

THE

# union farmer

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Cover Photo:

Around 600 diverse people from all walks of life (farmers, foodies, soil scientists, permaculturalists, alternative thinkers and more) attended "The Convergence 2014" permaculture conference in July. The event was held on Onaka Farm in Frelighsburg, Quebec. In the background are the rolling foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. (see story on page 14)

—Photo Courtesy of Dan Kretschmar, NFU member from Ontario.



## Message from the Editor...

—by Carla Roppel

*“We like to think of this book as the literary equivalent of a big can of fluorescent orange spray paint. We are spray-painting the Invisible Man in order to make him visible again. We want the public at large to recognize the skilled propagandists of industry and government who are affecting public opinion and determining public policies, while remaining (they hope) out of public view.”*

*In a democracy, everyone needs to know who is really in charge, who makes the decisions, and in whose interest. Democracies function best without Invisible Men.”*

These are the final two paragraphs of Chapter One (Burning Books Before They’re Printed) in the 1995 book, *Toxic Sludge is Good for You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry* by John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton. The Invisible Man in the Claude Rains’ 1933 movie was an “evil scientist who used his attempts to rule the world ... using his invisibility to evade detection.” Public relations (PR) professionals are the Invisible Men who, with access to media and unlimited funding, deliberately manipulate public opinion and manufacture consent, compliance and consumption according to the wishes of their corporate and government masters.

While this 236-page, easy-to-read book is out-of-date by almost 20 years, it lays bare the evolution of an insidious industry that shapes and changes what people think: what matters to them, their neighbours, their countries and the world.

Nothing in the book is news to NFU members; we’ve experienced the impacts of negative PR for decades. Nevertheless, we continue to expose self-serving messages slyly crafted by Invisible Men with access to all the power that money can buy. Most media dare not threaten their ad-generated revenue stream by contradicting the PR messages offered.

Much of what is presented as “news” comes attractively pre-packaged and biased from PR flacks rather than from the good reporting of journalists, who even 20 years ago were outnumbered by PR staff. News and advertising collude to implant consent, beliefs, values and desires into undiscerning brains as easily as a virus or worm infects the operating system of a computer.

Thus, the invisible hand of the invisible man does not give citizens the raw data they need to independently analyze and form an opinion about an issue. This is antithetical to genuine democratic process.

I like to think that being a member of the NFU acts like a very effective “anti-virus” against corporate and government PR. Our research, reports, briefs, commentaries and publications lay bare the realities of who pays, who benefits and who bears the risks.

Change is already on the wind, and NFU members are acting “In Union” with local, national and international allies to remake the food system according to the principles of food sovereignty. Join us. We are challenging the status quo and making a difference.

—nfu—

## union farmer quarterly

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2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6

Telephone: 306-652-9465 — Fax: 306-664-6226 — E-mail: [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca) — Website: [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)

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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.*





—by Jan Slomp

# A Message from the President

**T**he National Farmers Union is fortunate to have youth who not only brainstorm about farming matters as young farmers, but who also actively look for ways to strengthen our organization and reach a broader audience with our information. During the last few years, the youth have identified a couple of bottlenecks that reduce our ability to reach out to current and potential members. To address these shortcomings, as well as to take advantage of the best modern communication tools, the Executive struck an Alternative Media Working Group to recommend improvements and to implement them once made.

Youth pointed out that we need to modernize our “look and feel”, to reflect an organization that is relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and improve how others see and perceive our work on issues that are critically important to farmers. This work will be a small step to help counter negative perceptions about the NFU that have been created by corporate media as well as federal and some provincial governments. Those concerned that the NFU is proposing radical changes in our constitution, bylaws and policies can rest assured that this make-over is only skin-deep. We will continue to honour our 45-year heritage, but package it in new ways that are attractive to the new members we plan to recruit. In short, we will make best use of the tools available to truly present ourselves for who we are.

The Executive struck a Branding Development Working Group (BDWG) to develop and implement an inclusive consultation process about our brand. The survey that you participated in the spring – whether online or in paper format – has provided the BDWG with rich and diverse information about how members regard our brand and how we want to be perceived by others. Some of the words that NFU members used to describe the NFU were trustworthy, dynamic and grass-roots. Other words used to describe values that were somewhat less emphasized were family farmers, progressive, strong and democratic. See pages 12 and 13 for more information about the project.

The Brand Development Working Group will work with the Board, staff and other members to approve the NFU’s new look and feel for presentation at the upcoming Annual National Convention in Saskatoon, November 27 to 29, 2014.

The work of the BDWG is part of a larger institutional strengthening project funded by a generous grant from Inter Pares. The next phase of that project will focus on developing a national strategy to build member recruitment and retention skills, as well as to enhance our fundraising capacity.

*In Solidarity, Jan Slomp*





—by Joan Brady

# A message from the Women's President

## Membership - the Roots of Organization

**D**o you ever wonder why more farmers do not join the NFU and other farm organizations unless mandated by a check-off or stable funding program? I certainly have. I have shared with this audience before, my involvement with the NFU gives me hope and a place to affect my future by communicating and acting on policies and initiatives that match my values. The friendships and solidarity that I feel go a long way to support me in the various challenges and opportunities that have marked my farming career. My outlook would be different without this organization.

Often organizations and groups form in response to a certain situation, crisis or opportunity. The motivation to gather is the knowledge that we can do more together than alone, that many voices can be heard above the clamour and that a variety of perspectives and skill sets add to the effectiveness of our response to the motivations for organization. I have been part of the establishment of a number of new organizations as people rally around a cause that is important to them whether it is the development of a local farmers' market, the formation of a provincial food network or the creation of a local aid organization.

The NFU originated first as provincial Farmers Unions to respond to the inequities faced by farm families in a corporate dominated marketplace. Grain and milk shippers had no power within a system that favoured the buyers of their product to an extent that buyers could pick and choose their suppliers leaving product unpurchased or severely discounted. The lack of consistent processing and distribution infrastructure meant that at times even the highest quality product could not reach the markets. Farmers rallied developing practical and political organizations to look towards their own interests. In 1969 these provincial unions merged to form the NFU to represent farmers at a national, provincial and local level.

What about today; have we forgotten the success of the past as we are bombarded by ever widening loss of control and democratic rights? Have we forgotten why the various

agencies and farmer-led organizations (CWB and co-ops) were formed in response to those very issues? Have we forgotten our rights to gather and invite others to join us? Have we forgotten that when like-minded, passionate people gather to tackle an issue or solve a problem – great things can happen. We need our members and new members as never before. The National Farmers Union is one of the best kept secrets in farming today. As members it is our responsibility to share the wealth and our story.

As our resources are challenged, the NFU struggles to maintain its mandate to work for farm families on the issues that affect them. We have begun revival and resurgence activities, and we need to keep up the momentum. The recent influx of youth members inspires us. Attention to our communication tools and mediums will equip us to communicate the value of the NFU to others. Our legacy of activism and conscientious research gives us proud credibility. Our leadership - past, current and future - work tirelessly to represent the interests of farmers in a less than farm-friendly world.

