



National Farmers Union
Union Nationale des Fermiers



union farmer

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Delegates to La Via Campesina's 7th International Conference take part in a public march to raise awareness of our struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology in Bilbao, Basque Country on July 25, 2017. (See pages 14 to 16)

Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

Scattered throughout the regional reports and the articles in this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* (UFQ) there are several references to the importance and need for public plant breeding and agricultural research undertaken in the interest of farmers. Time and again the NFU has advocated, and will continue to advocate, for public plant breeding and public agricultural research undertaken in the interest of farmers, with input from farmers and with the benefits of the research going to farmers and the people of Canada.

The Editorial Advisory Committee decided to devote some space in both this issue and the summer issue of the UFQ to explore a couple of examples of how farmers are working to make sure research and plant breeding is being undertaken in their interests. In the summer issue, NFU member Sarah Hargreaves introduced us to the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario's (EFAO) Farmer-Led Research project. Through this project, EFAO trains and supports farmers to conduct rigorous research trials on their own farms. This type of agricultural research is particularly valuable to small-scale, diversified and ecological or organic farms. The EFAO Farmer-Led Research project is partially funded by private foundations and partially funded by the public through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, a Government of Ontario agency which

funds projects across the province to help build healthy and vibrant communities.

In this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly*, NFU member and SaskWheat board member, Glen Tait, explores the importance of farmer-directed plant breeding in relation to crops, like wheat, that are grown in large acreages across the prairies. The loss of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), the cuts to public plant breeding and the recent changes to Canada's Plant Breeders Right's Act are all a threat to plant breeding undertaken for the benefit of farmers and the people of Canada. Although these changes pose a threat, as Glen points out, there are organizations, such as the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission (SaskWheat) and the Western Grain Research Foundation, which provide farmers with the power to direct plant breeding and agricultural research. But, when we have the opportunity to do so, such as during the upcoming elections to the board of SaskWheat, we need to make sure we use the power we have to keep those organizations working on behalf of farmers, just as we need to continue to push all levels of government to fund public plant breeding and agricultural research and extension.

If you have examples from your region of how farmers are working to make sure research and plant breeding is being done in our interest please let us know.

—Ann Slater

Chair, Editorial Advisory Committee

union farmer quarterly

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We believe a strong rural community in Canada is an essential part of our national culture. In the National Farmers Union, we work collectively to strengthen the farm community by: building ties between farmers in all parts of Canada, with farmers in other countries and with non-farm people; ensuring all people have access to an adequate, nutritious and safely-produced food supply; promoting equity for women and young people in the farming community; promoting social support systems that permit people in farming communities a good quality of life; promoting the development and maintenance of a Canadian infrastructure to serve Canadian goals in food production and trade; and helping governments to form fair and constructive policies related to food production and food trade.





A message from the President

— by Jan Slomp, National President

Democracy at Stake

In September 2016 I was in Brussels to hear firsthand from European farmers about their economic hardships. Board member Doug Scott recently forwarded an article from the *New York Times* about elevated farmer suicide rates in France. Millions of Mexican farmers have lost their livelihoods since the signing of NAFTA. Those who subsequently survived the journey into the US are often low paid migrant workers. They form part of the farm labour force responsible for the increased volumes of vegetables, pork, chicken, beef and dairy products. In return, that increased production further undermines farm gate prices in the countries where they are dumped. President Trump, elected because of popular discontent, wants a new NAFTA — one that serves America first. Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, made promising labour and environmental demands in advance of the NAFTA negotiations this summer and pointed at CETA as being a modern and successful trade agreement in the hope of achieving progress in those areas.

As Canadian farmers we regularly experience adverse, human-induced climate change resulting in weather conditions that add to our frustration and stress. There is, however, a suffering that runs deeper than weather worries — it is the prolonged struggle and sustained longing for fair farm gate prices. The lack of recognition of that struggle by the wider community and government puts salt in the wound. We have seen a gradual but steady deterioration of government policy, resulting in the loss of marketing boards, of regulation in the public interest, of government funded plant breeding, and of agricultural research and services. Time and again the NFU has submitted extensive briefs to government indicating the consequences of

proposed changes and offering positive alternatives to the problems. NFU submissions are increasingly ignored with growing arrogance. That is immensely frustrating, especially when one looks back and sees proof of our warnings playing out.

It is now clear that any hope of the Trudeau government implementing real change is severely dampened. Senior bureaucrats are deeply entrenched with the interest of large corporations, supported by affiliated think tanks and embedded media. Most check-off funded farm group representatives have also been ideologically massaged to fit into this inner sanctuary of corporate interests at work. It takes a clear alternate vision, a strong personality, and stamina for a newly elected minister to stand up to bureaucratic machinations and take a new direction from a truly fresh democratic influence. Minister MacAulay does not fit this model for change. Nor does the Prime Minister.

The danger of President Trump wanting a new NAFTA deal with clear American interests, is that Trudeau's government might be willing to sacrifice Canada's interests to achieve a new deal. He does not have a vision for an alternative to the neo-liberal agenda, despite his Minister's rhetoric of labour and the environment being on the table.

Civil society organizations, labour unions and farm organizations from Mexico, the US and Canada are preparing a campaign and actions this fall to demand an alternative to the present NAFTA — an alternative that recognizes the need for human development, for labour rights and livelihoods, and to preserve the natural world. The NFU is part of that organization and I would like to invite you to participate in the actions.

—In Solidarity, Jan Slomp





A message from the Women's President

— by Coral Sproule, Women's President

When I gazed upon an article entitled *Where are the farm women?* by Maggie Van Camp in the August 21, 2017 issue of *Country Guide* magazine, it certainly piqued my interest. Not least because the farmer pictured in the accompanying photo is NFU member and past National Youth President of our organization, Kalissa Regier. Kalissa is one of many women farmers who have been integral in my entering into and staying involved in agricultural politics, community organizing and social justice work. The article focused on the rising numbers of female farmers in both Canada and the U.S. and the distinct lack of representation on marketing boards, farm lobby groups, and even in the numbers we are receiving through our national census.

The census reports a mere 28.7% of farmers being female, whereas many farm organizations and agricultural colleges are reporting higher numbers of graduates and members respectively. Anecdotally, the number of new farmers that I have encountered in the last ten plus years I have been farming has been overwhelmingly female. The farm I currently work with employs four women and one man. The census data certainly does not necessarily reflect our diverse agricultural labour force or the many farms that are co-run or operated but may have the business name under a male farmer.

The article goes on to explain how many organizations like the Chicken Farmers of Ontario are attempting to better represent the growing diversity in a dwindling farm population by encouraging and onboarding women through mentorships, training, and other forms of support to ensure that this sometimes ignored, and always integral portion of the farming population, is involved. The analysis in this *Country Guide* article and others like it reflect a need for inclusion that we in the National Farmers Union have stressed since our first National Convention nearly fifty years ago, when positions for women and youth became enshrined in our constitution and specific to these roles, advocating for and encouraging participation of both women and youth in the NFU.

It feels as if these roles are necessary as much today as they were 50 years ago.

We are still seeing a need for support in entering into the realm of agricultural organizing and leadership, especially into our boards and governing bodies. At the Region 3 Convention this year in Ridgetown, Ontario, our membership passed a resolution to require our Region 3 board members to be made up of one man, one woman, and one youth. A working group has since been formed to determine ways to encourage future board gender diversity and participation of female and new farmers from the grassroots to contribute to the national work in the NFU.

In the current economic, social, and agricultural climate, it is ever more important to ensure all voices are represented around the development of government policies and norms in Canada and on an international level. At the 7th assembly of La Via Campesina (LVC), which was attended by several delegates of the NFU the declaration of the 5th assembly of the Women of LVC which “...represent the diversity of rural women: indigenous women, peasants, rural employees, fisherfolk, shepherds, artisans, young people, migrants and gatherers, who, through our productive and political work, contribute on a daily basis to the rural struggles and to the international movement of La Via Campesina”, also expressed the ongoing importance of inclusion in their declaration: “We recognize the ideological, political and legislative progress that has been made with regard to political participation. However, these advances are often not translated into practical policies for our daily lives, the States or our organisations.”

