



National Farmers Union
Union Nationale des Fermiers



union farmer

Quarterly

FALL 2016 / Vol. 22 Issue 3



Photo: *Region 3 members Henry Bakker and his son check on their grass-fed cattle.*

Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms.

Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

The NFU is a founding member of La Via Campesina (LVC), a global social movement that connects farmers and workers in rural communities around the world that are working for change. Within La Via Campesina, the NFU and other family farm/peasant, indigenous and rural workers organizations are working together to resist global trade agreements; to stop the destruction of communities, cultures and our environment; and to build an alternative : food sovereignty. La Via Campesina, first introduced the concept of food sovereignty at the World Food Summit in 1996 in Rome.

Migrant farm workers are a common sight on farms in some agricultural regions of Canada. Many of these workers come from farm backgrounds themselves, either as farmers pushed off their land or as farmers with small holdings. They leave their families and farms behind for extended periods year after year to come to Canada to help grow and harvest our food but they are not allowed to become permanent residents. Raising awareness of the plight of migrant farm workers and the challenges they face in Canada and other countries, along with advocating for better treatment, are priorities within LVC.

The NFU International Program Committee (IPC) is made up of elected IPC representatives from each

region and other interested NFU members. This committee plays a key role in coordinating our relationship with farmer and rural worker organizations in other countries and our participation in LVC activities and events. The IPC has been pushing for more discussion about migrant farm workers in Canada for several years. A panel discussion on the topic was part of the 44th Annual Convention in Ottawa in 2013 and the Fall, 2015 issue of UFQ included an article that highlighted the situation for migrant farm workers in Florida.

The IPC continues to ask us all to learn more about the conditions under which migrant farm workers are allowed to come and work in Canada. You can start with the article in this UFQ issue, which also includes a call for each of us to act in solidarity with migrant workers in Canada. Behind the scenes, this article also represents a strength of the NFU: several members coming together to ask questions and to provide thoughtful responses so to help us build a solid base from which to learn more and take action.

The message from Coral Sproule, the NFU Women's President, also provides excellent insight into our work on the international stage, both in terms of championing food sovereignty and in strengthening ties and understanding of issues facing family farms/peasants within Canada and beyond our borders.

—Ann Slater
Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee

union farmer quarterly

Official publication of the National Farmers Union
2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6

Telephone: 306-652-9465 — Fax: 306-664-6226 — E-mail: nfu@nfu.ca — Website: www.nfu.ca

PRINTED AT ST. PETER'S PRESS, MUENSTER, SK, AGREEMENT NO. 40063391, POSTAGE PAID AT MUENSTER, SASKATCHEWAN.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE:

Members \$ 15.00; Non-Members \$25.00; Institutions \$35.00
(price includes monthly newsletter and quarterly magazine)

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

On a hot afternoon in early August, five young First Nation's people went for a swim in the river near Bigger, Saskatchewan. The driver of their car noticed a problem with a tire and pulled up to a nearby farmyard for help. After they entered the farm yard, twenty-two year old Colten Boushie was killed by a gun shot. The farmer has been charged with second-degree murder.

This tragic shooting triggered very negative comments over the internet from other rural residents. Thanks to NFU Region 6 youth advisory member, Rachelle Ternier, for contacting the NFU office and working with staff on a public statement in which the NFU expressed condolences to the family of Colten Boushie and solidarity with First Nations in general.

The NFU commits itself to building relationships of solidarity, mutual respect and friendship with our Indigenous neighbours, and to honouring our obligations as Treaty people.

The lack of sound agriculture policy and the neoliberal agenda, both lead to a loss of farm income, decades of depopulating rural areas and the loss of essential services and community. This has led to the isolation of many rural dwellers. Additional pressures on families have led to an increase in family breakdown. People under economic pressure in prolonged isolation can easily come to the conclusion that the world is a hostile place. Every other race and every stranger becomes a mortal enemy. Individuals can become tempted to over indulge in basic instincts of self pity and self defense, making them a danger to the rest of society. The Premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall, responded to the incident with a public call to end racism. There is nothing wrong with that call, but it

means nothing in terms of addressing the problem and it lacks much needed solidarity with First Nation people.

Governments fail to understand that agricultural policy needs to produce real net farm income to be successful. The current export oriented mass production of commodities is creating growth in exports and growth in trading and handling. It also creates growth in the importation of food and the distance it travels. It fails to create net farm income, it fails to meet consumer expectations and it fails to address climate change. And related to the incident mentioned above, it increasingly fails to produce peaceful thriving rural communities.

The NFU is often the only farm organization to address these connections and offer positive changes to the federal and provincial political process. The statement that the NFU made with respect to the murder of Colten Boushie triggered a wave of appreciation on the internet, expressed by many First Nation people and beyond. The NFU commits itself to building relationships of solidarity, mutual respect and friendship with our Indigenous neighbours, and to honouring our obligations as Treaty people.

In Solidarity, Jan Slomp



National Farmers Union
Union Nationale des Fermiers



NFU 47th Annual Convention

November 24 to 26, 2016

**Hilton Garden Inn Downtown
Saskatoon, SK**

(See back page for more details)





A message from the Women's President

— by Coral Sproule, Women's President

Greetings to our valued members and supporters of the National Farmers Union. Managing and working on our farms is a full-time job, yet somehow most of us manage to undertake meaningful participation in political policy making as well as conversations and debate to further the cause of positive agricultural, political and social change. This summer the women of the National Farmers Union have once again gone above and beyond our usual farm work to speak of the struggle of small farms in international forums, both in Canada and abroad.

World Social Forum

In August, Dixie Green, the International Program Committee (IPC) representative from Region 6, and I were part of La Via Campesina's (LVC) North American Region Delegation at the World Social Forum in Montreal. Several other NFU members, including our IPC Coordinator Josie Baker, joined us for portions of these open forums as well as for a short, but meaningful, face-to-face meeting of the North American Region of LVC.

The World Social Forum began in Brazil in 2001 and is described as the “largest gathering of civil-society to find solutions to the problems of our time”.¹ The gathering provides opportunities for discussion and action on a diversity of themes ranging from solidarity and economics to social justice and human rights. North American LVC region participants joined in a broad range of self-managed activities organized in partnership with allied organizations such as Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), USC Canada and Food Secure Canada (FSC). We were greatly supported on the ground by members of Union Paysanne, our sister Canadian organization in La Via Campesina. Thank you to Union Paysanne for your local support during, and in the year leading up to, the World Social Form.

The themes of the LVC forums included:

- Mobilization over Corporate Control of Land, Food and Seeds and Building Alternatives;
- Farmer-Led Research in a Changing Climate;
- Industrial Livestock and Feed Stock versus Small Farmer Ecology; and
- Youth: The Future of Peasant Agriculture.

As NFU participants, we spread ourselves around in order to participate in discussions on a wide range of topics and to deepen our understandings of our current allies and partners. Dixie and I were given time to speak on several panels throughout the week and to contribute to significant discussions and declarations on the above subjects and beyond.

It was incredible to see some of the conversations within the broader context of issues, such as food sovereignty in an age of extractivism². In these forums, we catch a glimpse of the social movements found locally throughout the planet which are forging community building efforts to help envision and create communities that are more respectful of human beings and the limitations of our dear planet.

(continued on page 5...)



World Social Forum in Montreal, August 2016.



(Message from the Women's President, from page 4)

This opportunity for cross pollination and solidarity with other civil society groups, leaders of indigenous communities, and people's movements on common themes of dismantling corporate control; regaining sovereignty of our food, environment and resources; and change in social and economic systems was an important opportunity.

...we catch a glimpse of the social movements found locally throughout the planet which are forging community building efforts to help envision and create communities that are more respectful of human beings and the limitations of our dear planet.

Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) Triennial World Conference and Food Sovereignty

Former NFU Women's President, Joan Brady, was our representative to the Associated Country Women of The World's (ACWW) 28th Triennial World Conference in Warwick, England from August 17-23. Joan also sits on ACWW's agriculture committee, and therefore, has a strong connection to the ongoing work of this association. The ACWW is made up of 420 women's organizations and represents over nine million rural and non-rural women worldwide. It works to improve the quality of life for women and communities.

