



National Farmers Union  
Union Nationale des Fermiers



# quarterly union farmer

Summer 2018 / Volume 24 Issue 2



- photo by Lisa Lundgard, The Veggie Patch

Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms.  
Des communautés solidaires et des politiques sensées pour une agriculture durable.

# Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

## NFU and Orderly Marketing

Farm organizations that indulge in talk of *value chains* and *innovation*, along with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), were sleeping at the helm as genetically modified (GM) wheat was found along an access road to an Alberta field in mid-June, more than 300 kilometers from the nearest recorded open GM wheat field trial. Two large customers of Canadian wheat, South Korea and Japan, responded immediately by putting import orders on hold. The NFU issued a News Release on June 15, calling for drastic new regulation to end open-air field testing of GM wheat.

In a 2014 statement, Cereals Canada, along with the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Grain Growers of Canada, Grain Farmers of Ontario and the Canadian National Millers Association, called for wheat innovation, including biotechnology, saying it was needed to help feed the world. No apparent thought was given to market losses that could result from such statements, let alone losses from contaminating actual supplies with GM wheat. It is also inexcusable how lax the CFIA is regarding the possibility of contamination, given that they okayed open field trials, which the NFU has opposed since 2001.

The CFIA's regulatory process in the late-1990s and early 2000s, when Monsanto was experimenting with the trait just found in Alberta, did not even require biotech companies to provide the CFIA with full information about the plants they were testing.

In marketing the historic reality is that the customer is always right. In 2003, when Monsanto was still seeking approval for GM wheat, the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) surveyed their international customers and found 83% would look for other sources of wheat if Canada brought GM wheat onto the market. Due to very practical marketing reasons the coalition that included NFU, CWB, Keystone Agricultural Producers and Agricultural Producers of Saskatchewan got what they asked for - a halt to the introduction of GM wheat.

The lack of proper regulation by industry-connected bureaucrats in the CFIA and gullible farm leaders in organizations like Cereals Canada who stand behind talk of *industry innovation* and *value chain benefits*, leave farmers exposed to huge risks through their disregard for basic marketing principles. Proper regulation, erring on the side of caution, is needed in light of the market's sensitivity. Genuine farmer power in the marketplace and in the regulatory system is needed to correct these faults.

In communication with Prime Minister Trudeau, the NFU asked the federal government to stand firm in the protection of supply management. Although largely still intact, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and subsequent trade agreements have nibbled away at the import controls needed for supply management to work properly. A standard Canadian negotiating tactic has been to give away a little of supply management in order to secure an overall agreement. With the belligerent *America First* stance of President Trump and the risk of him escalating trade wars, the Canadian government may be persuaded to engage in another give-away round with supply management. The NFU urged the Prime Minister not to do that, but to instead realize the fact that a growing group of American farmers and their organizations are looking at the Canadian supply management system as one that would really serve them as well. It would be a huge error to impede the very system that we are envied for, right at the time that others want to emulate it to overcome their own crises of structural surplus production.

—Jan Slomp, NFU Vice President (Policy)

## National Office Staff Retirements

It is with a mixture of regret, pleasure, and envy that I am informing members of the National Farmers Union about the retirement of two staff members at the National Office. Our **General Manager Patty Englund** and **Office Assistant Bev Magill** have both announced their plans to retire effective July 2018. My regret stems from losing such dedicated and knowledgeable employees, my pleasure from knowing they are looking forward to enjoying a major change in their lifestyles, and my envy from the fact that they have reached that stage ahead of me.

Patty took on direction of the NFU office in June 2015, and shortly after, Bev joined National staff in April of 2016. During their time with the NFU, they have both exhibited a commitment and allegiance to our organization that goes beyond the conventional bounds of an employer/employee relationship. With Joan and Cathy, they formed a team that was dedicated to ensuring that the needs of farmers were their top priority. They have consistently adjusted their personal schedules and taken on any task that was required in order to meet deadlines and get the necessary work done.

As they approach retirement, both Patty and Bev are continuing that tradition of dedication to the NFU. They are staging their exit strategies to allow for the minimum disruption to National Office and fellow staff members. Patty has agreed to assist with planning of National Convention, supervising our summer students, and being available on an as-requested basis to aid in the NFU's transition.

I know that members of the National Farmers Union and their fellow staff will miss Bev and Patty, and join me in thanking them for their work on our behalf. *All the best to both of you as you focus on enjoying all that life has to offer.*

—Cam Goff, NFU VP Operations

# A Message from the National President



— by Coral Sproule, National President

**G**reetings fellow farmers, Summer is upon us, and as we actively perform small acts of positive change on our respective farms it is important

to recognize the work that we all do towards the betterment of agriculture and rural communities across the country, and beyond. Simply by acting as stewards of the land we occupy, we are working towards better food systems and food sovereignty for all. We are very thankful for the support we always receive for our work from members and supporters, whether monetary, in-kind, or in other forms. In particular we would like to thank those of you who recently responded to our springtime appeal for donations to help further the work of the National Farmers Union. We value their generosity. Another integral piece of our work that is essential to recognize is the ongoing dedication of our team of staff, nationally and regionally, past and present. These are just some of the main forms of backing that keep us going and without such we would be unable to do the good work we do.

On this note, it is important that we recognize the value of working with allies in our movement. One such ally of ours for many years has been Inter Pares, who support much of the work of our International Programming Committee, our activities with La Via Campesina, and our work in the realm of agroecological principles and training. I was honoured to be invited by our partners at Inter Pares, one of the organizing teams for the event, to participate in two days of meetings in April entitled W7(Women 7) Summit on Feminist Visions for the G7.

These meetings entailed a process for consultation for a Gender Equality Advisory Council to the G7 meetings this year in Charlevoix, Quebec. There was healthy scepticism, though this did not negate the enthusiasm for the process felt throughout the meetings. These meetings were a

combination of strategizing and building consensus and understanding among the participating delegates of nearly 50 organizations whose work is centered on women's movements and empowerment of women and girls in Canada and the world. The several roundtables with thematic areas of discussion included: Peace and Security; Women's Economic Empowerment; Feminist Movement Building; Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Intersectional Feminism; and Violence Against Women. I was asked to be part of the focus on Climate Change.

It was very daunting to be one of few direct representatives of rural women and the particular parts we play in the realm of Climate Action and advocacy for change and the betterment of our environment. Many of the conversations at our table were around the particular challenges and relationships women have to the environment and planet. It was enlightening to hear stories of the over 1000 current land struggles of peasants in Guatemala, many of them fighting for their lives directly in opposition to resource extraction by various Canadian mining companies. With these and other peasant women we stand in solidarity and support of one another's struggles.

We were able to present our initial recommendations and statements on all of the themes to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Hon. Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women, Canada in a W7 town hall meeting. We also participated in a lunch and reception with many ministers and members of the official Gender Equality Advisory Council. It was a moving experience to hear from women who are advocating for women's rights and generally building towards social justice in our communities and internationally. The official recommendations can be seen in a communiqué that was published from our discussions at: [www.w7canada.ca](http://www.w7canada.ca). We will be posting a link to this on the NFU website.

Best wishes and gratitude to all of the women at these meetings, as well as for all of your work on your farms and beyond. I hope to connect with many of you in the near future.

*In Solidarity, Coral Sproule*



## Message from the National Women's President



— by Katie Ward, Women's President

**O**n June 5<sup>th</sup> I was pleased to participate as a keynote panelist at an event in Ottawa called She Feeds the World, put

on by the UN Food & Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) and CARE Canada, held on World Environment Day. The event was attended by Members of Parliament – including the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Global Affairs – various government ministry staff, staff from a variety of our allied Non-Governmental Organizations, as well as NFU Members and Associates from Local 362. The focus was primarily on women farmers, fishers and pastoralists in the developing world.

Other keynote panelists were Thomas Pesek from UN FAO; Renaud DePlean, Program Leader of Agriculture and Food Security at IDRC; and Juan Echanove, Senior Director for Food Security and Climate Change at CARE USA. They were asked questions about gaps in research and knowledge, best practices that promote women in agriculture achieving a dignified and rewarding livelihood, and the role of women farmers in countering malnutrition. Each panelist had an opportunity to weigh in briefly on each of these questions, and I made an effort to point out that women need to be involved in designing research projects around their actual needs as opposed to being the subjects of study; women need power over and control of their own farms, bank accounts and to take elected positions in agricultural organizations where decisions are being made because representation matters; and that women are traditionally pushed by a variety of factors onto more marginal land with poorer soil health that generally produces food that is less nutrient dense – if you enable women to access economic power along with providing education about soil health and biodiversity, then women will be able to produce more wholesome and nourishing food for their communities.