So please join the NFU, LVC and all of our women and sisters of the soil as we unite to strengthen the voice of those underrepresented in our communities and board rooms. We would like to encourage anyone interested in our Women’s Caucus and advisory work to please be in touch with myself or Katie Ward, Women’s Vice President, if you are looking for ways to get involved or seeking support in particular issues of importance in your own food and farming communities.

—In Solidarity, Coral Sproule





A message from the Youth

— by Ayla Fenton, NFU Youth President

Dear NFU members,

As you may have heard, the new 2016 census data released a few months ago confirms what we have known anecdotally for years - that there is an increasing number of young people turning to farming in Canada. According to the census, the number of farmers under 35 increased by 3% - the first increase since 1991. The total number of female farmers continues to increase as well, in part because the number of young female farmers is increasing much more rapidly than the number of young male farmers. This is an exciting kernel of news, but of course there is lots of bad news from the census as well. The total number of farms continues to decline, the average size of farms continues to increase, and a shocking 92% of farmers do not have a formal succession plan. Yet the Canadian government continues to behave as though there is nothing wrong with the demographic situation of agriculture. The census reports mention young people taking over family operations, but I have yet to see an acknowledgment of the many young people who are trying to get into farming from non-farm backgrounds.

In June, I represented the NFU at the Food Summit hosted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Ottawa. The Summit was intended to gather input for the development of the National Food Policy. As I mentioned in my last report, they have identified four “priority areas” for the Food Policy:

- increasing access to affordable food;
- improving health and food safety;
- conserving our soil, water and air; and
- growing more high-quality food.

The Food Policy will be an intergovernmental effort, involving the ministries of the environment, health, social development, and agriculture.

The priority area *growing more high quality food* has been specifically assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Naturally, that was the breakout session I chose to attend at the Summit - assuming that growing more food means growing more farmers. Right? Wrong. The ministry representatives opened the session by talking about their mandate to increase exports to \$70 billion by 2020. When they talked about *high quality*, they clearly meant standardized and highly regulated, not nutritious or sustainably produced. There was no mention of supporting new farmers.

They were, of course, met by incredulous stares from the participants, most of whom were academics, representatives of community organizations and food sovereignty advocates. The feedback from the group was unanimous - we need to focus on building local and regional markets in addition to export markets, and we need to remove regulatory barriers for those farmers who are trying



NFU member Shannon Jones

to sell their products locally. The government should be investing in organizations that are supporting new farmers on the ground, and develop a national farmland succession strategy. The ministry representatives seemed somewhat receptive to these ideas, but we need to make sure they continue to hear us.

But government consultations will only take us so far. Governments do not lead change, they follow it. More importantly, we need to continue to support each other as we build the future food system we want. They will catch up eventually.

—In Solidarity, Ayla Fenton



Regional Reports



Region One:

Provinces of PEI, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia

— by Reg Phelan, Coordinator



Our annual regional convention was held in Prince Edward Island during August. NFU Youth President Ayla Fenton delivered a presentation on what is needed to support new farmers. She was involved with a national survey and study. There is a big shift coming. Seventy-five percent of farmers plan to retire in ten years, and 92% of them have no succession plan. In this survey of new farmers, 83% were from non-farming backgrounds, with 58% being women. They are motivated by social and political concerns and want to be involved in local food production. Ayla says there is a need to ensure new farmers can make a liveable income. One of the biggest obstacles raised was access to land. She says there is a need for a national farmland policy that protects agricultural land and makes it accessible to new farmers. There also needs to be investment in local markets and distribution systems.

The NFU is becoming frustrated with the way government is siding with large corporate interests that are taking large tracts of land and are attempting to control most aspects of farming. The September issue of *Rural Delivery* magazine focused on this issue. Hopefully this pressure will result in the issue being taken more seriously.

Our annual meeting had a panel discussion on NAFTA and Supply Management, as we know this is a very important and topical issue. There was great discussion.

The Region 1 national board members are Phil Gervais and Reg Phelan; Women's Advisory, Carina Phillips; Youth Advisory, Brian Dyck; and International Program Committee, Jean Eudes Chaisson. ■

NFU-O/Region Three:

Province of Ontario

— by Emery Huszka, Coordinator



Finding wage fairness on the farm in 2017

Without question, NFU members can be proud of our social conscience which serves to guide our strong, farm influenced, policies. Recently, Ontario farmers were been introduced to a significant provincial minimum wage increase and while NFU policy clearly supports a fair living wage, we need to step back and take in the bigger social picture. Most NFU members who have spoken to me on this topic are certainly supportive of fair wages and improving the lives of farm labourers. Where some of our peers have clouded the waters is by leading the frustrated farm sector in their criticism without considering anything more than the mob reaction. Knocking a higher minimum wage is not helpful and we ought to be looking at the whole compensation table along with the breakdown of who pays what.

Fifteen dollars an hour is not the problem. Small businesses are facing a host of other costs, which are out of their control, and the costs for good programs are often too high. Again, we seem to be avoiding the topic of golden parachutes, whereby special, high importance people work short periods and receive hundreds of thousands, if not millions in some cases, as compensation because "they're worth it". How many \$15 an hour jobs would that cover?

We may well cringe at some on the sunshine list as well which make \$48 per hour or more! What is a fair wage distribution when the biggest numbers are concentrated amongst the smallest groups in our society? This is not to argue that people should

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(Region 3 Report, from page 6)

never see compensation for higher effort, but the scale is out of whack. People deserve a basic standard of living, and in turn, they owe a basic effort to society as contributors to improved communities.

So, as the water heats up on this topic all over Ontario, we discover humanity in our NFU policy, which recognizes the value of our fellow citizens but also respects the burden that particularly hard-working family businesses endure to provide that

fair living wage. We should not allow the conversation to be strictly about the lowest wages jumping up to \$15, but rather take a holistic view of the big picture and show leadership by challenging Canadians to find fair solutions that help employers, all communities, and families engage successfully in our economy. There are no easy answers, and we need a public debate on this critical topic. Please have thoughtful discussions with your farm neighbours and look for ways to make fairness the topic of our friendly talks versus reducing people's worth to hard minimum wage numbers. ■



Region Five:

Province of Manitoba

—by Ian Robson, Coordinator

What is the vision or expectation for Agriculture in Canada and in Manitoba?

A new concern in Manitoba is brewing with talks of commodity groups merging. It may be needed with smaller groups who have less money due to lower production, but having 7+ commodities merge creates a strain on directors to be fully informed on every commodity and the plethora of offshoot organizational meetings to attend that are attached to each. If this merger goes through fully it will water down farmers' ability to speak up when it counts. We urge members to make their concerns known. E-mail me to discuss further.

Checkoff dollars from farm income that goes to commodity organizations is meant to help farmers. Farmers are elected to be in charge of the checkoff organization, but all too often corporate ideals influence the direction of checkoff organizations. Some good happens from these dollars, like measuring management practices, and ensuring public plant breeding is protected but farmers with strong ethics, ability to participate and NFU values are needed. A farmer these days can easily spend one dollar per tonne / crop in checkoff money for wheat, canola,

barley, oats, peas, flax, winter cereals, sunflowers, and cattle. The NFU is needed to educate the next generation and encourage positive directions to these organizations if we want beneficial results.

Nationally, the continued pursuit of maximum crop for volume keeps leading to low farm gate prices, but it does provide a food cushion for our population. Canada's policy framework for the agricultural and agri-food sector, Growing Forward 1, 2 and now version 3, all have seen a reduction in support structures for farmers. Market prices have not kept pace with costs. Better management practices are needed and are being learned about with new research. However, farmers cooperating with farmers is a key practice not fully explored by the Growing Forward process.

Free trade deals have not yielded farmers more net income. Instead we have fewer farmers working larger holdings to maintain a standard living. Prices of our crops diminish due to excess production. The inventory of cattle is poorly managed by a demand management market. Cattle inventory increases can not happen if the demand keeps overtaking the expansion of the herd. Over expanding the herd will not be good for the market or the environment.