At the 45th NFU Annual Convention in Saskatoon in 2014, a resolution was passed by our members asking the NFU women to submit a resolution to the next ACWW Triennial World Conference asking the ACWW to accept Food Sovereignty as part of their

agricultural policy. The following resolution was submitted to the ACWW:

Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food production through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It advocates for equity and full access to resources for women on farms and in rural communities.

Therefore be it resolved that the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) accept Food Sovereignty as part of ACWW agricultural policy and to begin a campaign to bring awareness and understanding of Food Sovereignty to the organization and its members during the next triennium (2016-2018).

It gives us great pleasure to report that the above resolution passed at the ACWW Triennial Conference. This resolution is a step in the right direction to ensure that all members of the ACWW will learn more about the pillars and principles of Food Sovereignty.

Thank you to the women mentioned above and to the many of you who are achieving feats of greatness in your farms, communities, regions and beyond, in the realms of agriculture and food sovereignty. We are the leaders of this movement and it is important that we recognize and celebrate the significance of our day-to-day achievements and our far reaching influence outside our farm gates. As always if you have any questions or comments or wish to become involved with our women's advisory and caucus please contact me.

In Solidarity, Coral Sproule

¹ <https://fsm2016.org>

² This word was new to me but widely used at the Forum. In online dictionaries it is described as "the process of removing high-demand raw materials from a natural environment (e.g. forest area).





A message from the Youth

— by Dana Penrice,
NFU Youth Vice President

In the summer, the tension between managing responsibilities on the farm and the desire to stay active in the larger community and political sphere is at its peak. This seems to be an age-old challenge. Despite that, I continue to be awed at how members of the NFU Youth continue to squeeze out time for advocacy, action and engagement. Keep up the good work!

Growing Forward 3

Over the summer, one of our priorities was paying attention to the federal consultation for the Growing Forward 3 framework.

Through conversations with staff at USC Canada and Food Secure Canada, we have been exploring recommendations specific to aspiring and new farmers. While the process of consultation continues and we have yet to see what will be in the new framework, some of our discussions include:

- Shift the political focus away from promoting an export-dominated model towards an agri-food model based on the principles of food sovereignty and agroecology;
- Include a new farmer pillar and funding stream for programs to address obstacles faced by new farmers including land access, capital access, income, knowledge and skills training and community development;
- Create and fund affordable training and mentoring programs that recognize the importance of farmer-to-farmer knowledge transfer and that deliver locally adapted services to new farmers;
- Support and fund the development and sustainment of incubator farms across Canada;
- Support the development of urban farming demonstration and training projects to recruit and attract first generation farmers from urban areas;

- Ensure that all farmers have access to extensive agricultural consulting and extension services and professional development opportunities. Support farmer-driven on-farm research;
- Develop a national micro-lending program and a national grants program to support new farmer investments at the start-up or expansion phase.

Food Secure Canada Assembly

At Food Secure Canada's 9th National Assembly October 13 to 16 in Toronto we will give a presentation titled *Helping New Farmers Build Food Sovereignty*. Our co-presenter will be Dr. Annette Desmarais, University of Manitoba, who will bring perspectives on farmland ownership in Saskatchewan.

Upcoming NFU Convention

We look forward to the **next NFU convention in Saskatoon, November 23 to 26.**

If you are a youth member and plan on attending, **please let us know so we can help coordinate accommodations and youth activities.** On the flip side, if you know anyone in Saskatoon that would be willing to provide accommodation let us know. Contact danapenrice@gmail.com.

NFU Youth Auction

The silent auction to raise money for the NFU Youth will take place at National Convention this November in Saskatoon.

If you have silent auction items to donate, please contact Ayla (aylafenton90@gmail.com) or Dana (780-914-6282).

In Solidarity, Dana Penrice

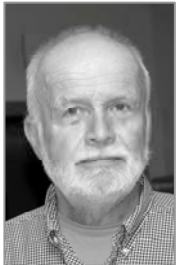


Regional Reports



Region One:

Provinces of PEI, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia



District 2 (New Brunswick)

- by Ted Wiggins, Board Member

Region 1 Convention

The Region One Annual Convention was held in Cornhill, New Brunswick. The convention was very well attended. Speakers included the New Brunswick Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Rick Doucet, and Pat Finnigan, chair of the federal Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and Member of Parliament for Miramichi-Grand Lake. Bob Osborne, an NFU-NB member, provided a guided tour of Cornhill Nursery. This business is a concrete example of many NFU values: it primarily serves a local market, the Maritimes; it specializes in cold-hardy fruits, trees and shrubs; and it is a family-owned and operated business which provides good work for many local residents. A barn fire threatened the survival of the business in its early years of operation, however, the community came together and over one hundred people donated their time to rebuild the barn in just one day.

Support for wild blueberry growers

The NFU-NB has made several interventions to the provincial government to support the efforts of the Northeast Blueberries Growers Association to create a regional marketing board which would allow a more equal playing field for growers in the northeast of the province. In 2013, the provincial government transferred 16,000 acres of prime blueberry land and a \$37.5 million dollar interest-bearing loan to Oxford Frozen Foods of Nova Scotia to build a processing plant. The government projected that since it takes up to eight years for blueberry fields to be in full production that the plant would purchase primarily from local growers, at least in the early years. Regional producers had their doubts from the beginning and first organized in opposition before the deal was finalized. Now the situation is almost worse than imagined.

An increase in production and processing without an increase in global markets has led to an inventory carry-over of frozen blueberries. The processing plant, which opened in July, is processing berries from growers in Maine rather than NB. Wyman's, another major blueberry processor based in Maine, used to have buying stations set up in the region, but with the opening of the Oxford plant, all the Wyman's buying stations have been closed this year. Not to mention that for the past few years, New Brunswick growers have received less per pound than their counterparts in Quebec and Maine. In what appears to be a year of high production, this further compounds the growers' problems. The government supported the growth of a vertically integrated company in an effort to become the world's largest producer of wild blueberries, with no stipulations that the plant must process a certain percentage of NB blueberries or employ a certain number of NB residents. In doing so they have created an environment where it is virtually impossible for growers to receive a fair price.

One solution would be to accept the application for a Regional Marketing Board that is currently before the NB Farm Products Commission, though the Minister of Agriculture said 'it was complicated' when asked about it at the NFU Region One Convention. The NFU will be back on the road to visit our members in the area in early September. This problem promises to be a major issue over the coming months.

Membership drive

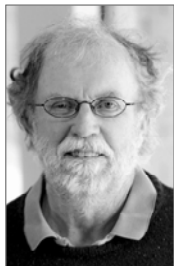
Over the past three months, NFU-NB staff and members have developed and begun a fall membership drive including farm visits, kitchen table meetings, attendance at farmers markets, phone calls, letters, a social media photo campaign and promotional materials. Farm Business Registration forms will be sent to all NB farmers in late September. Hearing and acting upon member concerns, having real conversations with farmers and overall excellent reception to the work of the NFU-NB has given us cause to be optimistic about the success of this campaign.

—nfu—

(continued on page 8...)



(Region 1 Report, from page 7)



District 1 (Prince Edward Island)

- by Reg Phelan, Coordinator

PEI Land Purchases

There is an ongoing concern on Prince Edward Island about the large acreages being purchased by large operations. We have had meetings with the PEI Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the PEI Minister of Environment and Lands about this. The ministers do not seem to be informed or overly concerned.

In a subsequent meeting with the PEI Regulatory and Appeal Commission, which reviews applications for land purchases, we learned that government has changed the lease / ownership provisions of the PEI Lands Protection Act. This change means that land leased to contract growers is not counted in land ownership limits. This change is allowing extensive abuse of the intent of the Lands Protection Act.

High Capacity Wells

The PEI government recently approved four high capacity wells for Aqua Bounty, the GMO fish plant,

while the moratorium on any further deep wells is supposed to still be in place during the ongoing consultations on a new PEI Water Act.

