetings for farmers to develop strategies to adjust to our changing environment. The first round of meetings has been completed, and we are in the process of highlighting those farmers who made pledges. If you want to make a pledge, please visit <https://nfuontario.ca/climate>.

Animal welfare protests are an issue that is becoming more common both in Canada and Ontario. Animal rights extremists harass livestock producers and their families by trespassing on farms, stealing animals outright, and picketing sales barns. The legal system's response to the problem is most disturbing. Farmers are concerned about their safety and that of their families, the behaviour of the trespassers/protesters, and the reaction of an unpredictable animal to an unfamiliar activity. Unfortunately, trespassing charges have recently been dropped, leaving farmers frustrated and feeling vulnerable. NFU Region 3 Council conveyed

their concerns to Premier Ford, Solicitor General, Sylvia Jones and Minister of Agriculture, Ernie Hardeman and requested details of how the issue was to be addressed. Council also drafted a letter farmers can send to their MPPs and other officials, which can be found at <https://nfuontario.ca/new/know-your-rights-when-dealing-with-trespassers/>.

At the same time, changes are being made to the legislation around animal welfare and the role of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) in policing it. For a number of years, the NFU has been advocating for changes to the flawed regulatory process which operated under an underfunded, independent system that served no one well. The province has one year to develop new legislation. The NFU-O drafted its response to government regulation, using the National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice as a reference, which will hopefully result in a publicly accountable livestock protection regime that is adequately and publicly funded, while providing inspection and enforcement by properly trained personnel.

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Many NFU members who produce fruit and vegetables depend on the Ontario Food Terminal (OFT) in Toronto, which is owned by the provincial government and situated on 80 acres of prime, downtown real estate. Recently, the province announced that they were reviewing their commitments to this vital producer facility, possibly

moving or even selling it. After working collaboratively with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and a stakeholder consultant to promote the OFT to senior Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) policy advisors and key MPPs, the NFU-O was informed in early July by senior policy advisors at OMAFRA that

the facility would stay put at its present location. Congratulations to NFU Region 3 Council and NFU members who pushed for this.

With that, our Region 3 Council and I wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy summer. ■



Region 5: Province of Manitoba

— by Ian Robson, Coordinator

***F*armers on the Frontline: Celebrating 50 years of the farm movement!**

This is the theme for your NFU 50th Annual Convention in Winnipeg, November 25 to 27, 2019. Please attend and discuss the farmers' challenges and opportunities through the NFU democratic process as we make decisions on which policies will benefit the most farmers. Contact the NFU national office to find out how to become a delegate and bring a visitor with you to observe and participate. The convention is your opportunity to discuss topics from seeds to the Canadian Grain Commission to the local market, international markets, the effects of climate change and greenhouse gas reduction and mitigation.

What is the situation today? Weather events largely dictate what a farmer does from one day to the next, followed by your

farm plans and by the policies of first human-made markets and second the government (again human-made policy) which is supposed to regulate for the interest of the people.

Our Manitoba NFU senator, Fred Tait noticed that there is a distinctly political approach to droughts and weather events. The 1980's droughts were hotly argued by farmers needing support programs. The 2019 Manitoba spring drought has caused hardship on farms but there are few farmers calling for support programs. How can this be? Could it be the one percent corporate agenda ideas which work toward limiting what a government should be doing? Could it be the effect of a power transfer from local people to corporations? The 2019 shortage of hay and feed for livestock is a huge concern for this coming winter. Many farmers are trying to put in green feed or corn for silage, but unless there is timely

rainfall livestock will be shipped to market. The present Manitoba Minister of Agriculture hopes for an increase in the number of cattle for potential markets, but many factors are playing against this including policy as well as the low market prices.

The present canola issues and maybe meat export issues with China mean that a big and important buyer such as China will decide the terms of the trade. We do not know what the problem is with China. They have not been clear yet. But canola dockage at 1% instead of 2.5% has been an issue. It is private companies that do the food trade to China not farmers. Why do private companies call on our government to "do something"? Farmers were at one time in control of 70% of all grain traded to markets but not now. We farmers have let the government gift this important job to the private profit of grain companies and somehow we end up paying checkoffs to promote our grain. Had farmers been in control of the grain sales, it would be important to note customer concerns and take actions early to meet customer needs.

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We do have the Canadian Grain Commission and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, but both need to help solve the China issues. Farmers have lost market power, inward grain inspection at terminals, elevator audits, weigh scale inspections and ownership of our seeds. It is not out of order to ask what private companies are doing which has caused our customers to have complaints. Indeed what is the price that

private companies ultimately sell to the customer. Canola has declined by \$2.50 per bushel since this action of China. We have to open communication with China since it is a good customer.

Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI) has done stellar grain sales work but now does this work for private grain companies not really for farmers. Cereals Canada an upstart private club of grain trade companies

wants to merge with CIGI. It should be noted that much revenue accrue to these grain companies with over paid CEO's.

Again, please attend the upcoming National Convention in Winnipeg to discuss the path forward for farmers, along with some reflection on how we farmers are doing under the situation of today. ■



Region 6:

Province of Saskatchewan

— by Glenn Tait, Coordinator

Greetings from a generally, but not completely, green and growing Saskatchewan. We look to be heading for a nearly average year. Most of us came through the winter with an adequate snow melt to get things started but nearly all of us were searching the May and June skies for enough rain to keep things going. How dry did it get? Check out the cover of the June 13 *Western Producer* to see a photo of a farmer getting blasted by drifting dust as he stoops to search for emerging canola. Late June rain saved the crop for most of the province, except for a few pockets where the rain came half-past a little too late.

The price of wheat is holding fairly steady at a weak position from last year, durum is down

5%, and canola has dropped 15%. At these prices any drop in yield or quality is a serious hit to the profit margin.