At last, the federal government is asking: "What should a National Food Policy look like?" and it wants the public to provide their thoughts. Food sovereignty should be central to Canadian people and democracy. This means that people debate what should be the market and business rules and then set the regulation rules as seen fit. So much of

(continued on page 8...)



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our Canadian economy is owned from outside our country that we need to regain our sovereignty. For example, Omnitrax suffered a blow of trying to provide needed service to Churchill including grain shipments. Our federal government ended the CWB which helped Omnitrax ship grain via Churchill. Magically, Omnitrax is now not able to, or is unwilling to, fix its track that was damaged by floodwaters in May, 2017. Had the federal government continued to own the Churchill railroad line under CN (keeping CN crown owned) those tracks would have been repaired as soon as the water receded and service would have continued. Our CWB would have provided farmers more money by shipping grain out of Churchill. Currently a consortium of multiple communities in Manitoba's North has bundled together, seeking to buy the line. This would be a better option than the status quo, but without vision and ongoing government support the invisible hand of the market has not worked for Churchill, nor for farmers, nor for indigenous people.

In Manitoba, government austerity is beginning to reduce the Manitoba rural economy. Nurses have been asked to re-apply for their jobs, presumably for less wages even though they have a contract. Nine hundred Manitoba Hydro workers, upon which we depend for our electrical services, are being asked to take buyouts for early retirement. We need these people to build our infrastructure and power generation capacity which will help power a 'green' future. Ambulance services have been cut and remote health service is threatened. Manitoba took far too long to sign onto the Medicare funding agreement with the federal government. Contrary to the Canada Health Act, a private expensive MRI clinic is being proposed. Each qualified technician taken to a private clinic is a loss to the service of public health.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan lag in plans to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in line with the Paris agreement, and have not signed up for available federal assistance dollars to develop and implement a GHG reduction plan. The federal government has allowed each province to do its own reduction plan. This leads to a mishmash of policy, although there could be some brave new policies discovered this way. Farmers do not want to be adversely affected by GHG reduction plans, but the NFU feels there is a win-win-win for farmers, the economy, and the environment if the GHG reduction

policy is well done to allow new energy and new management to be used. We want to see the NFU's work in Manitoba available to the public, but we are currently seeking partnerships for added resources.

The Manitoba Highways budget has been reduced and road repairs are still needed. All of this and a promise that the PST will be rolled back to 7% cannot be good for farmers. Farmers need to be earning money so they can pay fair taxes to support needed services, especially since heavy trucks now run more miles on public highways rather than short hauls to rails. Farmers' loss per acre from the CWB ending far outweigh what would be spent in the 1% added sales tax. Context matters, so does vision.

Here is an example of big picture analysis from 20 years ago, from a March 18, 1997 House of Commons Agriculture Committee hearing with Ken Sigurdson as a witness:

http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/archives/committee/352/agfo/evidence/68_97-03-HYPERLINK
["http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/archives/committee/352/agfo/evidence/68_97-03-18/agfo68_blk-e.html"](http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/archives/committee/352/agfo/evidence/68_97-03-18/agfo68_blk-e.html)18/agfo68_blk-e.html from #1555 to #1605 :

"The amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, in my view, cannot be seen outside the things that are happening in Canadian agricultural policy, such as the World Trade Organization, NAFTA, the elimination of the WGTA, and now the proposed privatization of the Canadian Wheat Board. The impact of all these changes is to move power from farmers to transnational corporations. For instance, Dwayne Andreas, CEO of ADM, said at a news conference in Winnipeg that "free trade is for corporations like ADM, farmers waiting for free trade is just like leaving the porch light on for Jimmy Hoffa". et all of these things happen.

This is a transformation process, and I'm suggesting that various things have been done by farm leaders in this country. The SEO process, the Western Grain Marketing Panel, the National Safety Net Consultation Committee, the Blue Ribbon Commission, and numerous other committees to eliminate the WGTA have all been created by government. These farm industry leaders and farm leaders have complied and made the changes."

Remember what Roy Atkinson said, "Keep your eye on the doughnut not the hole." ■





Region Six:

Province of Saskatchewan

—by *Nettie Wiebe, Member*

The leadership team of Region 6, ably guided by Coordinator Rachele Ternier, organized an excellent regional convention, June 27 & 28th in Saskatoon.

It began with a challenging, informative and inspiring public event focusing on the complex, unresolved and sometimes contentious relationships between those peoples whose ancestors lived on this land for thousands of years and those whose ancestors largely displaced them when they settled here less than 200 years ago. The shooting death of a young aboriginal person on a Saskatchewan farm last summer exposed just how dangerous and troubled these relations continue to be in many rural communities. Against this background the Region 6 leadership team demonstrated courage and care by inviting public dialogue on land, settlement, dispossession and justice. Their aim was to provoke “discussion around sharing land, understanding colonization and decolonization and building relationships between farmers and indigenous peoples.”

The evening began with the screening of a documentary “Reserve 107” filmed in the Laird farming community. The film tells a Saskatchewan story about Mennonites, Lutherans and the Young Chippewyan

First Nation coming together to figure out how to honour a violated and long-neglected treaty relationship. It is an honest story of pain, fear, determination, trust and hope – and a shared love of the land.

The ensuing discussion was opened by panelists Gary LaPlante, a councilor from Young Chippewyan First Nation; Sheila McLean, an education professor; and Barbara and Wilmer Froese, a farming couple from Laird who participated in the reconciliation efforts documented in the film. What followed was a rich, diverse and respectful conversation that set the tone for further work on this ongoing issue.

The regional convention took place in a political context that continues to threaten family farming and rural communities. NFU President Jan Slomp reminded us of the big picture challenges while other speakers focused on Saskatchewan specific issues such as public pastures, cooperatives and rural services. Having lost rail services years ago, rural communities have now been dealt a further blow as the government has shut down the public bus services which carried passengers, parcels and farm machinery parts.

While Saskatchewan was spared some of the tempestuous weather that other parts of Canada and the world suffered over the summer, conditions for farming have been far from ideal. High temperatures accompanied by dry winds have left some areas with sparse pastures, hay shortages and low crop yields.

Difficult weather (political and physical) make the solidarity, energy, collective wisdom and work of the NFU more important than ever. ■



Region Seven:



Province of Alberta

— by Doug Scott, Board Member

Greetings from Region 7. As I write this in late

August, harvest is just around the corner in our neck of the woods. What started out as a late and wet spring turned into a great growing season with lots of moisture and sunshine. The pea harvest is now underway and swathing of canola has just started.

Our annual convention and AGM was held in Waskatenau on July 29. It was a well attended event which offered something for everyone. Kudos to the organizers. Valerie and Greg Cruikshank, who are new entrants into supply management, were our first presenters. They explained how they got involved in the fertilized egg business. They started their business from scratch and with a lot of hard work and attention to detail were able to put together a viable business plan. Very important to their plan was the security provided within the supply managed framework. It was interesting to see how their enthusiasm had propelled them through all of the hard work involved in getting their successful business off the ground.

Our second presenter was Dwayne White, a young entrepreneur who is the owner of Eneray Solar. Dwayne's excellent presentation focused on solar energy systems and the exciting role that they can play in meeting our farms energy needs. Dwayne highlighted the number of options available and briefed us on available government programs that help to offset the cost of solar panel systems.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE!!

Do you want to advertise your farm operation, your business or an upcoming event to fellow NFU members?

Do you know a business or organization that is of interest to NFU members?

We will now be placing a limited number of advertisements in the UFQ. The cost will be \$125 per issue for business card size ads and \$300 per issue for quarter page ads. **The deadline to receive ads for the winter issue of the UFQ is January 5.** Print copies should start to hit mailboxes around the end of January.

Please send your advertisements to:

**Joan Lange, NFU office, at lange@nfu.ca
and to**

**Ann Slater, Chair of the NFU Editorial Advisory
Committee at aslater@quadro.net**

Disclaimer: The inclusion of advertising, logos or website links in this publication does not constitute an endorsement by the National Farmers Union of the products or services so advertised. The NFU reserves the right to publish only advertisements that are aligned with NFU policy. The Editorial Committee of the NFU will review each request and decide its suitability.

