



National Farmers Union  
Union Nationale des Fermiers



# union farmer

Quarterly

Summer 2015 / Vol. 21 Issue 2



**Cover Photo:**

*NFU Youth discuss strategies for growing the new farmer movement in Canada. (left to right): Adam MacLean, Dana Penrice, Virginie Lavallée-Picard, Katie Ward Chiasson, Jordan MacPhee, Alexander Fletcher and Ayla Fenton.*

*(photo by Dean Harder)*

Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms.

# Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

I hope this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* will leave everyone with hope about both the importance and relevance of the NFU today and our ability to change farm, food and environmental policies. Yes, the reports highlight the loss of farmer income and autonomy as a result of decisions made by and actions taken by our various governments. However, at the same time the reports highlight the interest from across the country in our *Losing Our Grip* report, the willingness of the Senate agriculture committee to hear from the NFU in their studies of agricultural issues, the potential to bring our perspective to a new government in Alberta and the adoption of a regulation to reduce the use of neonicotinoid treated seed in Ontario that is similar to our own policy on treated seeds.

In pulling together articles for this issue of the *Quarterly*, it was certainly hard to miss the very active and hardworking NFU youth. From visits with opposition MPs to work with other civil society organizations on a "Growing our farm population" election campaign and a New Farmer Policy platform, the NFU youth are making themselves and their needs known. This should inspire us all.

When you are out talking with other farmers this summer, be sure to share some of the hope found in the NFU. Those messages of hope might just inspire some new members!!

Welcome to Patty, the NFU's new General Manager. Our committee looks forward to working with you in the future. And a big thank you to Joan Lange for guiding us through the production of the *Quarterly*, and to Kate Storey for the editing help.

*Ann Slater, on behalf of  
the Editorial Advisory Committee*

## Thank you dear NFU Members,

Last fall the NFU Board faced a dire financial situation. The gradual decline in membership elsewhere and the temporary loss of accreditation in Region 3 led to severe deficits despite rigorous cutting of expenses. Although a dark cloud hung over the convention following the presentation of the financial report, members who were present immediately formed a fundraising committee for the duration of convention and a special appeal was made to the wider membership. Very generous donations have been received and membership is recovering in Region 3. Revenue outpaces costs again, thanks to members digging deeper into their pockets, staff taking additional frugal steps, and elected officials minimizing or externalizing their expenses.

A special NFU Strategic Membership Committee has received external funding for a membership recruitment plan and to look at additional funding sources. Details are being worked on and the plan will be launched in the fall at the NFU convention in London. Sustainable funding of the NFU will only come if we gain membership across the country, and that will only happen if we (continue) to engage farmers locally by bringing our solid analysis and solutions around the issues that really matter to farmers and our communities.

**A big thank you to all members for your generous donations  
in support of the National Farmers Union!!**

On behalf of staff and the NFU Board,  
Jan Slomp, NFU President





—by Jan Slomp

# A Message from the President

Farmer driven agricultural policy is hard to find in the current trade dominated agendas (with their notorious investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms) of the federal and provincial governments. Developing real progressive agricultural policy both provincially and federally requires a thorough exchange of ideas from the grassroots up. Democratically structured general farm organizations like the NFU need to play a crucial role in presenting ideas, solutions and farmer protection measures to fact finding missions by Senate or House of Commons Agriculture Standing Committees, as well as to provincial agriculture ministers across Canada.

Important issues remain unaddressed:

- Where is the next generation of farmers?
- Who owns our farmland?
- What portion of the costs of setting food on the table comes back to farmers?
- What is left of the institutions we erected to create fairness and equity for farmers in the marketplace and to protect our land?

Farmer input in policy making is drastically needed as industrial agriculture increasingly relies on finite resources. Farmers can play a key role in mitigating climate change.

There is a role for commodity organizations in the provincial and federal political arenas, but comprehensive policy development can only take place when general farm organizations, like the NFU, have also been consulted. Our NFU records of research, solutions and insight have a proven track record. Ontario, PEI and New Brunswick have taken the lead by creating stable funding legislation for multiple general farm organizations at a provincial level. Provincial ministers of agriculture in those provinces do include the NFU when they consult with farm organizations. When the NFU-O was re-accredited in Ontario the judge chastised the Tribunal for compromising public interest by excluding a vital farm organization like the NFU.

In Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Quebec, one general farm organization is supported through legislated membership - the Federation of Agriculture in Nova Scotia, KAP in Manitoba and UPA in Quebec. NFU members in Manitoba and Nova Scotia continue their efforts to bring democracy through stable funding for multiple farm organizations to farmers in those provinces. The NFU supports the efforts of the Union Paysanne, our Canadian La Via Campesina partner organization, in its effort to be acknowledged on equal footing as the UPA by the province of Quebec.

There is such a need for the federal government and all provinces to consult with general farm organizations like the NFU. The failure of western provinces to intervene on behalf of prairie farmers when their unique single desk was destroyed proves that point.

On June 2, 2015, the Chair of the NFU Seed and Trade committee, Terry Boehm, appeared before the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry in their *Study on international market access priorities for the Canadian agricultural and agri-food sector*. He presented an NFU brief and for a full hour answered genuinely good questions from Senators of all parties. This appearance follows NFU presentations to the same Senate committee on Bill C-18 on February 3, 2015 and on *The Importance of Bee Health to Sustainable Food Production* on May 1, 2014. These are examples of the type of consultation that needs to happen before legislation is conceived or in its final draft, rather than the use of omnibus bills like Bill C-18.

It is time for the NFU to push provinces into the direction of stable funding legislation, where it does not already exist. What better opportunity do we have than right now in Alberta, where there is a fresh government in need of clear direction. I would like to urge members in provinces that do not have stable funding for multiple general farm organizations, to write to their provincial minister of agriculture and address the need for stable funding legislation for multiple general farm organizations, for the empowerment of farmers and the communities in which they live.

*In Solidarity, Jan Slomp*







# A message from the Women's President

—by Coral Sproule

**G**reetings fellow NFU members! As I write this on June 1, we have been thankful to get some much needed rainfall over the last week where I farm in Eastern Ontario. With the rain, though, has come an upswing in our weed pressure. As most of us can attest, with the weeds, as with most tasks on our farms, it is all about the right tool for the job! Whether it is the hand tools, such as a particular hoe, a scuffle hand weeder or any number of cultivating implements for hand work, tractors or another method we have become accustomed to, we all have our favourites. As I worked away with my favourite hoes at a task I find sometimes meditative, and always satisfying, I could not help but compare this best tool for the practice metaphor to some ongoing work we are doing on our Membership Strategic Planning Committee.

Building on work and discussions in many Board meetings, conventions, and also through the Branding Development Working Group, we are attempting to put together packages and tools for our members to use which allow for the best and most efficient ways of getting our tasks done. Be it through our ongoing preparation for policy work, by delving into issues or by providing briefs, we are developing key tools and strategies for our member leaders to use at every level to strengthen our local, regional and national leadership roles. We are putting together toolkits for education and organization in a holistic manner within every aspect of our NFU work together.

A dedicated group of us from across each region of the National Farmers Union is working on these initiatives so we can better cultivate a sense of meaning, purpose and achievement within our supportive and diverse membership.

We are taking into account the many conversations and table top discussions from various forms of NFU meetings over the past years, and trying to form concrete strategies based on feedback from members. As we develop these tools further, we will try, through several avenues, to better communicate to every member, how we can all access, utilize and interact through these useful education and facilitation pieces. Accessibility of these tools will be the key to how we are able to put them into practice within our own farming communities and the broader farm policy work provincially and nationally.

