



Seed Synergy or Seed Sovereignty?

—by Cathy Holtlander, Director of Research and Policy

What farmer, seeing the late summer abundance of crops ripening in the field, has not stood in awe of the tiny seeds planted in the spring? The anticipation of spring seeding and the joy of harvest is something every farmer and home gardener experiences.

On our farm, the seed we sow was harvested from our fields and cleaned by our neighbour. With fertile soil, timely rains, well-maintained equipment and careful work it will produce tonnes of nutritious grain that will feed thousands of people. I marvel at the power of seed in my garden too. I save some of my seed and buy open-pollinated seed from local seed growers. A few old cookie tins and mason jars hold enough seed to produce most of our year's vegetables. No doubt, my sense of wonder is a feeling shared by all gardeners.

Crop seeds and farmers are like the chicken and the egg – so tightly tied together it is impossible to say which came first. The development of cultivated crops from the seed of ancestral wild plants was a revolutionary process that created the world's many and diverse farming and culinary traditions. Seed carries the knowledge of thousands of generations of farmers who selected, cultivated and saved seed with desirable qualities. Seed holds the promise of next year's harvest. In proper conditions, viable seed can be saved for many years. Because it can both produce food and reproduce itself, seed is the world's greatest store of wealth. Without seed, crops cannot be grown, sold or transformed into edible food. Whoever controls seed thus has great power.

It is in this context that the National Farmers Union created our vision of a **Seed Act For Farmers** (see www.nfu.ca) and has fought back against efforts by corporations to gain control over seed, starting in the late 1970s when private ownership and control of new seed varieties in the form of Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) was first proposed, and again when gene patenting was used to claim ownership of newly introduced genetically engineered (GM) crops. In 2014 the NFU led a nation-wide campaign against the omnibus Bill C-18 which included the adoption of the UPOV '91 PBR regime. The bill was ultimately passed, and now Canada is under UPOV '91, a legal framework that allows for a massive increase in corporate control over seed.

PBRs and gene patents are relatively new forms of private property called “Intellectual Property Rights” (IPRs), which were created by legislation. IPRs allow those who claim ownership of new plant varieties and GM crops to control access to them for their first 18 or 20 years on the market. IPR owners are authorized to collect royalties from farmers who plant the seed. With patented GM crops, companies such as Monsanto provide seed on the condition that farmers sell their entire harvest and not keep back any of it for seeding the next year's crop. Each year, new GM seed must be purchased. The price of GM seed includes a royalty that is paid to the owner of the gene patent. With PBRs, seed breeders claim ownership over new plant varieties so they can prevent farmers from using the seed unless they pay a royalty. If a seed company suspects a farmer of using seed without paying royalties, it can sue. Monsanto's suit against Percy Schmieser is widely known, but others have been sued and/or threatened with patent and PBR infringement and settled out of court.

For seed subject to Canada's older PBR legislation based on UPOV '78, farmers must pay a royalty when buying PBR-protected seed, but they have the right to save seed for planting subsequent crops. Varieties that have been on the market for over 18 years are no longer subject to PBRs, so they are in the public domain, meaning there are no restrictions on their use. Under the new UPOV '91-based law, PBRs are in effect for 20 years and farmers' right to save seed has been downgraded to a mere “privilege” for those varieties registered after the new law came into effect. Bill C-18 also made it easy for the government to take away “farmers' privilege” simply by passing regulations. These regulations could be used to exclude classes of farmers, plant varieties, uses of harvested material; to restrict or put conditions on farmers' use of harvested material and/or to stipulate what is to be considered “conditioning” of seed.

In January 2018, the Canadian Seed Growers Association, Canadian Seed Trade Association, Canadian Seed Institute, Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada, Canadian Plant Technology Agency, and CropLife Canada, began to promote *Seed Synergy*, their proposal for an extreme make-over of Canada's seed regulatory system, which if adopted by government, will dramatically increase big seed companies' power

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over seed. Seed Synergy would dismantle the existing seed regulatory system, which is ultimately accountable to the public – including farmers -- and replace it with a system designed for and run by the seed and agro-chemical lobby groups. On the surface, the *Seed Synergy* vision may seem to promote greater efficiency, but a closer look reveals that it would employ UPOV '91 rules to massively increase multinational seed companies' control over seed.

