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NFU member Lyle Orchard harvesting fall rye in north central Saskatchewan, August 2018. (photo by Cathy Holtlander)

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

Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

Through its various reports and articles, this issue of the Union Farmer Quarterly gives a great deal of focus to the goal of the National Farmers Union which is to work together to achieve agricultural policies which will insure the dignity and security of income for farm families while enhancing the land for future generations. This issue was pulled together in early September, as NAFTA negotiations continued, along with the fear of the future loss of security of income for farm families should Canada choose to give concessions on items like supply management and/or grain grading.

The NFU is a general farm organization with members from across a wide range of commodities and farm types and sizes. In order to work together to achieve agricultural policies that are in the interest of farmers, it is important that we learn from each other about what policies and programs are in place to insure our dignity and security of income. The community markets discussed in the Region 1 report are key to the income of many new and small farmers. PEI dairy farmer, Doug Campbell addresses the importance of supply management to both dairy farmers and to the stability of rural communities. Although it may be somewhat technical and a challenge for some of us to get our

heads around, the letter to the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) provides solid background on the mandate of the CGC and how maintaining high quality standards for grain leads to better prices, and dignity and security of income, for grain farmers.

The NFU 49th Annual Convention takes place from November 22 - 24 in Saskatoon. The theme of the upcoming convention is *Unleashing the Power of Food Sovereignty*. An important part of each convention is simply the coming together of a diversity of farmers from across the county and across an array of farm types. It provides an excellent opportunity for the peer-to-peer learning that is a key piece of agro-ecology. It also provides an excellent opportunity to build the solidarity and unity with other farmers and with social justice movements that Coral talks about in her president's report. Of course, it also gives those who attend the opportunity to help shape the NFU, our policies, our positions and our actions through respectful debate on resolutions and to hear insightful presentations from guest speakers and other members. Throughout the convention the NFU goal of working together to achieve agricultural policies which will insure the dignity and security of income for farm families while enhancing the land for future generations will always be top of mind.

—Ann Slater,
on behalf of the Editorial Advisory Committee

union farmer quarterly

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

A Message from the National President



— by Coral Sproule, National President

Building and fostering resilience in ourselves, our farms our communities and organizations

It has been a trying season for farmers in many parts of Canada and across the globe. Faced with drought, wildfires, floods, windstorms, tornadoes and other effects of climate change farmers are turning to ourselves and one another to look towards solutions. The question of how to build strength and diversity into our systems to help us respond to these unpredictable events is more important than ever. At times, the environments around us can seem very volatile and our ability to adapt to these changes can mean our chance to swim or at least wade through it all.

Starting on the micro level, when we build the health of our soils, we offer ourselves an opportunity to strengthen our farm's ability to adapt to extreme weather patterns. Farmers are doing a lot of fantastic work with farmer-led research. They are following practices which build soil microbiology, seed saving and adapting varieties to be regionally specific and adapted to changes in temperature and weather. There are emerging networks of regional seed saving alliances working collaboratively to ensure we have a secure and sovereign seed supply.

Self-care may seem like a buzz word, but as farmers who rely on both our bodies and minds to carry out our way of life it is of utmost importance to ensure we care for the mental and physical health of ourselves, our family and our communities. Focusing on this care will better our abilities to adapt to stresses that may at times seem beyond our control. Heat exhaustion has become a reality for many farmers working in record-breaking heat. Supporting one another in caring for ourselves is integral to our success. It is inspiring to see co-ops and community organizing efforts that build teamwork into farming practices. Online and in-person networking and

farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange is a growing action that we can partake in and instigate to build this type of care of ourselves and one another into our everyday practice. I personally had the privilege and pleasure recently to join several other farmers in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec in our first Femme Farmer Spa day. Though our to-do lists are never ending, we all felt it was important to pause for a moment and reflect on ourselves and one another.

Of course, the policies around these social and farm adaptations will be key in how the future of farming is shaped. The same resiliences ought to be prioritized to our community and farm organizing efforts. In a world where politics are often extremes within themselves, the importance of diversifying our approach to grassroots organizing becomes a priority in our planning around actions. With much focus on global trade systems, and less focus on our local food sovereignty and communities, we can at times feel helpless. When our political representatives are playing with bargaining chips like supply management and other farmer developed systems, we can find ourselves feeling that pit in our stomach and wondering where things will land. We can take direct action by writing letters, meeting with our MPs, MPPs and our municipal representatives or by organizing and participating in collective actions on the issues that are meaningful to us, our farms and our communities. We can build solidarity and unity with other farmers. We also need to look to other social, labour and justice movements to ensure that we work together when we can build solidarity through common causes. Though we may not always see eye-to-eye on what is best for our food system, there are many issues on which we can connect. These connections become a huge part of our ability to adapt as we grow our resources, knowledge and strengths.

I want to finish this report with a quote by American activist Angela Davis that has inspired and resonated with me lately when I start to feel I need some positivity, "You have to act as if you can radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time."

In Solidarity, Coral Sproule

Message from the National Women's President



— by Katie Ward, Women's President

The FLEdGE Network (Food: Locally Embedded, Globally

Engaged) is a research and knowledge sharing partnership committed to fostering food systems that are socially just, ecologically regenerative, economically localized and that engage citizens. It is hosted by the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at Wilfrid Laurier University. The collaboration includes seven Canadian regional nodes of practitioners and researchers, and three international working groups focused on exploring territorial integration, scaling up opportunities, innovative governance, agro-ecology and metrics. This year, the FLEdGE network held their 2018 Agroecology Field School in Ottawa from August 16 to 18. During the first two days invited farmers and researchers participated in tours of farms using agroecological practices – coincidentally all were NFU member farms – and attended workshops focused on participatory plant breeding, seed diversity, integrated systems of animals and vegetation, agroforestry and soil, rotational grazing and soil health, and bringing together plant, animal and community systems. On the third day panels of speakers focused on the culture, policies and politics of agroecology and food sovereignty as a growing global food movement.

Discussions touched on building capacity in Canada and beyond for agroecology knowledge networks. One aspect that was mentioned too briefly, unfortunately, was the need for further research to provide hard data on performative results of agroecological practices on commercial-scale farms. We may see great results of regenerative agriculture practices on many of our farms, but lacking hard data on yield, carbon sequestration or rainfall infiltration rates in soil, it can be difficult to expand the community of farmers

practicing agroecology. The Field School was a great opportunity to network with allied organizations like USC Canada, Inter Pares and Food Secure Canada, and it was a pleasure to meet and learn from academics from universities across Canada, as well as from Cuba and Brazil.

It is events like these that remind me why I am so proud to be a member of the National Farmers Union. The learning experiences, the solidarity with other farmers who are facing the same trials and tribulations – and successes – are an invaluable support whether you are a new farmer, an older farmer looking to find a new farmer who subscribes to a similar agricultural philosophy to work with you toward farm succession, or somewhere in between. Aside from the policy debates at our NFU conventions, which are fascinating and wonderful in the way that they demonstrate our ability to respectfully hash out consensus on issues about which we care so passionately, it is priceless to have learning opportunities and the ability to network and interact with farmers from all across the country.