It has been my pleasure to work with this committee to figure out how we can continue to strengthen ourselves in order to achieve a vast array of tangible outcomes and achievements. This is ongoing work for us, and as we go along we would be so happy to hear how these strategies are being received and utilized by members. We will shortly be getting these tools out for you to use, and we encourage any and all participation and feedback from each and every one of you.

As always, do not hesitate to be in touch with myself or any of our local, regional and national representatives in order to further our conversations and goals on this and all of our ongoing work within the National Farmers Union.

Thank you all for your ongoing work in the fields and in our communities at a grassroots level.

*Coral Sproule, Women's President*





# A message from the Youth

- Alex Fletcher, Youth President

## Youth Retreat

The Youth Retreat took place towards the end of March in Wakefield, Quebec. Over 20 participants from across the country gathered in a converted 100 year-old barn for three days of networking, learning, eating good food, and having a great time. Not only did we have more participants than in recent years, we had farmers from more provinces: BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and PEI. We were also happy to have a larger representation of francophone farmers than in previous years.

Several participants came on behalf of aligned organizations including: Union Paysanne and the Coopérative pour l'agriculture de proximité écologique in Quebec, Young Agrarians, and the National Young Farmers Coalition in the US. It is great to be collaborating with these groups to advance a common cause.

We packed a lot into three days. Meetings and presentations covered several issues including:

- A full day dedicated to new farmer policy, engagement strategy and coalition building;

- Regionally focused presentations from NB, NS, PEI and QC covering bilingualism and franco-phone oppression in NB, corporate control in PEI and NB, PEI's land protection measures and moratorium on deep well irrigation, farmer meetings in NS, and the struggle of the Union Paysanne against the monopoly over General Farmer Organizations in QC;
- The problems posed to farmers by the Canada – EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement;
- Supply Management and the Union Paysanne's recent report about reforming the system;
- A workshop on Robert's Rules of Order;
- The NFU's democratic process and current committee work;
- The International Program Committee and the NFU's involvement in La Via Campesina; and
- Climate Change and Agroecology with reports from Dan Kretschmar and Ayla Fenton who recently attended international events in Peru and Mali on behalf of the NFU.

We also co-hosted an evening mixer with Young Agrarians that attracted over 25 farmers and supporters from the region who joined us for presentations, a potluck and some party time.

Thanks to all the Youth Retreat participants for making this a great event and to the National Farmers Foundation, NFU-Ontario, and the Huron and Kingston Locals for their financial support.

Also, we are very grateful to the many generous farms and businesses that discounted or donated food and beverages for the event.

## Other Activities

For more information about NFU Youth activities, please see other articles in this edition about the NFU Youth meeting with Opposition MPs at parliament (*page 12*), the National New Farmer Coalition (*pages 15 & 16*), and the New Farmer Election Campaign (*pages 13 & 14*).

*Alex Fletcher,  
Youth President*



*Photo: NFU Youth Retreat participants from 9 provinces and 1 U.S. state, Wakefield, Quebec, March 2015.*



# Regional Reports



## Region One:

*Provinces of PEI, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia*



*District 1 (PEI)*

*- by Reg Phelan, Coordinator*

**T**his year's **Region One Convention is planned for August 11, 2015 in PEI.** National President Jan Slomp will be attending. Youth Vice President, Ayla Fenton hopes to attend as well to give a presentation on the new farmer national survey. Don Kossick, who did the NFU's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary film, will also be there. Don will be conducting interviews and visiting farms, as he shoots a film on Islanders and the land.

PEI was busy with a provincial election in May. Local groups organized panels with party leaders on various issues. At a couple of these well attended panels, all party leaders endorsed the BIG proposal of Basic Income Guarantee. If this gets put in place it would become a great boost to encourage young and beginning farmers.

There would have been a much fairer election result if our province had proportional representation, as introduced by resolution from our youth at the last NFU convention in Saskatoon. The governing party with about 40 percent of the votes got about 70 percent of the seats. They had a majority vote in only three of these seats. Two parties with 22 percent of vote got one seat. The leaders of the second and third placed parties do not have a seat. The new agriculture minister got his seat by a coin toss to break the tie (laughing). Hopefully, proportional representation is on its way.

—nfu—



*District 2 (New Brunswick)*

*- by Ted Wiggans, Board Member*

**O**n March 29, 2015 over 45 members of the NFU-NB and the general public gathered for our district annual meeting. The program included official NFU-NB business and guest speakers. Jean-Eudes Chiasson shared the history of the NFU-NB through a slide show (available online at [nfunb.org](http://nfunb.org)) and received a plaque in recognition of his seven years of service as president of NFU-NB.

On April 30, 2015, Bill 11, a Local Food Security Act, introduced by MLA David Coon was voted down in the provincial legislature by the Liberal government on second reading. The proposed legislation was an attempt to provide a legal framework to develop a local food security strategy. It contained provisions to define local food, to encourage local food procurement by provincial institutions, to determine local food capacity and to set targets for increased consumption and production of local food in New Brunswick.

NFU-NB has been campaigning for a strong local food initiative in New Brunswick for seven years. When it became apparent that the Liberal majority intended to deny passage of this bill, NFU-NB members showed their support of the proposed legislation outside and inside the legislature on the day of the second reading vote.

Our district board of directors has begun an strategic planning process for the next five years. Board members and a facilitator participated in an intensive overnight retreat in early May. The goal is to ensure that NFU-NB reflects the needs of its members and effectively addresses those needs. NB members will have the opportunity to provide input over the coming months.

—nfu—



## NFU-O/Region Three:



*Province of Ontario*

- by Karen Eatwell, Coordinator

**B**y the time you read this, the NFU-Ontario will have once again appeared before the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal as part of the re-accreditation process that occurs for all three Ontario farm organizations every three years. The regulations have been updated to try and avoid some of the difficulties that occurred in 2012, and we expect to move forward smoothly. An update will be posted at [www.nfuontario.ca](http://www.nfuontario.ca) when it becomes available.

On June 9, 2015 the Ontario Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Glen Murray announced new regulations, which will take effect on July 1, 2015, aimed at reducing the use of neonicotinoids in Ontario. These regulations make Ontario a leader in North America as the first to enact policies to protect pollinator health.

The NFU, along with the Ontario Beekeepers Association, and other allies, have been instrumental in encouraging this government to consider the environment and to protect pollinator health. The implementation of the new regulations will be the task of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs. The NFU-O will continue to make recommendations on how these regulations can best be implemented in a way that will protect pollinators and assist farmers.

In brief, the new pesticide regulation:

1. Ensures that neonicotinoid treated seeds are only used when needed and where pests are present.
2. Requires farmers to take training on Integrated Pest Management practices to help protect pollinators.

3. Sets out requirements for the sale and use of neonicotinoid treated seeds.
4. Helps protect bees and other pollinators.

The complete regulatory requirements are available online at <http://news.ontario.ca/ene/en/2015/06/regulating-neonicotinoids.html>

We are now half way through the year and while memberships are still trickling in, we are pleased that we have already surpassed our 2014 membership numbers. Unfortunately, we are still short of where we were in 2012, and Regional Council continues to look for opportunities to engage and draw in new members. We encourage all members to do the same.

Finally, we are looking forward to hosting the National NFU Convention in London this year. We know from past experience that the speakers will be engaging and interesting, the debate will be lively, and the policies put forward will benefit farmers across the country. You and I, as members, are the voice of our organization, and we must continue to advocate for policies that will help shape the agricultural sector that we want to see. It is clear that the NFU has the leadership within our organization to build strong, sustainable agricultural communities within Region 3 and across Canada. We hope to see you in London! —nfu—

### **NFU 46<sup>th</sup> National Convention** **NOVEMBER 26 - 28, 2015**

*Hilton London Ontario, 300 King Street*

## **London, Ontario**

**This year's theme is**

*Soil: Our Common Ground*

*see back page for more details*





## Region Five:



*Province of Manitoba*

*- by Ian Robson, Coordinator*

This federal government certainly does not do much consultation about needed farm policies. Instead, it creates stories and then proposes fixes to perceived problems. It said that the farmers' CWB did not allow farmers to sell grain when in fact, that is what the farmers' CWB did do – it let farmers sell grain. So the government ended our CWB and told farmers to 'sell grain on our own'. We now clearly see this is a revenue gift to the elevator companies who now claim a much larger share of the grain market price as well as more control over farmers.