Last year about this time Darrin Qualman posted an article about the colossal Canadian farm debt and razor thin margins. The 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 crop years made it look like we could handle the debt load but slow movement, fusarium problems, and China closing the door to our canola means many Saskatchewan farmers had to borrow even more to put in this year's crop.

July is a busy month (aren't they all?) for farm shows and plot demonstration days. Coming just after the Farm Progress Show in Regina in late June is the Ag In Motion show outside of Saskatoon. It is put on by the huge Glacier Media group and bills

itself as the largest agricultural trade show in western Canada. There are demos or exhibits on crop varieties, cattle handling, grain handling, crop spraying, fertilizer spreading, tillage, and earth moving.

A less 'corporate' demonstration can be experienced at the various AgriARM stations around the province. These demos are unbiased and are full of the latest information on agronomy and new crop varieties. AgriARM is producer-directed and supported by Saskatchewan Agriculture. Field days at each of the eight locations were scheduled between July 10th and 24th. I hope you made it to the one closest to you.

Our Region 6 convention was held July 24 and 25 in Saskatoon at Queen's House Retreat. Our featured evening speaker was Jeff Olson, a Wetlands Specialist and retired planner with the Water Security Agency who ranches in the Beaver Hills area. Convention participants also toured the Plant Gene Resources of Canada (seed bank).

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As I mentioned, most of the province was looking for rain earlier this year but large portions of the eastern half have been quite wet for most of the last 15 years. Over the last few decades unlawful drainage has added up to affect over 150,000 quarter sections in Saskatchewan, and also further downstream into North Dakota and Manitoba. Technically only one

complaint is required to stop or reverse unlawful drainage projects (there is no 'grandfathering-in' of old work), but this almost never happens. If complaints happen, restoration is rare. Rumbles coming from Regina suggest the issue is being looked at and definite laws, regulations, fines, and courses of remedial action are forthcoming. On the other hand, everything may

be lost in this fall's provincial election. Or it just may be that all things formerly unlawful will soon be deemed lawful. I remember a line like that from the Devil's contract with the character *Swan* in the movie *Phantom of the Paradise*.

Have a good summer, a good harvest, and keep safe. ■



Region 7: Province of Alberta

— by Doug Scott, Coordinator

Summer greetings from Alberta. What started out as a warm and dry spring has turned into a cool rainy June. Overall the crops here are quite good but there has been areas of excessive rain which has caused some flooding and drowning out of crops and some hail with lots of pop-up afternoon storms.

In June, we had a really successful Region 7 Convention which was hosted by Glenn Norman near his farm in central Alberta. We rented a beautifully restored rural community hall called Knee Hills, a few miles east of Innisfail. It was back dropped by the Rocky Mountains in the distance. We want to thank Cam Goff, NFU VP (Policy), for making the seven hour drive to give us an update on NFU affairs and campaigns. We also had an update from Reagan Boychuk on

the orphan well situation in the province. Mandy Melnyk led a wonderful session on NFU history. The stories told were great and will help to make our 50th celebrations in Winnipeg memorable. Women's President Toby Malloy ended the day with a mental health presentation. The stresses of modern farming have made mental health issues something all farm families must be cognizant of. I was surprised at how open people were in sharing mental health issues that were affecting them and their families.

Glenn Norman, Peter Eggers and Doug Scott were acclaimed to the three director positions in Region 7. Women's and youth advisory positions remain vacant.

In Alberta, we are starting to see some of our new United Conservative Party (UCP) government's campaign promises in a real way. Changes to the Schools Act have taken us back 20 years.

A repeal of the carbon tax will get us nowhere. Cutting the minimum wage by two dollars an hour is insulting as is creating labor unrest with public employees by ignoring labor law. We are not looking forward to the next four years of UCP leadership.

Trade issues are really starting to take a toll on our markets. It appears that until our political differences are resolved there will be no improvement in trade with China. With canola now trading at some of the lowest levels in the past decade and wheat not far behind, it will be another tough year for farmers. Its been interesting to hear our former Agriculture Minister, Gerry Ritz mouthing off about how successful he was in dealing with China on trade issues. He never mentions how the late CWB opened all the doors for him.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and be glad you do not live in New Orleans. The global weather this summer cannot be ignored. A friend of mine recently returned from a trip to Dawson City, Yukon where it is 28 degrees and smoky. Forest fires are not fought in the far north. ■

UN launches Decade of Family Farming

La Via Campesina urges focus on agroecology and peasant rights

—by Jessie MacInnis, NFU Youth Vice President

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) formally launched the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDDFF) 2019-2028 this May in Rome. I had the opportunity to attend on behalf of La Via Campesina North America, to support the process with a regional and youth perspective. The UNDDFF is a response to the International Year of Family Farming (2014), which raised global awareness of the multitude of intersecting issues affecting family farmers and initiated partnerships to address them. The FAO aims to use the Decade as a platform to meet Sustainable Development Goal targets with the acknowledgement that family farmers are key to rural development and predominate in local and domestic markets. A key component of the UNDDFF is the direct involvement and empowerment of family farmer-led organizations in the planning and execution of the key goals. The guiding document for the Decade is a Global Action Plan based on seven key pillars including generational sustainability, gender equity, strengthening family farmers' organizations, improving socio-economic inclusion, and promoting climate-resilient food systems. The primary aim is to position the Global Action Plan as a framework to develop an enabling policy environment



Jessie with Maria Fernanda Espinosa, President of the UN General Assembly.

where the needs of family farmers are at the forefront of national and regional agriculture strategies.