The main question posed to me as a woman farming in Canada was, “What best practices enable women farmers to continue feeding the world while

enjoying unimpeded access to and control over agricultural assets, inputs and income?” My first reaction was to point out the fallacy of this question being posed in the present tense, since I think it's more of a future aspiration. Between our legal system and media exposure over the last few decades, there are no formal legal barriers that prevent women in farming from accessing and controlling assets, inputs and income in Canada. But make no mistake, when you're saving up for a farm and you're facing a structural gender wage gap, it's going to be more difficult to afford a downpayment on farmland. Many new young farmers are female vegetable growers who sell at farmer's markets, and guess which gender of farmer customers feel more comfortable telling that they should accept a lower price for their products?

Systemic, low-key discouraging tactics such as: financing officials speaking to your male partner despite you running the finances of the farm, or more blatant contract equipment operators suggesting payment via sexual favours instead of cash; I have heard lots of anecdotes about micro or macro aggressions from women farmers all across Canada – many of which came to light during the past year with the #MeToo movement online.

Most federal agriculture grants and cost-sharing programs are out of reach for the majority of young farmers (especially women who have the extra time burden of managing household and childcare tasks, too) – or even older farmers with small operations – for the simple fact that large, multi-person operations have the ability to designate an employee to attend the necessary workshops and fill out the necessary paperwork; cost downloading over the last few decades in Canada has all but eliminated agricultural extension services that could have offered help in writing financing applications for the time-strapped young farmer, so they fall further and further behind.

My fellow panelists all agreed that while the barriers facing women farmers around the world may be different in terms of scale since some of us start with distinctly more privilege than others, in the end we have many common challenges. We all need to be allies in working to break down the barriers faced by women no matter where they farm. ■

# A Message from the National Youth President



— by Stuart Oke, Youth President

I'm happy to spend a few hours today out of the oppressive humidity here in Western Quebec to update

you all on the work of the NFU youth.

Since our annual youth retreat concluded, the youth advisory has been busy working on developing and implementing a National Youth Campaign. Based upon recommendations from the upcoming New Farmer Report, the campaign is focused on developing supports and eliminating barriers for young farmers. Part of this process has been looking at how we can successfully advocate for the change we need to see. This means understanding and accepting the fact that declining numbers of farmers and the consolidation of corporate agribusiness means that farmers' voices and our collective power to enact change is less now than it has been in the past.

As we move forward in our national strategy to support and protect farmers across the country, it will be important to make sure the public is well educated on the issues affecting us today and, in the fights to come, are on the side of farmers. It's unfortunate to say that the majority of Canadian consumers have little connection to farmers, our problems, and the process by which their food is grown; this gap represents a fundamental problem for us as we seek to effectively advocate for policies that protect and support us. To this end, the NFU youth is currently developing a series of videos that seek to educate the public about new farmers' issues and build solidarity with our cause for the future.

It's clear to me that the NFU has some big fights on the horizon. Within Canada's National Food Policy process, it's becoming increasingly apparent in the

government's recent communications that supporting new farmers and addressing land access is not a priority, contrary to the recommendations they received from the Standing Committee on Agriculture. Further, as I watch the NAFTA process unfold and read the daily debates surrounding the necessity of supply management, it's clear to me that a strong and focused NFU is needed now more than ever.

As a young farmer I need the NFU to have the connections, resources, and policies in place now to help support and protect me and young farmers across the country in the future. Historically our biggest wins within the NFU have always come from effectively mobilizing the grassroots of our membership and cultivating the expertise and abilities of said membership to greatest effect. As we look into the future and the looming crisis of farm succession across the country, I ask all members to redouble their commitment and efforts to help shape and guide the National Farmers Union. We have always been a participatory democracy and your time and effort is sincerely needed to help push for the change we want to see. The passing of resolutions is just the start of this process and for any meaningful change to be seen we need the valuable time and effort of our members to see it through. Simply put, without the participation in our participatory democracy we risk the livelihoods of our farms and the food sovereignty of our country. I'd encourage all members to reengage in our Local, Regional or National work and help to support change for us all. Now is the time to rebuild our ties to allies, rejuvenate our passion for change, encourage our young farmers, and put in place the mechanisms necessary to fight back the forces that would see our voices silenced.

I'm hopeful and excited looking forward at our union and welcome all members to help strengthen it for the better.

—*In Solidarity, Stuart Oke*

# Regional Reports



## Region One:

*District 2 (Provinces of NB & NS)*

— by Rébeka Frazer-Chiasson

J e m'appelle Rébeka Frazer-Chiasson et je suis membre fermière de la nouvelle coopérative de travailleurs de la Ferme Terre Partagée à Rogersville, au Nouveau-Brunswick. Nous sommes de petits producteurs maraîchers, et nous élevons également des animaux dans le cadre d'un processus de relève d'une ferme transmise de génération en génération.

J'ai choisi de présenter ma candidature au poste de présidente de l'UNF-NB pour de nombreuses raisons, notamment parce qu'au cours des cinq ou six dernières années en tant que membre de l'UNF-NB, j'ai acquis, sans m'en rendre compte, un certain bagage de connaissances au sujet de l'organisme, de son histoire et de sa façon de défendre ses valeurs. De plus, constatant que des membres de longue date du conseil d'administration se retiraient de la direction de l'organisme après de nombreuses années d'engagement soutenu, j'ai senti que c'était à mon tour de mettre la main à la pâte.

Même si je ne connais pas en profondeur tous les secteurs de l'agriculture et même si je ne prétends pas être en mesure de parler au nom de tous les fermiers de la province, j'estime faire preuve d'un esprit d'ouverture et d'une volonté d'en apprendre davantage sur les défis et les possibilités des fermiers du Nouveau-Brunswick. Dans le cadre de mes fonctions, je veux mettre de l'avant le rôle et l'importance de l'agriculture à petite échelle, trop souvent laissée de côté au profit des discussions sur le PIB, les exportations, les superficies d'exploitation, le nombre d'emplois créés et l'uniformité. La tendance actuelle en matière d'agriculture au pays montre que les fermiers s'organisent pour nourrir les gens de leur collectivité et que des femmes n'ayant pas grandi sur des fermes entreprennent de faire pousser des légumes et d'élever des animaux afin de joindre leurs efforts à ceux de femmes de partout dans le monde pour nourrir les gens qui les

entourent. Le

Nouveau-Brunswick ne fait pas exception, et j'espère que vous avez eu le privilège de constater vous-même l'augmentation – petite, mais dynamique – du nombre de nouveaux fermiers dans la province. Cette augmentation, toutefois, semble être passée sous le radar de notre gouvernement, qui a récemment annoncé qu'il offrait un financement de 3,25 millions de dollars à l'entreprise Oxford Frozen Food pour la construction d'une nouvelle usine de transformation de légumes dans la Péninsule acadienne. La promesse de créer 95 emplois a permis au gouvernement de faire abstraction du fait que ce genre d'investissement n'aide en rien la viabilité à long terme de l'agriculture dans la province et l'atteinte de la souveraineté alimentaire des collectivités, bien au contraire.

À l'UNF-NB, comme dans la vie de tous les jours, il nous arrive d'avoir l'impression de répéter sans cesse la même chose et de discuter avec des gens dont l'opinion est déjà faite. Mon objectif à titre de présidente est de réunir davantage de personnes à la table de discussion. Si l'organisme doit continuer à être dirigé par les fermiers, le soutien et la solidarité des consommateurs sont toutefois essentiels pour continuer à faire croître le mouvement et pour s'assurer d'être pris au sérieux et considérés comme la force motrice que nous sommes. Pour y arriver, nous devons renforcer notre capacité en tant qu'organisation – ce qui passe par un meilleur partenariat entre les organismes provinciaux et nationaux. En raison de notre statut d'organisme accrédité et de notre processus d'inscription dans le cadre du programme de producteurs agricoles professionnels inscrits du Nouveau-Brunswick, nous avons la responsabilité de représenter nos membres à l'échelle provinciale au mieux de notre habileté et conformément à nos valeurs et à notre philosophie. C'est pourquoi les cotisations des membres, qui sont divisées entre l'organisme principal, l'Union nationale des fermiers, et notre organisme, doivent nous permettre de représenter nos membres dans les deux langues officielles, de

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garder l'agriculture à l'ordre du jour du gouvernement en participant aux consultations, de mener des activités de lobbying et de collaborer avec d'autres organismes de la province afin de travailler sur les différents piliers de la souveraineté alimentaire. Nous espérons que la renégociation de notre mémoire d'entente avec l'Union nationale des fermiers nous permettra de mieux collaborer et de mieux aller de l'avant afin de mettre en valeur notre potentiel tout en contribuant à la viabilité de l'organisme national.