To maximize their returns from seed, the seed and agro-chemical companies would need to control farmers' access to seed through PBRs or patents, collect royalties for the use of most or all seed (whether farm-saved or purchased annually), easily enforce PBRs and patent rights, reduce their costs for bringing seed to market, and offload the risks of poor quality seed onto farmers by selling it on a buyer beware basis. All of these elements are contained in the *Seed Synergy* proposal.

Seed Synergy proposes a system that would:

1. Enable seed companies to collect End Point Royalties on harvested crops legally grown from farm-saved seed – a “bushel tax” that would be paid to seed companies.
2. Require farmers to register detailed information about every sale and purchase of seed, thereby facilitating investigation of suspected PBR or patent infringement.
3. Minimize, and perhaps eliminate, the use of common seed that can be exchanged between farmers without any payment to seed companies.
4. Fast-track approval and introduction of new GM crops regardless of consumer acceptance or market impacts, increasing the number and/or acreage of crops to which patent rights apply.
5. Eliminate the roles of both independent multi-year field trials and publicly accountable Recommending Committees in determining whether new varieties can be registered for sale, instead allowing any variety to be sold via a simple internet listing of company information about the seed. This would make it easy for companies to sell varieties developed for other countries without proving they perform well in Canada.
6. Eliminate quality standards for variety registration, allowing any variety to be marketed on a buyer beware basis.
7. Facilitate increased sales of herbicides, fungicides and insecticides and/or seed treatments, a consequence of allowing the introduction of varieties designed as part of a seed-chemical package instead of requiring that new varieties meet minimum standards for disease and/or insect resistance.
8. Reduce autonomy of certified seed growers by promoting seed company self-inspection of contracted certified seed crop fields and creating cost barriers to third-party seed inspection for independent seed growers.
9. Promote integration of seed and agro-chemical companies with other agri-business corporations through the collection and use of crop data collected through seed sale registries and other data collection systems.
10. Replace our publicly accountable regulatory system with one supported by taxpayer dollars where decisions are made by a consortium of seed and agro-chemical companies.

The federal government is largely responsible for creating an environment for a corporate push to take over seed regulation. It has withdrawn funding from key elements of the seed system, creating a vacuum for the corporate sector to fill. Seed, with its implications for food, agriculture, economics, health and ecology, is a matter of public interest. The regulation of seed must be properly funded and kept publicly accountable.

The NFU calls for the inalienable rights of farmers and other Canadians to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds to be enshrined in law. Our position is supported by the United Nations *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. As a signatory to this treaty, Canada “recognizes the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world, particularly those in the centres of origin and crop diversity, have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources which constitute the basis of food and agriculture production throughout the world.” And Canada also “agrees not to limit any rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material, subject to national law and as appropriate.”

Clearly, Canadian farmers and consumers need to stand up and prevent the *Seed Synergy* vision from becoming a reality. Food sovereignty cannot exist if multinational corporations control seed. ■

What you can do:

- Visit the NFU's Save our Seed page on www.nfu.ca to learn more.
- Contact federal and provincial politicians, including your own MP – see <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/addresses> .
- Bring information to your local citizens groups, faith community and allied organizations to get them involved.
- Discuss seed issues with your neighbours to help them understand the situation.
- Encourage people to join the NFU, donate to support the work, and become active on this issue.

Global agribusiness consolidation:

EU okays Bayer's acquisition of Monsanto

There has been a flurry of “merger and acquisition” activity among global agribusiness corporations since 2016. ChemChina acquired Syngenta; Dow and DuPont merged and will soon re-brand under the name Corteva Agriscience; two fertilizer giants, Potash Corp and Agrium, have merged, and now do business as Nutria. Global grain companies Archer Daniels Midland and Glencore United (which owns Viterro) are both interested in buying US-based grain company Bunge. Probably the most controversial transaction is Bayer's plan to buy up Monsanto, which was approved with conditions by the European Union regulator on March 21. At time of writing it was still under review by Canada's Competition Bureau.