The theme of this year's convention is *Unleashing the Potential of Food Sovereignty*. Following on my experience at the FLEdGE Network's Agroecology Field School I am re-energized to explore ways that I can implement more agroecological practices on my farm to further food sovereignty in my own corner of Eastern Ontario, as well as to take advantages of workshops, panels and policy debates at convention that will help to bring discussions about biodiversity, soil health, and regenerative practices to a wider audience. I look forward to continuing this work with you and to encourage our friends and neighbours in the broader agricultural community to research and implement the aspects of agroecology that can benefit all of our farms. See you in Saskatoon!

—In Solidarity, Katie Ward

A Message from the National Youth President



— by Stuart Oke, Youth President

September is an important time for us all on our farms. A definitive seasonal change, a time when harvests

begin to come in faster and faster and a time we cross our fingers for favourable weather windows, and that last extra bit of heat which will help to ripen our remaining crops. It is a busy time for everyone including for those of us that sit on the National Board.

The next few months are likely to yield some big changes for agriculture in Canada and unfortunately not all for the good. The constant attacks on supply management from our own news media and that of the American administration throughout the NAFTA renegotiation has been extremely concerning. But with the ramped-up pressure of congressional deadlines serving to increase the pressure on our government to cede ground on the issue in order to finalize the deal, it is increasingly easy to see this Liberal government consider concessions like they have done on CETA and the TPP. In addition, we also will likely see the first Canadian National Food Policy which started off with plenty of hopeful

recommendations for agriculture and new farmers but it looks as though the government will use the process to ratify its own export-oriented conclusions from the ill-conceived Barton Report.

As I look forward to the next several months, it is apparent to me that making sure the National Farmers Union is strong and united now and in the future is critical to being able to fight back against any adverse positions taken against farmers.

As we look forward to our 49th Annual Convention in Saskatoon this year, and as your locals and regions select delegates to represent you, I would ask all members to reach out to their youth members and support them as delegates for your area. We have seen for years the power convention has to train and empower the young farmers who attend to go on to give their time and energy to the Union for years to come. It is important to invest in our young farmers now by sending them as delegates to ensure the strength of our Union into and for the future.

I wish all our members a good and productive fall season and I look forward to see everyone at this year's convention in Saskatoon.

—In Solidarity, Stuart Oke

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UNLEASHING THE
POTENTIAL OF
FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY

Regional Reports



Region One:

District 2 (Provinces of NB & NS)

— by Claire May, NFU-NB
Director at Large

The Importance of Farmers' Markets

New Brunswick's capital city opened a new summer market this year - The Garrison Night Market - and it has been widely attended with very positive reviews over the course of its 12 weeks. Its main focus is a tourist and craft market, with only about 6 or 8 primary producers of the 130+ vendors each week. Another of Fredericton's markets is the very well-established Boyce Farmers' Market which has operated for many decades. Many folks are very familiar with it and are accustomed to using it as a source of quality local food. While the Boyce is promoted as a *farmers' market*, and offers prime retail space to roughly 25 primary producers each Saturday throughout the year, it is difficult to gain entry, and a balance of varied offerings is always maintained for their 250+ vendors. These are just 2 of the 4 markets which operate within the city on a weekly basis.

Fredericton's Hayes Urban Teaching Farm, in its first year of production, along with running the pilot of its 30-week Regenerative Farming Certificate program, has found a home at the Garrison Night Market, and needs to travel a mere 4 kilometres to get from farm gate to market stall - what a luxury! As a new farm, still getting to know all aspects of its operation - including its soil, microclimates, water and drainage, harvest, washing, packing, and storage systems, labour, and markets - being able to join this new market has been a comfortable success. They expect to grow together - farm and market - and hope that the overall offering will improve; that more people and more producers will see it as a farmers' market, and that it will become another solid opportunity for small scale producers to gain a portion of the consumer market share.

It's quite expected that every market will have its own rules, peculiarities, and governance structure to work within, but still the traditional model of commun-

ity markets holds such promise for new and small growers. There is much power that lies in the hands of those that operate a market, regardless of its location or size, and that power comes with responsibility to support and advocate for the vendors that they host. They hold a considerable measure of control of the food system that we all are working within. The topics of food sovereignty and food safety regulations are both hot in our recent conversations, debates, and meetings.

They relate directly to the markets that are available to our farmers, and producers are encouraged to keep farmers' market operators involved in those conversations as much as possible.

Primary producers selling their own product - whether whole or value-added - direct to consumers ought to feel important and necessary, as well as proud and enthusiastic about the variety and quality of their goods. Many of our livelihoods depend on the existence of farmers' markets, and the community rallies around a market like almost no other routine event. Does your community have a farmers' market? Visit it this week! ■

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NFU-O/Region Three:



Province of Ontario

— by Emery Huszka, Coordinator

Communication is the most important service we can offer within the National Farmers Union in Ontario!

As I write this, we have just finished a day spent visiting with some of our provincial government representatives. Our new Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Ernie Hardeman engaged us in a very warm and friendly discussion about agriculture in our province. As many of you are aware, NFU-O surveyed our members to provide clear direction (and make sure that we were focusing on your priorities).

Above all else, we made it known that as a non-partisan group, and as an accredited General Farm Organization in Ontario, we are here to work together on solutions while representing the concerns of our NFU membership. For years now, we have focused on the core values of the NFU-O - Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability within the context of Healthy Rural Communities. All of our NFU and NFU-O policies fall nicely under these core principals. While presenting the minister with the NFU document *Losing Our Grip*, we made it clear that access to land, farmland preservation and a pathway to ownership for new and starting out farmers is important to us. Conveniently, we had additional information available through two other documents - *Farmland Succession and Land Access for New Farmers*, and the *Ontario Land Access Guide*. Aaron Armstrong articulated the challenges faced by young farmers and our wonderful General Manager Sarah Bakker presented other NFU briefings to champion the NFU policies which we advocate. The massive number of farm successions taking place in the next few short years is a call to action and presents opportunity for government to provide strategic assistance to next generation farmers.

As our NFU-O research indicates, a large number of us engage in some form of direct to public marketing, and to this end, we have asked the minister to collect more research on this important vehicle for Ontario

farmers. This led nicely into our concern for rural communities and the fact that we cannot conduct direct marketing without strong supporting local infrastructure, such as local abattoirs who face unrealistic regulatory burdens brought about by pressure to adapt to international, export driven federal standards.

We pressed the point that soil health and water protection issues were critical to our membership and that we strongly support the soil health strategy begun by non-partisan groups under the previous government.

Under the social aspect, we explained our concerns of mental health for the people who feed us all. In fact, all pressures brought about by government actions and inactions compound the stresses faced by all citizens. We felt it necessary for the minister to always put the mental health in the equation of all OMAFRA decisions with a goal to reduce stress and look to provide options when pressures become too great to handle alone.