La Via Campesina (LVC) - the international peasant movement of which the NFU is a founding member - is part of the International Steering Committee for UNDDFF, along with the World Farmers Organization and the World Rural Forum. In this capacity, LVC was consulted in the creation of the Global Action Plan for the UNDDFF and will orient the implementation of action items throughout the Decade. While LVC has a seat at the negotiating table, we face conflicting discourses within the Steering Committee and thus in the overall Global Action Plan over the definition of family farmer. To LVC, family farmer is

synonymous with small holder, peasant farmers who use agroecological methods, and also includes pastoralists, fisher folk, forest farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and landless farmers. However, smallholder is relative across contexts; a relatively small farm in Canada by Canadian standards could be massive compared to those in low- and middle-income countries. Other definitions, such as that presented by the World Farmers Organization, include larger-scale, industrially-oriented farms that are not reliant on family labour. Part of our goal in bringing LVC members from around the world to attend the launch event was to ensure our definition of family farmer was not co-opted or drowned out by growth and development rhetoric.

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The launch event, which took place in May at the FAO headquarters in Rome, was marked by a number of significant interventions by LVC and its allies in the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC). Common themes key to all stakeholders in the IPC include empowering women and youth, agrarian reform, seed law, peasant agroecology, and cross border mobility. When intervening at panel discussions and roundtable talks at the FAO, LVC implored emphasis be placed on the recently adopted UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, agroecological approaches to food sovereignty, and agrarian reform, while many state and corporate actors centred their dialogue around digitization of agriculture, technological innovation and economic growth. LVC was firm in taking a human rights approach, while states and corporate actors emphasized growth and job creation as the foundation of the UNDF.



Edgardo Garcia of Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo (ATC Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of LVC on the first day of the Global Launch event.

Without LVC in these spaces, the voices of peasant farmers from across the globe would be sorely missed - free trade, agribusiness corporations and the technology they control would continue to go unchecked.

As a recent participant in these international processes with LVC, a question I am often asked (and ask myself) is, "How do these esoteric processes and mechanisms apply to us, the grassroots movements and farmers, on the ground?" It is particularly difficult to grasp in the North American context, since organizations like the FAO target their growth-based projects in low- and middle-income countries. Essentially, state delegates, social movements, and NGOs at the FAO will use the Global Action Plan over the next ten years as a framework to lobby for national and regional level policy change to support not only individual family farms, but farmer-led organizations. It is up to states and regions to come up with national plans, lobby their respective governments, and apply to the International Fund for

Agricultural Development for support. The problem is, as I indicated in the previous paragraph, definitions and goals differ dramatically across states and organizations. Essentially, whoever dominates the discourse will see their policy proposals realized. While family farming is recognized at the international level for its capacity to feed the world using agroecological production, agribusiness nevertheless forges forward on its path of neoliberal growth, and as we know largely sets the tone for agriculture policy. This is why LVC needs to be involved in these discussions.

My time in Rome gave me a better understanding and appreciation for LVC as it navigates global governance processes. Without LVC in these spaces, the voices of peasant farmers from across the globe would be sorely missed - free trade, agribusiness corporations and the technology they control would continue to go unchecked. Some question LVC's move towards UN-based work, but we should celebrate the fact that a grassroots social movement is being heard in a traditionally state-dominated arena. The decisions made in international spaces affect our day to day lives as farmers – making our voices heard has been a great battle and victory for LVC. UNDF is a valuable opportunity to push peasant-oriented policies and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants forward at the international level. It is an opportunity to strategically deepen our work collectively and fight for food sovereignty on a new platform. ■

NFU 50th Annual Convention

Celebration

Farmers on the Frontline:

Celebrating 50 years of the farm movement

Going back to the city where it all began...

Fifty years ago, the National Farmers Union held its inaugural convention in Winnipeg, Manitoba. And this year, we're going back! We will celebrate our achievements, honour the members whose dedication and wisdom helped us achieve so much, pass on the lessons we've learned along the way, and help shape a vision for what the National Farmers Union and agriculture in Canada will look like in our next fifty years.

Please CELEBRATE with us in:

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NEW THIS YEAR! ADVANCE REGISTRATION FOR CONVENTION

SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO REGISTER EARLY AND SAVE!

If you have a piece of NFU history to share with convention-goers, whether it be a news clipping, a story to tell, memorabilia, or pictures, you are encouraged to **email nfu50@nfu.ca or to call the national office at 306-652-9465.**

In Solidarity, 50th Anniversary Convention Planning Committee

CGC, Seed Sovereignty, Canola and National Food Policy on the NFU's Agenda during visit to Ottawa

—by Cam Goff, Vice President Policy

This June, Katie Ward, NFU President; Stewart Wells, NFU VP Operations; and myself, NFU VP Policy were in Ottawa lobbying politicians on the Canadian Grain Commission, Seed Sovereignty, the canola trade dispute with China, and the National Food Policy.

We were able to meet with Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party; Alistair MacGregor, NDP Ag critic; Jim Carr's office, Minister International Trade Diversification; Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness; MP Wayne Easter; and Marie-Claude Bibeau's office, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. We were well received by all our hosts, who had knowledge of our concerns and could speak credibly on the issues that we raised.

The major issue that we spoke to, given our belief that it was the most time sensitive, and most amenable to a partisan political solution, regarded the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC). It had been reported in the farm media, and confirmed by trusted sources, that there was internal dissent within the Commission, and an unauthorized plan being created that would drastically change the governance, mandate, and responsibilities of the CGC to the detriment of farmers' interests, and Canada's reputation as a trusted supplier of grain. We warned all parties of the dangers this represented, and urged members of the Liberal Party to

thoroughly investigate these allegations, and recommended swift and decisive action if found to be true.