Oddly, the federal government amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act to bring Canada under UPOV '91 which provide a "farmers' privilege" to save seed, effectively means it is now illegal for farmers to grow saved seeds. Where is the justice for Canada's farmers in such actions?

Canadians developed the world class grain marketing agency called the Canadian Wheat Board to sell our grain. The CWB assets belong to the farmers who used the CWB. Those assets do not belong to the federal government but now this agency has been gifted away to something called G3. G3 is Bunge and a Saudi held investment company, who are taking over the assets of the farmers' CWB. This is not a sale to G3. It is a gift, since there is no compensation paid to farmers. G3 is not a new player in the market and how do we measure if G3's existence will improve prices beyond what the CWB was doing? Farmers have rebuilt the CWB before and will see the need to rebuild it again, particularly since the handling system will continue to be constrained even if extra port elevators are built. Farmers know about handling grain, they used to own 70% of the grain handling and earned revenue from this ownership in UGG and Pool Elevators.

How do such federal actions translate into ensuring that people will continue to want to farm and care for the land? There is a shortage of farm labour right now. The increasing scale of farming on the prairies leads to less people being involved in farming and fewer

opportunities in the future for people upon the land. What is this federal government's vision for rural Canada? Is it empty landscape worked by transient labour? Is it opening up land investment rules to allow farm land to be owned by outsiders?

Farmers have considered their land to be their retirement fund but now the federal government has announced, with no details or vision, that people can voluntarily top up their Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions. Where is a farmer going to get extra revenue to voluntarily contribute to CPP? Will this help a farmer in debt whose revenue barely covers the costs? CPP is a beneficial program and should be respected. It is a saving program where all contribute and all reap a benefit in the future. CPP is a quality program until it gets fiddled with by this federal government who fiddled with the CWB in a similarly silly way.

Alice in Wonderland seems to be in charge of the Canadian Ministry of Agriculture which recognizes only some farm organizations. The Ministry is disrespectful of the full range of farmer views on farm policies. Farmers need policies to put structures in place to re-balance farm income fluctuations caused by farm product pricing systems.

Region 5 NFU continues to consult with the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture. We will meet about the Crown Land Policy. We will meet with other farm organizations about the Growing Forward program. We will take part in consultations about farm programs in the wake of climate change. And we will continue to press the Government of Manitoba to allow farmers to join and fund the General Farm Organization of their choice.

Ontario has a model for farmers to choose to fund the General Farm Organizations of their choice which may be best for Manitoba. Farmers can choose to fund the organization most closely reflecting their views about farm policy or they can withdraw. This is healthy for democracy. Democracy is only real if people use it. This means not only voting but contributing to the discussion about beneficial farm policy.

**Region 5 Convention** is on July 11, 2015 at the Royal Canadian Legion in Portage la Prairie from 10 AM until 5 PM. The agenda includes a wide ranging discussion about supply management and off-quota production. The chairmen of the Manitoba Chicken Producers and the Manitoba Turkey Producers and a representative from *Sharing the Table Manitoba* will attend. NFU President, Jan Slomp, will speak on trade deals and other issues the NFU is addressing. —nfu—





## Region Six:



*Province of Saskatchewan*

- by Ed Sagan, Coordinator

**T**he Region Six (Sask.) Regional Convention is being held July 8 and 9,

**2015 at St. Michael's Retreat in Lumsden, Sask.** I

would appreciate it if each Saskatchewan member would sign up two new members. We require new people to run this union.

Gordon Carter, a former NFU board member from PEI, and his wife Mary, travelled through Saskatchewan recently. We had a great visit reminiscing about old times over supper.

The spring seeding was not great - a cool dry spring and very little rain. Last week we had frost for three nights in a row with -3 degree temperatures.

Reseeding of canola is now in progress. Auction sales are in full progress again. Many big farmers are going out of farming again, thanks to both federal and Saskatchewan farm policies.

With the CWB gone, we do not know where farming is going. Grain companies are doing very well this year. The west coast port price for number one hard Red Spring was \$ 9.21 a bushel while the local price available from a major grain handling company in eastern Saskatchewan was \$5.60 a bushel - a difference of \$3.61 a bushel. Guess who profited from the market - grain companies again. The profit of \$3.61 under the old CWB would have gone back to the farmers.

I believe that the NFU should stop wasting time making presentations to both the federal and Saskatchewan governments. We spend so much time and people power making our case about our concerns in farming. Neither government can be bothered to acknowledge our efforts. Our time and effort should be going to strengthen our membership. —nfu—



- by Matt Gehl, Board Member

**A**fter a quiet winter, spring time came quickly in southern Saskatchewan.

As seeding time approached it was also the busy time of year for farm meetings. My time was filled up once the NFU released the  *Losing Our Grip*  2015 update. As one of the media contacts on the press release, I did almost 20 radio interviews on the report. Media outlets from across the country were quite interested in the issue of farmland ownership and the NFU should take immense pride in having produced such a quality report. This is an issue where we can find allies outside of the farming community, as even those Canadians with no connection to the farm feel that the land should be owned by farmers themselves.

The other event I attended on behalf of the NFU was the Energy East protest events in Regina and Moose Jaw hosted by the Council of Canadians. The diverse audience for these events were very interested in hearing what the NFU had to say about what was going on in the farming world, especially the giveaway of the remnants of the CWB to the Bunge-Saudi group. Anyone who had the good fortune to be in attendance

would have learned that there are opportunities for farmers to create alliances from wider swaths of society, in order to pressure governments to stop taking actions that have the chance to harm the agricultural economy. The experience of Nebraska farmers in stopping the Keystone XL pipeline should be a beacon of hope for all progressives in the farming community.

On a final note, I want to thank everyone involved with the NFU for allowing me to serve on the Board of Directors for the last three years. I have been presented with a once in a lifetime opportunity which requires a move to Hamilton, and, therefore, I need to step down from the Board. I thought about packing the farm and taking it with me, but I do not have enough luggage. Thank you to everyone on the Board for providing me with experience I would not have otherwise gained. Thank you to the ladies in the national office for all of the tireless work they do behind the scenes. And mostly, thank you to all of the NFU members whose continued involvement has allowed this group to work as a progressive voice for all Canadian farmers for 45 years. With the dedication of our members and the hard work of the people who are elected to represent them, the NFU will continue to be a strong voice for sound policies that will allow the family farm to flourish. Thank you all and solidarity forever! —nfu—



## Region Seven:



*Province of Alberta*

*- by Doug Scott, Coordinator*

**G**reetings! I never thought I would be able to say this, but on behalf of all members of Region 7, I would like to congratulate Rachel Notley in her new role as the New Democratic Premier of Alberta. I would also like to acknowledge Oneil Carlier on his appointment as Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Rural Development. We look forward to working with them both in their new roles. National Farmers Union President Jan Slomp and I have sent congratulatory letters to them and have requested a meeting with the Minister at his earliest convenience.

One can only speculate on what a new government will bring to Alberta. After over 40 years in power, the influence of the outgoing Progressive Conservatives runs deep. Every public board in Alberta is populated with PC patronage appointees. Our PC government over the years has become dictatorial and vindictive. If you did not support the party and its policies, you were marginalized. The National Farmers Union was only one of many groups subjected to such treatment. To date, I have not heard a single utterance from any of the commodity groups or commissions congratulating our new Premier or acknowledging the appointment of Oneil Carlier as our new Ag Minister. Must feel a bit strange to many of them to suddenly find themselves on the other side of the fence, and hopefully, soon to be put out to pasture.