I urge each and every member to consider sharing the good news about the NFU, the work we do, and the notion that working together, farmers can overcome some significant odds. Hold a local/ regional meeting and offer a public invitation; share your *Union Farmer* or *Monthly*, which provides an update of our work; invite someone to the NFU convention to be held in Saskatoon, November 27 to 29, 2014. These are sure ways to inspire and acquaint newcomers to the depth of NFU policy and passion.

Thanks for joining the National Farmers Union and working with farm families across this great country.

*In Union, Joan Brady*





— Lisa Lundgard,  
Youth Vice President

# A message from the Youth

## 44th Annual National Convention — "Claiming our Livelihoods"

With convention approaching in late November, we are actively seeking a location for youth accommodations. Last year in Ottawa, we organized shared, subsidized group accommodation for 15 youth members, and we would like to offer a similar opportunity at this year's convention. If anyone knows of potential group accommodation options in Saskatoon, please let us know at [nfuyouth@nfu.ca](mailto:nfuyouth@nfu.ca). Also, any youth (up to 35 years old) who are interested in sharing accommodations, please let us know by emailing us at [nfuyouth@nfu.ca](mailto:nfuyouth@nfu.ca).

## National New Farmer Coalition

The National Farmers Union Youth and the Young Agrarians have collaborated for the past three years to build our capacity to connect and support new and young farmers. This spring, the NFU Youth helped form the National New Farmer Coalition.

The goal of the Coalition is to encourage and support the new generation of farmers in Canada and advance food sovereignty. This group is composed of new farmers, new farmer organizations (including Young Agrarians, FarmStart, Food Secure Canada and ACORN's Grow a Farmer Project), as well as supporters working at national, provincial and regional levels. The newly formed Coalition Steering Committee will work to advance the objectives established in the recently completed project statement:

1. Network, leverage the strengths and catalyze the work of new farmer organizations, initiatives and supporters;

2. Research new farmer challenges and opportunities;
3. Develop a National New Farmer Policy Platform; and
4. Connect, engage and mobilize new farmers and civil society.

As many of you know, young farmers face some major challenges with start-up costs such as high land prices, access to markets and more. This group is going to play a big role in capturing the attention of the government to start taking action and address the issues that young farmers are facing.

## Food Secure Canada Assembly

Food Secure Canada (FSC) is holding their 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly in Halifax in mid-November. NFU youth are collaborating with other organizations to develop and deliver the National New Farmer Roundtable at the FSC Assembly. This will also tie in with the National New Farmer Coalition work described above. If you are in the Atlantic area, I hope you will make it out to the assembly.

## NFU Blog

Despite the whirlwind of summer, we have managed to continue adding new entries to the NFU blog ([nfu.ca/blog](http://nfu.ca/blog)). We encourage you to check it out and let us know if you have any ideas for stories. We welcome any new ideas and additions.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Convention in Saskatoon!

*In Solidarity, Lisa Lundgard*



# Regional Reports



## ONE (PEI & N.B.)

**REGION**



- by Randall Affleck

### Deep Well Irrigation

The Environment Committee of the Prince Edward Island Legislature recommended in its interim report on deep well permits that a moratorium continue in place for now. The moratorium has been in place since 2001. They are also recommending that the Province introduce a Water Act to manage its water supply. There has been much public interest in this issue within the province. The NFU has made a presentation to the committee. There has been adequate rainfall this summer and very little irrigation has been required.

### McCain's Potato Processing Plant Closure

October 31<sup>st</sup> will be the final day of operations for the potato processing plant owned by McCain in Borden, Prince Edward Island. Premier Ghiz offered to open the golden cheque book to keep them operating in the Island community, but that was not to be. One hundred and twenty (120) employees will be laid off. The plant has been reducing grower contracts for the past several years and is reported to account for about 5% of the processing potato production on PEI. It is not clear if contracts for growers will be made for shipments to the other McCain processing facilities in New Brunswick.

### Dairy Processing Plant Consolidation

The past year has seen much consolidation of the Maritime cooperative dairy processing facilities. Agropur, a closed dairy cooperative based

in Quebec, first purchased Farmers Dairy in Nova Scotia, then Dairytown based in Sussex, New Brunswick, and most recently, Northumberland Dairies of Miramiche, New Brunswick. Saputo has purchased the fluid processing facilities of Scotsburn Dairy in Nova Scotia. They have retained their industrial ice cream processing assets.

### New Brunswick Election Called

New Brunswick is in the early stages of an election campaign as I write this report. Election day is on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

An issue important to farmers in New Brunswick has been the 15,000 acre give-away of choice Crown woodland on the Acadian Peninsula to Oxford Frozen Foods of Oxford, Nova Scotia for blueberry cultivation. Wild blueberry growers in the region have been consistently denied access to these lands to expand their production. Construction of a processing plant is supposed to be part of the deal. This is a real slap in the face to New Brunswick farmers on the Peninsula.

### Regional Conventions

The Region 1 Convention was held in Florenceville, New Brunswick on Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>.

Marcella Pedersen, NFU Women's Vice President attended and spoke to the convention delegates, as well as Robert Gareau from Quebec Parmentier, a group of potato growers working together to market seed and tablestock potatoes.

Reg Phelan has been elected to the National Board. Marion Drummond was elected to the Women's Advisory position. Farrah Carter was elected to the Youth Advisory position. Eva Rehak was elected to the IPC position. There remains one vacant National Board position at this time.

*In Union, Randall Affleck*



## REGION THREE (Ontario)

NFU-O



- by Karen Eatwell

Since our provincial election on June 12, Minister Jeff Leal has assumed responsibility for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. On July 10, we attended a stakeholder meeting in Guelph, Ontario that he sponsored. The meeting brought together members from all provincial farm and commodity groups and provided an opportunity for each group to voice their key concerns and bring forward the issues important to them. Minister Leal and his staff used the information collected to then prepare for the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Agriculture Ministers meeting held in Winnipeg the following week.

Because agriculture is about more than just one voice, it is important that our elected officials continue to hear from all farm groups, representing all commodities and scales.

### Neonicotinoid Pesticides

The issue of bee and pollinator health is a key concern for many, whether a beekeeper or not.

In July, we accompanied representatives from the Ontario Beekeepers Association to two meetings in Queen's Park. The first was with staff from the Premier's office, which allowed each of us to begin a dialogue with new staff in the Premier's office party and to express our key concerns. We are not yet clear about how the government will address the concerns of beekeepers. If changes to existing policies or regulations are made, the timing of those changes will be the most important issue.

The following week we met again, this time in the Ag Minister's office. At this meeting, NFU-O

and OBA representatives talked more specifically about the importance and urgency of the neonic issue and the effects of widespread use of seeds treated with neonicotinoids on the bee industry and all pollinators. We are now waiting to hear how OMAFRA will use data from its research trials to support necessary regulatory changes, as well as how they will be implemented. The NFU-O continues to keep on top of the neonic issue within our province and shall provide updates as we receive them.

The NFU-O has been a key partner to the Ontario Beekeepers Association, with both organizations agreeing that a balanced and reasonable approach will work for beekeepers and for farmers. The other general farm organizations have not said much. Neither the OFA or CFFO have made any statements about addressing the issue in ways that would allow both beekeeper and grain farmer to continue their farming practices alongside each other.

### Local Activities

Over the summer months, some Ontario Locals gathered for picnics and barbeques just for social purposes. What a way to spend a summer's day – food and engaging conversations among NFU members! Such social events are also a great way to introduce potential new members to the National Farmers Union.