In the afternoon we heard from David Dodge and Joe Jopin who are experts in the field of solar energy. Their informative session was full of information on the potential of alternative energy systems.

Our final event was a panel, lead by Mandy Melnyk, that focused on ways to engage indigenous youth in agriculture.

The day concluded with a bus tour of the historic Victoria Trail and a pig roast hosted by Cory Ollikka at his farm. ■

The National Farmers Foundation is pleased to welcome former NFU executive director **Carla Roppel as our newest board member.**

The NFF would also like to thank the NFU membership for its continued support. Your donations allow the NFF to provide funding to activities like the NFU Youth's leadership retreat, which was featured in the last *Quarterly*. We all benefit from the education, activism, and momentum created by these gatherings as the next generation of farm leadership builds its capacity and networks.

A final note, **if you wish to donate using your credit card, please find the National Farmers Foundation on www.CanadaHelps.org**



Reflections on Changes to Risk Management Programs

—by Tony Straathof, Region 3 Board Member

The federal government is in the midst of modifying the current agriculture risk management programs. The new program will be called the Canada Agriculture Partnership and will be implemented on April 1, 2018. No new programs will be added and all existing programs will continue with modifications; the goal being to increase participation, specifically in AgriStability and AgriInvest.

AgriStability participation is currently approximately 30%. It is an effective risk management tool for income stability, but it is also an inventory management tool so that participation in the program reduces the risk to rely on the program. The downfall is in Part 3 where the provinces may choose where and when to trigger the program, which makes AgriStability less universal nationally.

In the AgriStability program, a late participation mechanism has been added that provincial governments can trigger to allow producers to enter the program late in situations where there is a significant income decline and a gap in participation. This mechanism will only be triggered in response to significant events and benefits will be reduced by 20% for producers who enroll late, to encourage regular annual enrollment by producers. This measure is intended to allow governments to ensure all producers can access AgriStability support when a significant decrease in revenue threatens the viability of the farm, should provinces choose to trigger it.

The Western Livestock Price Insurance Program (WLPPI) remains unchanged. WLPPI is fully funded in western Canada by the federal and provincial governments. Ontario has chosen a cost of production livestock risk management program

(RMP). It is not federally funded. There are no changes proposed to either program.

AgriInvest will have its maximum Allowable Net Sales (ANS) reduced from 1.5 million to 1 million per farm, and therefore, maximum government matching contributions per farm will be reduced from \$15,000 to \$10,000. The minimum payment will increase from \$75 to \$250. This means start up farms and part timers with less than \$25,000 of ANS will not participate. The AgriInvest changes were made to counter the extra funds needed in the modified AgriStability. From a farmer perspective, the changes in AgriInvest will remove a risk management tool from small and start up farmers with less than \$25,000 of ANS.

From a farmer perspective, the changes in AgriInvest will remove a risk management tool from small and start up farmers with less than \$25,000 of ANS.

Consensus from all provinces was not reached for the proposed changes. The ministers did agree, however, to a year-long review to assess how well the BRM programs are working. This was a request from Ontario and a coalition of farm organizations in that province. The programs will continue during the

assessment period to ensure there is no lapse in risk management protection.

It should be noted that the current federal government is also in the process of modifying the Income Tax Act as it relates to farm businesses. Proposed changes include removing cash deferral tickets and making changes to capital gains taxes and transfers of corporate farm shares within a family. The above programs are used to manage risk in a farming operation while not requiring farmers to enroll in programs. All the changes do suggest, however, that not participating in the Agri programs will make family farms more vulnerable to risk as a result of unforeseen events. ■



Putting Values into Action:

NFU members make a difference!

In this edition of the *Union Farmer Quarterly*, we would like to introduce **PHIL GERVAIS**, a new board member, as well as **BILL BOCOCK** and **ROB COWAN**, two long-term NFU members/donors. One of the NFU's strengths is that we are a membership based organization with elected leaders who are guided by resolutions passed at our annual convention. Many of our members donate to the NFU to ensure that it continues to do its work to help protect Canadian family farms. Over the next few issues, we will be learning more about some of our other long-time members who also generously donate to the work of the NFU above and beyond their membership fees.

Region 1 (New Brunswick) Board Member



—Phil Gervais

Avec deux générations le séparant du métier, Philippe Gervais est un agriculteur acadien âgé de 26 ans. Originaire de Grand-Sault NB, il a passé la majorité de sa vie adolescente dans la ville de Moncton, NB pour ensuite poursuivre ses études à

Ottawa, ON. Après avoir travaillé sur une ferme laitière dans la région de Salisbury, son aventure agro-écologique débuta lorsqu'il prit le chemin de l'Ouest et se rendit à Haida Gwaii en Colombie-Britannique afin d'entreprendre sa première saison de maraîcher. Cette aventure le mena vers le sud où il continua de travailler sur plusieurs fermes en Amérique centrale pour éventuellement revenir au NB. et compléter sa deuxième saison en tant que maraîcher à Strawberry Hill Farm dans la région de Woodstock NB. La continuité de son cheminement à La Ferme Terre Partagée est pour lui une façon de poursuivre ses objectifs de faire partie d'une communauté agricole résiliente et créer un mouvement social du bas vers le haut ancré dans une économie locale de nourriture saine, écologique et durable.

"Trouver la solution à tous les problèmes du monde je ne pourrai jamais. Montrer l'exemple et inspirer les gens autour de moi à vivre une vie simple mais qui est infiniment riche dans les bienfaits qu'elle offre, ça je peux et dans le fond

c'est ça pour moi être paysan. Une semence à la fois, une conversation à la fois, sans mettre tous nos oeufs dans le même panier, c'est comme ça qu'on saura et pourra redéfinir le Nouveau-Brunswick, à notre façon afin de pouvoir continuer à y vivre ensemble pour des générations à venir!"

Il travaille présentement à temps plein comme maraîcher avec la Ferme Terre Partagée et gère entièrement la production d'oeufs ainsi que la production de Kombucha que celle-ci offre au publique. ■

Region 7 (Alberta) Long-Time Member & Donor



—Bill Bocock

NAFTA is in the news. NFU President, Jan Slomp, reminds us that under NAFTA, farm input costs have soared and inflation-adjusted commodity prices have dropped, contributing to a record level of farm debt. Increasing demand

for locally produced food allows opportunities. Post dairy farming, my brother John and I are working with a neighbour, Delton Jubinville, to raise grass finished certified organic beef. We are establishing a herd of Galloway and North (Red) Devon cattle to provide quality beef. With the help of friends and neighbours we enjoy the produce of over one acre of garden.

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We were third generation dairy farmers, so we marketed milk prior to supply management. The fate of dairy farmers in countries where orderly milk marketing has been dismantled are negative precedents. Attacks on supply management appear to be orchestrated. In 1970 and 1971, the Bocock farm won the *Greater Average Milk Butter Fat Award* as the highest producing herd in Alberta. I served as a delegate for Northern Alberta Dairy Pool and Agrifoods International Dairy Cooperative. We received the Dairy Industry Achievement Award in 2016 from the Alberta Milk Organization.

I graduated in 1952 from the Vermillion School of Agriculture. I was an elected delegate to the Alberta Cattle Commission from 1979 to 1985. In 1992, I was an intervenor in the Energy Resources Conservation Board of Alberta sour gas hearings. That same year our farm was named *Farm of the Year* by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). I served as a board member of Big Lake Environmental Support Society and I am presently a board member of the Alberta Surface Rights Federation. I participated in the Farmers' Dialogues in India, Thailand and the USA as a supporter of Initiatives of Change, formerly Moral Re-Armament, which is an international, ecumenical charity. I support St. Albert United Church, Regents College in Vancouver, and King's University in Edmonton.

I am profoundly grateful for three opportunities:

- farming during the period when machinery complemented manual labour but was not too sophisticated;
- farming in partnership with my brother John in a family company, W.G. Bocock & Sons, established by our late father Geoff Bocock, and;
- thirty-six years of happy marriage to a wonderful wife, Phyllis.