What was very evident is that the new minister does care deeply about agriculture and the people involved; he is exceptionally experienced in the industry as a whole. He made it clear that the province is suffering from a tremendous economic debt, however, he intends to push for value producing expenditures while considering the big picture of the many voices in agriculture, including ours. It is encouraging to see the open communication from this minister so far.

We left with a commitment to work toward real solutions and are cautiously optimistic for our NFU potential to participate.

Another highlight to share involves our delightful meeting with the Green Party of Ontario Leader, and Guelph MPP Mike Schreiner. Many of the same topics were discussed as with the Minister of Agriculture, and our reception was simply outstanding. It is important for those of us producing food (constituting less than 2% of our national population) to open as many doors as possible, and have meaningful discussions about food, our challenges and public interest solutions. We continue to engage our political leaders, our membership and the general public with our constructive approach, one that is in the interest of fairness and our public benefit. We look forward to showing the good work engaged in by the NFU in Ontario and throughout the other regions of Canada. Thank you. ■



Region Five:

Province of Manitoba

—by Ian Robson, Coordinator

The biggest news from Manitoba is that Colorado based Omnitrax finally gave up on the Churchill rail line and sold it to a conglomeration of Northern Manitoba communities, Saskatchewan-based AGT Food and Ingredients, and Toronto-based Fairfax Financial. The deal includes stipulations that the federal government will pump funds into the line, with repairs to major washed out tracks from a flood last year to begin immediately.

The NFU advocated for government ownership in an ideal system, and one that could create even a Canadian Wheat Board like model for producers in the vicinity of the line. However, the Canadian government seems to believe buying a pipeline for the benefit of Canadians is more *beneficial* than securing a vital rail line that ships food and supplies through a growing northern economic hub. We should recall that AGT's president and CEO, Murad Al-Katib, helped Harper get rid of the CWB and has stated that he is not an *interventionist*. At the same time, through the new 99 year contract, these conglomerations will be receiving continuous government funding, because, without guaranteed stability the line just could not run. Seems, socialism is fine if it works in your favour.

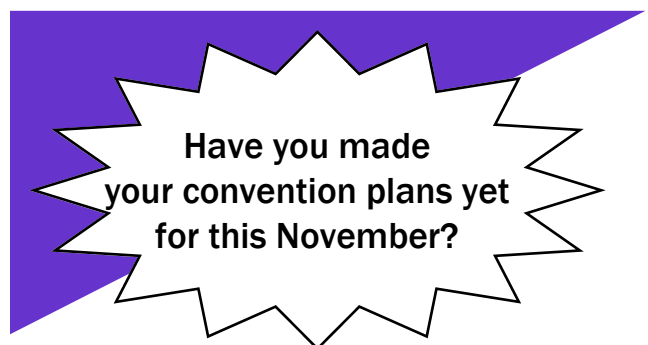
With little rains in August, harvest in Manitoba and other provinces resulted in earlier than usual completion times. It also resulted in less hay produced for livestock farmers and yields going down for most crops across the province. Even though we cannot predict the weather, farmers are gearing up to pump more water from ponds this spring. The Prairie Climate Centre in Winnipeg is doing some great work to warn all of us, that yes, dryer and hotter conditions will be the new normal with climate change. Please see their map at: prairieclimatecentre.ca.

Are governments prepared to react? With newer farmers wanting to enter the fold, will they have the

resilience? Grain farmers are able to access cash advances which the NFU pushed for in the early days and exist across the provinces, but in many cases they do not exist for direct market and smaller farmers. With cash flow, it will become inevitable that in harsh conditions several farms will decide to pack it in, just as the local farm movement is growing everywhere. We must advocate for a broader scope to 0% interest cash advances.

The Manitoba government continues to ignore many of NFU Manitoba's concerns at this point. We continue to send letters and meet with any MLA's we can, when we can. Even though the Manitoba government is going to put forward a climate tax over carbon pricing, which is a better solution for Manitoba, they are setting it up as tax neutral (reducing taxes elsewhere) and not multiplying the carbon tax revenue by dedicating a majority of it to actual carbon reducing activities. This is one reason the opposition has stalled the passing of that bill. We see very little incentive in it for farmers to actually change their activities and make reducing their footprint a larger part of their business plans.

On the brightest of notes, the NFU's 50th anniversary convention will be held in Winnipeg in November, 2019. This is where our original convention took place. We hope to make it a convention to remember and want to see a large turnout for that celebration. Stay tuned. ■



See page 13 for convention details on hotel booking as well as discount offers from Via Rail.



Region Six:

Province of Saskatchewan

—by Wendy Manson,
NFU Member

The Region 6 Convention took place in Swift Current, Saskatchewan on August 1 and 2, 2018, following the Organic and Low-Input Agricultural Systems Field Day and Tradeshow.

We hosted a public event and continued on August 2, 2018 with our business meeting. Guests and friends at convention included Carla Beck, Saskatchewan NDP Ag Critic, Denise McDonald, Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation and Milton Dyck, an NFU member and labour union representative.

Darrin Qualman, a writer and researcher, was the guest speaker at a public event held the evening of August 1. Darrin discussed the link between farm income, climate change and carbon taxes and he proposed some ideas for the adoption of carbon pricing in agriculture. He invited us to consider our role in climate change and the role the NFU can and should play in the public discourse.

The next day our convention continued with a panel of young, beginning farmers, three interesting speakers, resolutions and elections of officials.

The Young Farmer Panel was Ann Hill from the Swift Current area, Kayla Hopkins from the Outlook area and Will Robbins of the Delisle area. They expressed concern about selling their products in a marketplace of large and powerful *buyers*. Ann said she, “didn’t come home to be a serf”. Will discussed selling outside the commodities market. Kayla was concerned that a whole year’s calf crop price hinged on one day at the auction mart.

Dr. Ted Dupmeir, DVM, MVSc. presented information and slides on Glyphosate residues in animal feed.

Glyphosate was patented in 1964 as an industrial pipe cleaner, then used as a plant control in 1974 and with Roundup Ready crops in 1996. In 2010, before the patent timeline was up, it was re-patented as an antibiotic. He showed the differing

amounts of residues in a variety of animal feed, such as residue in crops desiccated with glyphosate, and animal health problems that disappear when the feed product is discontinued.

Glenn Tait, NFU member and incoming board member, presented an *Update on Seed Regulatory Issues*. There is a push to explore new ways of funding varietal research. The western crop commissions, chaired by Alberta Wheat’s manager Tom Steve, have worked together to discuss the topic. Also, *Seed Synergy*, describing themselves as leaders from the six major seed sector industry organizations, held consultations across the country. Dr. Richard Gray, used as a resource in the Seed Synergy meetings, described different funding formulas in France, Australia, and elsewhere. Discussion is around three basic ways to proceed: continue with the current (or expanded) check-off system, collect royalties by contract on farm saved seed, or institute end point royalties (EPRs). All royalties come from the farmers’ share of the price of grain. The seed sector seems inclined to apply a fee to farm saved seed through a *trailing* contract. There was always a move back toward royalties when the synopses were distributed. However, farmers in these consultations generally advocated for check-offs so that they would be able to both influence the direction of research and secure all the profit from their own investment.