Seed Sovereignty was our next priority, and we explained that we believed that our current system of public plant breeding, with additional financial input from farmers and government, was the best way forward for farmers, our fellow citizens, and Canada. We explained the dangers of granting control of Canada's food system to multi-national companies, and the profoundly troubling and dishonest way in which the issue had been brought before the farming community and the public.

We also discussed the ongoing trade dispute with China over its suspension of the import of Canadian canola. Unlike most other agricultural organizations, we delved into the history of China's quarrel over the Issue of dockage in Canadian canola shipments. This has been an ongoing sore point between our countries for years. The Canadian government ignored China's request for lower dockage levels and basically allowed shippers such as Richardson's and Viterra to make their own rules, and



Katie Ward, NFU President and Cam Goff, VP Policy.
(Photo by Stewart Wells, VP Operations)

agreed to tell China to take it or leave. When the political difficulties over the arrest and extradition of the Chinese industrialist blew up, there was a simmering friction waiting to boil over and scald farmers, while the exporters and government stood comfortably to the side.

Our last message to the politicians was in regards to new flesh that had been put on the bones of Canada's National Food Policy. While we said that while it was a good start, there was much more work that needed to be done on this initiative in order to meet the needs of our country and its citizens. We reminded them of the NFU's input into the consultation process, and reaffirmed our desire to actively participate as further work is done.

Overall, the lobbying was very successful and we felt it had been a worthwhile effort. There is still much work to be done on all these issues by our organization, and we will make sure that we keep them before our national and provincial politicians. ■

NFU Climate Leadership Project

Thanks to some external project funding, the National Farmers Union is going to do more work on climate change with farmers across Canada. Our Climate Leadership Project will highlight the need for climate change action that includes solutions that work for farmers and the food system. Working with the Prairie Climate Centre (PCC) and USC-Canada (USC) we will share information and help amplify the voices of farmers in support of policies and programs for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture.

How has climate change affected you and your farm? Has it changed the way you farm?

The NFU's Climate Leadership Project would like to hear your thoughts, concerns, ideas, insights and any information that you would like to share. If you could send a quick email (nfu@nfu.ca) or letter to the NFU National Office (2717 Wentz Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6), we would very much appreciate it. Your input will help us better understand your priorities and guide our work.

Here are the questions:

1. ***How is climate change directly affecting your farm?***
2. ***Have you changed how you farm because of the effects of climate change?***
3. ***Has what you have learned about climate change affected how you farm?***
4. ***What are your thoughts about the future of farming?***
5. ***Would you like to be actively involved in the NFU's Climate Change project?***
6. ***What other comments do you have?***

If you know of any other farmers who are using new ways to reduce input costs, reduce emissions, build soil health, or to adapt to climate change in other ways, we would like to

Get Involved!

hear from them too. Please encourage them to get in touch with the NFU office, or send their contact information to the NFU office at nfu@nfu.ca so we can reach out to them.

How might you participate in the project?

We are looking for farmers who are acting on their concerns about the climate by reducing

input costs, reducing emissions, building soil health, building community or adapting to climate change in other ways.

These farmers will be invited to share their knowledge and showcase their actions more widely in various ways, such as through various media and at in-person events.

We anticipate filming some informative video pieces that highlight policy ideas put into action on Canadian farms. If video is not your thing, other ways to become involved include helping review policy papers, organizing local in-person meetings, and/or writing letters to local media and on social media.

A project coordinator will be hired during the summer and they will be in touch with interested members and other farmers to follow up with more ideas and opportunities for involvement. In the meantime, feel free to contact NFU project committee member Glenn Wright at gwrightsk@gmail.com or 306-493-3023 at any time.

We look forward to working together as we push this important issue forward with determination, hope, and truth for the benefit of family farms and food security for all. ■



The USMCA straw will break supply management's back

—by Jan Slomp

US President Trump successfully bullied Canada and Mexico into new concessions after he ripped up NAFTA, threatened to raise tariffs on automobiles, steel and other imports from Mexico and Canada and cried wolf with Wisconsin dairy producers against Canadian dairy discounts to limit US dumping milk into Canada.

While the Canadian government boasts about the new United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA), it has fundamentally opened the door for the end of supply management for dairy products in Canada. Although the US pulled out of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), they were given special access based on Canadian concessions in TPP negotiations that started phasing out milk protein price protection.

Poultry and dairy Supply management systems in Canada offer farmers in all regions a fair return based on the cost of production in exchange for high quality product in sufficient volumes, while avoiding over-production and waste. Supply management also gives farmers an incentive to maintain output when adverse weather conditions or other costly events may cause lower production levels. Canada's dairy quality standards are substantially higher than in the US. Allowing American product in without upping import standards

*With the new USMCA
coming into effect,
who will feed
Canadians when
climate change
brings shocks
to production and
distribution of food?*

is unfair to Canadian producers and consumers.

Climate change will cause increasing havoc with production, distribution and consumer prices. Ending supply management would make it even harder to deal with extreme weather conditions. Compared to export-oriented agriculture, supply managed production has a smaller carbon footprint. Free trade and export-oriented agriculture policies have left rural Canada in an economic and social decline. Supply management not only maintains rural communities, but its regional structure of production, processing and distribution allows it to have a smaller carbon footprint than export-oriented agriculture which is facilitated by free trade agreements. Canada will fall even further behind in meeting our Paris Climate Change Accord as a result of concessions in the new USMCA.



After the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) with Europe was concluded, allowing an additional 17,800 tonnes of European cheese into Canada, the federal government offered a compensation package to our dairy industry. However, "compensation" is a misnomer when every producer loses revenue but only those farmers and processors that expand receive government support funds. It is a foolish business practice to expand an operation when revenue or yields go down, yet the Canadian government encourages it.