Phyllis's parents, Esther and Alfred Ellett, farmed south of Edmonton. Their farm, now a centennial farm, was homesteaded in 1885 by Charles Ellett. In 2009, the Bocock family, Bill, Phyllis, John and Jenny, with their daughter, Rachel, sold 777 acres of their farm to the University of Alberta at a fraction of the appraised value. This gift of land was the largest ever made to a Canadian university. Subsequently, Edwin and Ruth Matthais gifted their 12,000 acre southern Alberta ranch to the University of Alberta. ■

Region 5 (Manitoba) Long-Time Member & Donor



—Rob Cowan

Rob is currently operating a centennial family farm homesteaded in 1899 by his Great Grandfather Robert Cowan. The Cowan Farm is located in the beautiful Swan River Valley of north-western

Manitoba near the village of Kenville. Rob's involvement in the farm makes him a fourth generation farmer on both sides of his family. His dad, Arnold, still actively operates machinery during seeding and harvest. The early years of mixed farming have given way to the current conventional grains and oilseeds farm. Today, they crop 2325 acres of wheat, canola and flax with half of the land rented from close neighbours and relatives that have passed multi-generational land on to them, creating a strong connection to all the land they farm. Rob estimates six family farms once worked the land that his family now does.

Rob started his career like many farmers, working off farm as a mechanic at an Ag dealership, eventually coming back to the farm full time in 1998 with the building of a shop to do custom repairs in his spare time. Rob became an NFU member when he got interested in farm policy. His interest in the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) drew him into the fight to maintain our single-desk selling agency by getting involved in CWB director elections.

Rob is interested in preserving soil health and practices reduced tillage. Having practiced minimum tillage for over 15 years he is generally concerned about the sustainability of conventional farming. He wishes crop decisions could be made based on agronomics alone and not economics. The emotional bonds and attachments that come with the business of family farms has certainly been the motivation for decades of farm life and is not for the weak at heart. ■



7e Conférence de LVC présenté des symboles forts de résistance et de réussites collectives

—par Jean-Eudes Chiasson

Le 15 juillet, je m'envolais pour Bilbao au Pays Basque, en Espagne, pour la 7e conférence de La Via Campesina. Si je connaissais l'organisation depuis bien des années, je ne m'attendais pas à voir une organisation aussi bien rodée, professionnelle et de grande envergure. Alors que plus de 500 participants et autant de personnels de soutien, dont plus d'une centaine de traducteurs et d'interprètes bénévoles, y participaient, les ateliers sur les différents sujets ont été informatifs, mais ce sont les rencontres qui restent mémorables et enrichissantes pour moi, tant professionnellement que personnellement.

Les défis qui sont infligés sur plusieurs paysans, particulièrement les Palestiniens et plusieurs autres mouvements des pays du Sud, ne peuvent nous laisser indifférents. Toutefois, les succès qu'ont connu plusieurs mouvements, spécialement le Mouvement des sans-terres (MST) et les petits paysans, au nombre de plusieurs millions, sont des symboles forts de résistance et de réussites collectives. Grâce aux efforts collectifs et aux luttes acharnées des mouvements de défense des paysans et en réclamant l'assistance de leur gouvernement, plusieurs initiatives ont permis à des millions de paysans et paysannes de participer à l'essor économique qu'ont connu l'Amérique latine et plusieurs régions d'Asie du Sud-est.

Il m'a aussi été possible de rencontrer, et de discuter en profondeur, avec des représentants français de la Confédération paysanne, le pendant de L'UNF en France. Je cherchais à comprendre leur succès, alors qu'il bénéficie d'une équipe de vingt personnes dans leur bureau de Paris ainsi que de 3 ou 4 employés dans chaque département.

Si l'effet de José Bové fut catalyseur pour ce mouvement, il n'en est pas moins que l'engagement de milliers de paysans en a fait un des mouvements de défense ayant le plus des succès dans les pays du nord et très respectés en Europe.

Lors de mon séjour, j'ai appris que la prochaine conférence de La Via Campesina devrait normalement se tenir dans les Amériques, plus particulièrement dans la région du nord, c'est-à-dire au Mexique, au Canada ou aux États-Unis. Sachant que le Mexique a déjà été l'hôte de la 2e conférence il serait de mise qu'elle ait lieu aux États-Unis ou au Canada.

Le comité international de l'UNF a déjà manifesté son soutien à l'idée de tenir la 8e conférence de La Via Campesina au Canada, souhaitons que le Conseil national de L'UNF apporte lui aussi son soutien sans restriction à cette initiative. L'exposition internationale, ainsi que l'effet catalyseur que ce genre d'événement donne à un pays, et une région du monde, n'est pas négligeable, alors qu'aucun effort ne doit être ménagé pour mener à bien ce projet.

En toute solidarité! Jean-Eudes Chiasson

Supporting Migrant Workers in Our Communities

The NFU's International Program Committee (IPC) is seeking more member involvement in its Migrant Worker Subcommittee. This committee seeks to extend and deepen the NFU's understanding of migrant farm worker issues by providing information to members, offering recommendations to the National Board, and providing a forum for members to share resources and learn together.

The NFU has committed to solidarity with agricultural workers, whether Canadian residents or migrant workers. Through *La Via Campesina*, the global movement that brings together organizations representing small- and medium-scale farmers, peasants, agricultural workers, rural women and Indigenous communities, the NFU works to support the struggles of migrant farm workers both in Canada and around the world, recognizing that many of these workers are farmers who have been forced off the land in their home countries as a result of global free trade agreements.

Within Canada, the NFU has urged the federal and provincial governments to uphold the rights and improve the conditions of migrant farm workers. In 2016 the NFU endorsed the Mobility, Voice and Equality for Migrant Workers (MoVE) Campaign organized by the Coalition for Migrant Workers Rights - Canada. The NFU joined in the call for regulatory changes so that migrant workers can more easily move between jobs and be offered permanent residency. For more about the campaign, visit www.migrantrights.ca. The Migrant Worker Subcommittee also sponsored a screening of the film *Migrant Dreams* at the 2016 NFU Convention to raise awareness of the isolation, discrimination and vulnerability many low-wage migrant workers face under Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

We would like to hear your ideas of how we could support migrant farm workers in our communities, and if you are interested in joining the Migrant Worker Subcommittee, please contact the NFU's IPC Coordinator, Carla Fehr, at: ipccoordinator@nfu.ca.



Important steps forward for youth and diversity within La Via Campesina

—by Ayla Fenton, NFU Youth President

I was honoured and proud to represent the NFU Youth at La Via Campesina's (LVC) 7th International Conference in July. The International Conference happens once every four years and is the largest gathering and political decision-making space of LVC. La Via Campesina is increasingly recognized as the world's largest grassroots social movement, and represents over 200 million peasants, farmers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, migrants and landless peoples in 79 countries. Most member organizations sent delegations to the 7th conference, which made for an incredible experience of diversity and solidarity. It is hard to describe in a short report the energy and emotion of an event like this – I would encourage you to check out the LVC website for more articles, videos and photos at <https://viacampesina.org/en/who-are-we/our-conferences/7-derio-2017-our-conferences/>.

The 4th International Youth Assembly took place in the days leading up to the main conference. It was

a chance to introduce new youth members to the movement, and to identify our specific struggles as youth. It is motivating to realize that although our problems manifest very differently across the globe, we are all fundamentally struggling against the globalized forces of capitalism and patriarchy. Patriarchy means that the voices of women and youth are undervalued and excluded from decision making processes throughout the world. Much of our discussion at the Youth Assembly focused on increasing the voice and power of youth within LVC - the change we want to see in the world must be manifest first within our own movement. We made an important step forward in convincing the broader movement that there needs to be more youth representation in leadership positions. The International Coordinating Committee which is currently composed of one man and one woman from each region agreed to add positions for a youth from

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each region but only after some pushback and difficult conversation. This will allow youth to take on greater responsibility within the movement, and to improve the functioning and connection of our international and regional youth articulations. The youth articulation of LVC is a crucial organizing space - we are fortunate within the NFU that youth voices are raised and celebrated, but that is not the case in many organizations. For many of my LVC compañeros, this international youth articulation is the only space that they can effectively organize and be heard.