The EU's conditions on the Bayer take-over of Monsanto involve Bayer selling its seed, agro-chemical and digital agriculture divisions to another large multinational company that would have the capacity to compete with the new Bayer-Monsanto entity. Bayer has offered to sell to BASF to meet this condition. The EU regulator believes the post-merger environment dominated by four global corporations – ChemChina, Corteva, Bayer and probably BASF -- to be an adequate level of competition in the seed, agro-chemical and digital agriculture sectors to provide price competition and incentives for continuing innovation. For details of the EU decision, see the press release posted at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-2282_en.htm

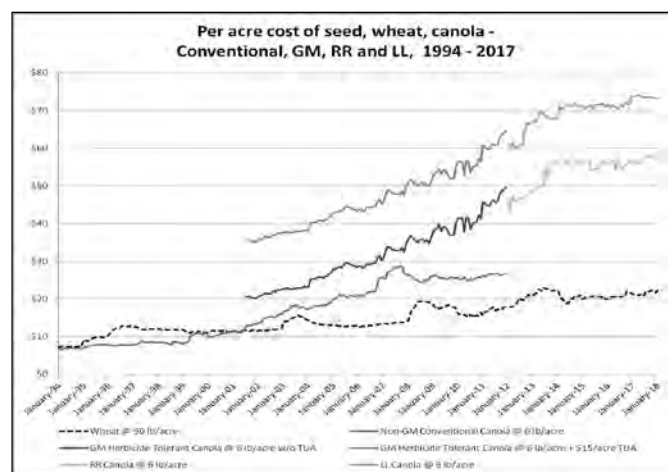
In March, 2018 the NFU along with CBAN and ETC Group gave input to Canada's Competition Bureau regarding the Bayer-Monsanto deal. We provided information about concentration of the canola market in Canada to illustrate how Bayer and Monsanto have expanded their market share and increased seed prices to farmers in ways that appear more collaborative than competitive. We suggested that these companies should not be permitted to merge because they are already big enough. If Bayer divests its seed and chemical business prior to the merger and sells it to BASF, it would not change the dynamics of this highly concentrated market significantly. We urged the Competition Bureau to use this opportunity to reduce the dominance of these few companies by requiring seed and agro-chemical divisions to be broken up into smaller entities.

Price of canola seed versus wheat seed:

In 1996 Monsanto and Bayer introduced their patented genetically modified herbicide tolerant canola seed. Monsanto's seed is “Roundup Ready” (RR) – tolerant to glyphosate, sold by Monsanto under the brand name “Round-up”. Bayer's seed is “Liberty Link” (LL) – tolerant to glufosinate, sold by Bayer under the brand name “Liberty”. The traits are patented, which allows the company that

owns the patent to restrict access to their product and charge royalties for its use. Monsanto and Bayer require farmers to buy seed every year and pay a royalty or face a patent infringement suit. Until 2012 Monsanto charged a per-acre royalty they call a “Technology Use Fee” while Bayer has always incorporated the royalty in its selling price.

Input price data shows canola seed prices going up significantly and steadily since 2000, with Roundup Ready and Liberty Link going at the same rate in lock-step, while wheat seed prices remain fairly low and constant. The nominal competition between Bayer and Monsanto has not had any effect on the rate of seed price increase, while the ability of farmers to use farm-saved wheat seed has helped keep those prices down.

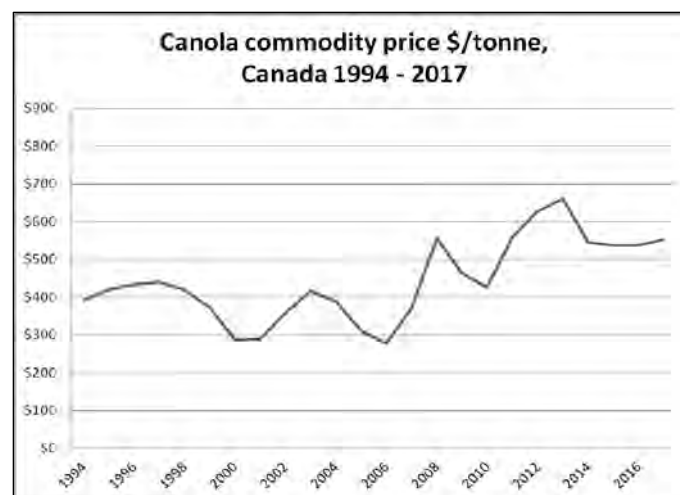


Graph 1

Source: Alberta Farm Input Prices

Seed price versus commodity canola:

The price of canola seed is rising at a faster rate than price farmers receive when selling canola commodity at the elevators.