Immediately after the USMCA deal was reached and import concessions were made, Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland announced another compensation plan for Canadian dairy farmers. If the CETA compensation plan has set the tone, it does not bode well for profitability of Canadian dairy farmers.

Canadian farmers do not need compensation or handouts, they simply need policies that offer a fair return so they can make the investments that secure future production even when climate change throws new hurdles their way. ■

DARRIN QUALMAN.

BOOK REVIEW

Civilization Critical: Energy, Food, Nature, and the Future

Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood 2019.

—by Nettie Wiebe

In the opening pages of his book *Civilization Critical: Energy, Food, Nature, and the Future* Darrin Qualman makes some big promises. He states that he will not only develop “new unifying ideas regarding the functioning of civilizational and natural systems and the interface between those two classes of systems” but will also give us “concrete examples that shed light on the processes of everyday life.....so that we might create households and communities that derive more joy and stability from less consumption and waste.” He delivers.

Qualman does not just list the rapid ecological, economic, political, social and climate changes we are experiencing and driving. He provides a framework for understanding what is going on, as well as some thoughtful suggestions for what needs to be done to avoid the looming catastrophes we are careening into on many fronts.

Where Nature, that is, biological systems, are cyclical and regenerative, our current industrial systems are linear, mostly non-renewable and ultimately unsustainable. “We push massive quantities of materials and fossil energies into one end and push massive quantities of food, cars, buildings, and consumer products out the other (along with trash and other emissions).” (p. 9). The great wonders of our ingenious, high tech, high energy, highly

productive industrial systems are also the great perils. We are using up the world we live in, and rely upon for our continued existence, at an alarming rate.

In a story that is familiar to farmers, Qualman illustrates the clash between natural systems and “e-civilization” (our current energy-intensive, industrial, consumerist civilization) by describing how farming has changed over the last 200 years. For tens of thousands of years, agriculture was essentially solar powered with seeds, human and animal energy, soil nutrients and water renewed in complex cycles, webs and loops. Industrialization changed all that by breaking open the loops and substituting linear production chains. Data confirms the astounding amount of fuel, fertilizer, chemicals, steel and

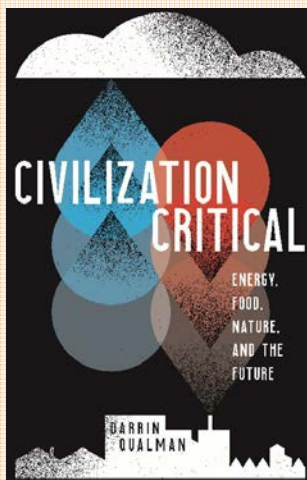
*This book is a
'must read'.*

other inputs of our current food production systems. The outputs include increased food production along with water pollution, loss of biodiversity, degraded soils and fewer farmers.

A clear-eyed, critical analysis of the current state of the world makes for some pretty grim reading. But Qualman manages to make this an enjoyable read by injecting funny and quirky facts. For example, did you know that bacon fat and gasoline have similar energy density? (p. 112)

This book is a ‘must read’. And it is written in such a clear, accessible, compelling way that you will want to reread it, mark it up and take it along to coffee row. ▀

Darrin Qualman was the NFU's lead researcher from 1996 to 2010. His new book, ***Civilization Critical***, examines food and agriculture, energy and industry.



*Ronald Wright calls the book
“thoughtful and thoroughly
documented.”*

Available now!

—from local independent bookstores
—from the publisher, Fernwood Publishing
—from Amazon.ca

More information:

www.darrinqualman.com

A Seed Sovereignty Update

Our work to keep control of seeds continues

—by Cam Goff, NFU Vice President Policy

The Seed Sovereignty issue has been quiet on the public front for several months now. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Seed Synergy group, however, have been working desperately in private trying to come up with a spin on this issue that makes it palatable to farmers.

After being told by western crop commissions that a robust and detailed economic analysis on a by-crop basis, was absolutely necessary before any further debate, the two boosters of the plan have been trying to come up with numbers that show a clear benefit to farmers. They have, so far, failed miserably. In a “soft” and incomplete analysis on wheat that was presented to the Saskatchewan crop commissions in early June, they showed a \$14 million dollar benefit to farmers over ten years. This is a paltry \$1.4 million dollars per year spread over all Canadian farmers. They also admitted that preliminary work that they have done on other crops show even less merit.

Without seeing the details, it is impossible to know what factors and monetary values were considered. Given the previous track record of Ag Canada and the Seed Synergy group in their unprincipled championing of their Value Creation model, it is hard to believe that even this unflattering analysis is free from strong bias in their favour.

As well, there seems to be a lack of communication and supervision between the office of the Minister of Agriculture and the personnel in Ag Canada responsible for this fiasco. When the subject of Value Creation came up at our June lobbying meeting in Ottawa, the information that we were given on past and future actions and approaches differed between the minister’s office and Ag Canada’s statements and activities. While these discrepancies may be the result of a new minister becoming familiar with their portfolio and getting up to speed with on-going initiatives, it may also point to a situation where the bureaucrats are driving this process under the guidance of corporate interests.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture affiliates are in the process of bringing forward a third option for the future of plant breeding in Canada which counters the two options espoused by Ag Canada. While still in its formative stages, and seemingly more favourable to farmers, this third option also concedes control of seed to corporate power. Such a concession would make this option unacceptable to the NFU.

Japan is undergoing a similar process to what Canada is in regards to their plant breeding and seed rights. While their structure of varietal development

Japan is undergoing a similar process to what Canada is in regards to their plant breeding and seed rights.

and breeding differs in detail from ours, in general, it provided the same benefits: a public system which provided locally adapted varieties at low cost to farmers, and returned the benefits for the common good. Late in 2018 the Japanese government abolished their public seed law with almost no warning or consultation, and announced that seed development would be handed over to private industry. This prompted a Japanese delegation to visit Canada in early July to examine how we were handling the situation.