Region One Convention

The theme for the Region One Convention in August was *Farming for the Future: Opportunities in a Changing Climate*. During the two presentations which focused on the theme, the NFU's national work on the relationship between agriculture and climate change was highlighted. It is apparent that there are many disconnects on this issue between farmers, scientists and policy makers. Farmers have much experience raising crops and livestock and need to be part of Canadian wide discussions about how to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals. There are many ways we, as farmers, can have an impact in cooling the planet.

At the Region One Convention the following were elected for leadership positions: National Board members, Ted Wiggans and Reg Phelan; Women's Advisory, Shannon Jones; Youth Advisory, Philippe Gervais, and International Program Committee, Jean-Eudes Chiasson.

—nfu—

Region Five:



Province of Manitoba

- by Ian Robson, Coordinator

Growing Forward 3

The NFU has written to federal and provincial agriculture ministers regarding the next generation of farm support programming, Growing Forward 3. The letter (available at www.nfu.ca/story/letter-re-next-ag-policy-framework) calls for accessible programming to be available to farms of all scales and for program payment caps which will help distribute money to more farmers rather than to the

advantage of fewer, larger scale farmers. The letter also calls for support of supply management, support for collective marketing structures and for Canada to not sign trade deals that undercut local food and the ability of governments to set Canadian farm policy. The letter was presented to Manitoba Agriculture Minister Ralph Eichler at the annual farm policy consultation on June 28 in Winnipeg.

Region 5 Convention

The Region 5 Convention was held on July 9 at Brandon. Brandon West MLA Reg Helwer welcomed the NFU and took questions and comments. Mr. Helwer was informed that legislation in PEI, NB, and Ontario allows farmers to direct funds to their choice of General Farm Organization. The NFU in Manitoba requested that legislation be changed to allow farmers in Manitoba the choice of whether to fund the Keystone Agriculture Producers or the National

(continued on page 9...)



(Region 5 Report, from page 8)

Farmers Union. There was also a good discussion on the role of Public Research and Crop Breeding in Canada presented by David Gehl in an interview done by Dean Harder.

Climate Change Presentation

Darrin Qualman made a presentation at the convention outlining NFU research and recommendations with regard to climate change and agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Manitoba. These emissions create an uncertain and dynamic future for farmers, and also create a need for farmers to act quickly to reduce emissions. It is important to note, however, that many farmers are *already* working to improve the environment and the food system, though more will need to be done. Federal/provincial greenhouse gas Adaptation, Reduction, and Mitigation (ARM) goals need a plan of implementation, and this will benefit farmers and consumers as well as the environment and the economy. Darrin is looking at the data and research and collecting farmers' views around beneficial farming methods and food-system needs which should help us meet GHG ARM goals and targets.

Our climate is changing. There is already much more humidity in the air and this is creating challenges for the way we farm. Farmers need to have the support programs and knowledge to deal with more difficult weather patterns. More local food processing makes more local jobs and serves up healthy food to local consumers. We should all be proud to raise food—whether in our back yards or on a larger scale. But a wiser use of resources is needed to conserve the fossil fuel and nitrogen used in food production. Calorie units can be used to measure energy in foods, but also in fuels, and even the energy embedded in fertilizers and other farm inputs. Today, the North American food system (from input suppliers, through the farm link, and on to the dinner table) uses 13.3 calories of energy (mostly fossil fuel) to produce one calorie of food that makes it into our mouths. Rather than 13.3 calories in and one calorie out, ideally that ratio could use one calorie in and three to six calories out. These are the kinds of net energy returns earned by “primitive” food systems—systems that are many times more efficient than ours at turning inputs into food.

The tillage practice mistakes of the 1930s should be a lesson. Because of those mistakes we now live

with eroded soils. We must not make similar mistakes again. We need to get GHG ARM measures right, and we need to get them fast, so that those living in the future have a better chance of feeding themselves. Every farmer wants a better chance every day, that includes the future.

Price of grain

A very large private elevator company said in 2016, and also back in the 1970s, that fifty percent of farmer's grain tonnes are sold in the lowest twenty-five percent of available market prices. The company says they have been trying to educate farmers not to do this and use contracts. Not all the 1970 grain was priced like that. Farmers bargained to gain the best deal of the day during the entire year and took an average price which would easily beat the 2016 suggestion of a much less average price. There is a much wider price range in the upper seventy-five percent of the available prices for the other fifty percent of the tonnes which leads to quite differential pricing between one farmer and the next. It is this differential pricing which is the problem as well as the vast fluctuations in the price.

Closure of Churchill Port

When Hudson Bay Route Association President Eldon Boon spoke at our convention, he indicated that the Churchill port would have a smaller tonnage of grain shipped in 2016 and that the track and the port were for sale. At that point there was no indication of the actual closure of the port, which was announced at the end of July. Omnitrax has received financial compensation from both federal and provincial governments because of the loss of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). There is no longer a system to make sales to willing buyers for delivery of grain at Churchill. About two percent of the grain was shipped via Churchill which is/was a benefit to prairie farmers, but without the CWB those benefits now go to the grain companies who are saying no to Churchill.

The NFU says it is a mistake to close the Churchill Port. There is lots of good business to be done via Churchill but federal government support is needed. The NFU calls on governments and local interested business and communities to work together to operate the line as a public service and to seek business, as needed, from a Canadian viewpoint rather than an investment company viewpoint. —*nfu*—





Region Six:

Province of Saskatchewan

- by Ed Sagan, Coordinator

Region Six Convention

The Region Six Convention was held in Bruno, SK. On June 29, Dr. Christy Morrissey from the Univ. of Saskatchewan spoke on *The fate of neonicotinoid insecticides in wetlands with implications for aquatic insects and birds in the prairie agricultural eco-systems*. Speakers on June 30 included: NFU President Jan Slomp; Sask. Wheat Development Commission Chair, Bill Gehl; Ian McCreary from the Community Pasture Patrons Assoc. of Sask., Emily Eaton from the Univ. of Regina on the Impacts of Oil; and Chair of the NFU Seed and Trade Committee, Terry Boehm.

NFU Membership

In order to keep the NFU strong and productive we need new members. Members are the backbone of this organization. The NFU has endured many hardships and ups and downs, but we are still here after 47 years. We continue to bring farmers' concerns to the government in power.

Spring Seeding and Auctions

We managed to get out in the fields by May 1, but a week later we had frost and it went down to minus

five. So much for seeding canola early. In Melville, we had the biggest online auction in western Canada. The two brothers farmed up to 40,000 acres of owned and leased land. There were four lots of equipment on display to the public with a total of 325 items. The sale included 23 four-wheel drive and two-wheel drive tractors, 25 semi tractors, 10 air seeders, grain cleaners and sprayers. The equipment went for bargain prices. The sale was forced on the farmers by three investment firms. There was one more sale to be conducted at the end of the month, and that was the end of the biggest farmer in western Canada. So much for free enterprise farming in Canada.

The Impact of Government Policies

Farming without the Crow rate and the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is hard to do while we try to retain these organizations to help retain our income. Other farm leaders were destroying what our forefathers fought for. How can anyone's farm survive on wheat at \$5/bushel and canola at \$12/bushel. For example, a four wheel drive tractor imported from the USA costs \$700,000. When you get \$5 wheat you need 140,000 bushels of wheat to buy the tractor. At thirty bushels an acre, you need 4,700 acres to pay for this tractor. We have to thank both the federal and provincial conservative governments for this. They believe in farming without government intervention, but Bill C-18, brought in by the federal conservatives, gave additional powers to our grain seed multinationals who are reaping additional income from investment companies. —nfu—

To the Editor;

Re. Saskatchewan Ombudsman Report on Water Security Agency

Anyone who has suffered damages from illegal drainage was not surprised by the report by the Saskatchewan Ombudsman, Mary McFadyen, on her office's review of Water Security Agency (WSA). The report is available at www.ombudsman.sk.ca/news/what-s-new. What is surprising is that it has taken this long for such wrong doing and mismanagement to finally come to light. The Ombudsman found the WSA was not following its written policies or procedures, and staff were found to lack any understanding or knowledge of the procedures to be followed when dealing with illegal drainage. She also said that WSA could have ordered illegal drainage closed immediately and that WSA could provide no clear explanation for a significant three year delay. Damages from drainage can occur very quickly and those downstream do not have days, months, or years to wait.