### Membership

We are happy to report that Ontario membership numbers continue to rise as a result of our accreditation, which returned our wrongly removed eligibility for stable funding through the Provincial Farm Business Registration program.

As 2014 has been a positive comeback for us, the members of Regional Council will use the last quarter of 2014 to continue to refine our membership recruitment strategies for 2015.

*In Union, Karen Eatwell*



## FIVE (Manitoba)

REGION



- by Ian Robson

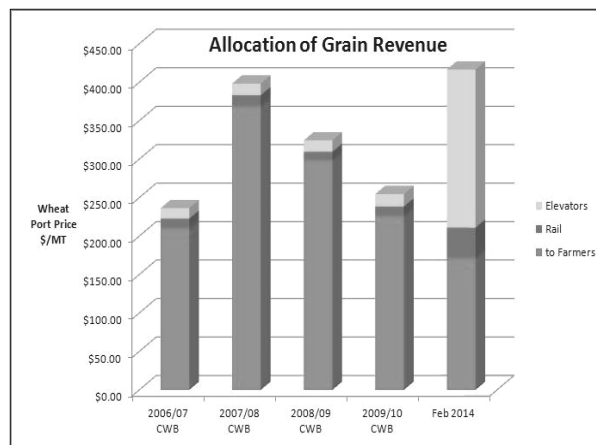
At the Region 5 Convention in Onanole on July 12, members discussed a variety of issues: flood and drought, effects of lost marketing structures, changes in plant breeding research, licensing and bonding of grain elevators, and excessive elevator basis in crop markets. While flooded farmers may be 'happy' to learn that a large multinational grain company donated \$20,000 to the Red Cross Canada for flood relief, they will be less happy to discover that the donation is equivalent to the basis collected (assumed for this example to be \$2.50/bu) for just 8,000 bushels of wheat – two railcar loads. When closely examined, the elevator company's donation is just a PR exercise that falls flat on its face. Region 5 has appealed to the government for emergency assistance programs like those in place for the flooding in 2011.

NFU President Jan Slomp addressed the Region 5 Convention, stressing the need for farmers to join the NFU to bargain for their own interests, not those of "the industry". For example, the loss of public plant breeding and marketing structures due to government policies is costing farmers more than country of origin labelling does. Moreover, the payback to farmers and consumers from government-funded Canadian crop research is very high as research by Agricultural Economist Richard Gray shows.

Slomp also talked about farmers' opposition to Canada's adoption of UPOV '91 as proposed in Bill C-18 because the benefits of research, in the form of royalties on seed or end product, will go to corporations, thus removing yet another source of funding for public-interest plant breeding. As governments cut back on investment in public-interest crop research, such research will be paid for by farmers through various commodity check-offs and levies. He mentioned that in many cases, local food systems and farmers' markets represent strong

alternatives to the industrial scale food model. Farmer-friendly market structures will help to meet consumer demands for safe, healthy food.

Ken Larsen of the Canadian Wheat Board Alliance ([www.cwbafacts.ca](http://www.cwbafacts.ca)) spoke by way of Skype about the excessive elevator profits taken from farmers these two past seasons. Under the former CWB, farmers and local Prairie businesses received 85% to 95% of grain prices at port (shown in graph below). Now, however, elevators return to farmers 40% of the port grain price. As well, elevators – not farmers – will obtain the benefit from a successful level of service complaint against railways because the elevators are deemed to be shippers and farmers are not. Price transparency in this private grain market is much lower than with the former CWB. The losses are adding up quickly: \$20 to \$50 per acre in grain prices due to basis deductions; captive supply and unequal access to delivery; loss of pricing transparency and market knowledge for which we now must pay extra; mounting debt in the face of rising interest costs.



Before the end of the CWB, grain handlers were regulated service providers like the railways still are, and were restricted by law as to how much money they could charge the farmer-controlled CWB. Effectively, farmers owned grain marketed by the CWB from their farm to the end use customer. Now grain handlers own the grain from the time the farmer dumps it at the elevator. Those handlers are free to make as much money as they want from the grain and pay the farmers as little they can get away with.

*Source:* Canadian Wheat Board Alliance. Available online at <http://www.cwbafacts.ca/2014/07/supreme-court-in-favor-of-shippers/>  
Data compiled from CWB Annual Reports.

(continued on page 19..)





## SIX (Saskatchewan)

REGION



- by Ed Sagan

**H**ello to the Saskatchewan NFU membership! This spring was not the best year for seeding; poor weather and many small showers kept us busy seeding until June 20. It has continued to be a wet year. We had 12 inches of rain in June, and to top off the month, an additional 6 inches. In the part of Saskatchewan where I farm, we had flooded basements. A foot of water meant that furnaces and water heaters had to be replaced. As well, bridges, culverts and roads were washed out. Many roads are still washed out and remain closed. Saskatchewan Water indicated that the flood was caused by my farmer friends who drained their land to waterways. Up to 40% of this year's floods in the eastern part of the province were caused by drainage. A real fun summer for us!!

By the way, after the Premier of Saskatchewan announced that our area was a total provincial disaster, all insurance companies refused to pay water-related claims due to the flooding. So much for carrying house insurance!

After all the rains, the crops are late, but they look great! Wheat prices in Melville are still at \$4.75/bu and \$11.75 at Vancouver ports. Guess who is making an additional 7 bucks a bushel? So much for open market grains!

In our area, at least three big corporate farms of 40,000 acres have gone under. So much for corporate farms!

The Region 6 (Saskatchewan) Annual Convention was held July 9th and 10th at St. Michael's Retreat in Lumsden and was a great success, with about 30 people attending. We attracted some excellent speakers to our convention. On Wednesday night, Ken Larsen spoke about grain transportation post-CWB.

Thursday's speakers were Glenn Tait, Board member of the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, and Cam Goff, Chair of the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission. After lunch, President Jan Slomp presented a summary of the NFU's work over the last year and an update on where new federal government policies are at. Terry Boehm spoke in detail about the progress of Bill C-18. Edward Sagan, Matt Gehl and Ed Pedersen were elected to the National Board.

Farmers are starting to swathe winter wheat (week of August 18); hay and alfalfa are nearly done.

Once again, I invite you to do your best to invite two friends or neighbours to join the National Farmers Union. We certainly will not turn anyone away.

*In Union, Ed Sagan*



*Photo: NFU members attend the ACWW Canada Area conference held in Camrose, Alberta in June. (left to right) Ruth Veiner, Marcella Pedersen, Lylas Lysine, Joan Brady, Donna Freadrich (Kathleen Charpentier not pictured).*

*The women contributed to the convention through participation in table discussions, business sessions and reporting on NFU activities.*



## REGION

## SEVEN (Alberta)



- by Blake Hall

We held our Regional Convention in Springbrook on Saturday, June 7. With about 40 attendees, it was a positive meeting with good representation from across the region, as well from various demographics.

The morning featured an in-depth look at grain transportation bottlenecks and solutions by regional members Ken Larsen of Eckville, Alberta and Ken Eshpeter, a representative of the Battle River Railway, Alberta's only farmer-owned short line railway. We were also pleased to welcome Glenn Tait from Region 6 (Saskatchewan) to add some trans-prairie perspective on the challenges facing Canadian grain farmers and the various organizations working for and against Canadian farmers.