Premier Notley is an intelligent, classy individual who has attracted many like-minded members to the Party. This is clearly apparent in her Cabinet choices. Her Cabinet is small but well chosen. All have experience in varying public roles. The

problems Premier Notley faces are many, but I know her and her colleagues are up to the task.

In our area, spring seeding is mostly complete, and although germination has been good, all is not well. Early seeded crops have been subjected to frost and flea beetles. Some reseeding has occurred and it remains very dry, with only small areas receiving scattered showers. The hay crops are suffering as well. Total precipitation in our area for the month of May is 20 mm at most, with some areas having no appreciable precipitation. At last count, there were over 40 forest fires burning in the province.

Our Region 7 Annual Convention will be held in Castor, Alberta on Saturday, July 4. After Premier Notley's win, we are rethinking our agenda in the hope of attracting a speaker from our new government. The agriculture planks of our NDP government are at best sketchy, and as a Region we hope to develop strong ties and influence with them.

I had the pleasure of attending our local 4-H Achievement Day recently, and I must tip my hat to all the members and their leaders. The highlight was the sale, with many members receiving \$3.00/lb. for their 1200 lb. animals. A tidy sum in my books.

A final thought in closing. Does Rachel follow Stephen Harper's declaration and say, "Give me a majority and 5 years, and you won't recognize Canada" or does she follow the wisdom of Machiavelli and say, "Getting and keeping power is what it's all about." —nfu—

### **NFU Region 7 Convention**

**Saturday, July 4, 2015**

**Castor Legion Hall**

**48<sup>th</sup> Street & 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

**Castor, Alberta**

*Check your mailbox for more details or call  
National Office at (306) 652-9465.*



## Region Eight:



*Peace River District in Alberta  
and the Province of BC*

- by Peter Eggers, Coordinator

Seeding is finished in the Peace River area of Alberta with good moisture for germination but, as of the end of May, growth of pastures is already slowing down due to lack of rain.

There were provincial elections in the Alberta part of Region 8. The NDP relieved the PC's from the reign of power they had held for 44 years. I wish Rachel Notley and her team strength and foresight. If anyone ever said there was a lot of influence peddling going on in the back rooms it would be hard to believe but it might be true.

I was part of a committee of thirteen people, chaired by Alberta Environment. We were asked to come up with new regulations about how retired well sites should get a Reclamation Certificate. Industry and government wanted to streamline the process. I got on the committee through the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society. The other two farmers on the committee represented the Alberta Surface Rights Federation. Other committee members included two people from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) and representatives from government agencies like forestry.

We had twelve one-day and two two-day meetings in Edmonton over a fourteen month period. There were twelve points for discussion on the agenda and one more was added at my request but was never discussed. Every day one point was discussed and after two meetings I was wondering how we were going to solve this. My question was answered at the last meeting. We sat at a long table with the chairperson at a computer at one end and the two CAPP representatives at the other end. All other members sat on the sides of the table. The CAPP representatives told Alberta Environment what they wanted in the new regulation! I was there! I saw and heard it! Voila! We have a new

Bingodobber well site certification office in Edmonton. The regional inspectors' hands are tied behind their backs. The land, the farmers and everything else got shafted.

As Andrew Nikiforuk says: "*in Alberta with maturing industry we lower the standards*". So, we were all present at the committee level so the government can say that all "stakeholders" had input and were at the table. But it was a direct dictate by industry to paint over poor work on the land during construction, operation and reclamation of well sites.

It might have been a waste of time for me but at least I know now that it is true. And that is why I hope so much that our new provincial government can do better. Maybe the NFU can be of help. It is worth a try.

—nfu—

### GMO Inquiry 2015

It has been twenty years since the Canadian government approved the first genetically modified (GM) crops. After twenty years, there are still some major unanswered questions and conflicting messages about the impacts and risks of GM crops and foods. Through its GMO Inquiry 2015, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) is digging into some of these important questions and conflicting messages to find out what is really happening in Canada. Throughout 2015, CBAN will produce and publish several reports, including: *Where in the world are GM crops and foods?* published in March, and *Are GM crops better for the environment?* published in May.

To download the reports or for more information go to [www.GMOinquiry.ca](http://www.GMOinquiry.ca).

*The NFU is a member of CBAN and is supporting this project with background information and reviews of portions of the reports.*





# NFU Youth travel to Parliament Hill to meet with Opposition MPs

**O**n March 25, 2015 eight NFU Youth members convened on Parliament Hill to meet with MPs and attend Question Period. Not surprisingly, Gerry Ritz's office did not respond to our request to meet with either him or someone else from the Conservative Party. Understandably, the Green Party, with only 2 sitting MPs, apologized for being unable to arrange a meeting. Thankfully, we were able to meet with NDP and Liberal MPs.

We enjoyed a lunchtime meeting with NDP MPs: Malcolm Allen—Ag Critic, Ruth Allen Brosseau—Deputy Ag Critic, and Alex Atamanenko—former Ag Critic and long-time supporter of the NFU. From the Liberal Party, we met with Ag Critic, Mark Eyking—and Wayne Easter, former Ag and Canadian Wheat Board Critic (as well as a proud past-President of the National Farmers Union).



*Photo: (l to r) MP Ruth Allen Brosseau, Virginie Lavallée-Picard (BC), Jordan MacPhee (PEI), Shannon Jones (NS), Dan Kretschmar (ON), Ayla Fenton (ON), MP Alex Atamanenko, Terran Giacomini (ON), Alex Fletcher (BC), MP Malcolm Allen, and Dean Harder (MB).*

We presented MPs with copies of the NFU's recently updated report, *Losing Our Grip*, as well as a New Farmer Policy 2-pager which outlines the need to re-orient Canadian Agricultural policy away from export growth, towards food sovereignty, and to develop specific policies to reduce the barriers for new farmers to access affordable farmland and financing, training and technical support, and to earn a decent income.



*Photo: NFU Youth members with Wayne Easter.*

MPs were particularly interested to hear about our experiences as young farmers. Shannon Jones from Nova Scotia shared her experience of taking their business plan to Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Crown Corporation tasked with giving loans to *farmers*, and being told that in order for her and her partner to access a loan one of them would need to get an off-farm job. Fortunately, they were able to turn to the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board who were much more supportive of new farmers and gave them favourable terms which has allowed them to grow a successful farm business and repay their loans.

It was a positive experience for all the youth members involved. The MPs were receptive and understanding of the need for specific programs and policies to provide more support to new farmers and they shared advice and insights with us about politics and policy development. It was encouraging to speak with politicians who were approachable, respected farmers, and valued our perspectives. We are hopeful that the upcoming election is an opportunity to make a real difference in Canadian agriculture policy and beyond! —nfu—

*Thanks to Dean Harder for organizing the meetings and to the MPs and their staff for making the time to meet with us.*



# Eat Think Vote



Food Secure Canada is using the federal election campaign as an opportunity to encourage conversations about food sovereignty in Canada with candidates and within our communities. Through their **Eat Think Vote** campaign they are calling for a bold new national food policy, a vision for our food system that encompasses the goals of zero hunger, healthy and safe food, and a more sustainable food system.

The NFU is a member of Food Secure Canada. Alex Fletcher, NFU Youth President, is a member of the working group for the "Home grown crisis – growing our farmer population" plank of the campaign, which is printed below.

For more information on the **Eat Think Vote** campaign visit [www.foodsecurecanada.org/EatThinkVote](http://www.foodsecurecanada.org/EatThinkVote).