University of Regina professor, Victoriya Galushko, conducted a survey of farmers on varietal development funding. While the results are not out yet, Glenn found that, in the session he attended, the topic was new to the few non-NFU farmers present.

Convention passed six resolutions on board training, bus service to rural communities, closing of tax loopholes, the need for machine co-ops, control of field bindweed through the use of bindweed mites, and an Amicus brief to the federal court on the right of the Government of Canada to enact policies to mitigate climate change.

National officials were elected for the terms starting at the time of the National Convention: National Board: *Marcella Pederson, Dixie Green, Glenn Tait*; Women’s Advisory: *Ann Hill*; Youth Advisory: *Vacant*; IPC: *Lyle Orchard*.

Thanks to Dixie Green, Stewart Wells and the members from the Swift Current area for a very well hosted and interesting regional convention! ■



Region Seven:

Province of Alberta

— by Doug Scott, Coordinator

When I began writing my report some early harvesting of peas and barley had occurred. Temperatures were in the mid twenties and we were looking forward to a quick and easy harvest. Since then things have taken a turn for the worse. We have had 2 weeks of cold, rainy weather with frost and even some snow. With the prospects of an early harvest gone many Alberta farmers are on edge. Late, wet harvests are costly and hard on machinery, farm families and their harvest crews. This will be our third wet harvest in a row. We can only hope for a harvest friendly October. As my friend Larry from Red Deer likes to say “Arghhh”.

Our annual convention was held in La Glace, Alberta this summer. La Glace is located in the heart of the beautiful Peace country and is the home of Peter and Levke Eggers. We enjoyed an event filled day that culminated in an evening of fun and

fellowship at Peter and Levke’s farm. We all enjoyed the farm tour as Peter explained how he had transitioned his farm to 100 percent organic. During the day we had excellent presentations on farm taxation and generational farm transfers. Many thanks to all the NFU members who, as always, pitched in and made the day such a success.

Many of us are concerned as we see our supply managed dairy system come under attack as NAFTA is renegotiated. The Americans want access to our dairy industry and don’t appear to want to take “no” for an answer. In addition they want access to our grain grading system on exported grain. It is upsetting when we see our own AWC supporting this move. Sometimes the best deal is the one that isn’t made. I hope this is where this is headed.

This past summer NFU board members have spent many hours negotiating a new funding agreement with the NFU-O. Both sides are firmly entrenched but we hope to reach a resolution before too long. In addition we have been dealing with a long standing issue involving translation costs with New Brunswick. Of course both of these issues concern money, something we are always short of.

Sure hope October turns out to be warm, sunny and dry. ■



John Alexander "Ike" Hendricken

As the result of a tragic motorcycle accident on Friday, July 20, 2018, John Alexander “Ike” Hendricken of Pisquid, PE, passed away at the age of 54. Father to Shaundell Hendricken (Dwayne Gallant) and Alex-Sandrea Hendricken (Kass Baker). Ike is also survived by the mother of his children, Anne Marie MacDonald, his special friend, Linda Sanderson, his father, J.P. Hendricken; siblings Danny, Darlene (Harold Curran), Cathy (Marvin Cameron), Kim (David MacSwain) and Clair Jerome (Lisa Jennings). Loving grandfather to his “favourite boy” Dane Alexander Gallant and “his little girl” Josie Ray Gallant. Loving sisters-in-law Sue Fraser, Joanne (Bruce Nelson), Donna (Gerard Deagle). Brothers-in-law

Leslie MacDonald (Christine) and Kenneth MacDonald. Loving mother-in-law Teresa MacDonald, as well as many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and godchildren. Predeceased by his mother Marie Hendricken, father-in-law Chester MacDonald, sister-in-law Paula Wilson and brother-in-law Joseph Wilson. Also left to mourn his loss are his four-legged fur babies Bradley and Thompson. Ike lived and breathed farming. The red soil ran true in his veins and encompassed every part of his being. Ike was all heart. He would give anything to anyone and never expected anything in return. Ike also loved his motorcycle. With the wind in his hair and the freedom to ride, he was able to escape the pain and anguish that plagued his soul for so many years. Above all else he loved his family. Ike cherished his children and grandchildren and had so much pride in their accomplishments. His smile, his laugh and his way of acting out a story will never be forgotten.

The whole story must be told when it comes to dairy industry's supply management

- by Doug Campbell

I am writing this letter in response to an article by The Fraser Institute entitled "Canada can eliminate supply management by following Australia's lead".

The three authors, Jon Berry, Alan Oxley, and Dan LeRoy say Canadian policymakers would be well advised to learn lessons from Australia about phasing out supply management in a number of agricultural sectors. Their article is about Australia doing away with supply management in the dairy sector in 2000.

The authors write a glowing report on what a success this has been for Australia. They say consumers are paying less for milk, national supply has been maintained, and larger farms are driving much greater productivity allowing milk products to be the third biggest agricultural export after beef and dairy.

I would like to question this Australian success story, and offer my perspective as a Canadian dairy farmer.

First let's talk lower dairy prices to consumers. If the authors say it is the case in Australia then I will have to take their word for it, but someone paid the cost somewhere.

I draw your attention to the Canadian consumer reality - that the previous trade deals, which have negotiated away percentages of the Canadian dairy market, have not seen Canadian consumers reap the benefits of cheaper dairy products as promised by negotiators and others wishing to see the dismantling of the supply management system.

What has happened as a result of the undermining of the system is an ever-increasing divide between what the dairy farmer is receiving for producing milk and what the consumer is paying. Because of the opening up of the market, farmers are receiving 1980 prices for their milk from processors, and are struggling to cover the cost of production and stay in business.

On the other hand, dairy processors have seen their profits double in the last 20 years. It is supply management that has become the scapegoat.

The authors state that the stabilizing of the supply and price of Australia's dairy products allowed for inefficient farms and the consolidation in the industry is so much more efficient. Supply management allows farmers to know what they will receive for their

product. Nowhere does it give permission to be inefficient, regardless of size, for the product must be produced within the return, or there simply is no farm. How is that inefficient?

The authors are really implying that only large-scale farms can be efficient. Why didn't they come right out and use the term industrial farming, because that is what they are supporting. Yet consumers are increasingly (and with good reason) growing disenchanted with industrial farming.

There is also the bigger question that the authors neglected to address with their support of industrial dairy farming in Australia, and that is the health of rural communities. Just how are they doing socially, environmentally, and economically under the dismantling of supply management?

There is a lot more to look at than the dollars that come out of industrial farming and the fewer number of pockets those dollars go into.