The convention was also pleased to welcome the leader of the local chapter of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Jem Mathieson, who gave a presentation about the Foundation and Dr. Price's 1930's publication "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration". The Ohio-based doctor travelled the world when people who had been surviving and thriving on traditional diets were being introduced to diets of refined carbohydrates. His work looks at the effects of this dietary shift on dental and skeletal structure, as well as mental health and fertility. Jem offered an enlightening perspective on food and our roles as farmers in producing food that makes people healthy rather than sick. She stirred the pot a bit and a lively debate took place during the following Q & A period.

It was interesting to hear how the language about food in town is changing from a focus on cheap food to one on quality. As a direct marketer myself, I hear this every week from my customers,

but almost never from the policymakers who focus on food as a commodity.

Before our President addressed the assembly, we had a presentation from another regional member, Dana Penrice, on the Young Agrarians (YA) and their role in "growing the next generation of farmers". At the NFU Youth Retreat in March, strong ties were established between the BC-based organization and the NFU Youth caucus. Since then, Dana has become point person for Young Agrarians in Region 7, and was instrumental in Alberta hosting its first Young Agrarians event in April of this year.

The Young Agrarians have been hosting events for young and elder agrarians alike across British Columbia for the last couple of years, and in so doing, have established vital networks for farmers in that region. These networks are built around community potlucks and knowledge exchanges. With more frequent annual events added to major traffic on their website, Young Agrarians is proving to be an important voice for farmers in BC and is poised to do so nationwide. YA is not an advocacy group and can do no policy work, so it is a natural ally with NFU grassroots, advocacy-based social movement.

We are pleased to have re-elected Doug Scott as National Board member for another year. Thank you for your continued service. There remains one vacant Board position.

What was also pleasing was the increasing number of young producers at this year's regional convention. It looks like the NFU in Alberta may see increased membership in the coming years as we continue to be one of the few groups tackling barriers to entry into agriculture for young producers and wannabes alike. Keep up the good work everyone!

*In Solidarity, Blake Hall*



# PEI Land Use Policy, Legislation and Regulation

British Columbia is not the only Canadian province re-examining its agricultural land use policy, legislation and regulation. Prince Edward Island completed an extensive consultation process about the subject, resulting in a report to government tabled in January 2013. The government has endorsed the general directions of the report and continues to review in detail the recommendations put forward.

PEI members of the NFU submitted comments to the Task Force on Land Use Policy (available online at <http://www.nfu.ca/sites/www.nfu.ca/files/13-06-26%20Submission-Land%20Use.pdf>). What follows is a summary of key points and recommendations contained in that document.

The second and third paragraphs of the Introduction provide an overview of the ideological roots of both NFU policy and the recommendations offered in the reports.

“We are convinced that the attitude/ideology of those who own and control the land is intimately related to how the land is used. Similarly the attitude/ideology of those who develop and implement policies, whether government departments or municipal planning authorities, is

intimately related to how those policies play out. Sustainable development means different things to different sectors. We cannot assume that all policy-makers use the same “sustainable development” lens from which to form and implement policy.

We cannot assume that farmers all agree on the meaning of sustainable development. This is seen in our varied concepts of land ownership, land use, the role of the market, and the kinds of public policies we demand of governments.”

PEI members spelled out a number of areas in which the work of the Task Force and NFU policy converge, such as:

- the interest in preserving rural communities, their landscapes and their productive capacities;
- efforts to protect our more delicate land and water formations, and our coastal communities; and
- the respectful and peaceful co-existence of rural and urban (or municipal) communities despite different and diverse interests, purposes and cultural roots.

*(continued on page 17...)*

## Selected NFU Policies Regarding Land and Land Use

We believe provincial governments should enact legislation restricting agricultural land ownership to actual farmers to ensure that agricultural resources remain in control of agricultural producers. *(Land Policy G-1 #4)*

We believe that those people who work the land should have control over the management of their food production unit. We view with alarm the encroachment of industrial corporations into the business of primary food production through direct ownership, vertical integration and contract farming. *(Land Policy G-1 #5)*

We need to develop a sense of stewardship in the concept that we never really own land; we use it carefully while we hold it in trust for those who must use it after us. *(Land Policy G-7 #16)*

...provincial and federal governments should adopt and expand the Land Bank concept with an appeal procedure and no-purchase option and provide the necessary funding so the concept and principles of land without capital may be provided to those “who will till the soil”. *(Land policy G-6 #11)*

The National Farmers Union strives for a system of food production, processing and distribution that is, in all stages economically viable, socially just, and ecologically sound. The current system does not meet these criteria and, thus, is not sustainable. *(Sustainable Agriculture Policy G-10 Preamble)*



# Preparing for Success: NFU Brand Development Project



*A progress report from the Brand Development Working Group*

—by Dean Harder, Co-chair

From time to time, successful organizations examine how they project themselves to others and how others perceive them. This activity is essential to ensure their continued viability and relevance in a rapidly changing world. To that end, the Brand Development Working Group (BDWG), appointed by the Executive, has been meeting regularly via teleconference to fulfill its mandate of developing a brand – a “look and feel” – that makes an impression and is relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This could mean changes to our logo, colours and tagline that could be quite minor or very different from what we now have.

What the BDWG cannot and will not do is rewrite or erase our history - the NFU’s strong collective roots. The group does not exist to propose changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. Its work is aesthetic. The goal is to have an NFU logo and tagline that projects our unique vision for farming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and points out the relevance of our analysis, policy recommendations and actions to new generations in this world.

The Board will approve decision-making about the logo and tagline based on the Executive’s recommendation before it is brought to Convention.

## **About the survey**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our survey. We had over 180 responses, most of which were submitted online. The responses represented the NFU’s geographic and demographic diversity and have provided valuable information to guide the BDWG’s work. The results will also be useful as we move into the next stages of our institutional strengthening project.

In the survey, members were asked to rank 12 value statements according to which should be primary guides for the NFU’s ongoing work. Members’ top four choices affirm the work we already do, such as:

- Developing and promoting sound farm policies and legislation.
- Ensuring family farms are the primary unit of food production.
- Organizing farmers as an effective voice in our society.
- Working for fair food prices for farmers and safe, quality food for consumers.

Among respondents to the member survey about a new look and feel for the NFU, 6% expressed a preference to keep the logo as it is.

## **About our brand**

Thinking about brand requires deep consideration of questions such as “*How* do we want to be thought of?” and “*What* do we want to be known for?” Clear answers to these questions will lead us toward a look and feel that will help to improve our brand equity – the perceived value of what the NFU has to offer. The member survey was designed to collect that information.

### **At a minimum, a brand is:**

- a. the combination of the tangible and intangible characteristics that make an organization unique.
- b. less about what the **organization** says it is and much more about what the **audience** says it is.



**Branding is also:**

- a. a promise to the organization's audience (in the NFU's case, membership, farmers, policymakers, concerned citizens);
- b. an indicator of what the audience can expect; and
- c. about the way it makes that audience feel.