Graph 2

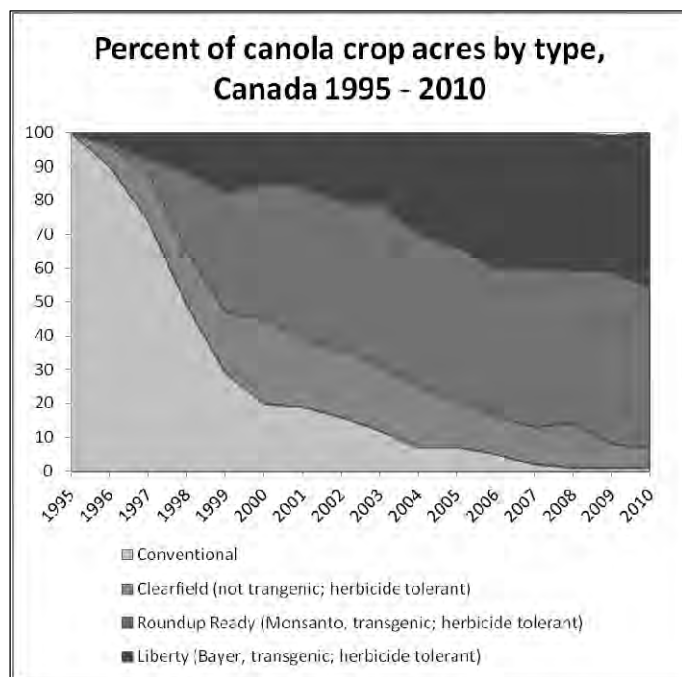
Source: Canola Council of Canada

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Market share of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) Canola:

The market share of HT canola has gone from 0% in 1995 (before RR and LL were introduced) to around 99% by 2015. There is a non-GM HT canola called "Clearfield" which had as much as 10% of the market share for awhile, but by 2015 its market share was around 6%. Monsanto and Bayer obtain royalties from over 90% of all canola grown in Canada.

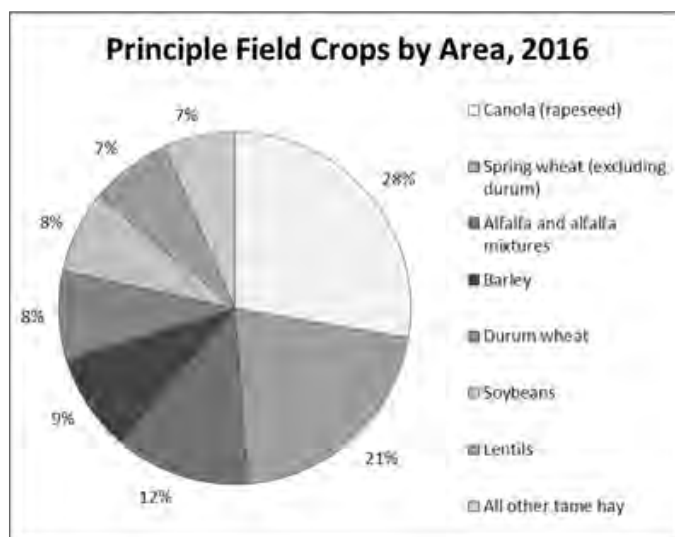


Graph 3

Source: Canola Council of Canada

Canola acres:

Canola's share of crop acres in Canada has been increasing. The Census of Agriculture reports 28% of cropland was planted to canola in 2016. To prevent disease issues, agronomists recommend that canola should not be grown on the same field more than once every four years. Thus, the maximum acreage of canola should be 25% or less. Monsanto and Bayer benefit from increasing acres. With their ability to influence farmers' decision-making through advertising and commodity group sponsorship, they wield a degree of influence that may be contributing to short rotations that undermine disease prevention measures. ■



Graph 4

Source: Census of Agriculture

NFU comments on proposed Health Canada neonic regulations

The NFU submitted comments in support of Health Canada's proposed decision to protect pollinators by changing the ways the neonicotinoid insecticides clothianidin and thiamethoxam can be used. The proposed decision is a positive step.