The 7th conference created several important advancements for diversity within LVC. In the North American region, for example, we have so far failed to include Indigenous voices in our movement building. But for the 7th conference, the region allowed the NFU to invite an Indigenous ally to join us - Dawn Morrison, of the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (WGIFS) (www.indigenousfoodsystems.org). We hope the WGIFS will eventually join LVC, but in the meantime we have initiated some important debates and we are very grateful to Dawn for sharing her knowledge and experience with us.

Another first at this conference was a self-organized side meeting of LGBTQ+ members and allies. The struggle of LGBTQ+ peasants and rural peoples so far has not been unaddressed by LVC, but not without reason - in many countries, gender and sexual diversity are such taboo subjects that discussion can result in real physical danger for our members. This meeting

was called to begin a conversation about how we can support and promote the rights of our LGBTQ+ members while keeping everyone safe. For me, this was the most moving part of the conference. Many of the participants said that the meeting was the first time in their lives that they had the opportunity to speak openly about their identity. We drafted a short statement to share with the rest of the conference, emphasizing that the creation of *a diverse, non-violent and inclusive countryside* is fundamental to our broader struggle. I think this is an issue the NFU should begin to open up a conversation about as well. While we are extraordinarily fortunate in Canada compared to many places in the world, LGBTQ+ folk in our countryside still face severe discrimination, violence and oppression.

I have returned home with renewed commitment to working with the NFU and to connecting our work in global solidarity. I am currently working with youth across North America to develop a regional process for agroecology training and continental exchanges. I am grateful to former NFU Women's President, Joan Brady for taking on the regional coordinator position and for her commitment to improving our regional functioning. Under her leadership I am sure we will accomplish great things over the next four years.

I look forward to the opportunity to speak with more of you in person about this experience, and to explore ways in which the NFU can strengthen our international ties.

Viva la Via Campesina! ■

The Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing

Award Criteria and Details:

- There are two age categories – 15 to 21 years old, and 22 to 30 years old. One award in the amount of \$500 will be awarded in each age category for a **NON-FICTION OPEN LETTER** 500-1000 words in length. **Applicants can only win once per age category.**
- **THIS YEAR'S THEME IS: WHAT DOES SOCIAL LICENSE MEAN TO YOU?**
- Deadline for entries is November 1, 2017.
- The winners will be announced at the NFU Convention in Ottawa, November 2017.
- All or some entries may be published by the National Farmers Union.

Send entries to the National Farmers Union:

By email: nfu@nfu.ca, or by mail 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.





National Farmers Union
Union Nationale des Fermiers



NFU 48th Annual Convention

Convention Theme : Farm Renewal

November 23rd to 25th, 2017

Holiday Inn Ottawa East

1199 Joseph Cyr Street, Ottawa, ON K1J 7T4

FOR ROOM RESERVATIONS, CALL:

613-744-1060 (direct) or 1-800-387-9779 (toll-free)

(Group Code: NFU or refer to the NFU Convention and dates of event)

Room Rate: \$129 single or double

To receive this convention rate, rooms must be booked by October 22, 2017.

(\$10 additional fee for third/fourth person) Parking is ample and complimentary.

SEE PAGE 23 FOR INFORMATION ON APPLYING FOR A CONVENTION BURSARY

ARE YOU TRAVELLING TO CONVENTION BY VIA RAIL OR WESTJET??

VIA RAIL INFORMATION:

VALID: November 21st to 27th, 2017 from all stations throughout the VIA system to **Ottawa, Ontario** and return.

RESTRICTIONS: Fare applies to a maximum of two passengers per booking. One complimentary stopover is allowed at no additional charge. For travel on all fare plans in Business class, the first stopover is allowed at no additional charge, provided that this stopover takes place in Toronto, Montréal or Ottawa only.

DISCOUNT: **10% off the best available fare in Economy, Economy Plus, Business, Business Plus, Sleeper class.** "Subject to the conditions and restrictions of the fare plan to which the additional discount is being applied."

EXCEPTION: Discount does not apply in any **Escape fares and Prestige Class.**

IDENTIFICATION: Participants must reference the event's VIA convention discount code: **13547.**

Online booking tips: You have to log in to your profile, or create one prior to booking. On the Passenger information screen, select "Convention fare" from the "Discount Type" drop-down menu, and enter the discount code for your convention in the "Discount code" field. This code has been given to you by the conference organizer. The conference fare will be shown on the next page.

WESTJET INFORMATION:

WestJet is offering **10% off Econo** and **15% off Plus** base fares* for travel between **Ottawa** and anywhere WestJet flies in **North America**. To take advantage of this offer, you will need the discount codes listed below. Please use both the coupon and promo code when booking with a travel agent.

Book by: December 7, 2017

Travel from: November 17, 2017 to December 7, 2017

Coupon code:

P3WTGA0

Promo code: *For travel agent use only

YOW03



In Resistance to Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline: Indigenous Rights and Future Generations

—by Gillian McDonald

What is the Kinder Morgan Pipeline?

On November 29, 2016, the current federal government approved the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion and Tanker Project (KMX). The pipeline is set to expand an existing line running 1,150 km south-west from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia (Metro Vancouver), crossing 1,309 waterways and nearly tripling capacity of the pipeline from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels a day. It would also increase the number of tankers in Metro Vancouver waters seven-fold from five to 34 per month (approximately 400 tankers per year). Despite international companies' divestment, Indigenous resistance and mass public opposition, KMA president Ian Anderson announced the project in on track to begin construction in September 2017ⁱ with the support of the federal government. However, "two-thirds of the 120 First Nations along the pipeline route have not given their free, prior and informed consent for the pipeline"ⁱⁱ.

Violations of Indigenous Rights and Sovereignty

Indigenous communities are at the forefront of resistance. In a recent press release, the Secwepmc have called for a moratorium on all pipelines running through their territories. Dawn Morrison, Secwepemc founder of the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty explains, "The health of our families and communities relies heavily on our ability to harvest wild salmon and access clean drinking water, both of which are at risk if the Kinder Morgan pipeline was ruptured or impacted by the fires."ⁱⁱⁱ In these ways and many more, the pipeline will impact thousands of Indigenous peoples, threaten their right to food sovereignty and infringe on their Nationhood and sovereignty^{iv}. The federal

... the pipeline will impact thousands of Indigenous peoples, threaten their right to food sovereignty and infringe on their Nationhood and sovereignty.

government pushing through with KMX is a clear and direct violation of many Indigenous Nations' right to free and prior informed consent and breaches confidence in the democratic process.

Future Generations, Future Farmers

This pipeline is not just an indigenous issue. It would affect the health of the land and waters impacting all of us. The creation of this pipeline means putting ecosystems along the pipeline route at risk and it could be absolutely devastating. The risks associated with this project include a 40% increase in greenhouse gas emissions in violation of the 2015 Paris agreement. An oil-spill risk assessment from scientists at Simon Fraser University indicates "a high likelihood" of a tanker spill.^v Leaks and spills could poison watersheds negatively impacting many aspects of agriculture as well as salmon populations.

Additionally, this project will put at risk hundreds of other ocean species with increased tanker traffic. This is an issue of farmer food security because our communities would suffer the negative health and economic impacts of pollutants in the water and soils we rely on. ■

Gillian McDonald is a farmer and member of the Indigenous Solidarity working group.

ⁱ Feb 8 2017. The Council of Canadians. <https://canadians.org/blog/council-canadians-secwepemc-nation-meetings-vs-kinder-morgan-pipeline>

ⁱⁱ *ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*

^{iv} UNDRIP.

^v <http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Kinder+Morgan+underestimating+environmental+health+risk+pipeline+expansion+report/1108373/story.html>



Let's keep our public, farmer-directed plant breeding research system intact

—by Glenn Tait

For many years public plant breeding has been an invaluable part of farming in Canada. On the prairies, for the last thirty years the yield increases from new publicly funded wheat varieties have slightly edged out the yield increases from canola varieties and this has been achieved for about one third the cost. Though canola was famously created with public funding, its varietal development is now largely private. There is also little risk of a new public variety being contractually tied to a patented chemical application regime, in contrast to what seems to be the strategy of corporate crop developers. Long live public plant breeding!