**Why a branding review now?**

Our brand has implications for our success into the future. A review right now is timely for many reasons, such as:

1. The NFU needs to attract more members to be more effective.
2. The NFU brand must stand out and show its relevance to attract the interest of new members because there is a great deal of competition for attention, whether that of farmers or policy-makers.
3. The NFU "brand" must be perceived as relevant with a legitimate voice.
4. Corporations use the media to project images and text designed to persuade viewers to their perspectives and the NFU is competing for farmers' attention in those media spaces – another reason our 'brand' must be unique and recognizable if we want to gain sway.
5. A modern visual presentation in keeping with 'culture' of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the first step on a path to reaching out and connecting with new generations of potential members.
6. Members also need better tools and supports to reach out to new and potential members who are more likely to see NFU event posters or brochures, visit the website or follow our social media before meeting a member in person. A compelling, consistent look and feel will ensure that the NFU is recognizable no matter where our brand is present.
7. Finally, a strong brand can increase potential funding opportunities. When an organization's visual presentation reflects its values and actions (brand equity), members, project funders and donors are all attracted.

As well, we have received two years of funding from Inter Pares for activities to strengthen our organizational capacity. This work is a sub-project of a larger initiative to improve our communications, membership recruitment and fundraising skill sets along with developing supporting materials and actions.

**Our Progress**

As noted above, the member survey has been completed and the information compiled and analyzed. The BDWG will use member perspectives to inform the brand development process, as well as share it with the Board.

The BDWG has contracted Dana Penrice, an NFU Youth member from Alberta, to be the part-time coordinator for its work as well as the subsequent phases of the institutional strengthening project. Kelly Hunt, graphic designer, has been contracted to work with us in creating options for logos and colour palettes. The BDWG also used "99designs.com" to help define the 'edges' of appropriate colours, styles and icons for an NFU logo based on survey results.

Again using data from the member survey, we are exploring possibilities for a new tagline to go with the logo. If you have a suggestion containing seven words or less that you think will resonate well with members, please contact Dana Penrice: [dpenrice@ualberta.ca](mailto:dpenrice@ualberta.ca). In the past, the NFU has used "In Union is Strength" and "Food, Farmers, Community".

We will begin work on brochures, letterhead and other promotional material once the logo is finalized.

Consider for a moment being pleasantly surprised with what the BDWG comes up with. Consider the impact it could make on the future of the NFU.

—nfu—

**The Brand Development Working Group is:**

*Alex Fletcher (co-chair), Dean Harder (co-chair), Joan Brady, Karen Eatwell, Edith Ling, Marcella Pedersen, [staff: Carla Roppel and Sarah Bakker]*



# The Convergence 2014: Patterns

-by Dan Kretchsmar, Region 3 (Ontario)

**I**n July, I attended *The Convergence 2014*, a permaculture conference in Frelighsburg, Quebec. How does a farmer have time to go to a conference in the heart of summer? I decided as soon as I saw it that it was an essential learning and networking experience that I did not want to let pass by unnoticed.

I drove about 666 km to the host farm, ONAKA, in the rolling foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Picture a large rolling hay field with a single tree at the top of a hill and a beautiful restored barn; with Montreal almost visible to the west and Vermont less than a kilometre away. With one farmer's field on the Canadian side, and another's on the American side, I wondered if these invisible borders are needed when the movement of consumer goods is less restricted than the movement of people.

Around 600 diverse people (farmers, foodies, scientists, permaculturalists, alternative thinkers and more) converged for the event. Experts shared their knowledge and we had many in-depth discussions about sustainable living, renewable energies, positive economies, collaborative practices, agriculture, permaculture and local resilience.

The experience was almost like going to a different country! The French-Canadian culture is alive and well, which made clear to me that at least in Ontario, we have lost much of our rural



*Photo: Jean-Martin Fortier demonstrates the use of a wheel-hoe. (photo courtesy of Dan Kretchsmar)*

## Solutions are in nature

The Convergence is a 3-day intensive solution-sharing event geared to improve and offer solutions that will enhance our quality of life, increase solidarity and our respect for the earth. Passionate permaculture experts from around the globe come to share solutions on sustainable living, renewable energies, positive economies, collaborative practices and local resilience, with the hopes that you will leave inspired, unified and full of amazing tools for change.

Source: <http://convergencepermaculture.org/en/>

culture and conviviality. I believe this is one reason for the decline in the family farm. Our response to this decline should be obvious; these participants, and many more around the world, are beginning to diverge from current social norms. We want to work together to build a radically new and awakened society.

Having read Jean Martin Fortier's book, *The Market Gardener: A Successful Grower's Handbook for Small-Scale Organic Farming*, I took advantage of the opportunity to tour his 1.5 acre intensive organic farm. I had been slightly skeptical whether he put everything he wrote into practice on his farm, but those reservations vanished as soon as I started walking down the driveway. Wow! Everything he wrote about was there. I left Quebec that weekend thinking about moving there to farm - a nice dream.

When I returned to my family farm, I shared the inspiration and sense of unity I felt with a growing group of people, along with some amazing ideas and tools for change. The wheels of change are already turning; we know what needs to be done to see the change we want. All we need to be concerned about is the direction those wheels are turning.

As we face future challenges, I think that we need as much tradition, culture and intermixing of different farming philosophies and methods possible to achieve a future we can be proud to live in. A philosophy of "Earth care, people share, fair share" will give us an ethical society and embody a new culture to be proud of. —nfu—



# BC legislation protecting farmland weakened

## Resolution from NFU National Convention (2013):

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU publicly acknowledge the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a model that should be replicated across Canada and maintained and strengthened in BC.

The NFU has been following BC government activities regarding amendments to Bill 24, the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA), and the associated consultation to which the NFU submitted a brief.

In May, however, Bill 24 was passed. A new consultation process about potential changes to the regulations associated with the ALCA was opened. Once again, the NFU submitted a brief. This article condenses key points from those briefs (available online at <http://www.nfu.ca/policy/2014>). Bullet points followed by an asterisk (\*) indicate that the complete brief contains supporting graphs or other illustrations.<sup>1</sup>

- BC has maintained a steady number of farms and nearly three-quarters of BC's farms are less than 130 acres. Canada, by contrast, has lost about one-third of its farms since BC's ALR was implemented.\*
- BC's agricultural lands are diverse, and its farming heritage and culture rich and vibrant. By protecting BC farmland and prioritizing its use for agriculture, and ensuring access to affordable land, interested BC residents will be able to make farming their life's work, and grow healthy nutritious food sustainably.
- There was no comprehensive and inclusive public consultation process about the regulations, nor were farmers at the forefront, as they should be, of discussions about legislation and regulation of farmland.

- The consultation period about regulatory changes was very short and took place during the summer when farmers' workloads are heaviest.
- The "agree-disagree" scale used in the consultation document could be confusing to some respondents, who might consider the *idea* behind the examples given instead of the regulatory *mechanism* that is the subject of the consultation.

## **Changes to the Agricultural Land Commission Act**

- Established and defined six geographic areas called "Panel Regions": Interior, Island, Kootenay, North, Okanagan, and South Coast.
- Established Zones: Zone 1 includes the Island, Okanagan and South Coast Panel Regions. Zone 2 includes the Interior, Kootenay and North Panel Regions.
- Established and defined the form of six Panels: Each panel with at least two members including the Vice Chair from the Panel Region plus all other members of the Commission residing in the Panel Region.
- Added consideration of "economic, cultural and social values; regional and community planning objectives; and other prescribed considerations" (which may conflict with the Commission's existing purposes\*) when making decisions about Zone 2 lands.
- Authorized the Lieutenant Governor in Council (Cabinet) to make new regulations that add other factors that Panels must consider when making decisions regarding lands in Zone 2.