To protect pollinators, spraying clothianidin will be phased out for uses including orchard trees and strawberries; and reduced for cucurbit vegetables. Spraying thiamethoxam will be phased out for uses including orchard trees, legumes, outdoor fruiting vegetables, and berry crops before or during bloom. Soil application of thiamethoxam to certain ornamentals, berry crops, cucurbit crops and fruiting vegetables will be phased out. Allowed uses for seed treatments for field crops will be changed to require dust control.

Pollinators are killed or harmed by acute or chronic exposure to clothianidin and thiamethoxam at both the individual and population level. Treated plants absorb the insecticide and distribute it throughout the plant -- including its nectar and pollen.

The alternatives to clothianidin and thiamethoxam should be a broad set of strategies, not simply other agro-chemical insecticides. Government programs should assist farmers to adopt integrated pest management methods that include solutions such as creating habitat for the pests' predators; revised crop rotation and tillage practices; and the use of biological controls and micro-organisms. The NFU also asked Health Canada to advocate for public plant breeding to develop crop varieties that are resistant to insect pests, noting wheat midge tolerant wheat and hairy canola that resists flea beetles as good examples.

Read the NFU's full submission at <http://www.nfu.ca/policy/nfu-comments-clothianidin-and-thiamethoxam-pollinator-re-evaluation> .

Reconciliation must include rural communities

Canada desperately needs rural reconciliation

—by Max FineDay

Max FineDay leads Canadian Roots Exchange, a national non-profit that works with youth to advance reconciliation, and sits as a member of the interim National Council on Reconciliation. This article was originally published in the [Regina Leader Post](#), February 27, 2018.

Reconciliation feels hollow today. It has since delivery of the verdict allowing Gerald Stanley to walk free after shooting 22-year-old Colten Boushie (whose name I won't repeat to respect cultural protocol).

Two Fridays ago, around 7:30 p.m., is a moment people will speak about for decades. We'll remember where we were, what we were doing.

I was sitting in a restaurant, with friends, discussing what the verdict would be. We had different opinions, but all agreed that it couldn't be less than manslaughter.

When one at our table wondered what would happen if they didn't convict, the rest scoffed. The evidence couldn't be clearer, and the era of reconciliation had arrived. There had to be a conviction.

As 7:30 approached we began checking our phones.

Then the air was taken from my lungs.

Stunned, silenced, some excused themselves from the table to cry; the rest sat, holding back tears as best we could, waiting for someone to say ... anything.

I was angry, with myself as much as the jury. Angry that I allowed myself to believe justice would inevitably be served.

I felt foolish.

This flies in the face of the progress we, as a country, thought we were making on repairing the relationship. Pretending that the truth of history is deep in our past, pretending that reconciliation had already arrived.

The hollow feeling stayed as a wave of Facebook comments flooded us. People from every corner of Canada. At best wanting to "play devil's advocate", at worst telling us that justice was served.

When Treaty was signed, the deal was that we would share the land, and live in harmony with respect for one another. But the verdict (and some comments after) reveal that the vision of peace and prosperity for both sides of the treaty is farther away than many of us understood.

This case demonstrated that the lives of Indigenous youth do not matter in this country.

Do you feel it in the pit of your stomach?

You should.

Since the verdict, I've seen expressions of shame about Saskatchewan, looking at it with disdain. But this isn't a problem only for Saskatchewan. It's a problem for the entire country. Racism against Indigenous people exists in

Saskatchewan and elsewhere. It is fierce, and it is foul. It's in our cities, governments, and in our unjust justice system.