They met with the NFU at our Saskatoon office on July 5 to hear about the reaction and perceptions of Canadian farmers to the proposed changes. We detailed our concerns, and they were intrigued and gratified to hear our viewpoint, which differed radically from what they had heard from industry. This points out that we are not alone in our struggles, as this highlights our concerns of a global takeover of the food supply. We will continue to fight for farmers’ rights to use their own seed and preserve our public system. ■

“ You learn what is being done to you, and by whom ”

PROFILES OF NFU LEADERS

It's a blast from the past! In celebration of the NFU's 50th Anniversary, we will be profiling some of the folks who have held national elected positions over the years. Plus, in this edition, we have the profile of Urban Laughlin – long-time farm activist, a founding member of the NFU, and the only NFU member who can boast to have attended all National Conventions. His story shares some important history about determination and resistance of the east coast NFU members of the time, and the progress that was made accordingly. Enjoy!

Urban and Mary Laughlin

49 NFU Annual Conventions

Urban Laughlin was born in Sherbrooke, Prince Edward Island. on December 9, 1931, the son of Edward and Mamie Laughlin. He attended Sherbrooke School where he completed Grade 10. Following this, he enrolled in courses in Leadership and Debating at St. Dunstan's University and Prince of Wales College.

He was a member of the Sherbrooke 4-H Club for four years where he chose dairy, debating and public speaking for his projects. He was the leader of the debating team which won the debating championship in 1952. His debating team won the championship against the Ontario Junior Farmers in 1957. To this date, Urban still enjoys a good debate! He has shared his debating skills with his niece, Dianne Griffin. This has been very useful to her as she serves as a Senator representing PEI in the Canadian Senate.

Urban worked on the family farm alongside his parents, eventually taking over the family farm when his parents retired. When he decided it was time to search for a wife, Urban prayed he would find a good woman. His prayers were certainly answered in the person of Mary (MacDonald) who grew up in



Grand River, PEI. His proposal to Mary was an interesting one indeed. He asked her "How would you like to be buried with my people?" Mary was a school teacher in various schools and served as Vice-Principal and Principal in several schools.

Urban and Mary were married in the church at Grand River on October 10, 1959. Mary has been a wonderful helpmate to Urban who readily admits he never could have achieved what he did without her unwavering help. Often when Urban would be away on NFU business, Mary capably handled the milking chores, delivering calves, and so on. In addition, she along with Urban, lovingly cared for his parents in their later years up until the time of their passing.

Urban and Mary continued dairy farming until their retirement on October 7, 1996 just a couple of months prior to his 65th birthday. They still live in the family home in Sherbrooke.

The NFU has played a huge role in Urban's life. He and Mary joined the NFU on August 12, 1968 almost a year prior to the NFU Founding Convention. In fact, the three Locals in PEI (102, 103 and 104) were all formed prior to the 1969 Founding Convention. Urban has the distinct honour of being the only person in Canada who has attended all forty-nine NFU National Conventions to date thanks to his wife Mary. He and Mary plan to attend the 50th Anniversary Convention in Winnipeg in November 2019.

Urban served as President of the Prince County NFU Local which received Local 102 designation on January 29, 1969. When District 1 (PEI) was founded on February 18, 1970 he was the first District Director. Over 21 years, he served as District Director in intervals of 7 years, 10 years and 4 years. As well, he served on the National Board for one year.

(continued on page 20...)

In 1971 the PEI Government brought in An Act to Prohibit Public Gatherings. The NFU was not impressed with this and a demonstration at the Legislature took place on April 7, 1971. The NFU demonstration was the reason this Act never received Royal Assent. If the NFU had not taken this action, the NFU would not have been able to hold the tractor demonstration it held in 1971.

Alex Campbell's government refused to negotiate in good faith with the NFU and the decision was made to hold a tractor demonstration in several areas of P.E.I. from August 12 - 21st, 1971. Urban was very involved in the organization of this demonstration. Tractors blocked the highways, including the highway to the Borden Ferry terminal. Traffic coming into the province was allowed in but traffic leaving was stopped. Local NFU officials were flanked by National representatives including President, Roy Atkinson, Fred Gudmunsen and Evelyn Potter. Jack Brooks from New Brunswick also lent support. Vehicles hauling

livestock were allowed passage and every half hour some traffic was allowed through.

The demonstration ended with the arrest of Roy Atkinson who was handcuffed and spent a few hours in jail while the \$500 cash bail was gathered. At a later court date, Roy was found not guilty of conspiring to block the highway because it was NFU members who had made the decision to hold the blockade. Shortly thereafter, Roy Atkinson, Evelyn Potter and Urban Laughlin met with the Premier at his home in Summerside. Although Roy felt the meeting would be a short one, Urban knew otherwise. Premier Campbell chastised Urban for some time, and the Premier's wife (hearing the tone of the discussion) headed back to the kitchen with the coffee left unserved. However, from this time on the provincial government began to work with the NFU on a number of issues.

Along with N.B. National Board member, Wout VanGaal, Urban was also heavily involved in organizing the tractor and vehicle demonstration in New

Brunswick from April 24, 1978 to May 1, 1978. Again this happened because of the improper treatment of farmers by the government. It was in New Brunswick during this time that Urban's life was threatened. Security was quickly put in place and fortunately the threat did not materialize.

Urban is a recipient of the Confederation Medal (1967-1992) and also the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002. In October 2010 he was inducted into the Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the farming community and farm families in PEI over many years. He continues to be a wonderful mentor to the NFU in PEI. He attends almost all meetings, and his signature trademark is that huge notebook where he takes notes of all proceedings.