One of the jobs the former and greatly missed Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) had was to invest in varietal development for wheat and barley on behalf of farmers. With the death of the CWB, its farmer-directed research capacity was also lost. To fill the gap, the Prairie Provinces created, or adapted, provincial Wheat and Barley Commissions. I was lucky enough to be elected to the first regular board

of the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission. Many of you also know Bill Gehl and Professor Ken Rosaasen who work with me on the SaskWheat board.

The farmer-directed Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF) also invests in public research, both varietal and agronomic. You might have heard that the Western Canadian Deduction, the levy that was the regular funding for the WGRF, ended as of August 1 and has now become part of the Commissions' levy. Though funding for wheat and barley breeding will almost entirely be taken over by the Commissions by 2020, the WGRF is continuing on. None of its projects will be left unfinished. The WGRF plan for the future is to intensify its research into agronomics and emerging crops. Of course it still manages and will use the significant endowment, created from funds the railways must pay to compensate for rail freight overcharges as calculated by the Maximum Revenue Entitlement formula.

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Harvesting in Saskatchewan, September 2017.



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As the provincial Commissions take over cereal breeding from the WGRF they will not be re-inventing the wheel, nor will they create overlap and duplication. The same people will be working on much the same operations as before -- and there are so few researchers (only about a dozen project heads in wheat) that everyone knows what everyone else is doing anyway.

The next thing on the horizon is End Point Royalties (EPRs), which the provincial wheat and barley commissions are currently meeting to discuss. Amending Canada's Plant Breeders Rights legislation to adopt UPOV '91 did not mean that EPRs were automatic, but it did provide the legal framework to allow them to be brought in.

An EPR involves a royalty of perhaps \$2 -\$5/t of grain sold, paid to the owner of the plant breeder's rights for the particular variety of grain. For the first several years Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Crop Development Center (CDC) would be the major collector of EPR dollars as they hold Plant Breeders Rights for most of our current cereal varieties. Some people might find this acceptable, but over time things would change.

Dr. Richard Gray, agricultural economics professor at the University of Saskatchewan, reports that varietal development in wheat has a 20:1 and barley an 8:1 return on investment. Also, large agricultural research corporations generally only invest about 10% of their returns back in to research. Currently, public and farmer investment in cereals breeding is in the low tens of millions. If EPRs make possible returns of a few hundred million to variety owners, private companies will be eager to shove aside AAFC and the CDC and take over control of cereals breeding.

There is a big push by the federal government's Grains Value Chain Roundtable and others to increase investment in cereals plant breeding. For some reason, many think this can only come from the private sector, even though we have a track record of highly successful breeding programs that are publicly funded by AAFC and/or farmer-directed and funded through our levies. The levies are collected and then farmers decide where the money will be spent, based on farmers' interests.

A privately-funded breeding program would be funded by farmers – because the only possible place

a royalty can come from is the farmer's portion of the price of grain – but it would be directed by corporations according to their own self-interest. It is tremendously important to remember that. Why would we want to set up an EPR system to pump our money from our pockets to the bank accounts of Bayer and Syngenta shareholders?

If you are a wheat producer in Saskatchewan make sure you vote for the candidates who support public plant breeding in this fall's SaskWheat election. For those outside of Saskatchewan, impress upon your commission directors and/or politicians that it is vital that we do not move to an EPR system. Farmers want to keep the rewards of their own hard work for themselves. It's part of our theme song, isn't it? ■

Glen Tait is a former NFU board member and currently on the board of SaskWheat.

Important Information for NFU Members

NFU MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE

As a result of rising costs, the NFU Board has made the decision to increase all membership fees by approximately 15% **starting January 2018.**

The new fee structure will be presented at the NFU National Convention in November 2017.

***We thank you for your understanding
and continued support.***



Seeds, Democracy and End Point Royalties

—by Terry Boehm



When the Harper Government extensively amended the Plant Breeders Rights Act, calling the new the new legislation Bill C-18 *The Agricultural Growth Act*, they enacted UPOV'91. This is an international convention created by plant breeders and private seed companies giving them extensive control over seeds and greatly restricting what farmers and the public can do with seeds of protected varieties. Protected varieties are those varieties that have been registered since the new legislation came into effect. The legislation also put in place the legal mechanism to allow for the collection of End Point Royalties (EPRs). EPRs are charged on every bushel or tonne of grain a farmer sells. Where farmers grow forage crops like alfalfa, the EPR is charged every time they cut the crop in some jurisdictions. Australia is one example of where this takes place.

End Point Royalties are argued to be appropriate to generate returns on investment from varietal development. This of course is a private tax on farmers, which, as the American newspaper columnist H.L Menken said years ago, “for every human problem there is an answer that is simple, elegant and wrong.”

The fundamental problems with End Point Royalties are such:

- The end use of the funds collected are not directed by the public or farmers.
- They do not necessarily create innovation, but rather reward past developments.
- If a variety is particularly successful and widely used, all the funds flow to one party potentially creating a monopoly.
- Farmers have no control over the level they are set.
- Varieties that are developed will maximize private interests rather than the public interest.
- They will facilitate increasingly tighter private control of seeds.
- Farmers lose autonomy and are put in a position of having to comply with mechanisms that are imposed on them.

- Farmers will have to prove variety of their grain at time of sale so that funds can be allocated to the variety developer/owner.

One of the great rallying cries of new countries - including Canada - seeking to free themselves from empires was, “no taxation without representation”. This became a fundamental principle of democracy. Endpoint Royalties fly in the face of this principle.

EPRs are a mechanism that assumes that only the private sector can innovate, that seeds should be owned and controlled by private interests, and that farmers must pay on their whole harvest for the privilege of using seeds.

For thousands of years farmers selected and developed new varieties of seeds and shared them amongst themselves. In the last hundred or so years, governments and public universities have largely been responsible for bringing forward new varieties that responded to changing diseases, increased yields and a host of other considerations. It was widely recognized that a relatively small public investment in varietal development generated huge returns to the economy in general and to farmers in particular.

Farmers in Canada generate huge returns to the Canadian economy, making one of the largest positive contributions to Canada’s balance of payments through their grain sales. Public research and varietal development paid for through general taxation was the tradeoff made for the general benefit.

Farmers nevertheless are now paying extensively for varietal development through various checkoffs that go to assorted grain commissions. The advantage of this mechanism is that farmers at least elect their representatives to the boards of these commissions. They then have some control over how these funds are spent.

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It is critical that we maintain, invest, and control public breeding systems in Canada. We are at the cusp of giving up public germplasm to private companies. This, coupled with another mechanism flowing out UPOV' 91 known as *Essentially Derived*, will give near total private control over seeds.

Essentially Derived is a topic for another article in the future, but in short, it confers total control over varieties that exhibit any characteristic of an earlier variety as the result of any process including spontaneous mutation.

We cannot let something as important as seeds slip away from us, and End Point Royalties are one part of making farmers pay for transferring seeds to the private sector. If we let this happen we will have more varieties that are tied to formulas of chemical dependency, which will, not surprisingly, be supplied by the private variety owners. ■

Terry Boehm is a former NFU President, and is Chair of the NFU Seed and Trade Committee

In this issue of the Union Farmer Quarterly we will begin to feature NFU-affiliated organizations, committees and awards that you may not know much about. We hope you find these interesting and informative and incite you to become involved with the NFU.

NFU Property Consortium Inc.

The **NFU Property Consortium Inc.** (the Consortium) is a stand-alone company, operating at arms-length from the NFU, which owns the office building that houses the NFU.

The Consortium was formed in 1997. At that time the Consortium created and sold 400 shares—each valued at \$500. The shares do not increase or decrease in value, but yearly interest is paid to the holders at a rate of 6%.



The office is named "The Bob Pedde Building".