As the Ombudsman pointed out, WSA has the authority to issue closure orders and does not require anyone to complain. Yet WSA is still insisting that landowners first try and "work things out" with the illegal drainer before WSA will act. Complaints also cost taxpayers money. At \$10,000 per complaint, that is over seven million tax payer dollars that WSA has wasted while putting landowners through an ineffective and unfair process. The Ombudsman highlighted that WSA has failed to enforce the WSA act. The report did not deal with the protection of water quality, flood damages and aquatic habitat protection. WSA relies on a complaint process that is ineffective and significantly flawed to manage Saskatchewan's water.

Illegal drainage costs us all. Whether it is from lost productivity, damage to personal property or to protect, repair, or rebuild damaged infrastructure. The Saskatchewan Ombudsman's report re-enforces what the flood victims have been saying all along. Hopefully, Premier Wall and the government are listening.

Dan Hoover, District Director, Ratepayers Against Illegal Drainage, Kelliher SK



Migrant Farm Workers in Canada: 50 Years Later

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). The SAWP is Canada's guest-worker program which brings workers from Mexico and several Caribbean nations to Canada to work for up to eight months per year.

Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Programs

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) is just one of the streams of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). The TFWP includes an intricate collection of policies and programs ranging from highly paid foreign workers, such as medical specialists and corporate financial managers on the upper end of the payscale, to meat plant processors and field workers on the bottom end. There is little concern when it comes to the status and well-being of high-wage workers in Canada; these workers are usually well paid and eligible for permanent immigration.

On the other hand, workers participating in the low-skill stream of the TFWP, and the SAWP are mostly from the global south and are far more vulnerable. In each of these programs, workers' legal status is tied to one employer. Where it is possible to change employers, long waiting periods are required. Workers are generally low-waged, not eligible for permanent immigration, and isolated – geographically, culturally, and socially. Cases of inhumane conditions, even fatalities, have reached the mainstream media from time to time. Enforcement of adequate housing conditions is improving, but housing conditions can still be an issue for workers.

Agricultural Worker Programs

Most agricultural workers fall into two main streams – the TFWP low-skill agricultural stream and the SAWP. Workers are governed by somewhat different regulations, depending on which stream they are under.

Some farms may have only one or two workers, others have hundreds.

Workers under TFWP's low-skill agricultural stream:

- are often women;
- come from almost any country, although the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Kosovo and Guatemala are common sending countries;
- are eligible for year-round contracts to a maximum of four years (after which they must leave Canada) under what is known as the "Four in Four" rule;
- typically work in greenhouses, on mushroom farms, in meat processing and large poultry farms;
- are often brought to Canada by paid recruiters and;
- are not eligible for immigration.

Workers under the SAWP, on the other hand:

- are 85 percent men;
- most often come from Mexico and various Caribbean countries;
- must leave Canada each year;
- have contracts ranging from several weeks to a maximum of eight months;
- work on mushroom, vegetable, tobacco, fruit and other types of farms;
- may return each year so long as the employer wants them and they can pass the required health tests;
- generally do not deal with private recruiters as bilateral agreements between the Canadian government and the sending country's government provide for Liaison Service or consular support and;
- are not eligible for immigration.

NFU Solidarity with Migrant Agricultural Workers

This March, the National Farmers Union endorsed the Mobility, Voice and Equality for Migrant Workers (MoVE) Campaign organized by

(continued on page 12...)



(Migrant Farm Workers in Canada, from page 11)

the Coalition for Migrant Workers Rights—Canada. The campaign calls for regulatory changes such as an end to closed work permits so that migrant workers can move more easily between jobs, thereby improving working and living conditions for all workers. It is also seeking the removal of more recent changes to the TFWP and permanent resident immigration status for workers upon arrival.

“The NFU has a long-standing position in support of migrant farm workers, many of whom are farmers who have been forced off the land in their home countries,” said Reg Phelan, NFU Region 1 (Maritimes) Board member. “Our support for the MoVE Campaign is an expression of solidarity with farmers and farm workers around the world.”

In 2015, La Via Campesina released the Declaration on Migration and Rural Workers. This declaration states “temporary worker programs serve only to divide the working class and weaken our organizations and struggles. ... temporary agricultural worker [programs] serve only to benefit industrial agriculture by providing it with cheap and docile farm labor.”

The NFU has a long-standing position in support of migrant farm workers, many of whom are farmers who have been forced off the land in their home countries.

Our support for the MoVE Campaign is an expression of solidarity with farmers and farm workers around the world.

One Employer’s Perspective

Jennifer Pfenning is an NFU member and vegetable farmer in New Hamburg, Ontario who has employed SAWP workers for years. She has seen firsthand the systemic silencing of workers due to the policies which constrain workers’ rights. In her area of Ontario, it is clear that there is ample farm work for those willing to do it, but the SAWP itself is administratively heavy – a reality which frustrates employers and penalizes workers.

She questions the function of the recent increases in administrative aspects of the TFWP and their disproportionate effects on the rights of the workers in the SAWP. According to Pfenning, “The increased regulatory burden has not served to improve workers’ ability to exercise their rights. Instead of more paperwork, employers, including farmers, need better human resources education and management tools, as well as a better understanding of cultural differences. Anyone who has tried to find help for seasonal farm work knows it can be very challenging. Most people who are looking for short term employment are students who return to classes in the early fall; a time when harvest of storage crops begins in earnest and summer crops are still being harvested.”

When it comes to advertising jobs to local residents and the increased length of time required, Pfenning says, “These changes in the TFWP have not increased my ability to hire local workers. The process for the following spring begins in November as the season winds down. Most workers interested in working for the next season do not start looking in November. Those that do apply, often cannot wait until spring to start working.”

As for the migrant workers, “Why are we inhibiting people’s ability to move in and out of Canada for work? Why are these people not just allowed to move here?” she asks. Pfenning goes on to say, “It seems logical that people who have lived and worked in Canada, helping provide the very food we eat, should be eligible to immigrate here if they choose, subject to the same policies as others who apply for immigration. After working here for a number of years, it should be a smoother transition.”

Employers in the SAWP have an incredible amount of power by virtue of their position: the power to send a worker home; the power to decide if a worker will return the following year; and control over housing conditions and access to services and transportation. Pfenning identifies that in the language of employers of SAWP workers, “there is often an undercurrent of ownership, which is really disturbing.” She adds “We, as farmers, have to recognize the inherent power differential that exists between employers and workers. Ignoring that imbalance can be the source of many errors in judgment.”

(continued on page 13...)



(Migrant Farm Workers in Canada, from page 12)

When asked what message she has for other employers, she says, "It is simple. Employers just have to treat their workers as people. Too often within the TFWP, workers are treated as interchangeable moving parts, or disposable labour. This has a dehumanizing effect, which is felt by the workers. Treating workers as people means that employers must use their power to advocate for them. We have to go to bat for our workers. They are our responsibility, not our property."

One of the reasons that workers are reluctant to advocate on their own behalf is that they worry about not being heard and penalized. Also, when it comes to medical repatriation, Pfenning says, "If an employer shows that they are willing to work through a medical issue, the liaison officer and the medical community will not push for them to be repatriated." Pfenning advises employers, "If a worker is delayed or denied a visa, do not accept a 'replacement worker' unless you are sure the reason is justified. Demand answers. Demand the worker you want."



Pfenning is involved with groups calling for agricultural workers rights. She supports local farm worker's groups and works to educate the public and elevate the voices of workers on her farm. This July, Pfenning's Organic Vegetable Farm held a public film screening and discussion event where the public, local policy makers, and migrant workers discussed issues affecting migrant workers, toured the farm, and viewed a documentary about SAWP workers in Ontario. At this event one of the panelists, a former SAWP worker, suggested that in addition to the changes currently being called for, we add an end of season protocol. At the end of the season, instead of simply getting on a plane, the worker would sit down with the employer and the Liaison Officer. If the employer is intending to recall the worker they

would sign the contract for the upcoming season, if not, the employer would give an explanation so the worker could learn from his/her mistakes. This suggestion makes sense and would require very little change to the program.