What happened at 7:30 on that Friday has set us back. Reconciliation was wounded, gravely, in that moment. Many Indigenous people, already skeptical, had their worst fears affirmed: that in the last 150 years of Canada, nothing has changed.

I will not accept that those jurors, 12 individuals, get to be the referendum on reconciliation. That burden falls to each of us.

It's important to recognize that in this era of reconciliation reports, conferences, speeches, and actions, somehow we've left out rural Canada. Access to reconciliation events, dialogues and programs is plentiful in cities. But what is available to rural Canada?

This tragedy shows a failure to embrace rural communities on the road of reconciliation. We must ask: "What it will take to fill town halls, school gymnasiums and coffee shops with opportunities for honest, informed conversations about the state of the relationship?"

Reconciliation will not be bestowed by any government, or solved through academic conferences alone. Reconciliation can only be achieved with local solutions, through speaking about our shared love for this place, the hard truths about our history, and how they've led us to inequality today. And through recognition of the humanity reflected in the person in front of you at the grocery store. Those of us engaged in this work have an obligation to help facilitate that conversation.

Canada desperately needs rural reconciliation. Rural Canadians live the closest to Indigenous communities, but they might as well be a world away.

I've seen compassion of Indigenous communities; I've heard stories from farmers about how their ancestors interacted with the First Nation community down the road, learning about the land, or being offered needed assistance.

Is it audacious to believe that rural communities can reconnect to those roots in our history, regain that relationship of mutual benefit, predicated upon friendship and understanding?

Maybe.

We can let these events renew our resolve to achieve reconciliation, this time including rural communities, this time involving rural peoples who share more than they realize.

But for now, Canada is a nation yet unreconciled.

This is not the death of reconciliation, but a call to help Indigenous communities bear this incredible weight, help dismantle systems that have supported injustice, help build something new.

Canadians, I ask you, how will you reconcile this? ■

An NFU innovation to improve grain handling transportation for farmers

—by Terry Boehm, former NFU President and long time analyst of transport legislation in Canada

In a press release on March 15 we encouraged the federal government to enact a new NFU idea for positive change in the grain handling and transportation sector that will benefit farmers. The proposal is for the establishment of Grain Car Receivers at the west coast and Thunder Bay. They would receive producer-cars at port and direct them to whichever terminal elevator had space for the grain. The Receiver would have the grain graded by the Canadian Grain Commission at port and then offer the grain to whichever company was purchasing that grain. Any discrepancies in space allocations and sales would be cleared up on a monthly basis by the Grain Car Receiver.

For this system to work it would require grain companies be mandated to accept a certain portion of their supply from the Grain Car Receiver. The Grain Car Receiver would benefit farmers by making producer-cars once again a viable alternative to shipping through grain companies, allowing them to fulfill their original function as a discipline on grain company elevation and/or basis charges and by allowing farmers direct access to rail transportation services.

Legislation would be required to make the mandated Grain Car Receivers at port a legitimate and effective entity. To begin the process, necessary amendments to the *Canada Transportation Act* could be made through Bill C-49, which is currently before the Senate. The required amendments would:

- Remove railways' ability to close producer-car loading sites.
- Reinstate the former right for establishment of a new producer-car loading site if petitioned by a group of at least ten farmers.
- Require that producer-cars be given equal, if not first priority, as was formerly the case, to any other rail car when railways allocate cars.

It is important to understand today's grain transportation problems in their historical context. Canada's grain rail transportation system has been deregulated extensively to the point it is now able to extract money from farmers with impunity. Instead of continuing that trend, why not do something daring in this country to make the system work better for farmers and the country as whole? In the end, mandated Grain Car Receivers would force grain companies to truly compete for farmers' grain with fair basis levels because farmers would have a real alternative with a fully functioning producer-car option.

Unfortunately too many farm groups, along with the federal and some provincial governments, mistakenly believe that the reciprocal penalties between railways and grain companies that are part of Bill C-49 will cure many of our problems. What we really have in Bill C-49 is a set of tepid and harmful amendments to the *Canada Transportation Act* that refuse to recognize the real power dynamics that exist in a system where most grain delivery points are captive to one railway or another.