Urban says, "The biggest education I had was in the National Farmers Union. You learn what is being done to you and by whom". ■



Wayne Easter

National President 1982-93

My lifelong relationship with the National Farmers Union began all the way back to 1971. That summer, my cousin Allan Ling convinced me to take part in a "tractor protest" organized by the NFU to pressure the PEI government of Alex Campbell to address the declining fortunes of family farms. That was my first taste of how an organized, energetic and dedicated group of

citizens could change things for the better. Over the next two decades, I was fortunate to serve the NFU in many capacities: first as a farm youth travelling to Rocanville, Saskatchewan on the NFU youth exchange, then as NFU Youth President, Local 104 President, Region 1 Co-ordinator, National Vice President, and eventually as National President from '82-'93. My goodness, the political activism we got ourselves involved in! From more tractor

(continued on page 21...)

demonstrations and blocking highways to protest marches and wheat giveaways on Parliament Hill, it seems like we were always on the front lines fighting for farmers – and we always made our point!

In '93, it was my cousin Allan who again encouraged me to make another leap – this time into federal politics. I was eventually convinced that I could do more good from the inside than the outside, a conviction I still hold firmly. In my various roles as Solicitor General, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Co-Chair of the Canada-U.S. interparliamentary group, I have always striven to bring a farmer's eye to the table to ensure that our farmers and primary



producers from all across the country are represented and supported.

With the National Farmers Union, we enjoyed the fight of our lives for a better, more prosperous farm community where marketing power would be controlled by farmers themselves. To read through the NFU policy statement is to

envision a policy perspective that maintains farms, strengthens rural communities, and shows respect for gender balance, indigenous rights, and environmental sustainability long before they became popular in the political mainstream. Here's to another 50 years of fighting the good fight! ■

Kalissa Regier

National Board Member 2006-10



Kalissa Regier was born and raised on a grain farm in central Saskatchewan. At the age of 24, after several years away at school, she returned to her family farm to work alongside her parents on Hestia Organic Farm. For the next 10 years, Kalissa farmed with and learned from her parents as they grew organic grains and oilseeds for local and international markets. In 2014, Kalissa moved to southern Saskatchewan and began farming at Remoué Family Farms with her husband, Tyler Remoué. Their certified organic grain farm incorporates methods such as cover crops, green manure, intercropping, biological controls and conservation tillage to improve soil health, and reduce their impact on the land.

Kalissa and Tyler are constantly learning from their own experiences and those of other farmers, both near and far, in the hopes that the next generation may thrive in spite of the many challenges they will inevitably face. They have three kids, Annika, Theo and Felix.

Kalissa sat on the board of the NFU from 2006-2010 and was a youth representative for La Vía Campesina North America from 2008-2011. Kalissa served as a member of the coordination committee of the Civil Society Mechanism as well as the Advisory Group for the UN Committee on World Food Security from 2011-2013. She currently serves as a director on the board of the National Farmers Foundation and locally, as a council member for her rural municipality. ■

NFU is taking action on glyphosate issues

—by Cherry Halcovitch

Since glyphosate was first marketed as an herbicide in the 1970s, its use has been an often-debated topic. Since I joined the National Farmers Union in 2014, not a single convention has gone by without some resolution being debated as to the NFU's position on glyphosate, and what specific policy work should be done. One particular resolution from the last national convention, initially moved by a member of Local 333 and passed at the Region 3 convention, proposed that the NFU should oppose the use of glyphosate to dry down (desiccate) crops. The resolution was deemed redundant because it is already NFU policy, but discussing the issue at the local and regional levels got the ball rolling on some research and lobbying regarding glyphosate desiccation.

Glyphosate has been a registered herbicide for a long time, and spraying it as an herbicide has been a fact of life for many farmers. In relatively recent years it has become more and more accepted for the purposes of speeding dry down of nearly mature crops of grains and pulses as well. One correlation to the increase in farmers drying crops with glyphosate is the amount of glyphosate residue ending up in food products. It was alarming numbers reported by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in its *Children's Food Project* research that prompted an NFU member to draft the glyphosate desiccation resolution in the first place. Glyphosate residue levels in

To sign the petition and learn more about the issue, visit change.org and search “National Farmers Union” or go to <http://chnng.it/MDrBvfw5R>

food produced in Canada are higher than they have ever been, and in extreme cases reach 2.5 parts per million (ppm), a quarter of the way to the 10 ppm threshold that is the maximum residue limit the CFIA deems safe. That 2.5 ppm example is from a barley cereal intended for toddlers.

It should be noted that using glyphosate for pre-harvest dry-down is not a registered use per the Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) label and is therefore illegal. At this time, the only registered desiccant in Canada is Reglone. However, it is clear that the PMRA is willing to use a much less rigorous process called *User Requested Minor Use Label Expansion* (URMULE) to expand the label uses, without having to conduct the same levels of independent research on the effects of these expanded uses. This is how the PMRA has quietly condoned the practice on some crops. These label expansions will not apply to every case where glyphosate is used to dry down a crop, but in those cases, the PMRA is not willing or able to enforce the label uses.

And all of this is still true at a time when evidence is mounting that shows glyphosate can be a highly detrimental chemical to human health. The World Health

Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has considered glyphosate to be a probable human carcinogen since 2015. Last year Bayer, the largest manufacturer of glyphosate, was found to be at fault in the case of a groundskeeper who developed non-Hodgkin's lymphoma after years of exposure to the chemical. The company faces over 13,000 similar cases in the United States. And now in 2019, the organization *Safe Food Matters*, in conjunction with other groups and individuals, is suing the PMRA and Health Canada over their decision to continue to register glyphosate for any use. In particular, they take exception to the use of URMULEs to expand allowable uses.