The following four food priorities will be the focus of the **Eat Think Vote** campaign:

1. **A universal healthy school food program;**
2. **Ensuring all Canadians enjoy the right to food;**
3. **Affordable, accessible food in northern Canada; and**
4. **Growing our farmer population.**

## Home Grown Crisis — Growing our farmer population

From Food Secure Canada and the **Eat Think Vote** campaign

**A**griculture and the food sector employs one in eight Canadians, supplies more than eight percent of our GDP and contributes multiple benefits, from environmental protection and landscape protection, to healthy local food. Yet we are facing multiple, unprecedented crises in agriculture in Canada. Despite the strong interest in local food, the long-established trends of fewer operators, fewer young operators and fewer farms show no signs of reversing. Farm debt keeps rising, as does the cost of getting into and maintaining a farm, consuming any gains in market returns that farmers might have achieved. Climate change is bringing weather extremes, from drought to floods that add significant production challenges and have already cost billions in lost crops and revenue. Farmland loss across the country continues unabated, and corporate concentration at all links in the food chain continues to limit financial viability and rural resilience<sup>1</sup>.

Agriculture in Canada is facing a crisis of succession, with more than half of the Canadian population over 55, and eighty percent looking to retire in the next

ten years. This pending retirement of more than half of our farmers could mean the disintegration of rural communities and stewardship of the land, as well as a significant turnover in farm assets in the near future. More than ever, we need more new farmers to assume those assets and build new ones.

New farmers face particular barriers to entry and challenges to getting established. Some new farmers are part of a generational succession and are taking over some large, commodity-oriented enterprises. But many come from outside the farming community and start out small, with mixed production that is delivered through numerous direct market channels. Almost all of them start with significant debt to be serviced by whatever income they can derive from farming.

Agricultural policy in Canada has long been dominated by a focus on export markets and larger and larger farms to the detriment of smaller, ecological, owner-operated farms and of the rural communities of which they are a part. Targeted policies are urgently needed if we are to maintain and rebuild Canada's farm population. We need policies and programs that will transform the future of farms and food systems in Canada.

*(continued on page 14...)*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.farmaid.org/issues/industrial-agriculture/corporate-concentration-in-ag/>



## **Vital Facts:**

Today more than half of all Canadian farmers are 55 years or older compared to 37.7% in 1991.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1991 and 2011:

- the number of farmers under the age of 40 years old declined almost 75% from 74,159 to 20,229;
- farm size has increased at an unprecedented rate of 130%; and
- we lost 26.5% of the farms across the country.<sup>3</sup>

In the last two decades, outstanding farm debt has increased steadily and speedily from \$23.4 billion in 1993 to \$77.9 billion in 2013 - an increase of 332.9%.<sup>4</sup>

75% of the soon-to- retire farmers do not have a family member to take over the farm.<sup>5</sup>

## **What needs to be done**

We are calling on the government to undertake an overhaul of Growing Forward 2, the Agricultural Policy Framework, within the first year of a new government, to ensure that its programs are accessible to and adequately serve the needs of new farmers. This is to be complemented by programs to reduce land, capital and training barriers for new farmers (details on right).

A renewed agricultural policy framework will:

- Re-orient agriculture policy towards multi-functionality, highlighting the multiple benefits for society & the environment;
- Fund consulting and extension services for farmers; and
- Fund affordable training, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs that recognize the importance of farmer-to-farmer knowledge transfer.

Access to land programs will:

- Develop joint federal-provincial/territorial legislation to prohibit foreign ownership of land, limit land acquisitions by private investment funds; and
- Remove incentives and put in barriers for speculative and absentee land ownership.

Access to capital programs will:

- Expand Farm Credit Canada's envelope in order to develop low interest loan and small character-based establishment grant programs, available to aspiring and new farmers who meet the minimum criteria.

These programs will be supported by robust Statistical Information:

- Maintain and improve the detailed Census of Agriculture by Statistics Canada (every 5 years) by adding more specific questions pertaining to understanding the realities and barriers new farmers face and the impact of the revamped agricultural policy framework (GF2). —nfu—

<sup>2</sup>. Statca.gc.ca, "Demographic Changes in Canadian Agriculture". Martin S. Beaulieu, 2015. Retrieved May 5, 2015: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/96-325-x/2014001/article/11905-eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup>. Statcan.gc.ca, "Demographic Changes in Canadian Agriculture". Martin S. Beaulieu, 2015. Retrieved May 5, 2015: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/96-325-x/2014001/article/11905-eng.htm>

<sup>4</sup>. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=0020008&paSer=&pattern=&stByVal=1&p1=1&p2=-1&tabMode=dataTable&csid=>

<sup>5</sup>. Robicheau, Sarah. "Helping Good Things Grow." *Health and Sustainability in the Canadian Food System*. Eds Rod MacRae & Elisabeth Abergel. UBC Press. 2012, pg 245.

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# Constructing a National New Farmer's Policy Platform

*An update on the national New Farmer Coalition*

- by Ayla Fenton, NFU Youth Vice President

The National New Farmer Coalition grew out of the 2014 NFU Youth Retreat. The Coalition includes members from several organizations, including Food Secure Canada, Young Agrarians and the NFU. The aim of the Coalition is to promote government policies to reverse the decline in the number of young farmers in Canada. For more information on the Coalition see the Spring 2015 issue of the Union Farmer Quarterly.

As the Coalition members are now busy with farm work, we are grateful for the many hours we put into this project over the winter and the momentum we built to carry us through the busy summer months. Over the last several months, we launched an ambitious research project, engaged hundreds of farmers across the country, laid the foundation for a new farmer policy report and began strategizing for a national advocacy campaign.

## NYFC Rep Joins NFU Youth Retreat

We were fortunate to have Sophie Ackoff, field director for the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) in the USA, join us at the NFU Youth Retreat this March. The achievements of the NYFC have been our main motivation in launching our own project. An inspiring recent win for the NYFC was getting the Young Farmer Success Act introduced in Congress. This act would add farmers to the national student loan forgiveness program.

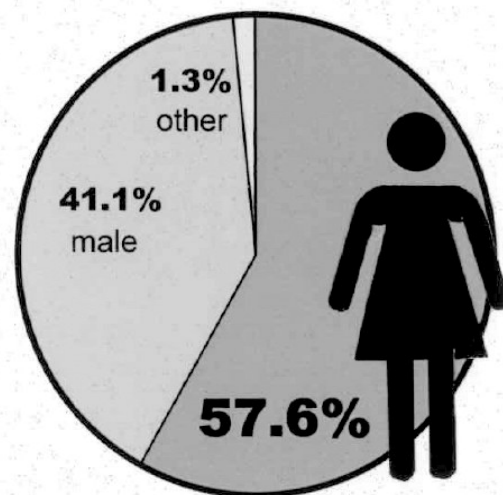
Sophie spent three days with us, answering our incessant questions and inspiring us to think big. It was incredibly valuable to hear first-hand how they have overcome obstacles, engaged thousands of young farmers, won political champions for their cause, launched a series of hugely successful advocacy campaigns, and written bills that have become federal law. Can we do the same in Canada?

## Initial Results from the National New Farmer Survey

The National New Farmer online survey closed on March 31. The survey was developed in partnership with Julia Laforge, a PhD candidate at the University of Manitoba. Thank you to the countless organizations and individuals that helped distribute the survey. Also, thank you to: Chelsea Green Publishing; Éditions Berger; Canadian Organic Growers; Growing for Market; Beyond Organic: The Permaculture Orchard (film); Johnny's Seeds; Bogs; and Small Farms Central for donating the prizes which were offered to randomly selected survey participants.

