

National Farmers Union General Resolutions from Regions 2020

1. Cloud Seeding Practices

WHEREAS the climate of southern Ontario is becoming increasingly more variable for agricultural production;

WHEREAS rainfall at the required times will become more of an issue in the future;

WHEREAS discussions of proposed solutions to a lack of rainfall will become more commonplace and;

WHEREAS cloud seeding is considered to be one such solution, even though current practices focus on intercepting rainfall cells in advance of where the weather cell would release its rainfall if it were not tampered with by cloud seeding;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby national, provincial and territorial governments to establish national and bi-national protocols to regulate cloud seeding practices modelled after existing watercourse access rights in international law so as not to deny rainfall to producers who may be at risk of losing their rainfall events as a result of the cloud seeding practices of other parties, regardless of jurisdiction.

Region 3

2. Financial Support for New/Young Ecological Farmers

WHEREAS the Canadian farm population is aging and continues to decline in number;

WHEREAS we are facing a climate crisis;

WHEREAS there are many barriers to entry (primarily financial) for new, ecological farmers (youth, career switchers, immigrants, etc.), and;

WHEREAS farmland prices have risen out of the range of affordability in many provinces, particularly British Columbia and Ontario;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU research financial support policies for new/young ecological farmers and write a national policy recommendation for use in lobbying government,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU provide members with information on such financial supports and relevant policy tools for lobbying at their local level.

Region 3

3. Promoting Food Produced Through Regenerative Agriculture

WHEREAS the term “regenerative agriculture” refers to farming practices which improve soil health while sequestering atmospheric carbon through plant photosynthesis;

WHEREAS the integration of crops and ruminant livestock is a key tenet of regenerative agriculture and is known to produce nutrient dense food while improving soil health, and;

WHEREAS the media often vilifies the consumption of meat and other animal products without recognizing the positive impact livestock agriculture can have on soil health,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU pursue a consumer awareness campaign that promotes the benefits to human health & global ecology from food produced through agro-ecological practices.

Region 3

4. Extension Service Staff for Local Food Agriculture

WHEREAS Provincial Governments have cut quality independent farm and food specialist advice services of vital need to help inform and encourage farmers and local food systems to survive and thrive;

WHEREAS vested private farm and food specialists are costly to hire and have vested interests less in line with community goals to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHGs);

WHEREAS the Farm and Food systems can reduce GHGs, if given good advice and practical examples suitable for local conditions;

WHEREAS local and regional public interest minded qualified extension service staffing creates employment and assists farmers and food processors with best practices and;

WHEREAS GHG reduction goals will require more good paying dedicated local jobs to help to do and to encourage skilled rewarding farmer work in our food systems that can help to reduce GHGs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU ask provincial and federal governments to hire agricultural extension service staff with responsibility for local food and direct farm marketing. Staff roles would include: demonstrating and sharing skilled farming practices; understanding healthy and safe food skills practices; giving advice to new farmers; offering education on producing fewer greenhouse gas emissions; providing direct marketing advice; and offering a conduit between local food producers and the government.

Region 5

5. Direct Marketing Farmer Insurance

WHEREAS several provincial farm insurance agencies from across Canada have no form of loss insurance for direct market farmers and;

WHEREAS direct market farmers are at a huge risk and even disadvantage if there is a major environmental incident;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU and its Direct Marketing Committee investigate insurance coverage for direct market farmers including information about what is and is not currently available in Canadian provinces, and recommend insurance options for direct market farmers in provinces across Canada.

Region 5

6. The NFU Farmers Network Strategy

WHEREAS many of our members do not know each other and yet there is so much collective knowledge within the organization;

WHEREAS retaining and gaining new members is a major challenge and we are competing with other organizations for time and energy and;

WHEREAS farmers connecting with one another is a huge resource that we can offer as an organization and bring value to the entire membership;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU, through its Membership Development Committee, set up a networking strategy that more formally connects members with other members, which could include phone trees, localized teams, forums, mentorships, and farmer-to-farmer workshops.

Region 5

7. Federal Crop Breeding and Variety Development Programs

WHEREAS the Federal Government has cut back its quality public interest crop research and breeding over a period of years with intentions to dangerously exit public beneficial crop breeding and variety development work and turn this over to for profit expensive private effort and sidelining real benefit to all food eaters and farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU advocate that the federal government maintain and expand its crop breeding and variety development programs, increase the budget for these, prevent the privatization of vital crop research and breeding, and reverse the imposition of related user fees on farmers.

Region 5

8. Royal Commission on COVID-19 and Agriculture

WHEREAS COVID-19 exposed the flaws in Canada's food production, processing and distribution systems;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU advocate that the federal government create a Royal Commission to look at how COVID-19 exposed the flaws in Canada's food and agricultural system. The purpose will be to explore the flaws in Canada's food production, processing and distribution systems, which proved costly to producers resulting in lower prices; costly to consumers through higher prices; costly to labour with the loss of employment and forced workplace exposure to COVID-19; and a massive bill to taxpayers who have been forced to subsidize the flaws in Canada's failing food system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Royal Commission propose a strategy to prevent these issues in the future.