En terminant, je vous souhaite la meilleure des chances pour cette saison et je vous invite à prendre

un moment cet été, pendant que vous herserez la terre ou sarclerez vos champs, pour réfléchir au rôle que devrait jouer un organisme dirigé par les fermiers et la communauté comme l'UNF-NB. Les membres du conseil d'administration et moi-même souhaitons vivement connaître vos idées et vos opinions sur la façon de créer un mouvement qui aurait une incidence sur le système alimentaire de nos collectivités, de notre province ou même de notre pays.

*Solidairement, Rébeka*

## NFU-O/Region Three:



*Province of Ontario*

— by *Emery Huszka, Coordinator*

**A**s farmers, we understand change on a fundamental level. We work with seasonal

changes, climate change, generational changes, and now in Ontario, we face a dramatic political change. A fellow farmer summed it up for me, “rural Ontario rejected tone deaf leadership.” In all fairness, anyone who has been around for a while understands that no party does everything right, nor do they get everything wrong.

While we may disagree with how our fellow Region 3 members voted, we remain united on our core values of environmental, social, and economic sustainability in the context of vibrant rural communities. What will change in Ontario is how we frame those values. As a non-partisan organization whose mandate is to promote the “attainment of [farmers’] economic and social goals,” we must be willing to talk to any and all political leaders, and I assure you we do! The NFU are creative thinkers, and given the economics here in Ontario, we need to be part of the discussions now more than ever. Our dialogue must find common ground to constructively

work with the new Minister of Agriculture to achieve our goals.

Some of the priorities over the next couple of months include the protection of farmland for farmers, improved soil health, safeguarding water for the public good, fair business practices, and the recognition that environmental, social, and economic goals are interdependent on, not exclusive of, each other. We know that succession planning would be assisted by good government policy; social justice requires a holistic approach; and agriculture cannot thrive with only an export-first, bigger is better model. Strong small and medium-sized farm operations are good vehicles to achieve all of these goals, and it simply makes good economic sense.

Farmers can be the most capable stewards of our resources with proper support and fair treatment. Our strength as farmers is that of perseverance and resolve. Agriculture at its core must operate under today’s conditions while looking ahead to our future and learning from our past. As we reach out to our new government, we will continue to champion the core values of our organization, complimenting what is done well, challenging what ought to be done better, and suggesting improvements.

Please continue to add your experience to our success, and please invite your neighbours to stand together with us in the National Farmers Union. ■



## We Remember...

**JERRY G. HUZEVKA**, 82, peacefully left to be with his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on May 17, 2018 in Petrolia, ON. Jerry was the beloved husband to Joan (nee Lauzon) for over 57 years. Loving father to the late Marty (2014) (Kathy Wolfe), Mark (Joanne) Huzevka, Matt (Ivona) Huzevka, and the late Marshall Huzevka (1995). Proud grandpa to Kevin, Lindsay, Brandon, Jordan, Madison, and Mario. Brother to Betty (John) Smith. Predeceased by his parents Martin and Zuzana Huzevka. Jerry was a deep philosopher, born leader and mentor to his sons and grandchildren. He taught them integrity, moral ethics, self confidence, self sufficiency, pride in hard work, the need to contribute to the larger community and above all, to profoundly love and support their families. Jerry was born in Zbora, Czechoslovakia and immigrated to Alvinston, ON in 1936 at the age of 6 months. In 1953, Jerry moved to a farm near Petrolia and began farming with his Mother and Father. After completing high school and while farming, Jerry worked at Polysar in Sarnia for 10 years. It was during this period that Jerry met and married the love of his life, Joan Lauzon. Jerry's passion and dedication to various farming activities (ranging from beef cattle to organic cash crops) further stimulated his entrepreneurial nature. Starting in the 1960's, Jerry was involved in multiple farming related businesses which included farm equipment and commodity input sales, a commercial grain elevator, commodity brokering and sales of organic crops to foreign countries. Jerry cared deeply about his fellow producers and was actively involved with a number of farming organizations which included NORM, The National Farmers Union (National Director), ACRES USA and the Ontario Soybean Growers Marketing Board (Vice-Chairman). Jerry's strong sense of adventure, desire to learn, and love of people, took him around the world on both business and pleasure related trips. After retirement in 2011, he focused on motorhome travels across North America, singing and playing his guitar at "jamming" sessions, and spending time with his children and grandchildren. We have been blessed to have had Jerry in our lives and our memories of him will be treasured forever.



## Region Five:

*Province of Manitoba*

—by Ian Robson, Coordinator

Some Manitoba farmers have had a dry start to 2018. Others have received rain, and unfortunately others have had hail and wind damage already. As farmers we have to deal with the good and bad even with poor prices, and some still say "why complain?" Complain indeed. How does any progress happen? Supply management was built because of the need for better conditions.

Farmers have been distracted by new federal transportation legislation, which is supposed to fix railway grain transportation. Farmers no longer have the Canadian Wheat Board to keep the elevators and railways out of our pockets. We will see that we do miss the CWB once any elevator company dares to go to court over poor grain rail service. Farmers have been around this discussion many times. It sounds like more cost to farmers due to the shippers of the grain—the elevator company owners—downloading their legal costs onto us. Farmers need to get the Federal Government to return the services of our CWB back to the control of farmers. The CWB built customer relationships and did the marketing for us and earned premium prices. Those market services are being lost

to the agenda of corporations. They do not have the farmers' agenda for better net farm income and better prices. Canadian International Grains Institute is being hijacked by Cereals Canada – without CWB it is becoming a wisp of its former service and farmers are no longer control it.

Manitoba Government promised a [Made in Manitoba Climate Change Action Plan](#). But now, it appears to be still looking for ways to spend any new money from Carbon Tax on fuel sales to reduce Manitoba greenhouse gas emissions. Apparently the new tax will not be applied to farmers' fuel, even though farmers could benefit from a pool of money from the tax being spent to help farmers improve management and increase profits. It is profit that pays for taxes and taxes that help profits—what goes around comes around. Messing with our own environment is not wise farming nor wise consumption. All costs should be considered, including the costs of wild weather we are now observing with more floods, fires and drought. Farming can contribute greatly to greenhouse gas reduction if better policy is put in place. We hope the Manitoba Government will listen to all farmers in its discussion with farmers. The Manitoba public does want to see greenhouse gas reduction take place, so this government has a job to do.

An End Point Royalty (EPR) enabling law has been put in place in Canada, though not yet applied. It would collect crop research and breeding money harvested crops and pay it to the seed companies.

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The request for EPRs came from major corporations who back an organization called UPOV (International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants). Many Canadian corporate-captured farm organizations support this model of funding crop research, which is strange because where this was tried in Australia, the collected money was a windfall for the owners of the most popular crop varieties while important crop research on many other needed fronts went without funds. Publicly-funded Canadian crop research and our *Canada Seeds Act* have served farmers very well in crop research and crop breeding, but there have been cuts. The UPOV system wants more cuts to taxpayer-funded crop research, starving public breeding as a way to justify bringing in EPRs or a similar royalty to fund private breeding instead. We

hope will not come to play in Canada, but it will take farmer resistance to this model and farmers calling for more public dollars to fund needed crop research and prevent EPRs from gaining support.

NFU has tweeted to President Trump on how to fix its USA dairy overproduction by implementing our supply management in their country. We hope our Federal Government remains strong in helping our farmers who are in supply management and other farmers who wish they had the stability of supply management farmers. Our direct farm support programs are not near what the USA or the EU have, and could not keep our dairy farmers in business if supply management was destroyed. ■



## Region Six:

*Province of Saskatchewan*

—by Boyd Dyck, Coordinator

**H**i all from sunny Saskatchewan! It was a late start to spring here but when it came, it went straight in to summer. In our area, which is more or less in the centre of the province, we have had very little precipitation since April 1. But for the most part, the crops have germinated and are coming along quite nicely. The hay crop here is definitely suffering. In the past few weeks there has been some extreme weather in the South East (Estevan area) and North West with hail you could shovel and crazy amounts of rain; seems to be awfully early for these weather events.