Although our original goal was to gather 1000 survey responses, we ended up with over 1300 responses from a diversity of farm sectors and provinces! It was a long and complex survey, and we are now taking on the daunting task of analyzing all of the rich data that was collected. Here are two nuggets from our preliminary findings:

## Gender Distribution of the National New Farmer Survey respondents.



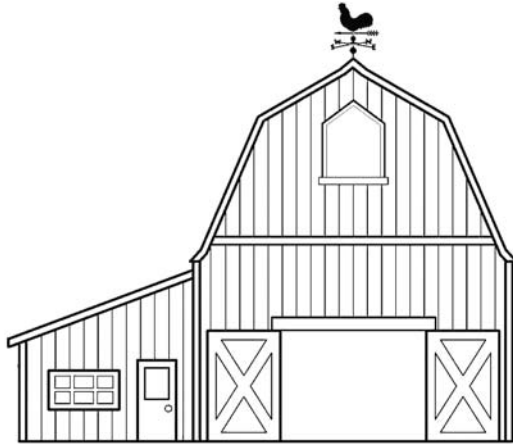
### 1. New farmers are predominantly female.

This may not fit with our traditional North American stereotypes about who grows our food and may have policy implications such as the need for accessible childcare in rural areas.

*(continued on page 16...)*



## Responses to the question: “Did you grow up on a working farm?”



**15% did and still farm there.**

**17% did, but now farm elsewhere.**

**68% did not grow up on a farm.**

- 2. The majority of today’s farmers did not grow up on a farm** - and this majority is continuing to grow. 46 percent of self-identified “experienced farmers” say they did not grow up on a farm, but that number rises to 70 percent for “new farmers”.

This means that the new farmers of today have drastically different needs. Unlike previous generations, most of today’s new farmers did not inherit land and knowledge from their families. These statistics are an interesting complement to the fact that 75 percent of soon-to-retire farmers in Canada do not have a family member to take over their farm. Canadian agricultural policy will need a major update to adapt to this new reality, with an emphasis on providing better access to land and training, and a

national strategy to ensure that farmland is passed on to the next generation, whether they are in the family or not.

### New Farmer Report

The results from the survey will be used, along with other existing research, to draft a new farmer report later this year. The report will present the findings of our research and assess which programs and policies should be expanded, changed, or introduced in order to better support new farmers in the future. We are trying to evaluate policies at both the federal and provincial levels. It may be particularly interesting to compare how programs and policies affect farmers differently amongst the provinces.

—nfu—

## **Facebook Group**

Want to keep up to date with what we are up to? Join our new Facebook group! Search “National New Farmer Coalition” on Facebook, or follow this link:

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/821201404620999/>**

We will be posting results from the survey analysis as we progress, as well as plenty of interesting new-farmer-related articles and media.

***Join the discussion!***

***For more information about the National New Farmer Coalition, visit:***

**<http://www.nfu.ca/about/national-new-farmer-coalition>**

**or**

**contact *Virginie Lavallée-Picard, interim Coalition coordinator,***  
**at: *newfarmercoalition@gmail.com***



## Support needed for new young farmers

**T**he average age of farmers in NB according to the 2011 Census of Agriculture is 55.5 years. The total number of farms in NB dropped nearly 6% between 2006 and 2011. In a province where nearly all of the food consumed in the province is imported, supporting the next generation of farmers is essential for food security and the economic stability of our province, according to the National Farmers Union in NB.

Heated debate has taken place in Caraquet over the past few weeks between neighbours and a young farmer who is applying for a zoning change where he would like to open his organic, open-air, livestock operation on over 25 acres when he finishes agricultural college in another 2 years. While this type of operation is currently uncommon in NB it is a frequent model in the United Kingdom. Working with the recommended 6-8 animals per acre the ground is able to handle the animal output resulting in no odor problem. If the zoning change is accepted, the farm operation will still need to meet the minimum distances set out by the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as undergo an environmental impact assessment. Therefore, changing the zoning to agricultural land will not necessarily mean that animal production will be approved down the road.

"Succession planning for the next generation of farmers in NB is in a really sad state of affairs, worrisome really, even more so within the francophone population which accounts for less than 16% of farmers in the province. Here is a young man who wants to get involved in agriculture, who wants to provide his fellow citizens with organic food: let's support him instead of trying to kill his dream," says Kevin Arseneau, NFU-NB Youth President.

In a province with a shortage of jobs, steady out-migration from rural communities and out-migration of our post-secondary educated youth, all involved should be looking at how they can support young entrepreneurs to succeed in operating viable rural businesses.

—nfu—

## Il faut appuyer nos nouveaux jeunes fermiers

**L'**âge moyen des fermiers au Nouveau-Brunswick, selon le recensement de l'agriculture en 2011, est de 55,5 ans. Le nombre total de fermes dans la province a chuté de près de 6 % entre 2006 et 2011. Dans une province où presque toute la nourriture consommée est importée, il est essentiel d'appuyer la prochaine génération de fermiers pour assurer la sécurité alimentaire et la stabilité économique de notre province, selon l'Union nationale des fermiers au N.-B.

Un débat houleux a lieu à Caraquet depuis quelques semaines entre les voisins et un jeune fermier qui fait la demande d'un changement de zonage là où il aimerait commencer son exploitation d'élevage biologique à ciel ouvert sur 25 acres quand il aura terminé ses études au collège agricole dans 2 ans. Bien que ce type d'opération ne soit pas commune présentement au Nouveau-Brunswick, c'est un modèle fréquent au Royaume-Uni. En travaillant avec le nombre recommandé de 6 à 8 animaux à l'acre, le sol est capable de traiter ce que les animaux produisent sans problème d'odeurs. Si la modification du zonage est acceptée, l'exploitation agricole devra tout de même respecter les distances minimales fixées par le Ministère de l'Agriculture, en plus de subir une évaluation environnementale. Donc, changer le zonage pour une terre agricole ne veut pas nécessairement dire que la production animale sera approuvée par la suite.

« La relève agricole au N.-B. est dans un état lamentable, voir inquiétant et ce d'autant plus chez la population francophone qui compte pour moins de 16% des agriculteurs de la province. Voici un jeune qui veut se lancer en agriculture, qui veut nourrir ses concitoyens avec une nourriture biologique : appuyons-le à la place de chercher à éteindre son rêve. », dit Kevin Arseneau, président des jeunes de l'UNF-NB.

Dans une province en mal d'emplois, avec une émigration constante des communautés rurales, ainsi qu'une émigration de nos jeunes gens diplômés du post-secondaire, tout le monde devrait chercher pour savoir comment ils peuvent appuyer les jeunes entrepreneurs et les aider à réussir l'exploitation d'entreprises rurales viables.

—nfu—





# NFU appears before Senate Ag Committee on their study of International Market Access Priorities

*On June 2, 2015, Terry Boehm, Chair of the NFU Seed and Trade Committee, appeared before the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee on behalf of the NFU, during the Committee's study on international market access priorities for the Canadian agricultural and agri-food sector. Below is an abridged version of the NFU's brief submitted to the committee in conjunction with Terry's appearance. The full brief is available in both French and English on the NFU's website at <http://www.nfu.ca/policy/2015>.*

**T**he NFU supports trade in agriculture, as long as it is fair trade – trade that supports the livelihoods of family farmers in Canada and those of our trading partners around the world, and which ensures each country has the capacity to feed itself and to democratically make decisions that support long-term economic, social and ecological sustainability in regard to their respective food systems. As a member of La Via Campesina, the NFU asserts that agriculture and food cannot be treated the same way as any other commodity in trade agreements because food is vital for human life.

Canadian agriculture policy fails to distinguish between agribusiness (including input sellers, food processors, and retailers as well as corporate industrial farms) and family farmers, yet the interests of these sectors often diverge. Canada's agriculture policy focuses on expanding exports to the extent that this goal eclipses other values such as soil health, farmer livelihoods, food quality, environmental protection and quality of rural life. Canada has increased trade in agri-food commodities, but this has not helped farmers. As trade increased, expenses and debt also increased and overall farmer numbers have declined, most dramatically for those farmers under the age of 35.