Wherever grain companies are served by a single railway they will be disadvantaged regardless of their ability to negotiate a penalty for poor service. Mindful of potential future consequences, the grain company is likely to use the reciprocal penalty provision sparingly, knowing it relies on that one railway in the long term. Meanwhile, farmers are standing by the sideline in any penalty negotiations between shippers and railways.

If a grain company ever brings a level of service complaint against a railway, Bill C-49's current wording adds a long list of considerations the Canadian Transportation Agency must bear in mind when making its decision. Under Bill C-49, the CTA would have to consider nine points that are so broad it is hard to imagine when, if ever, the railways would be in violation of their service obligations. This is a huge win for the railways. In effect they would be able to determine, to a large extent, who they will do business with by making skillful use of these new loopholes.

Bill C-49's weakening of the railways' common carrier obligation flies in the face of over a hundred and twenty years of transport legislation that was specifically designed to prevent the railways from exercising undue, self-serving power. On a positive note, the proposed legislation does reduce the time for a ruling on a service complaint from 120 to 90 days.

The Maximum Revenue Entitlement system remains in place under Bill C-49, but it still does not provide any mechanism for freight rates to go down. The only calculation the formula recognizes is an inflation factor. Yet with recent drops in fuel prices, why have we not seen a reduction in freight rates? This shortcoming could have been addressed by requiring a regular costing review that calculated the reduction in costs railways incur by running bigger trains, having far fewer pickup points than in the past, using smaller crews, and having more fuel efficient locomotives, for example. Bill C-49 removes the definition of government hopper cars from the *Transportation Act*

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and allows railways' acquisition of hopper cars to be calculated into their rates. This is a further measure that ensures rate adjustments can only go upward.

Freight rates should also be adjusted downwards to partially transfer to grain shippers the benefits of the railways' privileged position in the Canadian economy. Hopefully, lower rates would be passed on to farmers as well. This idea is justified on two fronts. First, it has been known for some time that the railways are receiving more than \$150 million in excess revenue annually using railway industry standard accounting measures that calculate a very generous return. Second, railways have been offloading costs onto farmers for years. Farmers have had to invest in more on-farm storage and larger trucks to meet railway demands for 24 hour fill times for 100-plus car unit trains. Being forced to bear a larger share of grain transportation system costs gives farmers a legitimate claim for lower freight rates. This inequity is not addressed by C-49.

The revenue cap formula, while somewhat flawed, can be modified to continue to bring freight rate price protection to farmers, albeit in our current system it is increasingly masked. The worst solution, advocated by the Western Canadian Wheat Growers and others, would supposedly be to eliminate the revenue cap entirely to encourage the railways to invest in their system. As always, it is naive to believe service would improve with further deregulation.

Finally, it would be appropriate to severely restrict the railways from abandoning any more track--the railway system should be expanding rather than contracting. We should have grain travelling by rail for longer distances rather than by road.

While frustration with plugged elevators, high freight rates and poor service is warranted, quick passage of Bill C-49 will not solve these problems. If the Senate gives it the sober second thought it needs, the Bill should be returned to the House of Commons with substantial amendments. ■

Are Influence Elites setting Canada's Agriculture Agenda?

—by Cathy Holtslander, NFU Director of Research and Policy

In March 2016, Finance Minister Bill Morneau set up his *Advisory Council on Economic Growth* and tasked it with developing strategies to accelerate growth of the Canadian economy. He appointed 14 members, which include CEOs and Directors of multinational finance and investment, high-tech and energy corporations; pension fund managers; and academics involved in the C.D. Howe Institute and the Conference Board of Canada. None have experience in agriculture. The pension funds, however, invest in farmland (Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and Quebec's Caisse de depot).

The Council's chair is Dominic Barton. He is the Global Managing Director of McKinsey & Company, an international consulting firm for the world's largest corporations. He now lives in London, England but spent much of his career in Asia. He is deeply involved in promoting the interests of corporations as chair of the Seoul International Business Advisory Council, trustee of the Brookings Institution, member of the Singapore Economic Development Board's International Advisory Council, board member of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and chairman of the U.S. President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa. He is co-chair of *Focusing Capital on the*

Long Term. Fellow Council members Mark Wiseman of the CPPIB and Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock (one the world's largest investment management companies), are also on this board, as is the CEO of Dow Chemical.