I would argue that Canada's supply management system, prior to the start of its gradual erosion by government bureaucrats, greatly stabilized rural Canada. Farming is far more than an industry. It is the fibre of rural Canada. It appears so many of our decision makers have no understanding of this fact.

The authors were so impressed with Australian dairy now being its third largest agricultural export. But they failed to mention where it is being exported or who it is impacting. United States dairy farmers can tell you. Australian dairy products are coming into the United States taking market share. Australia is a very big reason American farmers have not been able to meet their cost of production in the past two years.

Australia dairy products are a big reason the United States wants into the Canadian dairy market. It seems Trump is not the only one to stray from the facts. The Fraser Institute article is one sided and misleading. Not everything that is printed can be trusted.

We deserve the whole story to be told and debated.

- Doug Campbell is a dairy farmer in Prince Edward Island, and an NFU District Director



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 October 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 15. If you are selected, you will be notified by October 25 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.

2018 NFU 49TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Unleashing the Potential of Food Sovereignty



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Are you travelling to Convention by Via Rail?

The following are the details pertaining to your VIA RAIL conference fare:

VALID: November 17th 2018 to November 25th 2018

TERRITORY: From all stations throughout the VIA system to Saskatoon, SK and return.

RESTRICTIONS: Fare applies to a maximum of two passengers per booking.

One complimentary stopover is allowed at no additional charge.

For travel on all fare plans in Business class, the first stopover is allowed at no additional charge, provided that this stopover takes place in Toronto, Montréal or Ottawa only.

DISCOUNT: **10% off the best available fare in Economy, Economy Plus, Business, Business Plus, Sleeper class.** "Subject to the conditions and restrictions of the fare plan to which the additional discount is being applied." Discount does not apply in any Escape fares and Prestige Class.

IDENTIFICATION: Participants must reference the event's VIA convention discount code: **13773.**

ONLINE BOOKING TIP: You have to log in to your profile, or create one prior to booking. On the Passenger information screen, select "Convention fare" from the "Discount Type" drop-down menu, and enter the discount code for your convention or event in the "Discount code" field.

Experiences and work within the NFU

Summer research student Morgan Ryan-Roe interviews NFU members across the country

This summer, as a research student, I had the privilege of interviewing members of the National Farmers Union on their experiences and work within the organization. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the NFU, we wanted to talk with those who had an involved role within the NFU. From Regional Directors to past Presidents, we wanted to speak to someone who really understood what it was like to work within the NFU. While their experiences were similar in some ways, they differed greatly in others, showing that farming is often complex and different from person to person. However, one common theme that arose from the interviews time and time again, person after person, was how the NFU facilitated friendship and networking.

It's relatively well known that the NFU works closely with the people they advocate for, and organizations such as La Via Campesina to connect farmers on a global scale; through the interviews it became evident that this work has impacted not only the professional lives of NFU members but their personal lives as well.



Photo from NFU Archives:

1976 - NFU Local 631 girls' softball team.

I think just about everyone who's involved at all experiences that sense of community that edges over into family.

One member, **Wendy Manson**, described the NFU as a family:

"A national and international home, they are quite literally family, just because it's that dynamic of 'they're yours,' even when you go 'oh no,' so, in that way there's a certain point where... and I think everybody experiences it, when you're almost genetically connected.... we can get into a big fat fight in five seconds and frequently do over absolutely everything. And in some ways, I think we're almost viewed from people from the outside as a family because people come, and they're awed by the quality and the depth of the conversation and sort of spooked by 'boy those guys are getting into a fight on the floor.' It's a pretty permanent part of the fabric of your life. I think just about everyone who's involved at all experiences that sense of community that edges over into family."

Wendy by no means was alone in this experience. Over the twelve interviews conducted every participant made mention that the NFU had given them the opportunity to network and create friendship or familial bonds that have lasted for life. Whether it was the experiences they had within their own communities, from building up local food markets to the connections made across the globe through La Via Campesina, the Farmers Union has facilitated networking for decades.

Another member, **Dianne Dowling**, who some may be familiar with through her involvement in the Prison Farms Campaign, shared how the community she built through the NFU helped her in a time of need:

(continued on page 14...)

“You have connections, you have networks, you have people who understand your business. They support you and you support them. That always feels good in the farming business. For instance, in 2016 we had a severe drought here and lack of hay, and what hay we could get was very expensive. So we had to reduce our cattle numbers somewhat and put out an email to our meat customers saying ‘if you’re interested in increasing your ordering that would be of great assistance to us’ and they did. We got lots of responses for that, people wanting to help out, of course it was a product they were already buying but they spread the word to other friends as well. It showed that they could feel connected to helping the farmers in their own community.”

In this current socio-political climate where it seems divisive politics and hate for our fellow men is on the rise it’s encouraging to hear that the NFU has and will continue to facilitate networking for farmers in Canada and across the globe. The NFU remains a place where people can feel comfortable, welcome,



Photo from NFU Archives:
NFU Farm Gate Defense, May 1989.

valued, and build relationships no matter their lot in life. While the world around us seems to be crumbling we can take solace in the knowledge that we in the NFU have each other’s backs. I’ll leave you with a quote, something to chew on, from the eloquent and well-spoken **Fred Tait**:

“Anytime you go someplace else, you leave a bit of yourself there, but you bring a bit of the place back with you, and it’s a very nice trade.”

—Morgan Ryan-Roe

The Beingsessner Award for Excellence in Writing

Working with the family of Paul Beingsessner, the NFU has established an annual literary prize in honour of Paul and his contribution to rural and agricultural journalism. Paul Beingsessner 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 Beingsessner 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

or

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

Meet Edith Ling, a long-time NFU Volunteer

*The NFU's work could not reach the distance that it does without the work, the tenacity and devotion of all those people who give their time to defend small and family farms in Canada through their voluntary work. We would like to take the opportunity to feature **Edith Ling of North Winslow, Prince Edward Island**, whose volunteer contribution in the NFU has spanned decades.*

EDITH LING Prince Edward Island

I grew up on a mixed farm in West Covehead, Prince Edward Island. After attending the local one-room school, I went on to Prince of Wales College where my final two years of high school were completed. I took a secretarial course there and following that was fortunate to receive a position with the Provincial Government as Private Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture - a position I held for eleven years full-time and three years part-time. During that time, I worked for five different ministers of agriculture. In 1970 I married David Ling, a farmer and member of the NFU. We began farming together in North Winsloe and became the parents of two daughters.

1971 was a very interesting year as I worked in the Minister's office while my husband was taking part in the tractor demonstrations organized by the National Farmers Union. This topic was not discussed in the office and my professional relationship with the Minister remained strong during those days!

In 1979 I began to do the work of District Secretary for the NFU in this province which I enjoyed very much. I completed that role in 1996.

David and I had a hog operation initially and later converted it to beef production. For sixteen years we sold our beef direct to consumers at the Charlottetown Farmers Market. Our farm has been managed without the use of chemical fertilizers and sprays since 1985.