Classical economic theory, and now globalization, promotes the idea that each country should specialize in products where it has a "comparative advantage" and purchase other products from trading partners instead of making them at home. Put into action, this ideology simplifies economies, makes them more dependent on trade. Globalization causes our economy to become brittle by "putting all our eggs in one basket" and thus vulnerable to the cascading effects of economic

and/or ecological crises. Canada's trade statistics show that we indeed depend on selling large volumes of undifferentiated commodities and buying smaller amounts of higher value finished products. The top five agri-food commodities exported from Canada are wheat, canola, durum, live cattle and soybeans, while the top five imported are grape wines, food preparations, bakery products, denatured ethyl alcohol and fresh, boneless beef.<sup>i</sup> This trend has implications for our food security, as we become more dependent on importing the food needed for a balanced diet. With climate instability, some of our current sources for fruits, vegetables, meat and processed foods may be unable or unwilling to export as much, or at prices Canadians can afford, if drought, flooding, disease or pest problems make feeding their own populations a higher priority.

As a result of FTAs, Canada has lost significant fruit and vegetable production and processing capacity, which is both seasonal and labour intensive. Without processing capacity, production of perishable food products also declines. Food manufacturers and retailers use increased market access provisions to process food produced in the global south and the USA. Similarly, meat-packing in Canada has become notorious for its low-wages and dependence on temporary foreign workers. These conditions are a result of FTAs opening Canada's market to US-owned plants located where wages are lower and labour laws are lax or not well-enforced.<sup>ii</sup> In fact, Canada seems to be outsourcing a significant amount of beef packing, since live cattle are among our top exports and fresh, boneless beef is one of our top imports.

*(continued on page 19...)*



With the loss of the single desk Canadian Wheat Board, grain farmers have become vulnerable to similar forms of price manipulation and exploitation. Grain companies are now in a position to buy low from prairie farmers, sell high on world markets, and pocket the difference. Under the single desk, farmers were paid for the full value of their grain obtained when sold to export customers and domestic millers, and for that reason it pursued and obtained markets that paid premium prices.

In 1912, the Canadian Grain Commission was established in order to ensure fairness for farmers who sold grain. A robust grading, inspection and governance system was developed and has stood the test of time. However, the current federal government has introduced Bill C-48 to amend the Canada Grains Act by introducing changes to the CGC which will weaken its ability to uphold the quality and value of Canada's grain exports and hamper its ability to protect the interests of Canadian farmers.

The CGC recently held a public consultation on a proposal to alter Canada's wheat class system to permit the sale of American varieties of low-protein wheat as milling wheat in Canada. The proposed changes would allow grain produced in the USA to be imported and graded in the Canadian system. Currently imported grain is designated as foreign grain and is not eligible for grading. The US wheat lobby is pushing Canada for these changes.<sup>iii</sup>

Canada's deserved reputation for quality wheat was created, built and maintained by farmers producing and delivering the grain, along with institutions such as the CGC, CIGI and the single-desk CWB. A shift away from quality towards quantity of production will result in farmers having higher on-farm storage costs, increased trucking and higher

local taxes for road maintenance. If a permanent lower-protein wheat class is created, Canada's comparative advantage will be eroded and Canadian farmers will be forced to compete for market share on price alone.

FTAs are used to harmonize regulations and standards among countries so that corporations can easily operate across borders. Regulations and standards are often termed "trade irritants" and "non-tariff trade barriers." Domestic rules and regulations are elements of democratic governance; their implementation and enforcement is one of the duties of government. The rules and regulations are, in fact, an expression of sovereignty and a way for nations to draw boundaries around what is and is not acceptable behaviour, including matters of economic behaviour.

Canada's supply management system is a success story for farmers, consumers, processors and governments. Canadian dairy producers obtain their income from the marketplace, not from government subsidies as occurs in most other countries. Canadian consumers have a reliable supply of wholesome milk, chicken, eggs and turkey. Processors have the predictability that allows them to operate at near full-capacity and avoid the cost of idled plant space that is common in other jurisdictions.

We believe that international relations must be based on mutual respect for the whole of each society, that trade can be conducted fairly without destroying the cultural and economic institutions people have built, and that democracy means that people have a real say in the economic choices that affect their lives. We urge that the federal government develop a national food and agriculture policy that reflects these values instead of pursuing the ever-tightening noose of corporate control embodied in the FTAs.

—nfu—

<sup>i</sup> Canada at a glance – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. <http://www5.agr.gc.ca/eng/industry-markets-and-trade/statistics-and-market-information/import-and-export-data/countries-at-a-glance/canada/?id=1410072148230>

<sup>ii</sup> The Canadian Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing Industry, Statistics Canada. <http://www5.agr.gc.ca/eng/industry-markets-and-trade/statistics-and-market-information/by-product-sector/processed-food-and-beverages/the-canadian-fruit-and-vegetable-preserving-and-specialty-food-manufacturing-industry/?id=1375206764774>

<sup>iii</sup> U.S Wheat Growers Call for Equal Trade in Canada, National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), Joint Press Release, May 21, 2015. <http://www.uswheat.org/newsRelease/doc/6A76FF6BC420AFAE85257E4C00717F75?Open>



*Editor's note: The NFU was a co-sponsor of the Energy East tour across the prairies this spring. Below is a shortened version of an article by Nebraska Rancher, Ben Gotschall, one of the speakers on the tour. The full article is posted on the NFU blog at [www.nfu.ca/blog](http://www.nfu.ca/blog).*

# Canadians must stay strong against TransCanada Energy Pipeline

- by Ben Gotschall, Rancher and Energy Director  
with *Bold Nebraska*

I am first and foremost a rancher. However, I am now also an anti-pipeline activist. I was 10 years old when I started my own herd of cattle on my family's ranch in Nebraska. I learned early on from our 75-year history of ranching about the value of hard work. I learned the value of our land and water that sustains our herd and our family. You may ask, how does a rancher become an activist?

I was at a State Department hearing in 2010 when I first saw the names of my friends, family and neighbours on TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline map for Nebraska. The pipeline was proposed to pass right through the Sandhills, a unique and fragile ecosystem that overlies the Ogallala, a critically important aquifer.

None of my neighbours were activists. We felt alone in our opposition to the pipeline. TransCanada told us separately we were the only ones not signing easements, taking the money they offered. But we soon found out that was not true. I found my voice when I started speaking out. I found there were Nebraskans all across the state who felt the same way. Since then, along with other landowners and citizens in Nebraska and other states, we have fought the pipeline. And now I know we have friends in Canada waging the same fight against the same company.

Working with the Council of Canadians, I've just finished a week of visiting communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan along the Energy East pipeline path. Last fall I joined a similar public speakers tour and series of meetings with New Brunswick communities on the other end of the proposed pipeline.

We hear pipeline proponents peddle the same myths. Like the promises of jobs. But these jobs will be mostly short-term. In fact, they are over-advertised to lure people to support the project. And they pre-empt real discussion about how to build a long-term sustainable energy future that keeps young people in smaller communities and helps the economy grow. I am confident that as time marches forward, independent reports like those we have seen on the Keystone XL job promises will also find Energy East job promises overblown.

We too have heard that Keystone XL would reduce dangerous oil-by-rail traffic. Companies are not showing responsibility to communities by being forthright about the chemicals that are passing through waterways either by rail or by pipe. Industry is after as much capacity, pipeline or rail, as they can get to feed the booms happening in the tar sands and U.S. fracked oil. Approval of either Keystone XL or Energy East pipelines will add to the risks of communities facing oil-by-rail traffic.