**NFU Region 6 is holding our Regional Convention in Swift Current this year.** Ag Canada/Sask Ag/SaskOrganics are hosting an Organic and Low-Input Agriculture Systems field day and meeting at Walker Place, 2150 Walker St, beginning at 8 AM on August 1<sup>st</sup>. When the field day is wrapped up (5 PM) the NFU will be holding a supper (\$20) and public event at Walker Place with Darrin Qualman presenting *Farm Income, Climate and Carbon Taxes*.

We have a really interesting line-up the next day, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, at First United Church (223 3 Ave NE, Swift Current) starting at 9 A.M. In the morning, we have a panel discussion with four young/beginning farmers talking about their experiences and challenges so far and in the afternoon a presentation from Ted Dupmeier, DVM on *Glyphosate Residues in Feed*.

If you want to kill two birds with one stone, come for the low-input field day, stay over and join us at our Region 6 meeting. ■



Some long-time Alberta NFU members had a great time as they joined Nettie at a reception to celebrate the honorary degrees she and 12 other recipients received from the University of Alberta.

Back Row: Ken Larsen, Ken and Jackie Farion, Joan and Rudy Kiist, Cory Ollikka and Maureen Parker. Front Row: Linda Larsen, Nettie Wiebe, Joyce Ollikka, Wendy Manson, and Mandy Melnyk.



## Region Seven:

*Province of Alberta*

— by *Doug Scott, Coordinator*

**A**nother crop is up and growing on the Waskatenau Plain. What started out as a very dry spring has given way to a series of weather fronts that have brought much needed rain to the prairies. However the rain has not been widespread, and timely rains will be needed over the summer to produce an average crop.

The antics of the leader of the free world have many in the farm community on edge. President Trump's disregard for rules, facts, and the law are disrupting the complex order of world trade. Business does not like disorder and the farm community is no different. In the past month commodity prices have been in a downward slide with many wheat growers wishing they had taken advantage of the prices that were available several months ago. Fall wheat prices are down over thirty dollars a tonne in the past month.

The recent discovery of some GMO wheat, growing in a ditch on a oil lease site in Alberta, has raised concern about how it got there. It is hard to believe

that this clump of Monsanto's GMO wheat got there on its own. I'm no conspiracy theorist but hopefully we will eventually get the whole story. There were supposedly very tightly controlled tests of GMO wheat done on the prairies several years ago but it seems unlikely that the wheat came from there. Maybe some enterprising farmer who had an off farm job in the oil patch had done a little cross border shopping. Oil field equipment routinely crosses into Canada from the US. It didn't take long for Japan, one of our largest and most loyal customers, to halt all shipments of Canadian wheat. Hopefully the matter is quickly resolved and this is an isolated incident.

Our whole system of Supply Management is once again under attack and it does not seem possible that it will emerge from this Trump initiated trade war unscathed. Ironically, once profitable dairy farms in the US, decimated by over supply, have their owners suggesting that a supply managed system is something they should consider. No one knows how this will end but it doesn't look good. Our dependence on the US as our largest trading partner puts us in very troubling position.

We are looking forward to our upcoming convention in La Glace. La Glace is the home of Peter Eggers and he has promised to lavish us with renown Peace Country hospitality. Hope all the hail and wind storms miss your fields this summer and you harvest a great crop. ■

## NFU Welcomes Summer Students

National Farmers Union has been very fortunate to have received a grant from Canada Summer Jobs to hire two summer students. **Morgan Ryan-Roe** and **Nicholas Kindrachuk** began in June as our Community-based Digital Archivist and Communication and Outreach Coordinator respectively.

Both are currently students at the University of Saskatchewan in the College of Arts and Sciences. Morgan comes to us through a collaboration with the Department of History. She will be entering her third year this fall as a history student focusing on post-contact Canadian History, Indigenous and colonial settler relationships. She will be assisting in the compilation of 50 years of National Farmers Union history. In 2019 we will be celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Morgan has been tasked with digitizing and cataloguing our archives and calling members to do oral histories. Nicholas will be entering his 4<sup>th</sup> year in Computer Science after receiving a Bachelor's in English. He will be assisting us with communications by helping out with social media, website content, designing infographics, entering data into our Customer Relationship Management software, and research and writing about issues relevant to family farming. He will also support the development and implementation of new member benefits, as well as identify and track potential fundraising opportunities. If you would to contact Morgan and Nicholas they can be reached at [archivist@nfu.ca](mailto:archivist@nfu.ca) (Morgan) and [communications@nfu.ca](mailto:communications@nfu.ca) (Nicholas).



As part of our ongoing endeavour to introduce some of the active NFU members to other NFU members through the *Union Farmer Quarterly*, we asked **Julie Enman**, the Region 8 representative on the Women's Advisory Committee, to introduce herself to the rest of us.

## JULIE ENMAN Region 8 Women's Advisor



Originally from Nova Scotia, Julie fell in love with Canada's north while working as a dog musher in Yukon Territory. This is the first place Julie stayed put for more than six months as an adult. The highway sometimes washed out which meant that the supermarkets quickly emptied. With all the extended hours of sunlight, Julie was reminded that it was easy to grow a lot of food in a short period. Since then Julie has spent a lot of time growing food all over the big empty place we call Canada. Food security in the north and remote places remains as much of an issue then as it is now.

These days Julie can be typically found somewhere on one of the islands in the traditional unceded territories of the Tsimshian Nation. There Julie works off-farm as a carpentry instructor for the local community college, and in a supportive role farming vegetables and other stuff with members of First Nations communities.

When the season changes Julie often heads overseas, volunteering on agricultural and building

projects. The experience of living overseas and working with marginalized persons has led Julie to taking action on issues such as equality, queer and immigrant voices, various 'free' trade deals, climate justice, and of course, the concerns around food and marginalization of small-scale agriculture. As of late, Julie organizes free public events geared at building community, knowledge and well being through fun educational activities. If you would like to join an anarchist bookclub, learn more about WNBR or about locking yourself to machinery, Julie is probably someone you want to call. Up the punx!

In the future Julie hopes to cultivate more spaces for diversity and northern dwellers within the union.

■ ■ ■

Originaire de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Julie est tombée amoureuse du Canada nord alors qu'elle travaillait comme chien musclé au Yukon. C'est la première place Julie restée plus de six mois en tant qu'adulte. L'autoroute est parfois délavée, puis les supermarchés se vident rapidement. Avec toutes les longues heures d'ensoleillement, Julie a été rappelé qu'il était facile de cultiver beaucoup de nourriture dans une courte période. Depuis lors, Julie a passé beaucoup de temps à cultiver de la nourriture partout dans le grand vide que nous appelons le Canada. La sécurité alimentaire dans le Nord et dans les régions éloignées demeure aussi importante que maintenant.

Ces jours-ci, Julie peut être généralement trouvé quelque part sur l'une des îles dans les territoires traditionnels non-dépassés de la Nation Tsimshian. Là, Julie travaille à la ferme comme instructrice en charpenterie pour le collège communautaire local, et dans un rôle de soutien en cultivant des légumes et d'autres choses avec les membres des communautés des Premières Nations.

Lorsque la saison change Juliette se rend souvent à l'étranger, en faisant du bénévolat sur des projets agricoles et de construction. L'expérience de vivre à l'étranger et de travailler avec des personnes mariées a conduit Juliette à agir sur des questions telles que l'égalité, les voix des homosexuels et des immigrés, divers accords commerciaux «libres», la

(continued on page 12)



justice climatique et bien sûr la nourriture et la marginalisation de la petite agriculture. À ce jour, julie organise des événements publics gratuits visant à renforcer la communauté, les connaissances et le bien-être grâce à des activités éducatives amusantes. Si vous souhaitez rejoindre une discothèque anarchiste, en savoir plus sur WNBR ou vous

enfermer dans des machines, julie est probablement quelqu'un que vous voulez appeler. Le punx!

À l'avenir, julie espère cultiver plus d'espaces pour la diversité et les habitants du Nord au sein de l'union.

*In Solidarity/En solidarité, julie*

# UNLEASING THE POTENTIAL OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## NFU 49th Annual Convention, November 22-24, 2018

The **NFU's 2018 National Convention** theme will promote Food Sovereignty to counter the federal government's Barton Report, *Unleashing the Growth Potential of Key Sectors*, which justifies massive corporate-led expansion of exports in a way that excludes farmers and consumers from decision-making. In contrast, our Convention will highlight the Food Sovereignty's potential to drive community-based prosperity by ensuring farmers and workers get fair returns, consumers get quality food, and food production and processing makes domestic markets a priority. By reducing the outflow of consumer dollars from Canada and empowering farmers, workers and consumers, we can retain the wealth and income for community prosperity. The pillars of Food Sovereignty -- *focuses on food for people; values food providers; localises food systems; puts control locally; builds knowledge and skills; and works with nature* - also deliver social, cultural, environmental, aesthetic values that enrich our lives and livelihoods.