It seems logical that people who have lived and worked in Canada, helping provide the very food we eat, should be eligible to immigrate here if they choose, subject to the same policies as others who apply for immigration.

Call for Solidarity Actions

The federal government has recently reviewed the TFWP, and recommendations for changes were due this September, but not for the SAWP. Following conversations with federal politicians, Pfenning believes that in the view of the federal government, the SAWP is not where the problem lies but with the TFWP, and in their view, SAWP workers have adequate representation in the Liaison Services and extra Mexican consular staff dedicated to the program. The report being tabled this fall in the House of Commons will call for changes which are as yet not public. This is the time to make our voices heard so that the report will be the beginning of a new chapter in the TFWP.

This fall there is an opportunity for solidarity with migrant worker-led struggles. Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW), a grassroots organization that works for the rights and well being of Canada's migrant farm workers, is holding a Harvesting Freedom campaign to call for changes to the SAWP. In September and October, 2016 there will be a pilgrimage during which workers and allies will walk from Leamington, Ontario to Ottawa. Participants expect to arrive in Ottawa by October 3.

"Migrant Dreams" is a new Canadian documentary which tells of the story of a group of migrant farm worker women in Ontario. The film is available to anyone who would like to host a film night in their communities. **For more information:** Contact ***Josie Baker, IPC Coordinator at ipccoordinator@nfu.ca***.

—nfu—



Energy East — What are the Risks?

— by Rick Munroe, NFU Member, Howe Island, Ontario

The issues of climate change, oil and gas supply, and pipelines are complex and interrelated. This article focuses on TransCanada's Energy East proposal and explains why the NFU will argue against it during the National Energy Board hearings next year.

The Energy East (EE) project involves 4,600 kilometres of pipeline to move crude oil from Alberta to Saint John, New Brunswick. Although the eastern third of this pipeline will be new pipe, most of the distance involves repurposing 3,000 kilometres of pipe that has been in the ground for decades.

Concerns regarding TC's existing pipe

TransCanada (TC) intends to convert various segments of three gas pipelines in order to patch together a single 42 inch conduit for crude oil. Most of the pipe to be converted is over forty years old and has various obsolete coatings, including the notorious poly tape. The most recent pipe that will be converted was built in the 1990s and is coated in the preferred manner (fusion bonded epoxy) but this portion represents only fourteen percent of the converted pipe.

The existing pipe is also thin-walled: its 42 inch diameter divided by its usual 3/8 inch (0.375") wall thickness gives a D/t (diameter to thickness) ratio of 112. TransCanada intends to use much thicker walls in the brand-new section that will run through Quebec and New Brunswick: the ratio for the new pipe is 77 or better (a lower D/t ratio is more robust).

Energy East and Canadian 'oil independence'

TransCanada's claim that EE's purpose is to serve our eastern refineries is true...sort of. The pipeline has the potential to serve three eastern refineries. But Enbridge's Line 9 was restarted last December and moves 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) to Quebec. Energy East could meet Quebec's remaining crude oil shortfall of around 100,000 bpd and the New Brunswick refinery's capacity of 300,000 bpd. But these refineries can only use about 400,000 bpd of the eastward bound oil. The EE proposal is for 1,000,000 bpd, deeming 63 percent of EE's capacity surplus to Canadian needs and leaving it destined for export.

Given the fact that two-thirds of EE's length involves older pipe and two-thirds of the volumes are surplus to Canadian requirements, this project represents considerable environmental risk across six provinces in exchange for relatively little public benefit.

Energy East and American oil

The cost-benefit balance looks even worse when TC's proposed Upland pipeline is factored in. Running from North Dakota to connect with EE near the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, this pipeline could inject 300,000 bpd of American crude into the EE pipeline. This leaves four Canadian provinces to assume environmental risks to benefit American oil producers. To date, media seem unaware of the Upland proposal.

Energy East and Ontario's natural gas supply

Media have also ignored the implications of the EE's pipeline for Eastern Canadian gas supply. The reason the existing pipe is available for conversion is that Alberta's conventional gas production has been in decline for over a decade. Part of the EE proposal involves building a new pipeline to supply southern Ontario with American natural gas. However, the USA is also post-peak in conventional gas and, like Canada, is increasingly reliant on 'fracked' unconventional gas.

American companies have grand plans for the current glut of gas including large-scale exports to Mexico, more liquified natural gas export terminals and more gas-fired electricity generation. How long the US gas surplus will last, and where Ontario would rank during a US supply shortage, remains unknown.

Summary

TransCanada argues that Energy East will achieve "the longstanding energy policy goal of enhanced security of oil supply for mainland eastern Canada." The NFU supports this goal but not at any price. Amid rising global temperatures and governments' expressed commitments to address climate change, it is irresponsible of the National Energy Board to deny consideration of the likely "end use" impacts of creating Canada's largest oil pipeline. As outlined above, there are multiple reasons to oppose Energy East. —nfu—

—Rick Munroe serves as the NFU's intervenor in the ongoing National Energy Board process regarding the EE proposal.



La Vía Campesina Youth Participate in Brazil's 2016 'International Summit for Struggling Youth':

Building global alliances and convergences for alternatives to capitalism

—by Terran Giacomini, *NFU associate member and graduate student at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)*

From June 21 to 26, 2016, 280 youth from four continents and 115 organizations participated in the International Summit for Struggling Youth (Encuentro Internacional de la Juventude en la Lucha) in Maricá, Brazil. The meeting was convened by three Brazilian organizations — Levante Popular da Juventude/Brazil (Popular Youth Uprising), the Articulation of Social Movements toward ALBA and La Vía Campesina's Landless Workers' Movement (MST). A central outcome was a declaration that the youth delegates will take back to their organizations to discuss future involvement in the creation of a global international coordinating body for youth struggles. The proposed coordinating body would facilitate joint actions and solidarity among rural and urban youth and among youth in different parts of the world. This global youth movement may offer the youth of the National Farmers Union an opportunity to contribute to and learn from their counterparts in related movements, including those working on education, housing and access to land.

The youth affirmed themselves as subjects within, not separate from, the global movement for human freedom and the defense of Mother Earth. The youth also underlined the fact that they face a particular set of challenges: lack of access to land, free (quality) education, meaningful work, and health care (including abortion); increasing youth unemployment; political systems that do not represent youth's needs and values; addictions and the drug economy's targeting of youth; precarious jobs that lead to precarious lives; and the threat of global warming to the inherent right to a full life, both for younger and unborn generations. More alarming is the criminalization and surveillance of youth activists and their exposure to imprisonment, abuse, torture and even death. For example, on September 26, 2014 in Guerrero, México, 43 students from the Ayotzinapa rural teachers' college

disappeared. Mexican police and military may have been involved.ⁱ This disappearance led to the formation of Jóvenes ante la Emergencia Nacional (JEN) (Youth Facing the National Emergency). Members were prominent at the Summit.ⁱⁱ

Youth members of La Vía Campesina from Palestine, Morocco, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Korea, France, USA, Canada, and Brazil attended the summit. These youth shared their experiences of struggle and the strategies they are involved in to build food sovereignty in their territories. Michaelin Kellie, an African woman from La Vía Campesina's ZIMSOFF (Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmers Forum), called for the declaration to reflect the reality that "we cannot address climate change unless we treat nature and humans as one. What happens to her happens to us, and so the exploitation of Mother Earth is the exploitation of us as human beings and vice versa". Kellie's call for an end to all forms of exploitation contrasts sharply with those who seek to expand accumulation with minor 'green' adjustments to current relations, including through so-called Climate Smart Agriculture. This is a losing strategy because it entails massive destruction of nature, including human life. More discussion on this point could better centralize transformative ecofeminist activism and analysis, as put forward by Kellie.ⁱⁱⁱ

Cultural celebrations abounded at the Summit. At the opening and closing of each meeting youth organized a *mistica* — a ceremony or performance meant to build cross-cultural solidarity. Performances of song and dance added joy and facilitated communication across language barriers. Both women and men were seen and heard at the microphones, in musical performances and on the dance floor. Among the many chants was: "no socialism without feminism".