Sadly, I lost David in 2013 after a struggle with pulmonary fibrosis. I have kept the farm and enjoy



I am always amazed when I consider the vision that the architects of the NFU had when they developed this great farm organization.

working around a few cows and calves - I like to say I am just coasting to full retirement!

I have been Women's District Director with the NFU for over ten years now and am actively involved with the church I attend as well as involved with the Women's Institute. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the local Funeral Co-operative and am secretary of that Board. Each week finds me volunteering with a nursing home in town.

I really treasure the time I spend with my two little granddaughters and at the time of this writing I am looking forward to the birth of a third grand-baby. I so enjoy the nature walks with the children, watching birds, planting the garden, feeding the cows and so on, as I try to instill in them a love for nature and creation.

Agriculture is my passion and it has been a huge part of my life. The time I have spent with the National Farmers Union has been a wonderful experience for me. I can never repay the Union for what I have received from it in terms of education and friendship with other members. I am always amazed when I consider the vision that the architects of the NFU had when they developed this great farm organization. Let's keep on keeping on. ■

It is a Global Struggle

A report from the Global Encounter of Agroecology Schools and Processes

—by Claire Davies

What attracts me most to the intricacies of food is the fact that it is relatable and is depended upon by all humans – regardless of their political, cultural, historical, or economic position. Food is a form of power. It can be a source of oppression or a cause of conflict. At the same time, it can also be one of the most important and beautiful forms of identity and expression.

In May 2018, peasant farmers, indigenous peoples, landless peoples, youth and elders, fisher folks and those from the countryside gathered in Artemisa, Cuba for the first ever Global Encounter of La Via Campesina (LVC) Agroecology Schools and Formation Processes. Uniting over 45 individuals from 41 countries across Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East provided an opportunity to mutually strengthen regional schools and processes, engage in the recovery of knowledges, share tools and resources, and build solidarity for the agroecological way of life.

Hosted by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), attendees had the occasion to visit various organic farms across the country. We learned about diverse farming techniques, challenges they endure due to a changing climate, and how their production and distribution processes functioned. We also learned first-hand how international politics and historical events have significantly impacted Cuba's current unique agriculture sector.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Cuba has had to rely on sustainable farming methods. A shortage of pesticides and artificial fertilizers forced Cubans to turn to organic production processes. Furthermore, the Cuban government strongly prioritized strengthening agricultural biodiversity by making a greater range of seed varieties to available to farmers. Presently,



Members from the African region present their struggles and next steps.

several forms of agricultural production and distribution exist, including cooperatives – some of which we had the opportunity to visit.

One day was focused on Feminist Agriculture, where we were invited to a female-run cooperative. Complementary to LVC's philosophy, much discussion occurred around the fundamental role of women and youth in their operations and in the struggle for global agrarian reform. Acknowledging that females have a central role in agroecological peasant agriculture paves the way for a more equal, humane and ecological future.

How do we unite farming communities, public policy, civil society and private organizations to work together to achieve food sovereignty and to meet the demands and values of all citizens without diminishing or harming the needs of one group over another? Attending this conference reaffirmed the necessity of acknowledging agroecology as the foundation of Peasant Agriculture and Food sovereignty. It also reiterated how motivated and passionate members of LVC are to make this happen.

This struggle transcends geographical boundaries, and so does our hope! A special thank you to all whom were involved in the planning and execution of the first Global Agroecology Encounter. I feel honored and grateful to have been a part of it! I also extend my thanks to the translators for all of their support.

GLOBALIZE STRUGGLE! GLOBALIZE HOPE!

—Claire Davies is an associate member of the NFU. She has been involved with the Kingston and Toronto locals, and is interested in getting involved in Ottawa, where she recently moved for work. Claire was an organic farmer last season in South Eastern Ontario. Currently, she is a research officer for the Environmental Policy branch of Transport Canada, where she supports climate risk assessments on federally owned infrastructure.

Spreading Knowledge on Agroecology

A report from the Global Encounter of Agroecology Schools and Processes

—by Josh Bateman

The Global Encounter of La Via Campesina (LVC) Agroecology Schools and Processes took place in Guira de Melena, Cuba from May 21 to 30, 2018. Representatives from both diverse fields ranging from farmers to lawyers and urban agriculture educators and from around the world gathered for the Encounter. The evenings featured valuable and insightful cultural exchanges, creating friendships that united us as peers and allies fighting for the rights and aspirations of small-scale farmers and peasants.

We began by touring local farms that are certified agroecological and were welcomed with delicious, local fruits such as mangoes and papaya.

In Cuba, there are 3 levels of agroecological certification – municipal, state, and federal. To attain each, one must fulfil a certain number of criteria out of a total of 23. The criteria that stood out to me was that at every level the farmer must be involved in spreading the ideas and values of agroecology - this could be through farm tours, speaking at town halls, or whatever other means are suitable. The peer-to-peer education includes agricultural knowledge but also social values and results in agroecology spreading much quicker and more effectively than through centralized extension agents.

In the opening session, each Region in LVC presented the situation in the struggle against capital. I found it almost eerie how similar these struggles are wherever you are in the world. The struggle is against the corporate control of agriculture, land being (often forcefully) taken away from small-scale farmers and peasants, depressed prices and inability to earn a profit due

to global markets, and the violence against one of the most disempowered groups in society. The manifestations in the Global South are much more visibly violent, however, these same forces are at work here in Canada. It is evident that the new imperialists have taken the shape of international corporations but they are no less rapacious or reckless towards the local people and environments than their predecessors.

...each Region in LVC presented the situation in the struggle against capital. I found it almost eerie how similar these struggles are wherever you are in the world.

This was a heavy way to begin the conference, but we must define our struggles before we can know how to overcome them. The following session centered on agroecology based on LVC's framework and how to empower the disempowered in the

struggle against capital. One of the most essential elements of spreading knowledge on agroecology is peer-to-peer learning. Not only does this question the power and control of traditional, hierarchal educational institutions, but it allows knowledge to spread faster, local tips and tricks to be shared, and friendships to be made that create community rather than competition. Learning is based upon two-way dialogue and is an exchange rather than a prescription.

We heard from organizers of LVC Agroecology Institutions that educate using the peer-to-peer model in several different countries. These formal institutions allow for people to come together in schools, some with farmland, and learn through intensive experience. These learning environments provide rapid and thorough transfer of knowledge to students who can then share the knowledge with their communities.

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Joining hands in unity (Region presents their mistica - communicating their struggle against corporate powers through a symbolic performance).

The session on Agroecology and Feminism brought to light the essential role of women in agriculture from labourers to bearers of traditional knowledge and seed savers to nurturers of the land and communities. It was emphasized that around the world women continue to struggle against violence, exclusion, and sex-based discrimination today. It was a stark reminder that we must actively work to involve women meaningfully in arenas and spheres of influence for the betterment of all.