For the NFU's part, we have launched an on-line petition addressed to federal Health Minister Ginette Petitpas-Taylor demanding that the PMRA, a division of Health Canada, maintain only the label uses for glyphosate, and vocally and consistently constrain the use of glyphosate for drying down crops. To sign the petition and learn more about the issue, please visit change.org and search “National Farmers Union” or go to <http://chnng.it/MDrBvfw5R> ■

Cherry Halcovitch,
Region 2, Saint-Andre-Avellin, QC
aaron.halcovitch@gmail.com

BEINGESSNER AWARD

For Excellence in Writing

Working with the family of Paul Beingessner, the NFU 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 to 21 years old, and 22 to 30 years old. One award in the amount of \$500 will be awarded each age category for a **NON-FICTION OPEN LETTER** 500-1000 words in length. **Applicants can only win once per age category.**
- **THIS YEAR'S THEME IS:** *Farmers are on the frontline of the climate crisis. At this critical juncture when farmers must consider and employ climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, what does farming in a changing climate look like to you?*
- **Deadline for entries is November 1, 2019.**

The winners will be announced at the NFU Convention in November 2019 in Winnipeg, MB. 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

NFU BOARD and ADVISORY MEMBERS / OFFICES

National / Regional Offices:

National: 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 Ph: (306) 652-9465 Email: nfu@nfu.ca

Region 1: **NB Regional Office:** Rébeka Frazer-Chiasson, NFU-NB President, 1312 Pleasant Ridge, Rogersville NB E4Y 1C8
Ph: (506) 260-0087 Email: info@nfunb.org

NB Member Tax Service: Judy Barr, 559 Route 390, Rowena, NB E7H 4N2 Ph: (506) 273-4328

Region 3: Sarah Bakker, NFU-O General Manager, 5420 Hwy 6 N, RR 5, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2
Ph: in ON 1-888-832-9638 / Ph: outside ON (705)738-3993 Email: office@nfuontario.ca

National Officers and Directors: Katie Ward, President, Woodlawn, ON; Cam Goff, 1st Vice President (Policy), Hanley, SK; Stewart Wells, 2nd Vice President (Operations), Swift Current, SK; Toby Malloy, Women's President, Nanton, AB; Coral Sproule, Women's Vice President, Perth, ON; Stuart Oke, Youth President, St. Andre-Avellin, QC; Jessie MacInnis, Youth Vice President, Tatamogouche, NS; Reg Phelan, Region 1 Coordinator, Morell, PE; Riley Côté-DeMerchant, Region 1 Board Member, Summerfield, NB; Don Ciparis, Region 3 Coordinator, Florence, ON; Hilary Moore, Region 3 Board Member, Lanark, ON; Ayla Fenton, Region 3 Board Member, Kingston, ON; Ian Robson, Region 5 Coordinator, Deleau, MB; Dean Harder, Region 5 Board Member, Winnipeg, MB; Glenn Tait, Region 6 Coordinator, Meota, SK; Rachelle Ternier, Region 6 Board Member, Cochin, SK; Dixie Green, Region 6 Board Member, Swift Current, SK; Doug Scott, Region 7 Coordinator, Waskatenau, AB; Glenn Norman, Region 7 Board Member, Red Deer County, AB; Peter Eggers, Region 7 Board Member, La Glace, AB; Seann Dory, Region 8 Board Member, Parksville, BC.

Women's Advisory Committee: Carina Phillips, Morell, PE; Marcelle Paulin, Pass Lake, ON; Anne Hill, Swift Current, SK; Julie Enman, Kitkatla, BC.

Youth Advisory Committee: Phil Gervais, Moncton, NB; Madeline Marmor, Guelph, ON; Murray Jowett, Winnipeg, MB; Marta Reczek, Chilliwack, BC.

NFU 50th Annual Convention

NEW THIS YEAR! ADVANCE REGISTRATION

Early bird prices are in effect until September 30, allowing you to buy now and save \$25 off regular registration fees. On October 1, regular prices will come into effect and single day registration will be offered. Please note that registration fees **DO NOT INCLUDE MEALS**. Member registration includes spouse and children under 14. If there is **MORE THAN ONE VOTING DELEGATE** in the member family, a registration fee will be required for each. If you have questions about registration, please phone (306) 652-9465 or email nfu@nfu.ca

NOTE: Pre-purchased banquet tickets and fees are refundable up to October 31 LESS a \$25 processing fee.

TO GET YOUR EARLY BIRD PRICES, REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 30.

USE THE FORM BELOW and mail with your cheque or credit card information to the NFU, 2717 Wentz Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 or **USE OUR ONLINE REGISTRATION** at <https://www.nfu.ca/2019convention/register/>

CHOOSE REGISTRATION TYPE(S):

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|---|-------|------------|---|----|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FULL CONVENTION - NFU MEMBER | \$175.00 | X | _____ | (QUANTITY) | = | \$ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FULL CONVENTION - NON-MEMBER | \$200.00 | X | _____ | (QUANTITY) | = | \$ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FULL CONVENTION - STUDENT/YOUTH | \$ 50.00 | X | _____ | (QUANTITY) | = | \$ | _____ |

Name(s) on ticket(s): _____

ADD BANQUET TICKETS: \$ 55.00 X _____ (QUANTITY) = \$ _____

Name(s) on ticket(s): _____

AMOUNT DUE: \$ _____

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION: (if paying by credit card) ☐ **VISA** ☐ **MASTERCARD**

(16 digit card number)

(Expiry date - month/year)

(CVV - 3 digits on back of card)

Cardholder's Name: _____

CONVENTION REGISTRANT'S NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE AND EMAIL:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

We look forward to seeing you in Winnipeg in November!