(continued on page 16...)





(La Via Campesina Youth..., from page 15)

The gender relations at the event appeared to be horizontal, with both women and men involved in planning and decision making, and with some analysis of the need to end the exploitation of women taken up in the declaration. The youth dedicated time in the discussions and cultural activities to express solidarity with the women of Kobane, Syria who are facing down the Islamic State (IS) and “building of an economic system that is based neither on the exploitation of human labor nor on the pilferage of natural resources.”^{iv}

The process of writing the declaration helped lay the groundwork for global solidarity and alliances across movements. In groups of twenty to thirty people, organized by language for ease of communication, youth worked out the content of the declaration. They discussed not only the struggles they face within their territories but also the processes they are involved in to challenge and bring about alternatives to capitalism. The English speaking group, which had representatives from organizations from fifteen countries, highlighted the following processes for transformation: civil disobedience and non-violent

direct actions; agroecology; boycotts, divestments, and sanctions; autogestión (self-organization) and cooperatives; grassroots political structures including assemblies; replacing symbols of repression with popular art; and the use of music and dance for affective education and communication.

Participants in the smaller group discussions synthesized the findings and reported back to the larger assembly. The outcome of this democratic process was the declaration^v and the proposal for a global day of action which is scheduled for October 8 to mark the anniversary of Che Guevara’s assassination.

Overall the event was tremendously important in that it created new and deepened already existing solidarities and convergences. The transformative potential of this event could be strengthened by including more youth from those Indigenous communities at the forefront of action to keep fossil fuels in the ground. Because fossil fuels power every link of the corporations’ value chains; alliances and joint actions to fight agribusiness and energy extractivism are crucial to effecting a swift and peaceful transition toward a life-affirming global political economy.

—nftu—

ⁱ <http://www.democracynow.org/2015/10/5/mexico>

ⁱⁱ <http://jovenesemergencia.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ For more on the gendered and racialized class dimensions of extractivism: Women’s Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network. 2016. Available at:

<http://landbodydefense.org/uploads/files/Violence%20on%20the%20Land%20and%20Body%20Report%20and%20Toolkit%202016.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.kurdishquestion.com/oldsite/index.php/kurdistan/west-kurdistan/the-promise-of-the-women-of-kobane/713-the-promise-of-the-women-of-kobane.html>

^v <http://www.derechoalapaz.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/POLITICAL-DECLARATION-INTERNATIONAL-MEETING-OF-THE-STRUGGLING-YOUTH.pdf>



OP ED:

Churchill Worth Saving

— by Dean Harder

Most of us take for granted that the majority of our roads and highways are publicly funded and built at cost in order to serve the overall public good. There is no clamour asking why those roads are not being given away to private companies to let road barons profit from them. For good reason! If anything, recent events in Northern Manitoba should prove to us that like highways, the fate of crucial rail lines should not be in the hands of private companies.

The Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay Railway that serves it have real potential to benefit the communities they connect to – if they are publicly owned and managed to serve Canada's greater public interest. Both are vital infrastructure with important and irreplaceable roles in both our economy and social fabric. Churchill is the Canadian prairies' only ocean port; it provides an additional route for grain transportation. Utilizing this corridor reduces pressure on the West Coast and Thunder Bay to help prevent logistics bottlenecks when there is a bumper crop. From a farmers' standpoint, the port can also counteract the inefficiencies caused by vertically integrated grain companies shipping exclusively to their own grain terminals at Canada's other ports. Shipping grain over the rail line that serves Churchill reduces maintenance costs for prairie highways in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It also supports the line's economic viability, providing northern residents and tourists a gateway to the North that is less expensive and more environmentally-friendly than air travel.

In spite of all these benefits, the future of both the port and the railway are uncertain. Omnitrax abruptly closed the Port of Churchill on July 25, 2016 and the fate of the rail line that connects to the rest of Canada is now up in the air. Today's situation is the result of a dangerous domino effect set in motion by Omnitrax's negligence combined with a series of missteps by different governments. It can be traced back to the privatization of the Canadian National Railway in 1995, the give-away of the Hudson Bay rail line to American-owned Omnitrax in 1997 and the removal of the farmer-run single desk Canadian Wheat Board in 2011.

To secure the port's benefits for future generations of Canadians, the federal government should take back ownership of both the Port of Churchill and the Hudson's Bay Railway. In addition, it needs to take measures to ensure the port remains viable for the communities connected to the rail line and farming communities that are within its catch basin. Northern communities, local workers, businesses and farmers who rely on the line must be part of the decision-making for the publicly-owned entity that replaces Omnitrax as owner and manager of these facilities.

As they do with roads and highways, the federal and provincial governments must commit to investing in the rail line and port infrastructure in perpetuity. There should never be risk of potential selling off of line assets.

An adequate grain catch basin fed by both CN and CPR railways must be secured to bring grain to the rail line serving Churchill. Storage facilities must be secured, and if necessary, built, to ensure grain is available to feed the port during its operating season. The railway must be set up to actively facilitate rapid grain movement in years with large crops. Allocating railcars to serve Churchill must be a priority during its active season.

The mere existence of the needed facilities is not enough, however. Grain movement is essential for port viability. Therefore a grain logistics oversight system must be in place to make all the parts work together effectively. A farmer-first orderly marketing agency is needed to secure a strong export market for grain handled through Churchill, along with good prices for farmers. Logistics oversight, together with the marketing agency, would ensure the Port's viability by meeting or exceeding a 500,000 tonne annual throughput. In short, we need to replicate the function of the single-desk Canadian Wheat Board to ensure both the railway and the port are viable by providing a consistent and reliable flow of grain through the port. Assurances from the private grain merchants are paper thin and do not benefit farmers' bottom line.

With the right plan, the Port of Churchill can be a thriving entity that supports thousands of people and hundreds of businesses while bringing vibrancy to our North. Governments must ensure that the rail line and Port of Churchill belong to the people and must not be sold off or given away ever again.

Churchill is our Canadian Prairie and Northern port. We are all Churchill.

—Dean Harder is a National Farmers Union board member.
He farms with his family on their grain farm near Lowe Farm, Manitoba.



Campaign to restore Prison Farms continues

—by Dianne Dowling, member of the Save Our Prison Farms committee and president of NFU Local 316 (Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox-Addington)

More than 200 people attended a rally and town hall meeting on August 16, to show support for restoration of the prison farm program at two institutions in Kingston. Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Hon. Ralph Goodale, and senior staff from Correctional Services Canada (CSC) attended. The two-hour CSC-organized meeting was part of a feasibility study by CSC, looking at the potential for restoring the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions. The study also included an online survey that ended in August, as well as research into the use of farm programs in corrections.

The former Conservative government closed the prison farms program in 2010. At the time, the program was located at six minimum security prisons - two in Kingston, and one each in New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Prior to the closure of the farms, hundreds of people from eastern Ontario were involved in an eighteen month-long campaign to save the prison farms. The campaign included writing letters, signing petitions, attending meetings, holding demonstrations in Kingston, Ottawa and elsewhere, and making presentations at the House of Commons Public Safety Committee - all the usual activity associated with expressing public opinion in a democracy. In addition, thirty farm, food and social justice organizations across Canada, including local, regional and national levels of the NFU, supported the campaign's position statement.

The opposition parties at the time supported saving the prison farms and committed to restoring the farm program, if elected to government. When the Liberal Party won the federal election in October, 2015, the Save Our Prison Farms (SOPF) group lobbied the new government to act on its promises.