**MORE CONVENTION INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 23 OF THIS ISSUE.**

### **ALSO BACK - NFU CONVENTION BURSARY FUND**

A **Convention Bursary Fund** has been set up to encourage participation at National Convention by reducing financial barriers. **NFU members** who are first-time convention-goers may apply for a bursary. Bursaries will be funded by voluntary contributions from you, our Family Farm and Associate members. The Convention 2018 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 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 September 15.

**Would you like to apply for a Bursary?** **If you are an NFU member and have never attended a National Convention, you are eligible to apply.** Fill in the application form below, and send it in to the National Office by October 1. If you are selected, you will be notified by October 15 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. If you prefer to do this anonymously, we will not publish your name if requested. **Not an NFU member yet?** Fill out the application on the back page of this *Quarterly* and mail it in, or go to <http://store.nfu.ca/membership.html>.

**Application for NFU Convention Bursary**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ NFU Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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



# Connecting with a Remarkable Array of Farm Organizations

—by Murray Jowett

In early April of this year, I had the opportunity to attend the second *Agroecology Encounter*, hosted by the Farm Workers Association of Florida (FWAF), in Apopka, Florida. Upon arrival I was warned by a Spanish interpreter that, “there are potentially alligators in every fresh body of water in this area” so “don’t worry, but be careful.” Maybe that was their way of keeping us focused, because I sure as heck forgot about any notion of spending time at the beach.

The true purpose of this Agroecology Encounter was to gather the members of FWAF in order to reinforce their collective mission and identity, build practical skills, and exchange ideas with representatives of farming organizations from across the continent. (Please see the NFU “*Agroecology in Canada*” Report for background on the concept: <http://www.nfu.ca/issues/agroecology>) Partly I was a fly on the wall for a fascinating process of community organizing, and partly I was an active participant in an exchange about agroecology and its many expressions.

The content directed towards FWAF members was largely about building power among farmworkers and poor rural communities to empower them to respond to and gain control over the issues that affect them. Members learned about the dangers of pesticides in the orchards where many work, they shared stories of the history and purpose of their organization, and they celebrated their culture. They also cooked. They cooked very, very well and I ate until it hurt.

It is no surprise that the dinner table afforded the best chance to connect with a truly remarkable array of farm organizations from across North/Central America. There were rural farmers, urban farmers, cooperatives, women’s organizations, LGBTQ farmers, and people of many different ethnic backgrounds. For the sake of brevity, I will name just a few:



*FWAF community garden and hoophouse in Fellsmere, a town near Orlando. This is part of their community resilience work. Murray Jowett (left), Nia Licine from Massachusetts (middle), FWAF Volunteer (right) picking Jicama.*

**La Mujer Obrera** represents working women from the El Paso / Juarez area whose jobs and communities were deeply affected by NAFTA and increased border restrictions. Within their own community, much of their work focuses on the independent production and distribution of culturally relevant food. This focus on community capacity is elegantly framed by a deep understanding of the trends and effects of global capitalism. They are involved with a group called the **Rural Coalition** which has a similar depth of structural analysis and should be of great interest to the NFU.

The **Boricuá Organization of Ecological Agriculture** is a fascinating group from Puerto Rico which, in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, has used the space afforded by fleeing multinational capital as an opportunity to establish small-scale agro-ecological farm infrastructure across the island. In this unique context, they have organized multiple international work brigades to accomplish very much in a short time. They also happened to know of an excellent Puerto Rican bar in Orlando where they dance the Bachata and shout revolutionary poetry - but that’s another story.

*(continued on page 14...)*

Nataka from [The Urban Farming Institute of Boston](#) sparked a very interesting conversation about the “academic-ness” of concepts like agroecology. She commented:

*“We are practicing agroecology and food sovereignty, but the people talking about this – often their faces don’t look like our faces [not black faces]. It’s very academic so we don’t really feel connected to it.”*

This was a clear reminder that agroecology must persist as a welcoming and accessible process if it is to form a coherent and unified movement. We discussed the importance of the Nyéléni Declaration as a uniting document precisely because it was drafted by peasant farmers representing a diversity of backgrounds and incomes.

As a final note, I will mention that the children’s programming at the Encuentro was quite inspiring and made the idea of agroecology come to life. The kids studied plants, played cooperative games and even presented a play on Cesar Chavez and the Delano Grape Boycott!

This Agroecology Encounter was truly illuminating. Thank you to the NFU and the IPC (International Program Committee) for making this opportunity available to me! ■

*—Murray Jowett is the Region 5 (Manitoba) youth rep. He is a worker-owner at a worker’s cooperative called Urban Eatin’ which exists to establish and maintain urban agriculture and biodiversity in Winnipeg. He plays a mean fiddle.*

## The Beingsner Award for Excellence in Writing

*Working with the family of Paul Beingsner, the NFU has established an annual literary prize in honour of Paul and his contribution to rural and agricultural journalism. Paul Beingsner 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 Beingsner 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: *What will farming look like for young farmers in 30 years?***
- Deadline for entries is November 1, 2018.
- The winners will be announced at the NFU Convention in November 2018.
- All or some entries may be published by the National Farmers Union.

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

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

or

**By mail:** National Farmers Union  
2717 Wentz Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6



*We will confirm that we received your email submission within a week. If you do not get a confirmation email, please resend your entry or phone the office at (306) 652-9465.*

# The cows are returning to prison

—by Tony Straathof, Region 3 Board Member

On June 21, 2018, Mark Holland, parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, announced that the new prison farm model will include cows and goats. It has been a long and arduous process to re-establish livestock at two Kingston area correctional institutes following the 2010 closure of prison farms across Canada. In 2009, the federal government announced the termination of prison farms because it felt that inmates did not develop skills at the farms that translated into jobs upon release. An aggressive campaign was launched by many individuals and community groups, including the NFU, to reverse the decision. The first concrete step to the reverse decision came on February 27, 2018 when the federal government announced it would commit \$4.3 million over five years to support the return of a farm operation but with goats as the only livestock.

In June, 2017, an eight member Prison Farm Advisory Panel (PFAP), including three NFU members, was appointed to assist in drafting a proposal for what the new prison farm model would look like. The panel, with expertise from community advocates and farmers, provided non-binding advice and consultations to Correction Services Canada (CSC). At the time of the 2010 liquidation of the former prison farm dairy herd, a group of community supporters established the Prison Farm Coop to buy back as many of the cows as their finances allowed. This April the herd numbered 33 females. It was always a hope to send those cows back to a re-established prison farm but the February announcement came as disappointment. With the announcement of the re-opening of the farm in the February 27, 2018 federal budget, the PFAP renewed the call for a cow model to be included with the goat farm. The farm model announced on June 21<sup>st</sup> is a dairy goat and dairy cow operation. The resulting milk products from the combined operation is tentatively set to be processed at the Fehie Int. plant currently under construction in the City of Kingston.

For the first six months of their mandate, panel members needed to learn the prison system and CSC needed to learn farming systems. It was discovered that the agriculture land owned by the federal government had fallen to neglect and that any revised prison farm needed to contain a land stewardship plan to ensure that the lands were maintained and protected for the



*"At Joyceville Institution, near Kingston, Ontario on Thursday, June 21, Jeff Peters and cow, Prison Farm Joy, eagerly await the announcement of the re-opening of the two Prison Farms in Kingston. The dairy operation will begin next spring with both dairy cows and dairy goats." (quotes and info available at: [Global News](#), [The Whig Standard](#), June 21 & 22/18, and [Cowsmopolitan](#))*

production of food. Rehabilitation of inmates back into society at the completion of their sentence is the primary goal of correction services. Inmates themselves need to choose their employment tasks, which is why the new prison farm will have crop production, horticulture, and bee keeping as well as the two animal enterprises. All prisoner labour endeavours also need to be cost recovery or surplus to costs.