\*See the complete brief for more about the Commission's purpose.

<sup>1</sup> Readers are encouraged to read the complete brief for further details about the highlights provided in this article. The complete brief should be considered the authoritative source should there be a difference in interpretation between the text of the brief and this article.

(continued on page 14...)



- The consultation does not address all of the regulatory changes enabled by Bill 24. Further regulatory changes must allow for thorough, meaningful public consultations (e.g. those affecting additional “other considerations” for Zone 2 decisions, transparency regarding Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) operations and decisions, and residency requirements for commissioners on regional panels).
- When the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) was set up in 1973, it expressed BC’s identity as a province that cared for its land and people, protecting its limited and valuable farmland from urban and industrial encroachment. BC was visionary in this regard, and the ALR enabled BC to retain and even increase its farmland area, although Canada as a whole has seen a net decrease.\*
- While understanding of global climate change was poor four decades ago, today we are seeing its effects with erratic weather patterns and crises such as California’s severe drought. Urban developers and resource extraction industries now apply even more pressure on farmland prices. Local and global effects of climate change mean that it is even more imperative to protect existing farmland in all regions of BC.

The NFU indicated its support for retaining current regulations governing:

- allowable on-farm food storage, packing, processing and retail establishments;
- the size of lounges associated with wineries and cideries (and potentially also breweries, distilleries and meaderies); and
- prohibition of sales of alcohol not produced on the premises of wineries and cideries (and potentially breweries, distilleries and meaderies) for on-site consumption.

Property owners wanting to set up facilities outside of these parameters can apply to the appropriate ALC panel, which can then decide based on the specific circumstances, according to its mandate to protect farmland.

The NFU also supports:

- permitting breweries, distilleries and meaderies on the same or similar terms as wineries and cideries are currently allowed.
- existing subdivision regulations that require application to the ALC to subdivide Zone 2 properties into parcels of no less than a quarter section.
- existing subdivision regulations that require application to the ALC to subdivide Zone 2 properties of a defined size that are divided by a major highway or waterway.
- greater clarity about which agri-tourism activities would not require an application to the ALC. That decision process should be robust with the aim to protect farmland and farming activities. Farmers should be consulted extensively, and regulations should be sensitive to differences in local responses to the similar treatments or activities. Allowable new agri-tourism activities should be fully evaluated before further expansion of similar activities is permitted.

The NFU expressed its opposition to:

- allowing anaerobic digesters, on-farm cogeneration facilities and expanded parameters for non-agriculture related businesses on ALR properties in Zone 2 as “Permitted Uses” because the role of continued involvement of the ALC in protecting farmland used for those purposes is not assured.
- leasing of ALR properties.

The ALC should be involved in all decisions about subdividing to prevent fragmentation of Zone 2 farmland and subsequent reduced viability of farming. If there is a strong case for subdivision and leasing of a given property, the ALC should hear it and make a determination in keeping with its mandate.

—nfu—





*(PEI Land Use, from page 11)*

Members highlighted that land and farmers are interconnected and interact in ways that can be easily missed or dismissed, noting that “To us, the land is not a lifeless implement in our process of producing food for people and animals. Nor is it merely a potential source of our livelihood. The land is living. It is part of us. ... the land in [the farmer’s] blood.” Nor should land be protected as an economic driver of the Island’s economy, but as a way to produce safe healthy food for people. Land is part of a larger system that includes farming practices, and thus requires the application of a systems analysis to examine and develop policies to guide land use and maximize long-term food-growing potential. With just a few inches of topsoil, any activity that causes soil to end up in ditches and in waterways is unacceptable, uneconomical and unsustainable.

Often farmers nearing retirement can achieve a life of dignity only by selling land held near and dear. Urban encroachment and other development initiatives pressure land prices upward, which in turn excludes new young farmers or forces them to take on unmanageable debt. Land use protection, along with investments in land banking and land trusts are worthy long-term strategies to hold land for future farmers to purchase.

Regarding the role of land use in achieving greater food independence, the National Farmers Union is clear. Success is possible only if the principles and processes of food sovereignty guide the major changes to the food system needed. Greater diversity in cropping and livestock along with a rebalancing of imports and exports are essential. Concerns about protecting land for resource production were raised, especially which resources are referenced. The Task Force’s discussion document did not reference alternative energy production or the need for and effects of oil and gas fracking on land use.

PEI’s submission to the Task Force on Land Use Policy recommended that the Government of Prince Edward Island:

1. Enact legislation to establish a system of land banking with the power to purchase land at a fair price from farmers wanting to retire and to make that land available to beginning farmers, preferably for leasing.
2. Develop a system whereby some form of government (federal, provincial or municipal) which would protect all PEI farmland, that could attract a better price if sold for non-farm usage, by making a one-time premium payment to the current owner with the proviso that such land be kept as farmland in perpetuity and that it would be protected from all forms of future speculation.
3. Give priority to the enhancement and/or development of sustainable mixed farming as the predominant model for PEI agriculture.
4. Establish enforceable environmental standards, including a ban on hydraulic fracturing for natural gas, in order to protect the health of the land, air, water, humans, and all other species.
5. Ban all future GMO production and reverse the negative effects of the current use of GMO seeds.
6. Enact legislation to protect heritage seeds and to promote farmers producing and saving their own seed.
7. Withdraw its support of exportation of food products and the importing of Islanders’ daily food needs, developing a sustainable “eat local” model which is based also on paying cost of production to farmers and fishers. —nfu—



# Emergency flood relief, infrastructure maintenance and climate policy essential

**I**ntense, widespread flooding in eastern Saskatchewan and western Manitoba over the Canada Day weekend caused unprecedented damage to farms, crops, farmland and rural infrastructure. The National Farmers Union (NFU) urged the federal and provincial governments to provide a stream-lined process to get emergency relief funds to all affected farmers as quickly as possible. The NFU also stated that rural municipalities require adequate funding to maintain and upgrade infrastructure to handle the more frequent and severe storms that are becoming the norm. The NFU also called on all levels of government to implement effective greenhouse gas reduction policies to prevent the acceleration of climatic instability.

Ian Robson, Region 5 (Manitoba) Coordinator said, “In Manitoba, we know about and expect spring flooding, but now we are also getting flooded by huge rainstorms that last for days. It’s like an inland hurricane. Community members always help each other when disaster strikes – that’s a strong Canadian value we can be proud of. But we also need action from all levels of government to deal with consequences of destabilized weather patterns.”

NFU Board member Bev Stow, of Carman, Manitoba, added, “After a cold, wet spring with late seeding, many farmers face drowned pastures and hayfields that are too muddy to harvest. Without timely help, this situation may lead cow-calf producers to sell off, further reducing regional cattle herds.”

Saskatchewan has also been affected. “Disaster relief funds need to flow quickly so that individual farmers and rural municipalities do not have to wonder when – or if – they will be able to pay their bills,” said Melville-area farmer, Ed Sagan, NFU Region 6 (Saskatchewan) Coordinator, who was himself flooded by a 12-inch rain at the end of an already wet June.