In 1997 the NFU operated out of an office in downtown Saskatoon. When the landlords announced that the rent was going to triple, the NFU—and more specifically Bob Pedde (the Director of Finance at the time)—started to look for more affordable options. One option was to have the NFU members buy a lot and building outright and rent the space to the NFU. Hence the Consortium was formed and the office was purchased.

The Consortium is governed by a 8-person board of directors. At present the NFU itself and the National Farmers Foundation (NFF) owns some shares. The majority of the shares are owned by individual NFU members with a few shares being held by non-members.

The Board of Directors meet every year during the NFU Annual Convention. The meeting is open to anyone that chooses to attend. Minutes are kept, directorships are filled, and "in-house trading" occurs if there are any shares that have been put up for sale. This is the one chance during the year that shares can be bought or sold. **This year's Consortium meeting will be held on Friday, November 24 during the lunch hour. Exact time and room location will be announced at Convention.**



NFU CONVENTION BURSARY PROGRAM

BACK FOR A SECOND YEAR !! A Convention Bursary Fund has been set up to encourage participation at National Convention by reducing financial barriers. **NFU members** who are first-time convention-goers may apply for a bursary. The bursaries are funded by voluntary contributions from you, our Family Farm and Associate members. The Convention 2017 Planning Committee will select the bursary recipients from the eligible applicants.

THANK YOU to those who have contributed to the Bursary Fund. The NFU would like to thank the following for their contribution to the Convention Bursary Program: **NFU Grey Local (ON), David Suzuki (BC), Stewart Wells (SK), NFU Perth-Oxford Local 311 (ON), George Neville (ON), Kyle Korneychuk (SK), John Sandborn (MB), William Bocock (AB) and Shannon Storey (SK).**

Would you like to apply for a Bursary? If you are an NFU member and have never attended a National Convention, you are eligible to apply. Please fill in the application form below, and send it in to the National Office by October 31. If you are selected, your bursary will be paid at the end of Convention. After Convention you will be asked to write a thank-you note to the contributor(s) and send in a short reflection on your convention experience that we will publish. If you prefer to do this anonymously, we will not publish your name if requested. **Not an NFU member yet?** Fill out the application on the back page of this *Quarterly* and mail it in, or go to <http://store.nfu.ca/membership.html>. **SEE PAGE 17 FOR UPCOMING CONVENTION DETAILS.**

Application for NFU Convention Bursary

Name: _____ NFU Membership Number: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: () _____

Seeking bursary of \$250 \$500 (check one)

Please say a few words about why you would like to receive this bursary and attend the National Convention:

I agree to write a thank-you note to the bursary contributors and a short blurb about my experience at convention for publication.

WE REMEMBER ...

MARY HICKIE - May 4, 1936 to August 22, 2017

MARY HICKIE was born on May 4, 1936 in the Mamornitz District of Saskatchewan, the youngest of eight children of John and Annie (nee Sterzuik) Letwinetz. Mary received her grade nine at Woodhurst School. In 1943 the family moved closer to Buchanan where she attended Buchanan School as well as helped her parents on the farm. After receiving her Grade 12, Mary went to Teachers College in Saskatoon. Mary started her teaching career at St. Antal School in the Cana District. This is where she met the love of her life, George Hickie. George said to his friend, I am going to go and meet the new school teacher. So he jumped on his tractor and went over to see her. George talked about having children, and both said we are going to have twelve, and started to build a new house on George's land. October 11, 1958 Mary and George were united in marriage and resided on George's farm. Mary and George stayed true to their word and were blessed with twelve children. Mary took an active part in the farming operation, finding time to look after the children, grow a large garden, milking cows, feeding the chickens, geese, turkeys, ducks and pigs. She also found time to be secretary for the Farmers Union, score-keep for ball and bowling, a member of Pro-Life and the Royal Purple Legion. She enjoyed playing canasta, and watching her children and grandchildren in their school activities.

The couple resided on the farm until the fall of 2007 and moved into Melville. In February 2017, they moved into the Melville Care Home. Due to health issues, Mary became a resident at St. Paul Lutheran Home a few months ago.

Mary entered her eternal rest on Tuesday, August 22, 2017 at St. Paul Lutheran Home in Melville at the age of 81 years.

Predeceased by her parents, John and Annie; sons, Billy and Sam; grandson, Dustin; siblings, Dolly, Annie, Bill, Metro, Mike, Steve and Carl. Mary leaves to cherish her memory her beloved husband George; her children, Michael (Jacqueline) of Melville, Tim (Denise) of Morris, David of Estevan, Ernie of Waldron, Christopher (Rhonda) of Yorkton, Jim of Waldron, George Jr. (Robin) of Winnipeg, , Anna (Kip) Boyechko of Ottawa, John (Bonnie) of Moose Jaw, and Laurie (Colin) Hickie-Hartl of Lintlaw; 15 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; uncle and aunt Sam (Helen) Letwinetz; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and close friends.



Agreement Number 40063391
Postage Paid at Muenster, Saskatchewan

NFU BOARD / ADVISORY MEMBERS and OFFICES

National / Regional Offices:

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

Region 1: Office: 648 Smythe St., Fredericton, NB E3B 3G1 Ph: (506) 260-0087 Email: nfu.nb.office@gmail.com

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

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

Region 3: Sarah Bakker, NFU-O General Manager, 5420 Hwy 6 N, RR 5, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2

Ph: in ON 1-888-832-9638 / Ph: outside ON (705)738-3993 Email: office@nfuontario.ca

National Officers and Directors:

Jan Slomp, President, Courtenay, BC; *Lydia Carpenter*, 1st Vice President (Policy), Dunrea, MB; *Cam Goff*, 2nd Vice President (Operations), Hanley, SK; *Coral Sproule*, Women's President, Perth, ON; *Katie Ward*, Women's Vice President, Woodlawn, ON; *Ayla Fenton*, Youth President, Kingston, ON; *Dana Penrice*, Youth Vice President, Lacombe, AB; *Reg Phelan*, Region 1 Coordinator, Morell, PE; *Phillipe Gervais*, Region 1 Board Member, Moncton, NB; *Paul Slomp*, Region 2 Coordinator, St-Andre-Avelin, QC; *Emery Huszka*, Region 3 Coordinator, Florence, ON; *Tony Straathof*, Region 3 Board Member, Westmeath, ON; *Don Ciparis*, Region 3 Board Member, Rodney, ON; *Ian Robson*, Region 5 Coordinator, Deleau, MB; *Dean Harder*, Region 5 Board Member, Winnipeg, MB; *Rachelle Ternier*, Region 6 Coordinator, Cochin, SK; *Ed Pedersen*, Region 6 Board Member, Cut Knife, SK; *Ed Sagan*, Region 6 Board Member, Melville, SK; *Glenn Norman*, Region 7 Coordinator, Red Deer County, AB; *Doug Scott*, Region 7 Board Member, Waskatenau, AB; *Peter Eggers*, Region 8 Coordinator, La Glace, AB; *Seann Dory*, Region 8 Board Member, Parksville, BC.

Women's Advisory Committee: *Shannon Jones*, River Herbert, NS; *Katie Ward*, Woodlawn, ON; *Lois Robson*, Deleau, MB; *Marcella Pedersen*, Cut Knife, SK; *Toby Malloy*, Nanton, AB; *Julie Enman*, Courtenay, BC.

Youth Advisory Committee: *Phillipe Gervais*, Moncton, NB; *David Mazur-Goulet*, Wakefield, QC; *Martin Boettcher*, Brussels, ON; *Jeanette Sivilay*, Winnipeg, MB; *Christopher Sanford Beck*, Cochin, SK; *Alyse Stach*, Courtenay, BC.

YES



I would like to:

Join the National Farmers Union

- Farm Family \$195.00 / year **
- Associate \$ 65.00 / year **
- Youth (14-25) \$ 98.00 / year **

Donate to the National Farmers Union

- One time donation
 - Monthly donation **
- ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$500 ___ Other

** For automatic payments, send credit card information or a cheque marked "void".

PAYMENT INFORMATION: Cash Cheque Mastercard Visa

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date (month/year): _____

Name on card: (please print) _____

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Please mail your payment, along with this form to:

National Farmers Union, 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6