Region 5

9. Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Project

WHEREAS the Saskatchewan government has announced plans to develop a \$4 billion mega-project to expand irrigation using water from Lake Diefenbaker on the South Saskatchewan River, funded in part by federal infrastructure development money;

WHEREAS past studies show that much of the land in the proposed project area is not suitable for irrigation;

WHEREAS the already existing Lake Diefenbaker irrigation capacity is underutilized;

WHEREAS none of the proposed mega-project funds are allocated to on-farm infrastructure or food processing capacity required to make use of diversified production made possible by irrigation, and;

WHEREAS serious negative environmental consequences including biodiversity loss and increased carbon emissions would result from the proposed massive expansion of Lake Diefenbaker irrigation;

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU oppose the \$4 billion Irrigation Project at Lake Diefenbaker proposed by the Saskatchewan government in July 2020.

Region 6

10. End “Right of Entry”

WHEREAS, the Alberta government has allowed the oil and gas industry to stop paying property taxes, which has placed an increased tax burden on farmers and all rural residents;

WHEREAS the oil and gas companies have in many cases stopped paying their annual rent to landowners and farmers;

WHEREAS many oil and gas companies have failed to complete or pay for the abandonment, remediation, and reclamation of their wells, pipelines, and facilities. Leaving these environmental liabilities to be cleaned up and to be paid for with taxpayer money and;

WHEREAS the failure for the oil and gas and the Alberta Government to live up to these obligations is a violation of the social contract used to justify the creation of the Surface Rights Act that includes The “Right of Entry;” a right to seek an order from the Surface Rights Board to enter the property of a reluctant landowner. These orders are issued without the ability of the landowner to object; an ability that has given the industry an unfair advantage in negotiations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU call on the Alberta government to permanently and irrevocably extinguish the oil and gas industry’s use of the “Right of Entry”.

Region 7

National Farmers Union General Resolutions for Referral 2020

Note: *These resolutions first need 2/3 majority approval of the floor in order to bring them back for debate. If they do not meet this, we do not debate them.*

11. Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights

WHEREAS many farmers keep one or more firearms, often including a 10 or 12 Gauge shotgun, for use on their farm for euthanasia of sick or injured animals, protection from livestock predators, elimination of varmints threatening crops, etc.;

WHEREAS on May 1st, 2020 Prime Minister Trudeau announced immediate amendments to Canada's gun laws which criminalize the use of certain types of firearms and related devices. These amendments to approximately 1500 firearms and related devices, changed their status from restricted to prohibited. Since some of the prohibited firearm barrels are classified as anything greater than 20mm, some 10 and 12 gauge shotguns are included;

WHEREAS these amendments, created newly prohibited items which attract prohibitions and criminal penalties associated with their use, ownership, sale or possession. Section 91 of the Criminal Code makes it an indictable offence, liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, to possess a prohibited or restricted firearm without a licence and registration certificate for it and;

WHEREAS, according to the Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights, this sudden amendment to firearms classification was carried out illegally, through an Order in Council, rather than legally through Parliamentary debate and readings in the House of Commons and the Senate, following the procedure as laid out in the Canadian Constitution. These changes in classification have not been made law, yet these firearms and devices are prohibited as of May 1st, 2020, with more than 225 having been added since;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the NFU support the Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights (CCFR) by 1) notifying NFU members that the amendments to Canada's gun laws may affect them, and 2) join CCFR through a business membership and 3) subscribe to their newsletter to keep up-to-date on proceedings.

12. Site C Dam

WHEREAS major geological problems have been identified at the Site C dam construction site on BC's Peace River, including under the foundation for the powerhouse, the spillways and the dam itself, which threaten the stability and safety of the whole project;

WHEREAS it is unclear whether these geological problems can be solved by engineering solutions, what their costs might be, and whether the safety of workers and downstream residents can be assured and;

WHEREAS the Site C Dam, which will flood 15,000 acres of prime horticulture land in a class one climate for agriculture capable of meeting the nutritional requirements of over 1 million people a year is important to food security for British Columbians and northern Canadians;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the NFU call upon the Honourable John Horgan, BC Premier and the Honourable Bruce Ralston, BC Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources to:

- Institute a formal public inquiry, vested with subpoena power, to hear testimony under oath and subject to cross-examination, to determine:

- a) whether Site C dam is buildable given the major geological problems that have been identified;
- b) whether it would be a threat to public safety; and
- c) how much it would cost.

- Immediately stop all major works on the Site C dam construction site pending the outcome of this inquiry.