As this was the first Encounter on Agroecology Schools and Processes, we worked on defining how LVC shall move forward with agroecological education. We have some existing examples of schools to take after and we must work to create these models at home - models based on the cycle of study, debate, and reflection. Peer-to-peer knowledge transfer and organization is essential to

ensure rapid and impactful learning. The LVC Agroecology Online Learning Platform was launched to virtually link communities from across the globe. This platform will continue to be enhanced as individuals and organizations add resources.

This is just a beginning for agroecological education within LVC and it is up to all of us to engage in peer-to-peer learning, create connected communities, and work together to spread agroecology.

— Joshua Bateman is the Alberta Youth Representative on the NFU Youth Committee. He has a degree in Nutrition and Food Sciences and Food Policy, worked on several farms in Australia and Canada, and completed a Young Agrarian Internship in Red Deer County.

Are we moving towards corporate colonialism?

—by Ian Robson, Region 5 (Manitoba) Coordinator

The United Nations was established to curb the tendency of using war to solve trade problems. Both physical and tariff wars are addressed by the UN and the World Trade Organization. Both institutions were formed by long-term thinkers who wanted to avoid the destruction and waste of wars. This is one reason why November 11 is important, besides the remembering. But it is easy for people to drift into violence and belligerence that really solves nothing. In fact, people are displaced and become a burden to others and to themselves.

The USA has worked against the European colonial attitude and then has imposed its own forms of colonialism throughout the western hemisphere. Corporations based in United States focused on Latin America so traders could enjoy profit on fruit crops or mineral resources from low wage workers. When needed, the US Army was called in to arrange “friendly governments” by *coup d’etat*. One example took place in Chile on September 11, 1973, but there have been many other dictators put in place with US help before and since, leading to the displacement of many people.

Should we not hope that today’s trade agreements will encourage fair prices and a sense of civility? Are we in danger of moving back to colonialist behavior, or even corporate colonialism? Under current trade negotiations it is hard to tell what the USA or Britain really want with trade rules.

The USA has cut its tax rate, only to impose tariffs which will be paid by Canadians. China, the EU and Canada have reciprocated with tariffs which we will also pay.

Canada has always had a relationship with the USA whereby we usually build something, for example, the Avro Arrow, and then the US government will decide if they want it or not. The US has also acted as though it can take our natural resources, such as the Port of Churchill and its rail line or most of our oil and gas business. Canada really does want a proper say over what we need for our desires and resources.

Over the years, what has Canada built then lost to USA pressures? We had manufacturing and processing businesses. Farmers lost the Pool

elevators and our Canadian Wheat Board, which did an outstanding job of getting maximum dollars from the market and paying farmers. The Foreign Investment Review Board is gone. CBC has been severely cut back and is in need of better funding to find the important news that helps all Canadians. CBC is one of our best innovations. Why does the USA really care about supply management? It is ours and it works for us. Our health care system works for us as does our Canada Pension Plan. There is a long list of corporate demands to which Canada bends too easily. Luckily, Canada did not bend to false science and we did ban the rBGH milk hormone.

The UPOV ‘91 version of Plant Breeders’ Rights has been imposed on Canada by the effort of major corporations that want more farmer dollars via higher seed prices. Right now they plan to limit the varieties you can grow and impose the price you will pay to grow your crops. Farmers can resist this. We already own a great deal of good seed varieties and we can make these seeds work for us. Canada has a great publicly funded plant breeding and crop research effort which has beaten off many diseases and pests. It is under-funded and needs more good people to do the research. Two-legged seed salesmen are the next threat on over-charging us for our seeds. When pushing for a system of End Point Royalties or Trailing Fees, these corporations did not ask farmers if they wanted to pay a very high price for the seeds we already own and can breed for naturally strong pest resistance or other desirable characteristics.

One private Denver-based company owned the Churchill rail line and port but could not make money and would not fix the line. It has now sold this line to a public-private conglomeration. Will the public pay and the private profit? Why not just keep the rail line in public hands, owned by the people of Canada which is how it was intended by those who built the line?

It looks like the trade agreements and other ways Canada has given in to US and corporate demands are setting up colonialism all over again. Instead of trade agreements that give corporations more power and money, we need trade that delivers fair prices and wages and promotes the public interest. ■

NFU raises concerns about Eastern Wheat Class Modernization

The NFU sent the following letter to the Canadian Grain Commissioners on July 27, 2018. It raises concerns that the process and the proposal for a new Eastern wheat class is not consistent with the CGC's mandate to act in the interests of farmers and uphold Canada's grain quality standards.

The National Farmers Union has been participating in the Eastern Wheat Class Modernization consultation process. We have serious concerns and believe that both its process and outcomes to date are contrary to the Canadian Grain Commission's mandate – *to, in the interests of the grain producers, establish and maintain standards of quality for Canadian grain and regulate grain handling in Canada, to ensure a dependable commodity for domestic and export markets.* We believe we need to raise these concerns with you now, and urge you to take action to prevent harm to the integrity of our wheat quality system.

In 2016 the CGC proposed a new class for Canadian Eastern wheat which would have no quality parameters, would require disease and agronomic data and include varieties that do not fit within the parameters of any other Canadian Eastern wheat classes. The NFU submitted a brief to the CGC's consultation on that proposal, held in the spring of 2017. Our concerns were in line with the majority of stakeholders, as reported on the CGC website (grainscanada.gc.ca/consultations/2017/stakeholder-en-17.htm):

The majority of stakeholders were not in favor of developing a Canada Eastern Special Purpose wheat class as proposed. Some stakeholders were concerned that varieties approved for the Canada Eastern Special Purpose class could end up in milling or feed wheat shipments and negatively impact overall wheat quality and the Canada Brand.

Some stakeholders said that the Canada Eastern Special Purpose class could open the door for varieties that fail to meet the quality parameters of the 10 existing classes. These stakeholders said that developing a wheat class with no quality parameters could introduce the potential for market loss, price discounts, and a higher incidence of gluten strength issues.

Stakeholders said that adding a wheat class with no identified direct end-use market does not add value for producers.

As a result of the 2017 consultation, the CGC decided not to proceed with the proposed new Canadian Eastern wheat class and announced it would invite stakeholders to participate in a review and evaluation of the existing Eastern wheat class structure before making any changes. The NFU is participating in this process.

Our first concern is that the majority of stakeholders included in the consultation do not represent grain producers' interests. Of the corporate representatives, four are foreign-owned corporations and three are lobby groups with a strong presence of foreign corporations on their Boards. It is not reasonable to expect the recommendations of these people to be something that is in the interests of grain producers. The discussions and decisions of the consultation to date reflect the undue influence of the vested interests at the table, while farmer concerns have been dismissed or minimized.