“Farmers are doing their part to innovate and adapt to less predictable weather – by making silage instead of dry hay, for example,” said Robson. “Each province can help farmers cooperate by providing and promoting online tools to help connect producers with pasture or hay to those who need grazing and feed. Manitoba’s feed transportation assistance program has worked well for farmers, and we’d like to see it continue too.”

Robson also supports Manitoba’s new regulations that protect natural wetlands as water storage for flood and drought protection. Sagan would like Saskatchewan to bring in – and enforce – similar rules.

“Saskatchewan has been turning a blind eye to farmers’ illegal ditching for too long,” added Sagan. “Thousands of sloughs have been drained to create nice square fields that are easy to work. Without those sloughs, all the water dropped by these big storms makes downstream floods more frequent and much worse.”

“We need to deal with today’s emergencies and Canada’s long range climate policy, but we also have some medium-term work to do,” said Regina-area farmer and NFU Board member Matt Gehl. “After years of under-funding infrastructure maintenance, a lot of roads, culverts, and bridges will need to be rebuilt soon, even in areas that have not experienced devastating floods. Let’s make sure that RMs can rebuild to one-in-500-year storm standards. With global CO<sub>2</sub> levels at 400 parts per million and rising, the past can no longer be a guide to the future when it comes to the water cycle.” —nfu—

—This article is adapted from a July 2014 NFU media release.



**Region 5 Report:** *(continued from page 8)*

Region 5 NFU elected Beverly Stow of Carman and Ian Robson of Deleau to the National Board. Former Women's Advisory representative, Kate Storey of Grandview, has retired and the position is now filled by Lois Robson of Deleau. We would like to thank Kate for her past work as Women's Advisor. Youth Advisory representative, Dean Harder of Winnipeg, has also retired and we are seeking a youth member to fill the position. We are also seeking an elected representative to the International Program Committee. If you are interested in any of these positions or can suggest someone whom we might approach, please call me

at 204-858-2479. Dean, however, will continue his work with the Brand Development Working Group, which invites your interest in creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century 'look and feel' for the NFU.

Remember that our National Annual Convention will be at the Hilton Garden Inn in Saskatoon, November 27 to 29, 2014 on the theme, "Claiming our Livelihoods". Please plan to attend to learn, debate, vote and visit about the critical issues we face with NFU members and supporters from across Canada.

*In Solidarity, Ian Robson*

## The Paul Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing

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

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

- There will be two age categories – 15 years and under, and 16 years to 21 years. An award in the amount of \$500 will be awarded to one essay in each age category for a non-fiction letter or essay 500-1000 words in length.
- This year's theme is: ***The Importance of Seed to Small Farms.***
- Deadline for entries is October 15, 2014.
- The prizes of \$500.00 will be awarded at the NFU Convention in November 2014.
- All or some entries may be published by the National Farmers Union.

### **Send entries to the National Farmers Union:**

**By email: [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto: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.*



# Neonicotinoids:

## *Ontario government acts on NFU recommendations*

*Since their 2001 approval in Canada, neonicotinoid seed treatments are used on almost 100 per cent of Ontario's corn and canola acres, 80 per cent of Ontario soybean acres and 35 per cent of Ontario wheat acres. In total, more than 50 per cent of all Ontario cropland is being seeded with neonicotinoid-treated seed.*

Since 2012, NFU members have been raising concerns about the effects of neonicotinoids on the health of bees and other pollinators. After observing bee mortalities in their own communities, NFU members from Ontario successfully worked through the NFU democratic structure to have the following resolution approved at the National Annual Convention (November 28 – 30, 2013):

*Therefore be it resolved that the NFU will lobby the federal Health Canada for an immediate five-year moratorium on the use of the neonicotinoid class of pesticides in seed treatments for field crops;*

*Be it further resolved that the NFU calls upon Health Canada to require completion of independent scientific studies, unencumbered by industry influence, on the sub-lethal and synergistic effects of neonicotinoids on honeybees, wild pollinators and other affected species, including the farmers who use them, with full results to be made public and available for review and comment prior to the lifting of any moratorium on the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments.*

Facing the challenge of accessing untreated corn seed, NFU members passed the following resolution from Lambton County at the Region 3 (Ontario) Convention (March 2, 2013):

*Therefore be it resolved that the NFU-Ontario request that OMAFRA .... institute requirements that 80% of seed corn be available as untreated seed.*

Together with existing NFU policy calling for increased support for sustainable agricultural practices and publicly funded, public-interest research, the resolutions noted above comprise the NFU's position and recommendations regarding the use of neonicotinoids as seed treatments in field crops in Canada.

To that end, the NFU submitted comments in response to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) proposed Action to Protect Bees from Exposure to Neonicotinoid Pesticides in December 2013. More recently, the NFU sent a letter to Health Minister, Hon. Rona Ambrose, asking her to work with the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec to undertake immediately a number of steps that would lay the groundwork for a full moratorium on the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments on field crops in Canada. All associated materials are available on our website at <http://www.nfu.ca/search/node/neonicotinoids>.

Not surprisingly, the NFU's letter to the federal government received a cold shoulder. The reception of a similar letter by the Ontario government, however, was much warmer. In fact, Region 3/NFU-O members recently applauded an announcement by the Hon. Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, that Ontario intends to bring in measures to move away from the widespread, prophylactic use of neonicotinoid-based pesticides in agriculture. The first step in the plan is to introduce a licensing system by the spring 2015 season to use seed treated with neonicotinoids. Farmers and other commercial

*(continued on page 21...)*





*Everyone who has ever grown any of the many kinds and varieties of squash, cucumber or pumpkin knows, sometimes too well, their incredible productivity. But squash are not self-pollinating. They depend on bees and other pollinators to carry pollen between male and female flowers of the same species. Without bees, the alternative would be labour intensive pollination by hand.*

*(Photo courtesy of Lisa Lundgard of The Veggie Patch)*

*(Neonicotinoids, from page 20)*

growers will be required to apply for permits if they want to use neonicotinoid-treated seed. Such a process should lead to decreased use of the insecticide on Ontario's farmland.

"We are pleased to see such quick action on a key election promise," said Karen Eatwell, NFU Region 3 Coordinator/NFU-O President. "During the campaign, Premier Wynne committed to ensuring full and equitable access to non-neonicotinoid treated seed for growers, and to establishing a system that allows for targeted use of neonicotinoid seed treatments only in production areas or production circumstances where these pesticides are actually shown to be required."

"The NFU in Ontario has members who are beekeepers as well as members who farm various field crops, including conventional corn and soybeans. The effect neonicotinoids have on our environment is important to everyone," said Eatwell. "In our communication with governments, we have called for action to end the widespread prophylactic use of neonicotinoid seed treatments. We have suggested a

moratorium on the sale of treated seed while allowing for the possibility of farmers applying to have their seed treated if they can demonstrate the need for neonicotinoid seed treatment."