13. Changes to Government Agriculture Programs

WHEREAS, Canadian Governments' suite of Business Risk Management and farm support programs (including AgriStability and AgriInvest) lack any intent, mechanism, or target to increase the number of farmers and may be contributing to the ongoing decline of those numbers;

WHEREAS Canada has a goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 30% by 2030;

WHEREAS most farmers would be willing and able to reduce emissions and contribute to helping our nation reach that target if given appropriate information, support, programs, and policies;

WHEREAS farmers' knowledge is key to understanding natural systems, including cycling nutrients and not overloading our environment, and;

WHEREAS, a well-crafted suite of emission-reduction and sustainability policies create the opportunity to increase the number of farmers and increase net farm income;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby federal and provincial governments to:

1. Restructure Business Risk Management and farm support programs to ensure that they function to increase the number of farmers, increase margins and net farm income from the markets, and decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—this includes capping and reducing payments to very large operations;
2. Prioritize, in all government programs, increasing farmer numbers and net incomes while reducing emissions;
3. Measure and report progress metrics for net income, GHG emissions, and farmer numbers.

14. Ethics and Transparency in Investing

WHEREAS many pension funds, mutual funds, and investment firms are investing in farmland to the detriment of farmers, and;

WHEREAS many mutual funds, exchange traded funds and other investment firms are marketing their products as ethical investments with little regard to their impact on land prices and farming practices;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU call for pension and investment funds to divest from farmland and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU call for investment firms marketing their products as ethical or green investments to disclose the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of their portfolios.

15. Fundraising Policy

WHEREAS the NFU has maintained a 50 year old reputation for its unbiased research in Canadian agricultural issues because it is membership funded, and membership driven;

WHEREAS the NFU is seeking more and more fundraising for specific projects;

WHEREAS NFU board members and staff do change, and;

WHEREAS the NFU is a uniquely democratically run organization;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the current NFU staff and board work to develop policy that clearly outlines the priorities and limitations of fundraising across the NFU, to ensure consistent structure around fundraising and the integrity of the organization.

16. Electrification of Agricultural Equipment

WHEREAS the federal government provides financial incentive to purchase electric vehicles and;

WHEREAS the NFU is encouraging electrification of Canada's agricultural equipment to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby the federal government to introduce a program of financial incentives for farmers and farm equipment manufacturers to convert agricultural equipment to electric.

17. Migrant Workers NFU Membership

WHEREAS migrant workers are key to food production in Canada, and;

WHEREAS migrant workers are unable to participate in the NFU due to the prohibitive cost of membership relative to their wages.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU Board draft a constitutional amendment to enable migrant farm workers to purchase memberships at a significantly reduced rate, in relation to their wages.

18. De-commodification and Accessibility of Land

WHEREAS we recognize that in order to survive changing climate, rampant pollution, disease outbreaks, it is essential to heal our land and live a more holistic lifestyle;

WHEREAS people are looking for jobs, yet industry jobs can be precarious and hazardous and;

WHEREAS restoring the land could provide a large amount of employment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby governments to de-commodify land, taking it away from investors, and allowing opportunity for people to work on healing the land, while living a sustainable lifestyle, and partner with farmers to supply labourers, who can learn while contributing to a clean and sustainable food supply.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU lobby governments to mandate regenerative / agro-ecological agricultural practices and supply supports and labour to assist farmers with this task.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU lobby governments to strip land away from those who cannot farm in a sustainable, regenerative way, and provide land to ambitious people who agree to grow and produce food sustainably on small farms and cooperatives.

19. Northwest Territories added to Region 7

WHEREAS the Northwest Territories, like Alberta, has mountains on its western border, spilling into wide flatlands, and NWT and Alberta also share transportation infrastructure such as train lines, highways, and direct flights and;

WHEREAS if NFU wishes to increase our base of northern farmers/residents, we must be practical in our approach to recruiting them, as well as considering accessibility and connections to larger communities of farmers;

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU board consider making the Northwest Territories part of Region 7.

20. Northern Advisory Committee

WHEREAS NFU does not have the membership base to support the development of a Northern Region, which would include persons from Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon, but needs to begin to welcome northern farmers to the NFU, in order to strengthen and diversify our organization, and so that we might offer a truly diverse Canadian perspective on farming and;

WHEREAS Canada's north is at the forefront of climate change and food security issues, but are often overlooked due to their much smaller political and population base;

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU begin the process of recognizing the needs and struggles of Canada's northernmost farmers by asking the NFU board to establish a Northern Advisory Committee.

21. Livestock Numbers

WHEREAS corporate agricultural processors see a looming windfall of profit in replacing meat with plant based processed meat lookalikes;

WHEREAS farmers are still recovering from the completely inaccurate corporate funded campaign against the consumption of animal fat 50 years ago and;

WHEREAS citizens are now bombarded with insinuations about how bad meat consumption is for the planet and that they can still eat something tasteful, that they don't need to feel guilty about;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU refrain from promoting the idea of reducing livestock numbers.