From an advocacy perspective much can be learned from the prison farm closure. The government announcement to close the farms came in 2009 and the announcement to re-open has taken nine years, and it will be another four to five years to be fully operational. From the outset there were protests, information sharing, dialogue and letter writing campaigns. Then came a significant community investment with the formation of the coop to purchase some of the cows. Seven years later came a town hall meeting with politicians and the community to identify what was wanted and what could be provided. In year eight the advisory panel was formed and consultations moved to the board room. A Monday night vigil was held every week for eight years to show the kind of dedication community members had for the cause. In hind sight the protests were a short time frame in the overall campaign timeline. And a successful conclusion is usually achieved with respectful dialogue at the board table.

The most credit for the re-opening of the prison farms needs to go to the many unnamed advocates who protested, wrote letters and contributed their savings to a cause they believe in without expectation for monetary reward. ■

# Genetically Modified Wheat Incident



Created by Freepik

*On June 14, 2018 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) informed the public that a small number of genetically modified (GM) wheat plants were found in Alberta in 2017. No GM wheat has ever been approved for sale in Canada or any other country. The NFU was a leader in the coalition (which included the Canadian Wheat Board) that got Monsanto to withdraw its attempt to get GM glyphosate resistant (Roundup ready) wheat approved in the early 2000s. We are closely following and responding to the Alberta incident. The NFU is calling for an end to open-air field testing of GM wheat and publication of all current and past test site locations.*

**W**hat do we know? Several wheat plants along an oil rig access road through a field in southern Alberta did not die after maintenance contractors sprayed the ditches with glyphosate (Roundup) in the summer of 2017. The workers notified the Alberta government, which did preliminary testing then turned the plants over to the CFIA for further investigation. The CFIA determined the plants were genetically modified with the Monsanto trait known as MON71200. Monsanto had tested this wheat in open-air field trials in 1999 and 2000.

The CFIA identified the plants' genetic "fingerprint" and compared it with all 450 registered wheat varieties the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) has on file, and found no matches. This is good news, as it means that the wheat involved is not a registered variety. The CFIA could not test it against American varieties, but has determined it was not the any of the GM wheats involved in contamination incidents that occurred in the USA in 2013, 2014 and 2016. In the Alberta case, it seems the GM trait was engineered into an un-named and unregistered wheat line that has never been on the market.

The CFIA does not know how the GM wheat plants got to the location in Alberta. Monsanto's last field trials using this trait were in the early 2000s, and the nearest trial was at least 300 kilometres away. The fields surrounding the access road belong to a commercial farmer (not a seed grower) and the fields have never been used for any type of field-testing. The farmer's bins and fields were tested and no GMO

wheat was found. The CFIA will be monitoring the area around the access road for three years and managing the fields to eliminate any volunteer wheat.

To deal with export market concerns, the CFIA has developed a DNA test for this GM wheat and is making it available to customers if they want to use it. Japan, one of Canada's largest customers, as well as South Korea, have suspended imports of Canadian wheat until they can be sure their shipments are free of GM wheat.

**C**anada's quality control system shows its worth. Our variety registration system and the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) have again shown their value as guardians of Canada's grain quality. Unlike the USA, Canada requires all commercial wheat varieties to be registered and samples of each are kept. This allowed the CFIA to definitively confirm the GM wheat was not a commercial variety. The CGC inspects and retains samples of all export grain shipments. Thus the CFIA could call upon the CGC to find out whether any of our exports had been contaminated with GM wheat. The CGC and the CFIA each analyzed the DNA fingerprints from the last three years of export samples and found none had any kernels with the GM fingerprint found in Alberta. The CGC also runs the voluntary Harvest Sample Program where farmers can submit samples for a free unofficial grain grades. The CGC examined a representative sample of wheat sent in to the 2017 Harvest Sample program and found no matches for the GM wheat there either. ■

## **For more information**

The CFIA has a web page devoted to this incident at <http://inspection.gc.ca/wheatdetection>. It links to further information, including the CFIA's Incident Report, a timeline of key events related to the incident, and the CGC's Variety Identification Research and Monitoring page.

Additional articles on this topic are in the July edition of the *NFU Newsletter*. Also, visit the NFU website at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca) for media releases and op-eds. The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) website at [www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca) also has updates and technical information. The NFU is a member of CBAN.

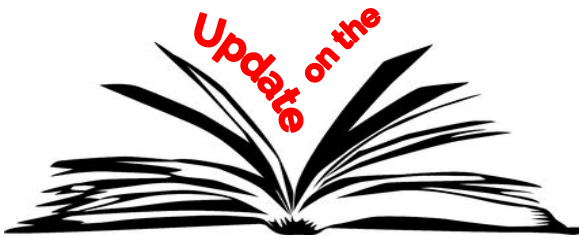


# I remember that!

The NFU has started a big project to digitally archive our photo collection. Summer student Morgan is scanning and tagging each photo with the information available. Some, like this one, are great — but unfortunately, we lack the details on file about where, when, who or why the photo was taken.



This is where you come in — do you know the story behind this photo? If you know anything about this photo or the event it captures, please get in touch with the NFU office by email, fax or letter.



## BOOK OF NFU INTERVIEWS

Annette Desmarais (as editor) is working with a team of contributors (NFU members and associate members) to prepare a book that tells the stories of some of the NFU's most important struggles, told by NFUers themselves, in their voices.

Each chapter will focus on a particular struggle and for each of these, readers will discover what was at stake, the NFU's strategies, actions, and impact. Through these interviews, the book will highlight the various ways that the NFU is working to creating viable rural communities and socially-just and sustainable food systems in Canada.

Fernwood Publishing has accepted our book proposal so we are busy conducting interviews with people across the country! **We hope to have the book ready for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NFU!** Here is the draft table of contents, along with the name of the people who are pulling together the chapters.

**If you have any great photos, poster, or speech, newspaper article, etc. that we should consider for this book, please contact Carla Fehr at [ipccordinator@nfu.ca](mailto:ipccordinator@nfu.ca).**

### Draft Table of Contents

#### **Introduction and History** (*Nettie Wiebe*)

#### **Dairy, Grain and Seeds: National Struggles**

- Krafting a Boycott (*Carla Fehr*)
- Guaranteeing Milk and Grain: Stopping rBGH and GMO Wheat (*Carla Fehr*)
- Protecting Seeds (*Terran Giacomini*)

#### **Markets, Land, the Environment and Prisoners: Regional struggles**

- Organizing the Market: the Canadian Wheat Board (*André Magnan*)
- Farming Ecologically: The NFU in Ontario (*Bryan Dale*)
- Saving the Prison Farms (*Meghan Entz and Asha Nelson*)
- Owning the Island: The Question of Land in Prince Edward Island (*Naomi Beingessner*)

#### **Women, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, and Crossing Borders: Key Solidarities**

- Embracing /Fighting Agrarian Feminism: Women and Struggle in the NFU (*Carla Roppel*)
- Inspiring Generation: NFU Youth (*Terran Giacomini*)
- Going International: The NFU and Food Sovereignty Sovereignty (*Annette Desmarais and Asha Nelson*)
- Building Solidarity: The NFU with Indigenous peoples (*Lauren Kepkiewicz and Terran Giacomini*)

# Understanding the Role of Manòmin in Indigenous Food Sovereignty

My husband, Jack and I are members of Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and live on 97 acres of land near Westport, Ontario, close to where Algonquin people had requested the establishment of a reserve in 1842<sup>1</sup>. It is a privilege for us to have been able to buy back our own land. This area is quite special as it is part of an area called The Land In Between<sup>2</sup>, which has particular ecology that is important to preserve. We bought the land in 2004 but the Uranium Resistance<sup>3</sup> took a great deal of our time and when the resistance was finished, we built a house.

What we are trying to do is bring back wild plants. We have huge areas of wild garlic, which we are careful to protect. We have beautiful birch trees with Chaga on them and we have some maples. We collect sweet water from both the birch and the maples for our own use. We also raise Chantecler hens, a heritage breed of chicken developed in Canada to withstand cold weather. We plant only heritage seeds and seeds of plants that Indigenous people grew. But mostly what I am trying to do is educate myself about the society of plants and why certain plants grow close to each other<sup>4</sup> - not necessarily about their use to human beings because they don't all have to have a use to us.

Before Europeans came here, the trees were big. What we see now is regrowth and I wonder what the smells and sounds were like, the feel of the air, before there were commercial spaces and the sound of electricity in the wires. What Jack and I envision is not to go back 300 years, because we can't, but to bring back a semblance of wild where we can. By doing this I can reconnect with my sense of land and knowledge of plants that was there once upon a time but through time has been lost.