"The recently published international *Task Force on Systemic Pesticides* study shows clear scientific evidence of the harm caused by neonicotinoids, not only to pollinators, but other non-target species including earthworms, birds and reptiles, and to eco-systems as a whole," said Nathan Carey, NFU member from Neustadt. "The insecticide does not just affect pest species in the soil. The seed treatment is absorbed into all of the growing plants' tissues, and it is water soluble, allowing the chemical to move from fields into water bodies, where it does additional harm to our biodiversity."

"It is important to create a process that protects our environment rather than one that only protects the profits of corporations like Bayer and Syngenta that sell neonicotinoids," concluded Eatwell.

—nfu—

# Seed sovereignty in La Via Campesina



When La Via Campesina (LVC) first articulated the principles of food sovereignty in 1994, it offered a radical departure from food security, the analytical framework within which food-related issues were discussed at the time. According to the World Health Organization, food security is secured “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”.

What food security failed to acknowledge, however, was the intimate connection between the consumption of food and its production. By expanding food security to include food production and producers under the umbrella of food sovereignty, LVC provided a framework to allow people involved throughout the food system - farmers, fishers and hunters, urban consumers, aboriginal peoples, civil society organizations and governments – to talk about the policies and infrastructure needed to build a better food system.

At the centre of every food-related activity is a seed, whether as food for people or feed for animals. Control of seed, therefore, is essential to ensuring the achievement of food sovereignty. Attaining that control is increasingly difficult these days as governments enact policies and agreements that give corporations more rights and power than citizens. The bottom line is that there is no option - this direction must be reversed. Only we, as citizens living in Canada or in any of the countries where there are LVC members, can take actions to reclaim food and seed for ourselves.

In recognition of the primacy of seed, LVC has added seed sovereignty to its framework to reclaim and rebuild a people-centred food system. As thought of by LVC, seed sovereignty is about giving care and control of seeds back to the people who work the land to produce food, without them claiming ownership of those seeds. Community members who still possess traditional knowledge about selecting, preserving and multiplying local varieties must work alongside rural and urban

supporters, taking actions to support seed sovereignty and ensure that people – not corporations – will control our food system.

To launch the seed sovereignty movement, LVC is asking its member organizations on all continents to take part in a collective action that will:

1. Protect, showcase, celebrate and educate about native, heirloom, open-pollinated, peasant and free seeds and plant varieties through collective and empowering practices such as swaps in houses, on farms and at festivals all focused on seeds.
  2. Document the qualities, cultivation method and history of native and local seeds to increase public awareness of and demand for local seeds and food.
  3. Produce in mass, multiply and disseminate locally adapted varieties to give to farmers, gardeners and artisans.
  4. Break the dependency cycle and reduce expenses related to reliance on industrial seeds.
  5. Reclaim identities, cultures and culinary traditions based on local seeds and food.
  6. Reposition farmers, especially women and indigenous peoples, at the center of plant breeding through participatory breeding programs.
  7. Develop and consolidate rural-urban solidarity around seed issues.
  8. Train citizens and farmers to develop legal and regulatory expertise, because in a science-based society, "science recognition is a prerequisite to legal recognition" (ARDEAR, France).
  9. Make farming more engaging by rebuilding relationships with farmers and the seeds, plants, soil and other natural resources needed to grow food.
- Such seed-centred experiences will make a strong political statement and contribute on a daily basis to resistance against a seed, farming and food system controlled by corporations. Seed sovereignty offers hope for today and the future, as life's powerful diversity, beauty and history is cherished and passed on from farmer to farmer and elder to youth in rural and urban communities.

*"We have to take steps toward the past in order to move forward and to grow freely with an autonomous, healthy and nutritious food supply."*  
(CLOC-Via Campesina)



*We Remember ...***RICHARD GRIEBEL****June 9, 1951 - May 16, 2014**

Who has seen the wind? A small boy born into the full grace of nature on June 9, 1951, with a heart of bird song and a mind open to adventure.

Richard spent his youth exploring the world, its people, their cultures and ideas, coming to rest in many special places. He learned all lands are sacred, especially the grasslands around his Castor home.

His life was filled with energy and dreams. When he met Kathleen Charpentier his dreams soared higher than Richard imagined possible. Together they began a journey, challenging each phase of life with passion and ideals. They touched many lives, challenged the limitations of this world and changed what was possible. This conviction and courage was passed to their four children - Marc, Ian, Andrea and Tess.

Richard's heart was bigger than his home and created a space where everyone was welcome. The price of admission was nothing more than the open exchange of ideas, an easy laugh, or the willingness to share a drink by the woodstove.

An inveterate storyteller, Richard made us all legends in our own time. The greatest legend was Richard's quest for the truth in himself and the rapidly changing world around him. This quest was driven by his passion to be a caretaker of a world where land and animals were sacred and he a provider of food, nurturing children and filling people with health and respect.

Richard's story will continue in the loving memory of his surviving sisters and brothers, Jim, Robert, Margaret, Philip, Elizabeth, and Rosemary; their life partners, Kathy Griebel, Sandy Estertbrook, Lorraine Bryan, Lydden Polley, and Richard Harvey; his wife, Kathleen, his children Marc, Ian, Andrea, and Tess; their spouses, Dana Blume, and Andrew Nikoniak; and his granddaughter, Eliana. His life was also filled with the love of his extended family and a global community of friends.

To honour Richard's dream that we nourish our children and create a world in which they grow healthy and strong, he requested donations be made to the Weston A. Price Foundation ([www.westonaprice.org](http://www.westonaprice.org)). The Foundation is dedicated to restoring nutrient dense foods to our diet through education, research and activism, and is united in the belief that modern technology should be harnessed as a servant to the wise and nurturing traditions of our ancestors.

**LAURA ELAINE JOHNSON (ASELTINE)****October 23, 1925 - July 14, 2014**

Elaine graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1946 with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Psychology. She married Merv Johnson of Beadle, SK on October 5, 1946, and lived on a farm there.

During that time, Elaine served on the Regional Library Board, Co-op Board, Co-op Women's Guild, and was Women's President of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union (1964-65). In 1982, while living in London, England, she was President of the Canadian Women's Club.

Elaine lived in Victoria since 1983 where she canvassed for various charitable organizations, and was a member of the Uplands Golf Club and Saanich Probus Club.

Elaine is survived by four children - Merlayna, Morley (Debra), Gordon (Sheila), and Janice (Will); grandchildren - Laura (Chris), Sandi, Gavin (Lindsay), Tekla (Derrick), Bart (Reia), Helaina, Zena, Clare, Stuart, Sally and Jill; great grandchildren - Allie, Jorja, Vivianne, Daxton, and Halee; brother Morley, sister Adele (Fred), and sister-in-law Doris AseLINE.



## NFU BOARD MEMBERS & OFFICES

### Regional/National Offices:

Region 1: Tax: 559 Route 390, Rowena, NB E7H 4N2 Ph: (506) 273-4328

Financial Services: 120 Bishop Dr., Summerside, PEI C1N 5Z8 Ph: (902) 436-1872

Region 3: 3127 County Rd. 36S, Bobcaygeon, ON KOM 1A0 Ph: in ON 1-888-832-9638 / Ph: outside ON (705)738-3993

National: 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 Ph: (306) 652-9465

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# NFU 45th Annual Convention

## November 27<sup>th</sup> to November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014

### Hilton Garden Inn Saskatoon Downtown

90- 22<sup>nd</sup> Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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