Because of the efforts of many opposed to the project, TransCanada was forced to change their proposed pipeline route in Nebraska. It still poses an unacceptable threat to the Sandhills and the Ogallala aquifer, so we will continue to fight it.

The Canadian Prairies tour introduced me to many talented and resolute people who are working together to protect their land, water and property rights. From farmers to First Nations elders, from the city of Winnipeg to the wind-swept Sandhills of Saskatchewan, it is clear that people will come together and fight to keep their drinking water and their homes from being endangered and exploited by an export pipeline that benefits a few wealthy corporations at the expense of many Canadians.

—nfu—

*For more information on the campaign against the Energy East pipeline, see: [www.noenergyeast.ca](http://www.noenergyeast.ca)*



## NFU joins other International Farmers' Organizations and Civil Society Organizations in calling for G7 and African Governments to stop supporting the New Alliance

Politicians and executives from some of the world's biggest agribusiness companies met in Cape Town, South Africa for the leadership council of the controversial New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition on June 3, 2015. On the same day, a coalition of a hundred farmers' organizations, social movements, unions and civil society groups around the world, including the National Farmers Union, released a statement calling on the G7 and African governments to stop supporting the New Alliance.

The statement says that "experiences on the ground and case studies confirm that the policies promoted by the New Alliance facilitate the grabbing of land and other resources, further marginalize small-scale producers, and undermine the right to adequate food and nutrition."

Launched by the G8 in 2012, the New Alliance provides aid money from the G8 countries and helps big business invest in different countries in the African agricultural sector. But in return, African countries are required to change their land, seed and trade rules in favour of big agribusiness companies. In the last year, controversies associated with the New Alliance have included:

- **In Ghana a proposed bill – dubbed the 'Monsanto Law'** which would bolster the power of multinational seed companies whilst restricting the rights of small farmers to keep and swap seeds. This bill, which is being brought in as part of the Ghanaian government's commitment to the New Alliance, will see the control of seeds being transferred away from small farmers and into the hands of large seed companies.
- Farmers in **Nigeria's Taraba State are being forced off lands** that they have farmed for generations to make way for US-based Dominion Farms to establish a 30,000 hectare rice plantation. The project is backed by the Nigerian government and the New Alliance.

- In **Tanzania about 1,300 people are at risk of losing their land** or homes to make way for a sugarcane plantation, which is a New Alliance project. An area of land the size of Washington D.C. will be used by a plantation to produce sugar for biofuels.

According to NFU President Jan Slomp, "The New Alliance is not addressing hunger or food security, but it is providing huge opportunities for big agribusiness companies to restructure food production across Africa to their own advantage. Countries in Africa need to develop their own agricultural policies that are effective in meeting the needs of small-scale farmers and food sovereignty, rather than being cajoled into having big industrialized agriculture imposed on them through coercive aid mechanisms like the New Alliance."

Three years after it has launched, the New Alliance has not been able to provide evidence of its impact. The August 2014 Progress Report states that \$1.1 billion out of \$8 billion committed in aid money has been delivered, and 3 million smallholders have been "reached". However, of the overall figure of "small holders reached" only 21% are women. The New Alliance has at no time publicly defined what 'reached' means. At no point does the Progress Report attempt to indicate or estimate its overall impact on food security and poverty – and the New Alliance has not done so since.

In May, 2015, an independent audit of the UK's aid spending singled out the New Alliance for particular criticism, saying that it was "little more than a means of promotion for the companies involved and a chance to increase their influence in policy debates". In 2013, over 100 African civil society organizations branded the New Alliance a 'new wave of colonialism'.

—nfu—

For more information or to access the full statement in French or English go to: <http://www.nfu.ca/story/g7-food-initiative-driving-hunger-african-countries-say-global-civil-society-groups>





# NFU introduces Patty Englund, new General Manager

**G**reetings NFU members! I have recently come on board as your new General Manager. Although I have only been here for a week I already feel part of the NFU family. The staff has made me feel very welcome and I am very fortunate to have Carla spending some time with me to help me get oriented. Several members have warmly welcomed me and I look forward to speaking with and meeting many more of you in person over the coming months. I am equally looking forward to reconnecting with some of you that I have known in the past. I would like to officially introduce myself and give you a bit about my background and what I have been up to before coming here.

I was born, raised and have spent most of my life in Saskatchewan. My husband and I are both from small farming communities in the province. I attended the University of Saskatchewan, receiving a BSc in Biology and a BSA. Upon graduating from the College of Agriculture, my husband John and I went to Papua New Guinea with CUSO where we taught agriculture, science and commerce to high school boys. After returning to Canada, I obtained my MSc in Horticulture through the College of Agriculture. A scholarship from CIDA allowed me to return to Papua New Guinea to conduct a project entitled "Supplemental Food Production to Improve Food Status in Health Centres in Papua New Guinea". Upon completion of my MSc, I accepted a research position at Agriculture Canada in Agassiz, British Columbia, but returned to Saskatchewan as soon as I was able.

I have worked in the Agriculture industry and been a Professional Agrologist for more than 25 years. My career has included research, international work and private consulting. The majority of that time was spent doing contract work for the Farmland Security Board and Farm Debt Mediation Service. This allowed me to work from home while raising our two sons. Immediately before coming to the NFU, I served as the Interim CEO for the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association. While there, I was responsible for guiding staff as



they worked on behalf of cattle producers to address the policy, production, communication, promotion, legal and financial issues that face the beef industry in Saskatchewan. I also represented the SCA on the Agriculture in Classroom board which allowed me to embrace two of my passions – agriculture and education.

It is with great pleasure that I join the National Farmers Union as its new General Manager. Over the course of my career I have witnessed the challenges that farmers face become more numerous and more complicated. From international trade deals and land ownership, to dealing with rising farm debt and a post-CWB grain world - farming is not for the faint of heart! I am looking forward to working together to embrace the changes that will keep the NFU strong and challenging those that do not; while honouring its roots and rich history.

—nfu—



## 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 to 21 years old, and 21 to 30 years old. 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. **APPLICANTS CAN ONLY WIN ONCE PER AGE CATEGORY.**
- **The theme of this year's essay is: *Soil - Our Common Ground.***
- Deadline for entries is November 1, 2015.
- The winners will be announced at the NFU Convention in November 2015.
- 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 to:

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.*

## *We Remember ...*

### KENNETH JOHN GIDLUCK

September 16, 1941 - April 30, 2015



Ken Gidluck of Biggar, Saskatchewan, passed away at Calgary Foothill's hospital after complications from spinal surgery. A large circle of family and friends are grieving the loss of "Big Ken." His years of activism with the National Farmers Union and numerous other political causes meant he had friends in communities across the country. Sadly, "Ken from Biggar" will no longer be sharing his strong opinions on issues like the loss of the Canadian Wheat Board and the dangers of genetically-modified food with call-in show listeners.

Ken faced many challenges in his life - the hardest being the loss of his wife in 1996, and son West in 2013. Ken's daughters Lynn, Lee and Lori and their families held a celebration of their Dad's life on May 9 in Biggar, SK.

### LOLA ALEXANDREA CALVIN

July 29, 1934 - November 27, 2014



Lola Alexandra Calvin of New Norway, Alberta, passed away peacefully in her home on November 27, 2014 at 80 years of age. Lola was born at Armena, Alberta on July 29, 1934. At 12 years of age she moved with her family to Edmonton. While working at Eatons in Edmonton, she met the love of her life, George Calvin of Hazenmore, Saskatchewan, and they married January 18, 1964. Lola and George had two sons, Allan David and Blaine George. She was a loving wife and mother. She is survived by her husband George and their two sons and their families. She will be sadly missed by all.



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National Farmers Union  
Union Nationale des Fermiers



**NFU 46<sup>th</sup> National Convention**

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