This Council is an unusually transparent example of the *Influence Elites* that Janine Wedel described in her keynote address at the 2017 NFU National Convention (see *Union Farmer Quarterly*, January 2018 edition for a summary of that address, *Outsiders, Influence Outsiders, Influence Elites and Corrosion of Democracy Elites and Corrosion of Democracy*). For names and bios of Council appointees visit <https://www.fin.gc.ca/n16/16-031-eng.asp>.

Unleashing the Growth Potential of Key Sectors, known as the "Barton Report" is the Council's second report, released in February 2017. It recommends targeting specific sectors and uses agriculture to illustrate its ideas for restructuring the economy. It suggests an agriculture pilot project could serve as a model for other sectors to follow. Growth – the more and faster the better --- is the goal, and other values, if acknowledged, are secondary. If regulations that protect labour or environment slow growth, Barton recommends they be redesigned to reduce their impact. However, "growth" is never defined in the report – only

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measured as increases in percent of global output, global market share, percent of total production exported, dollars of foreign investment and GDP. How promoting these types of growth would affect the number of farmers, number of farms or quality of farm life is not discussed.

The report suggests ambitious goals for increasing Canada's agriculture output: increasing oilseed sales by 20% through new trade agreements with China, India and Japan; tripling aquaculture sales by overhauling fisheries regulations to allow expansion of fish farms to replace traditional fisheries; and nearly doubling dairy production by ending provincial quotas. Clearly, meeting the dairy target would mean ending supply management to pursue New Zealand-style export dependency -- yet Barton does not consider how Canada's export prospects would be affected by the USA's dairy industry next door. Likewise, there is silence on the community and environmental impacts of fish farm expansion. Massive increases in market share for commodities would require significantly lower prices -- thus less money for the farmer. To achieve higher production, more inputs would be required, further shrinking the farmers' margins.

The Barton report would accelerate agriculture sector growth with private capital investment in infrastructure,

digital technology, deregulation, and re-training the farm workforce. The system is to be redesigned to deliver "growth" without regard to other purposes agriculture serves. Instead of publicly accountable governance, Barton calls for an Agriculture Growth Council made up of private sector leaders to set targets, identify obstacles and "serve to champion the implementation of its own recommendations adopted by government ..." and "advise the government on continuing, modifying, or terminating existing policies, regulations and programs (for example, streamlining cumbersome approval processes for new products)."

In February, Minister Morneau delivered the 2018 federal budget. It includes allocations for several of the Barton report's priorities, including "targeted reviews, over the next three years, of regulatory requirements and practices that are bottlenecks to innovation and growth in Canada, with an initial focus on agri-food and aquaculture ..." The Finance Minister, through his Advisory Council on Economic Growth, seems to have simultaneously taken on a major portion of the Agriculture Minister's role in priority setting, and turned it over to a group of elite corporate leaders who have stronger connections to their global networks than to the farmers, farm workers, consumers -- and voters of Canada. ■

To read *Unleashing the Growth Potential of Key Sectors* visit:

<https://www.budget.gc.ca/aceg-ccce/pdf/key-sectors-secteurs-cles-eng.pdf>.

New award-winning Canadian documentary on genetically modified food

Modified is a first-person documentary-memoir that questions why genetically modified organisms are not labeled on food products in Canada and the United States, despite being labeled in 64 countries around the world. The film is available in both French and English.

Interweaving the personal and the political, the film is anchored in the filmmaker's relationship to her mother, a passionate gardener and food activist. Their intimate mother-daughter investigative journey, fueled by a shared love of food and agriculture, ultimately reveals the extent to which industrial interests control our food policies, making a strong case for a more transparent and sustainable food system.

Modified is currently touring film festivals and cinemas and has already received 6 festival awards. To see the film ask your local film festival or cinema to screen it, or host a screening in your community. If you would like to host a screening or would like materials to hand out, contact the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) at info@cban.ca.

Check listings and get more information at www.Modifiedthefilm.com