Manòmin to me was a rice that you buy at the store. I knew that it grew in lakes but I never harvested the rice when I was growing up. My dad was more of a hunter and a fisherman. I was very fortunate to help with the Uranium Resistance, and because of that I was introduced to Manòmin and to the harvesting of Manòmin in Ardoch. It has become

a priority in my life to protect Manòmin and ensure that Ardoch's Manòmin beds are protected from commercial exploitation – Not because I object to commercial ventures, but because there is a very specific need for the Manòmin here to help people remember how to harvest and process wild rice themselves – to get people to rethink on their responsibility for their own food. For me food sovereignty means reconnecting with the food source.

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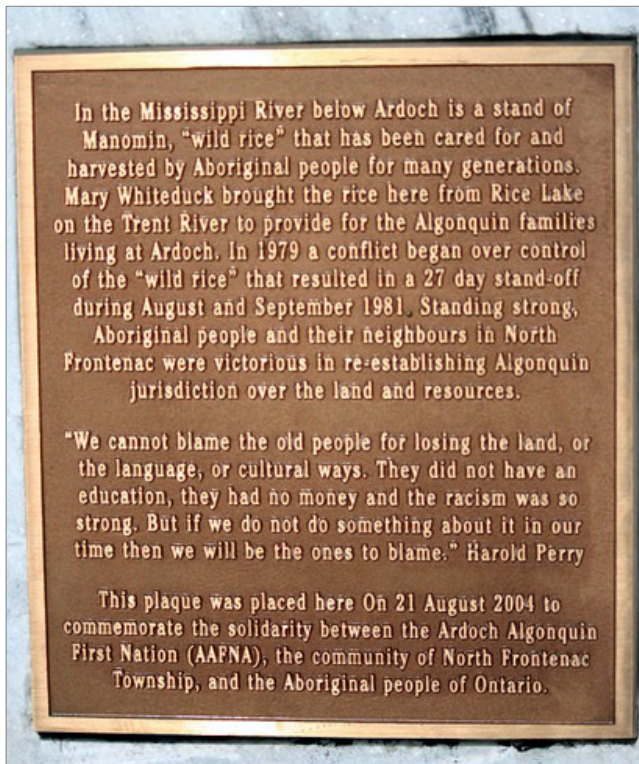
*"Manòmin is a plant with spiritual significance that stretches back to the Creation of Anishinaabe people and the Great Migration. During that time our ancestors were told to continue until they saw this plant growing on the water. As a result Anishinaabe people settled all over the Great Lakes and developed relationships over thousands of years."*  
([www.aafna.ca](http://www.aafna.ca))

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Wild rice is a vulnerable plant, as it grows in shallow lakes or slow-moving streams. There is a danger of extinction due to loss of habitat, as speedboats can quickly destroy a stand of wild rice. Pollution from recreational cottages and boats can change the ecology of streams and lakes. Manipulation of the water level can wipe out the stand. Experimental genetic engineering of wild rice threatens the integrity of the wild species<sup>5</sup>. The attitude of recreational users who want the lakes to be free of "weeds" has resulted in conflict<sup>6</sup>. And, in the early 1980s, conflict came about from the failure of the Ontario government to understand and respect the longstanding historical relationship between Algonquin people and the Manòmin stands at Ardoch.<sup>7</sup>

Mud Lake was first seeded to Manòmin in the 1800s. "At that time the forests were being clear-cut and burned and Algonquin families were struggling

*(continued on page 19...)*



to survive because of the thick black smoke that was all around. Animals had fled and traditional subsistence plants were not able to sustain growth because of the smoke. Learning of the struggle, relatives at Alderville First Nation sent Manòmin seeds, which were planted in the lake by the Whiteduck family. The seeds grew into three beds of

Manòmin, which Ardoch families have cared for ever since."<sup>8</sup> ([www.aafna.com](http://www.aafna.com))

In the fall of 1979 the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources gave Lanark Wild Rice a permit to harvest the Ardoch stand at Mud Lake. After an extended court challenge, Mary Whiteduck's descendant Harold Perry was able to stop the harvest in 1980. In 1981 a new permit was issued for commercial harvest. Twenty seven days of resistance followed and the commercial harvest was successfully prevented. The victory was achieved by Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, with the help of Indigenous allies and family from Alderville, Tyendinaga, Curve Lake and Hiawatha as well as non-Indigenous neighbours and the co-operation of township officials.

A monument stands today at the bridge in Ardoch where the resistance took place. It recognizes the jurisdiction of Ardoch Algonquin First Nation in this unceded Algonquin Territory, and acknowledges the solidarity that was achieved in protecting Manòmin from commercialization. We are forever vigilant in this role, understanding that our responsibility to our relatives is a part of our original instructions. ■

*Mireille LaPointe NFU 316 with Maureen Bostock  
April 15, 2018*

<sup>1</sup> The petition by Shawanapinssi was successful and a reserve was established, but the government refused to protect the community from violence and destruction of the forests by loggers, and ultimately denied that a permit for a reserve had been given.

<sup>2</sup> Land Between is a large transition zone which lies at the intersection of the Canadian Shield and the St. Lawrence Lowlands. See [www.couchichingconserv.ca](http://www.couchichingconserv.ca), The Land Between: Where the North and South Converge.

<sup>3</sup> The uranium resistance at Robertsville, near Ardoch ON began on June 29, 2007. Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation set up a blockade to stop Frontenac Ventures from staking claims with the intention of developing a uranium mine. See [www.turtleisland.org/discussion/viewtopic.php?p=8500](http://www.turtleisland.org/discussion/viewtopic.php?p=8500), Tehaliwaskenhas.

<sup>4</sup> See [creatorsgarden.blogspot.ca/](http://creatorsgarden.blogspot.ca/)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/Wild\\_Rice\\_Maps\\_Genes\\_and\\_Patents.doc](https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/Wild_Rice_Maps_Genes_and_Patents.doc) by Winona La Duke, 2001 identifies US Patent 5955.648 which describes the experimentation with cytoplasmic genetic male sterility to improve commercial productivity of wild rice.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.redmanlaughing.com/listen/2017/5/red-man-lauging-the-wild-rice-wars> Interview with James Whetung from Curve Lake First Nation who details the actions of cottagers in opposition to wild rice seeding of Pigeon Lake.

<sup>7</sup> Manomin (Wild Rice) in the Kiji Sibi (Ottawa River) Valley: An Exploration of Traditional Food, Development & Decolonization by Geri Blinick Carleton University M.A. Geography 2012

<sup>8</sup> [www.aafna.ca](http://www.aafna.ca) Ardoch Algonquin First Nation & Allies website details the history of Manòmin and the Wild Rice War of 1979



# An interview with Indigenous food sovereignty matriarch **Dawn Morrison**



**DAWN MORRISON** is of Secwepemc ancestry and is the Founder/Chair of the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty. She has a background in horticulture, ethno-botany, adult education, and restoration of natural systems, and is an internationally recognized published author.

Some of Dawn's writing includes: "Indigenous Food Sovereignty Pedagogy and Paradigms" in National Aboriginal Diabetes Association Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool (2018), "Indigenous Land and Food" in Reflections of Canada: Illuminating our opportunities and challenges at 150+ years (2017), and "Indigenous Food Sovereignty – A Model for Social Learning," in Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems (2011). She has consistently organized and held space over the last 10 years for mobilizing community and for regional and international networks to decolonize research and relationships in the food system. Dawn approaches her work by appreciating and inquiring into the cross-cultural interface where Indigenous food sovereignty meets sustainable agriculture. Dawn is Facilitator of the Decolonizing Research and Relationships: Cross Cultural Interface Framework, and Curator of the Wild Salmon Caravan, a celebration of the spirit of wild salmon and community engaged arts and public education project.

**ANNETTE DESMARAIS** is Canada Research Chair in Human Rights, Social Justice and Food Sovereignty at the University of Manitoba. Prior to getting her PhD, Annette farmed in Saskatchewan, worked with the NFU as coordinator of the Global Agriculture Project, and also provided technical support to La Via Campesina for over a decade. She is the author of *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants* (2007), and co-editor (with Hannah Wittman and Nettie Wiebe) of *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* (2010) and *Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems* (2011). She also co-edited the recently published *Public Policies for Food Sovereignty: Social Movements and the State* (2017). Annette is currently leading a research project on changing land tenure patterns in the prairie provinces and editing a book on the struggles of the NFU.

The NFU and the North American Region of La Via Campesina invited a powerful ally, Dawn Morrison, to participate in La Via Campesina's VII's International Conference that was held in the Basque Country in July 2017. Dawn is the co-founder and Chair of the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty that was formed in 2006. The following are excerpts from the interview that Annette conducted with Dawn while they were both at the Via Campesina conference.