On August 16, the SOPF group held a rally in front of Kingston City Hall, with speakers and musicians, in advance of the town hall meeting held inside city hall. During the meeting, dozens of people spoke in support of the prison farms as a corrections program that offers meaningful work experience and effective rehabilitation and therapy for inmates. Minister Goodale assured us that the study is a "genuine consultation" and said that his government is interested in effective rehabilitation and reintegration for inmates, to prepare them to make a successful return to society.

CSC received a larger than expected response to its online survey - 6000 replies, of which thirty percent were from the Kingston area, thirty percent

were from elsewhere in Ontario, and forty percent were from the rest of Canada. Some results were shared at the meeting: for instance, 96 percent of respondents said they think prison employment helps inmates; 94 percent said agricultural employment contributes to rehabilitation; and 84 percent said agricultural employment can make a unique contribution. Four out of five respondents said the prison farm land should be kept in farming.

Thank you, NFU members across Canada, for your support of the SOPF campaign and for participating in the online survey. We are very grateful that there was considerable response from places other than the Kingston area, showing the government there is public support across the country for restoring the prison farms. We have heard from people in New Brunswick who are working to restore the prison farm at Dorchester, N.B.

As a follow-up to the meeting, the SOPF committee is writing to Minister Goodale, to emphasize the need for CSC to take a strong, proactive and progressive leadership role in restoring the prison farms as an effective work and rehabilitation program in its institutions. The program worked well under CSC management in the past and contributed to public safety through the positive effects it had on the lives of inmates.

—nfu—

To submit further feedback to CSC about restoration of the prison farms, write to:

Scott Harris, Assistant Commissioner,
Communications and Engagement,
Correctional Services Canada,
340 Laurier Ave. W., Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9

or to

Minister Ralph Goodale, House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6



Farming in a Changing Climate

—by Ann Slater, NFU Member, St. Marys, Ontario

On a Sunday morning in early July, 2000, as we enjoyed the luxury of a leisurely family breakfast, we noticed the skies suddenly turn dark. And then it began to rain. Not just a gentle rain but a hard, pounding rain. When it stopped a few hours later, the rain gauge was overflowing as somewhere in the neighbourhood of six or seven inches of rain fell within a few hours. Fields became lakes and laneways became rivers. The rain event covered parts of several counties in southwestern Ontario, especially the top end of the Upper Thames watershed. If the rain had fallen over an urban area, it would of been a lead story on the national news. But it was only rural and small town residents and farmers who had to deal with the clean up as well as finding hay to replace the round bales that floated down the Thames river.

This was not rain from the remnants of a tropical storm moving up from the south. In fact, I recall the forecasted chance of rain that day was thirty percent. The other thing I recall is that at the time of the storm, I thought this torrential rain would be a once in a lifetime event. But it was not. Since then, most of the torrential rains have been more localized but similar in that they have been more of the pop-up type of rain, rather than saturated storm systems moving up from the south. In 2013, a neighbour a kilometre to the south watched the dark cloud sitting over the farms just to the north and west of her place. She received no rain. Once again my rain gauge was overflowing after a couple of hours, leaving flooded fields and little chance of finishing the Friday harvest for Saturday's farmers' market. More people in this area will remember their rain gauges overflowing after a Friday night in mid-September of the same year; it covered a larger area and led to the cancellation of the final day of the 2013 International Ploughing Match in Mitchell. Then, once again, there were the flooded

fields and gardens in 2014 and 2015 with the loss of vegetable crops each year. What I thought was a freak storm back in 2000 is now becoming the norm.

Researchers studying climate change in Canada consistently say that with climate change our weather will become more unpredictable, with rain coming more often in flooding downpours or winter rain, instead of winter snow.ⁱ Conservation authorities in southwestern Ontario are well aware of the changes in rain events. As Craig Merkley, a Conservation Services Specialist with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, said at the NFU's 46th Annual Convention in London in 2015, one of the differences between now and the late 1980s/early 1990s is that the intensity of rain storms has increased and we now have a challenge to stop seven inch rain storms from taking away a major

part of a farm. Similarly, a review of local climate trends by the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority has shown a change in precipitation patterns to more intense scattered thunderstorms. Their review also found that even with the increase in thunderstorms, the total annual precipitation has been declining over the past forty years and that more winter precipitation is falling as rain instead of snow.ⁱⁱ

As farmers, we are used to changing weather and to wet and dry years. But the extremes that are coming with a changing climate create a new level of stress and anxiety, especially because the impacts can be so variable from one farm to another. A survey conducted between September, 2015 and January 2016, by Professor Andria Jones-Britton, from the Department of Population Medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, showed that the level of stress, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion and burnout is higher among farmers than other groups.ⁱⁱⁱ

(continued on page 20...)



(Farming in a Changing Climate, from page 19)

After dealing with the loss of crops in both 2013 and 2014 due to torrential rain events, I found it a challenge to start over again in early June, 2015 after another series of heavy rainfalls. Knowing that over forty families had already paid me for a weekly delivery of vegetables gave me the push I needed to go out and see what had survived and what seedlings I needed to get started while the gardens dried out. So often we talk about the need to prepare for the risk of drought, the other extreme, when we talk about adapting to climate change. But on my farm it is too much rain, sometimes fairly localized, that has led to the greatest stress and the greatest loss of income. As we all adapt to a changing climate, we should remember that the weather, especially when it comes to rainfall, can vary widely from farm to farm and county to county.

As farmers, something completely out of our control, the weather, plays a major factor over our work and our income. When people ask me how the season is going or how my season was, my answer now is, "it is what it is" or "it was what it was". This is a reminder to myself that I did the best that I could given the weather I was given. It is often a satisfactory answer for other farmers, but not enough of an

As farmers, something completely out of our control, the weather, plays a major factor over our work and our income.

answer for our friends and allies who frequently press for a more definitive response. Comments from people who are not as affected by the weather, such as radio announcers who go on and on about beautiful days in the midst of dire drought conditions or well-meaning food activists pressing for a "good" or "bad" answer to their question on the season, can contribute to the isolation farmers sometimes feel.

Farming in a changing climate will require us to use our farming experience to find strategies to adapt our farming practices to deal with the extremes in weather as well as a change in diseases and insect pests. But we also need to find the tools and strategies to better cope with the mental health challenges that come with a changing climate.

—nfu—

ⁱ *Climate change will make Canada warmer and wetter*, Ontario Farmer, March 8, 2016.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.mvca.on.ca/mvca.php>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://news.uoguelph.ca/2016/06/farmers-need-want-mental-health-help-survey/>

NFU part of new Kisiskatchewan Water Alliance Network

The NFU has joined other activist and environmental organizations in the formation of the Kisiskatchewan Water Alliance Network (KWAN). This new water advocacy group was formed in response to the Husky Energy oil spill on the North Saskatchewan river in July. An independent study by KWAN released in early September made the following points:

- Husky's late reaction to the spill allowed time for the spill to travel further downstream. It also allowed time for the heavier components of the diluted crude oil to attach to sediment particles and submerge into the water column and the bottom of the river;
- Local residents need full access to the raw data from Husky's sampling program and a detailed cleanup strategy;
- Local residents were not warned of the health risks associated with the evaporating BTEX-group chemicals and other volatile compounds that were present following the spill;
- Infrastructure improvements need to be a priority in order to prevent further spills. Soil stability also needs to be considered an integral component of pipeline stability;
- The James Smith Cree Nation needs to be supported in its effort to mitigate and monitor the damage to their traditional territory.

—The full study is available at <http://bit.ly/2cIUv2>



NEW!!

The NFU is launching a Convention Bursary Program

National Conventions are often the highlight of our farming year. It’s a chance to hear interesting speakers on topics that concern us. We meet other farmers from across Canada, share ideas, participate in discussions on the convention floor and continue them in the hallways and around meal-time tables. Convention is where our NFU policy positions are debated, refined and adopted. New friendships are formed and old ones renewed every year. We recognize what a valuable experience it can be when people come to their first national convention. We also know that being part of Convention is one way members become more fully engaged in the work of the NFU, which strengthens our organization and helps us build for the future. For all these reasons, we have come up with a new Convention Bursary Program.