Representatives of the following have been involved in the stakeholder meetings:

| CORPORATE | GRAIN PRODUCERS | GOVERNMENT |
|--|---|---|
| Canadian Seed Trade Association – lobby group for seed companies (Cortevia -formerly Dow and DuPont - and C&M Seeds) | National Farmers Union | Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec |
| Canadian National Millers Association – lobby group for milling companies (Archer Daniels Midland) | Producteurs de grains du Québec (JPA affiliate) | Canadian Grain Commission |
| Cereals Canada – elevator and seed company majority (two reps) | Grain Farmers of Ontario | |
| Atlantic Grains Council (PEI Grain Elevators Corporation) | | |
| Canadian Grains and Oilseeds Exporters Association (G3 Grain) | | |
| Ontario Agri Business Association – lobby group for elevators and input companies (London Agricultural Commodities Inc.) | | |

(continued on page 22...)

The proposal now being brought forward involves:

- Elimination of minor wheat classes (CE Red, CEHWW, CESWS, CEHWS)
- Creation of a new class that has no merit requirements
- Moving varieties from the eliminated classes to the new class
- The new class is intended to be sold through Identity Preserved (IP) contracts. If the farmer does not have an IP contract (or presumably, if the contract specs cannot be met) the grain will be sold as Feed.
- The new class will have only one grade – Feed

Our wheat class system is designed to serve our customers by matching end-uses with wheat classes. It provides efficiency for the elevators, as they can sort grain by known class parameters that have value instead of segregating numerous bins based on specifications. It provides farmers with freedom to grow varieties that work on their farm, knowing they will have a market based on the variety's class.

The proposed new merit-less class is not in the interests of producers for many reasons.

It is clear that the new class is wanted by multinational seed companies to allow them to register inferior milling varieties that would otherwise be rejected by the Recommending Committee for failing to meet merit requirements. The proposed class would allow them to sell varieties already developed for, and sold in other markets. Examples CGC staff brought forward as being “impacted” by the current class definitions were Pioneer’s 25W38 (SWW), currently sold in Ohio and Michigan and Dow’s DS572RW (SRW), a UPOV ’91 PBR variety that they would like to bring in to replace Emmit, which is in the public domain and thus royalty-free. It is significant that the implication is these varieties are somehow victims of our quality control system, not that they fall short of our standard.

There would be nothing to prevent grain companies from blending grain from this new class with milling wheat of the existing classes, whether

they purchase it on IP contracts or as feed. The impact on farmers would be lower prices due to increased availability of cheaper wheat for blending.

Blending inferior milling varieties into other classes would also reduce the overall quality of Canada’s wheat in domestic and international markets, which would make our wheat less desirable and thus lower priced.

Canada's wheat quality system gives us a competitive advantage on world markets; diluting the quality of Eastern wheats by creating a supply of inferior wheats for blending will diminish or even eliminate this advantage.

During discussion of the proposed grading schedule it became clear that the CGC expects this new class to be used as milling wheat even when purchased as Feed. CGC staff suggested that the fusarium damage parameter (5%) was perhaps too high for human consumption, even if DON was low, and wondered if there should be grades 1, 2 and 3 of this new class. This indicates that the CGC is considering not only creating a class of inferior milling wheats that would be available for blending with other classes, but is actually looking to facilitate blending by grading to separate out low fusarium-damaged loads.

CGC staff have suggested that registration of inferior milling varieties would provide choice to farmers who want to grow them, and this is in the interests of producers. We disagree, because the impact of these varieties will be system-wide, lowering prices for all growers and diminishing Canada’s reputation for quality. Canada’s wheat quality system gives us a competitive advantage on world markets; diluting the quality of Eastern wheats by creating a supply of inferior wheats for blending will diminish or even eliminate this advantage.

The CGC should not rely on Identify Preserved (IP) contracts to prevent harm to the system, since there is always the possibility that IP grain will be delivered to the elevator if premiums disappear.

(continued on page 23...)

Farmers will end up bearing additional elevation costs that would result from the additional segregation more IP contracts would entail, as well as from failed IP programs when buyers disappear, when grain doesn't meet IP specs, or when yield exceeds contracted volumes. Furthermore, the CGC should not be institutionalizing IP programs. If farmers are compelled to use IP contracts, they become tightly bound to specific buyers, reducing their autonomy, while the buyers increase their power by obtaining intelligence that allows them to pay farmers the lowest feasible price based on expected yields.

We also see this merit-less Canadian Eastern wheat class as a trial balloon for the multinational seed companies' goal of eliminating Canada's wheat class system altogether.

Shifting to a system where wheat is bought on spec alone will put farmers at a disadvantage by eliminating the CGC's role as arbiter in the event of a dispute over grades and weights. Without merit requirements or grading schedules, the buyer has virtually all the power to determine whether a contract has been met, as specs can be highly technical and require lab measurements.

We also see the new class as a trial balloon towards bringing in mandatory variety declaration. The onus will be on farmers to declare the variety if they are delivering varieties of the new class to the elevator as Feed in the absence of an IP contract. Elevators may begin demanding variety declaration to prevent fraud if farmers try to get a better price by delivering into another class, since kernel visual distinguishability is no longer available as a tool. Variety declaration is a puzzle piece that would need to be in place for the implementation of an End Point Royalty collection system, as it would indicate the Plant Breeders Rights status of each load delivered. An EPR system is not in the interests of producers, as we already have effective levies which are allocated by farmer-elected boards to fund desired research purposes.

After the first consultation meeting, a CSTA rep circulated the following input to the group, saying "These comments reflect the view of DuPont Pioneer a wheat variety developer. Although they do not reflect official CSTA policy, I believe other germplasm developers would have similar views."

- 1) *In general DuPont Pioneer does not feel variety registration and restrictive class definitions are in the best interest of the crop production value chain. A nimble, progressive value chain doesn't require either. The food grade soybean industry serves a good example. Such a system enhances value creation through both genetic gain for yield and agronomics and quality.*
- 2) *Given we need to operate in a system of classes we support the creation a special purpose class.*
- 3) *We are of the view that a producer declaration of variety at the point of delivery would allow the grain channel to segregate materials in the system as they see fit.*

We can see by these comments that the proposed new merit-less Canadian Eastern wheat class is aligned with the desires of the seed companies and is not in the interests of producers or the quality of Canadian grain.

Throughout the consultation process, the NFU has raised concerns about the impacts of the proposed new class on wheat prices for farmers, the quality of Canada's grain, and our international reputation. Our concerns were dismissed and minimized by the CGC staff representatives. It increasingly appears that the creation of this new class was a predetermined goal, regardless of negative impacts, and the consultation process was constructed to create a pathway to achieve this goal.

As you reminded Western farmers in the media release dated July 25, 2018, *Grain grading and variety designation changes come into effect on August 1*, the CGC is responsible for establishing and maintaining Canada's grain grading system, it is the federal agency responsible for ensuring grain quality, and its role is to ensure that varieties assigned to wheat classes reflect the end-use functionality needs of buyers of Canadian grain. The CGC's duty is to regulate the grain industry to protect producers' rights and ensure the integrity of grain transactions. We urge you to uphold these responsibilities in regard to Canadian Eastern wheat by halting the creation of a new class with no merit requirements. ■

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