**ANNETTE:** What was the path that brought you to La Via Campesina's 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference?

**DAWN:** It depends on how far back you want me to go. In my Indigenous way of thinking, the journey of coming to realize myself more fully in an international conversation with the networks in La Via Campesina has been shaped by a lot of my own

personal healing story of overcoming social and health issues related to colonization and reclaiming my Indigenous identity and heritage as a Secwepemc person. Prior to this life though, I'm not sure how my spirit came to this work and the journey.

It goes way deeper in our teachings around realizing ourselves in this journey and the story that's unfolding as we come to position Indigenous

(continued on page 21...)



peoples more effectively in the food sovereignty movement and food systems discourse where we've been made invisible in the techno-bureaucratic framework for research and "development." While the Indigenous hunting, fishing, farming and gathering narrative is ancient, the process of weaving our narrative into food system discourse is newly emerging, it's something that's informing and storming. My journey has been shaped by mentors, such as Secwepemc elders Arthur Manuel and Wolverine Jones Ignace, and by the late Cathleen Kneen and her husband Brewster Kneen, who were living on my home traditional territory. When they learned of the work we were doing in our community with community gardens and a *Secwepemc* survival school, they began inviting us to the B.C. Food Network's gatherings. In 2006, a Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty was struck, which I spearheaded and have been the Chair of for over 10 years. There has been a rapidly expanding Indigenous food systems network that's born out of our work. Our whole purpose is to mobilize knowledge and increase awareness within the broader food systems network around the unique food issues and concerns that are impacting Indigenous peoples and our ability to respond to our own needs for adequate amounts of healthy, culturally adapted foods.

Food sovereignty is a very powerful framework for reclaiming our ancient practices and protocols we have observed and enacted for thousands of years. We still have the ancestral memories in our bodies too, we just have to remember these, and realize them more fully in the present-day reality. It's obvious that it is a different time now so we're developing different strategies, organizing our time and our spaces, developing projects, and getting support from a lot of people in the food sovereignty movement. This includes non-Indigenous people who also are coming to realize themselves more fully and the changing narrative in realizing how our realities are entangled across cultures, not just in so called Canada but all over the world.

We have been colonized by the same global forces that are oppressing all humans. The heritage of humanity, I feel, is at risk here, and we're all being affected by that whether we're Indigenous or not, so that's what's brought me here. The spirit, and intent seem simple, yet profound. But I know that the politics and diversity are certainly complicated.

**A** **ANNETTE:** You've just spent three days here in the Basque Country with hundreds of representatives of *Vía Campesina* organizations from around the world. What are your first impressions of the work that this transnational agrarian movement is doing and what it stands for?

**D** **AWN:** My first impression is that it is a very powerful social movement. The *Vía Campesina* has done a lot of work and I don't think that I can judge, I need to do more research to understand the complexity of it all. But there appears to be a dominant peasant farming narrative that talks about production and producers. Productionism was introduced in the industrial revolution but prior to that, for thousands of years, humans had adapted Indigenous hunting, fishing, farming and gathering strategies that were very diverse and among the most sustainable in adaptation strategies of humanity. Indigenous hunters and gatherers have persisted over 90% of the time that humanity has existed on the planet. I feel that Indigenous peoples and our narrative could have a stronger and more up front role to be a greater part of the global food sovereignty narrative overall.

**A** **ANNETTE:** What you said about the narrative is critical. How might the narrative of an exclusive productionist approach change and what are the benefits of broadening this narrative?

**D** **AWN:** Having a broader vision and ecological, cultural and temporal scope of who is involved, and how people are involved in food systems challenges us to speak differently. There is a lot of talk about the unsustainable path charted in global food systems but we don't even realize how we are still perpetuating the same systems of production, and mechanistic, linear, reductionist ways of thinking. The current agri-food system narrative and western science-based techno-bureaucratic framework isn't able to capture the beautiful complexity and uncertainty that lives in natural systems. We need to re-design a system that includes decolonized methodology and Indigenous ways of knowing about that complexity. I like the language of biodiversity and cultural heritage. Our new narrative should be shaped by a regenerative and holistic health model so that we can start to understand and work with Indigenous ethics and the complexities that will help us reconnect a very fragmented and unjust system. *(continued on page 22...)*

**ANNETTE:** One of *La Via Campesina's* current and main approaches to food provisioning is agro-ecology. From your experience, what are your thoughts on this?

**DAWN:** Prior to the introduction of agriculture in my part of the world – Salish territory in the west – there was a highly localized abundance of Indigenous foods. In the late 1880s, when agriculture was first introduced by the colonizers, they imposed a cultural hierarchy that viewed Indigenous hunters and gatherers as inferior to agrarians. Yet Indigenous food, land, and food systems were beautifully complex and provided food even to the first European settlers for their sustenance. The way food is valued in the agriculture-based resource extraction economy doesn't allow for us to value the ways in which Indigenous food is harvested, shared and traded. So it is really challenging for me to say that the agrarian narrative is the only path. Agriculture has led to colonial expansion around the world, but the scale got all out of whack; instead of feeding local people, it became a global export for trade and now there's this global economy that allows transnational corporations to control the masses. Many may argue that agro-ecology is a step in the right direction because it seeks to minimize the ecological impacts that the agri-food system is having on Indigenous land and territory. While agro-ecology may be part of a transition to a more holistic health and regenerative process, I feel it is still limited in the ways in which it works within a productionist paradigm and techno-bureaucratic framework for research and extension of knowledge where Indigenous peoples have been made invisible. It may be a transition in the right direction for ecological intents and purpose, but it is sadly lacking a social justice lens. I also feel there's a danger of transnational corporations co-opting the agro-ecological framework and terminology, and it still gives the control to a colonial framework for the extension of agricultural knowledge.

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*The critical times we're living in right now call for deep and meaningful relationships to be built with Indigenous peoples.*

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I respect that *La Via Campesina* did a lot of work to bring us to the Basque Country for their 7<sup>th</sup> conference, but I feel there are huge gaps in representation, narrative and analysis. As I mentioned earlier, I feel that Indigenous peoples could have a stronger role and be more a part of the narrative overall. I feel like the North American Indigenous voice is almost missing. What I'm bringing as an ally comes from what I learned from my people back home. I'll have to go home and talk to our Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and my Secwepemc peoples about the invitation we received to become a member of *La Via Campesina*. While I'm not certain the *Vía Campesina* is willing or able to integrate a stronger Indigenous hunting, fishing, farming and gathering narrative, and thus strengthen its own narrative considerably, I feel that the relationship to the NFU

is hugely important for us. I've been appreciating the work that the NFU has done to express solidarity with Indigenous peoples on important issues such as land and social justice. I've been wanting to build the relationship for some time now, but it's about capacity, willingness and readiness on both sides.

**ANNETTE:** How do you envision this relationship or alliance developing? What would have to happen for that to actually occur?

**DAWN:** There is a tragic and highly unjust history between agriculture and Indigenous people as you read in the book "Clearing the Plains" by James Daschuk. In my home Secwepemc territory, wild salmon is to us what buffalo was to the Cree people, and with fish farms, mining, and oil and gas pipelines, the social and environmental injustices are ongoing. The critical times we're living in right now call for deep and meaningful relationships to be built with Indigenous peoples. But I guess what I'd say is what I've said to all the others working in food systems networks, Food Secure Canada, researchers and institutions across North America who have

*(continued on page 23...)*

invited our participation: we need to be financially supported because it's gotten to be a huge responsibility! Our Working Group has developed a framework and a methodology for doing cross cultural work, to understand the different ways of expressing the food system and the ways in which they interact. We want to share that with others and help create safe spaces in structured conversations that will help to broaden the scope and scale of food systems discourse and address some underlying social and environmental issues.

**ANNETTE:** In many ways, food sovereignty is about finding new ways of being with each other, and with the territory, land, air, and water. I hope that by your participation and

presence here we've created some space for more collaboration between the NFU and Indigenous peoples in Canada. I am very hopeful that this is the case.

**DAWN:** Yes, we are always creating and changing, nothing is static. As Indigenous peoples we've heard the argument so much, "oh get over it, that was in the past." Actually, it's still happening, but we are living in very transformational times as we come to realize ourselves more fully in an inclusive consciousness. That's how we bring the young people in. I'm really excited about the youth from the NFU who are working to make change for their future. They're powerful! ■



**2018**

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