A Convention Bursary Fund is being set up to encourage participation at National Convention by reducing financial barriers. First-time convention goers will apply for a bursary. The bursaries will be funded by voluntary contributions from you, our Family Farm and Associate members. The Convention 2016 Planning Committee will select the bursary recipients from the eligible applicants.

Would you like to contribute to the Bursary Fund?

You are invited to contribute \$250 or more to the bursary fund. The money will be used to help first-time convention goers pay for their transportation, accommodation, food and if applicable, registration fees. You will be recognized as a contributor on the NFU website, in the convention program and the post-convention UFQ. If you prefer to contribute anonymously, that is okay too. Please mail your cheque or call the national office with your credit card information by October 14.

Would you like to apply for a Bursary?

If you 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 14. If you are selected, you will be notified by October 21 and 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.

Application for NFU Convention Bursary

Name: _____ NFU Membership Number: _____

Address: _____

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.



Rural Canada needs Canada Post

—NFU Submission to the Canada Post Review

The Canadian government is currently conducting an independent review of Canada Post. The stated goal of the Review "is to help put Canada Post on a self-sustaining footing, while providing valuable services for Canadians well into the future". During the first phase of the review, a Canada Post Review Task Force has been appointed to collect input and information, and identify options for the future of Canada Post. According to the timeline on Canada Post Review page of the Government of Canada website, the Task Force is expected to publish a discussion paper in September which will be followed by public consultations.

In June, 2016 the National Farmers Union submitted the following comments to the Task Force:

The National Farmers Union is a direct-membership organization made up of Canadian farm families who share common goals. It is the only voluntary national farm organization in Canada which, among many other things, is committed to building healthy, vibrant rural communities. The mandate of the National Farmers Union includes the promotion of a higher standard of community life in agriculture.

The NFU has several policies which support Canada Post and its provision of postal services which must be regarded as a right and not a privilege.

- We believe the provision of postal services to rural areas is absolutely vital to the viability of many rural communities and oppose the stated intention of Canada Post to vastly reduce postal services across Canada, and particularly to rural areas, in efforts to record a profit.
- The NFU demands that:
 - a) Canada Post and our elected representatives refrain from further discriminating against rural communities in the quality of postal services through the practice of franchising and/or contracting such services;
 - b) Communities already affected by reductions must have postal services restored and improved to previous levels in circumstances where they are dissatisfied with privatization. We urge no further privatization occur without the concurrence of communities affected.

- The NFU continues to support Canada Post and a public system that provides equitable service to all Canadians.

Furthermore, diminished mail volume can be easily compensated by Canada Post offering banking services as many countries already do. Many of our members live in rural communities, which have suffered from a general decline in population and associated services as a result – including banking services. As such, the National Farmers Union supports the Canadian Union of Postal Workers' proposal to supply financial services to underserved populations such as northern, rural and Aboriginal communities. This proposal will assist our members in accessing financial services and encourage investments in the local community.

The economies of rural communities increasingly suffer from a decrease in services. This is a prime opportunity for the Government of Canada to do the right thing - de-centralize services, give rural and remote areas economic opportunities and give Canada Post a boost at the same time. —nfu—

To submit your own comments to the Canada Post Review, use one of the following:

EMAIL: TPSGC.ExamendeSPC-CPCReview.PWGSC@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca

FAX: 1-844-836-8138

MAIL: Canada Post Review
CP 2200, Matane, QC G4W 0K8

TWITTER: [Twitter hashtag #CPReview2016](https://twitter.com/CPReview2016)

INSTAGRAM: [Instagram hashtag #CPReview2016](https://www.instagram.com/CPReview2016).



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 22 to 30 years old. One award in the amount of \$500 will be awarded each age category for a **NON-FICTION OPEN LETTER** 500-1000 words in length. **APPLICANTS CAN ONLY WIN ONCE PER AGE CATEGORY.**
- **This year's theme is: *My Future Vision for Canada's Farming and Food System.***
- Deadline for entries is **November 1, 2016.**
- The winners will be announced at the NFU Convention in November 2016.
- 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.

We Remember ...

HAROLD BLODGETT

HAROLD EDWIN BLODGETT of Abbey, Saskatchewan, passed away suddenly at the family farm on June 20. Harold is survived by his wife of 61 years, Doris (Nieminem); his children Shelley (Clem) Scott, Medicine Hat, AB, and Lisa (Cory) Laboucane, Coldstream, BC; grandchildren Andrew and Kelsey Scott; brothers Harvey (Judy) Blodgett, Lawrence (Laura) Blodgett, Gary (Joyce) Nieminem. *Donations in memory of Harold may be made to the National Farmers Union, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, or to the Salvation Army Food Bank.*



HANK NEUFELD

Hank's family would like to announce that he died on August 18 at The Meadows (Swift Current Nursing Home). He had just celebrated his 84th birthday on July 29. Hank was a dedicated supporter of the NFU and enjoyed nothing more than a day of canvassing for the organization (unless it was his many political and religious 'discussions'). He did this throughout many Districts in Region 6 and also in Regions 7 and 8. He is survived by spouse Joyce, his daughter Shirley, son-in-law Sim, grandsons Samuel and Scott, and his son Robert. He will be missed by family, friends and maybe even adversaries alike. A memorial gathering will be held on October 15 at 2:00 PM at the Waldeck Golden Age Hall in Waldeck, SK. *Donations may be made to the National Farmers Foundation or charity of your choice.*



NFU BOARD/ADVISORY MEMBERS & OFFICES

Regional/National Offices:

Region 1: Amanda Wildeman, Executive Director

648 Smythe Street, 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, PEI C1N 5Z8 Ph: (902) 436-1872

Region 3: Sarah Bakker, NFU-O General Manager, 3127 County Rd. 36S, Bobcaygeon, ON KOM 1A0

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

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

National Officers and Directors:

Jan Slomp, President, Courtenay, BC; *Hilary Moore*, 1st Vice President (Policy), Lanark, ON; *Glenn Tait*, 2nd Vice President (Operations), Meota, SK; *Coral Sproule*, Women's President, Perth, ON; *Toby Malloy*, Women's Vice President, Nanton, AB; *Ayla Fenton*, Youth President, Kingston, ON; *Dana Penrice*, Youth Vice President, Lacombe, AB; *Reg Phelan*, Region 1 Coordinator, Morell, PEI; *Ted Wiggans*, Region 1 Board Member, York County, NB; *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; *Ed Sagan*, Region 6 Coordinator, Melville, SK; *Ed Pedersen*, Region 6 Board Member, Cut Knife, SK; *Doug Scott*, Region 7 Coordinator, Waskatenau, AB; *Glenn Norman*, Region 7 Board Member, Red Deer County, AB; *Peter Eggers*, Region 8 Coordinator, La Glace, AB.

Women's Advisory Committee: *Marion Drummond*, Freetown, PEI; *Katie Ward*, Woodlawn, ON; *Lois Robson*, Deleau, MB; *Marcella Pedersen*, Cut Knife, SK.

Youth Advisory Committee: *Martin Boettcher*, Brussels, ON; *Lydia Carpenter*, Dunrea, MB; *Rachelle Ternier*, Humboldt, SK; *Ted Chastko*, Lacombe, AB; *Lisa Lundgard*, Grimshaw, AB.



CONVENTION ROOM RATES:

\$169.00 plus tax (includes parking)

Single or double occupancy/King or 2 queens

BOOK BY: OCTOBER 22, 2016 to receive the convention rate. When booking, use the group code: NFU087

FOR ROOM RESERVATIONS:

Call the hotel directly at **306-244-2311** or email your request to reservations@hgisaskatoon.com.

FLYING TO SASKATOON ON WESTJET??

Book your travel to Saskatoon between **November 17 and December 3, 2016** and receive

10% off the base fare. For details on how to complete a booking with these discount codes, please visit westjet.com/convention-discount. Use the Promo and Coupon code if booking with a Travel Agent.



COUPON CODE (WEB COUPON NO.):
10ROWWU

FOR TRAVEL AGENT WEB USE ONLY:
PROMO CODE: YXE02