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2018/19 NFU Board of Directors & Advisory Members

Photo: NFU Board of Directors and Advisory members installed at the 49th Annual Convention, Saskatoon, SK, November 2019.

(front row l - r) Cam Goff, Vice President Policy; Stuart Oke, Youth President; Dixie Green, Region 6 Board Member; Ayla Fenton, Region 3 Board Member; Toby Malloy, Women's President. (middle row l - r) Riley Côté-DeMerchant, Region 1 Board Member; Peter Eggers, Region 7 Board Member; Glenn Tait, Region 6 Coordinator; Rachele Ternier, Region 6 Board Member; Katie Ward, National President; Coral Sproule, Women's Vice President; Carina Phillips, Region 1 Women's Advisor; Jessie MacInnis, Youth Vice President; Ian Robson, Region 5 Coordinator; Marcelle Paulin, Region 3 Women's Advisor; (back row l - r) Dean Harder, Region 5 Board Member; Reg Phelan, Region 1 Coordinator; Stewart Wells, Vice President Operations; Seann Dory, Region 8 Coordinator; Glenn Norman, Region 7 Coordinator.

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

Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

A new year has arrived, and with it I have taken up new responsibilities in my role as 1st Vice President – Policy. Along with other members of the Editorial Advisory Committee, some with years of prior experience but others new like myself, we will strive to bring you the information from our organization that will help to guide us in our chosen life's work.

We know that there will be challenges in the year ahead, some familiar, some new, and others simply dressed up in new clothes to try to slip past our notice. Weather, climate change, and political policies (both domestic and international) have the potential to impact our livelihoods. These impacts can range from devastating to subtle and insidious.

The National Farmers Union will do its best to keep us informed about the challenges we face, and how we can work together to bring about solutions that benefit farmers and our world in general. Our publications and outreach are key to keeping our membership up to date on current events, and the Editorial Advisory Committee provides the foundation for that work.

This issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* will focus on our recent National Convention held in Saskatoon and its theme of food sovereignty. We will share the good news on our efforts in this regard, and also outline some challenges that lie ahead. One of these is the renewed thrust by corporate interests to gain control of seed and propagating material worldwide, using agreements such as UPOV '91. Consultations and presentations, facilitated by our federal government, are taking place across Canada as you read this. We urge you all to become involved in this fight in any way that you can – attending and speaking up at meetings, writing to newspapers and politicians, talking to your neighbors, and so on.

Other issues such as climate change and attacks on the Canadian Grain Commission, as well as internal matters of membership development and organizational renewal, will be brought before you as the year passes. We ask for your input and support as the National Farmers Union reaches its 50th anniversary and continues to be the voice for Canada's farmers.

Wishing you a prosperous and productive new year.

—Cam Goff,
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 Katie Ward, National President

It is a bit too easy on a snowy, windy day in the depths of winter to lose track of how quickly things are moving in the world. This past year has seen a whirlwind of developments in a variety of arenas that affect our lives on the farm, and many of them are either national or international in scope. International trade deals have been signed or have come into effect in recent months. We need to understand how these can change the way that we do business and the impact they will have on our neighbours and communities. Intergovernmental relationships and policy goals have shifted across the country with various provincial elections in the last year. This has created some opportunities and challenges on the climate change adaptation and mitigation front.

In conjunction with several citizen's group, we have applied for and were successful in obtaining intervenor status at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal to support the federal government's constitutional right to enact legislation to address climate change. As farmers, we are intimately aware of the impact that climate change is already having on our farms and in our lives. And, we are beginning to get a sense of how catastrophic the results will be if we do not stand up and demand that our governments act in a united fashion on behalf of all citizens from the Atlantic to the Arctic to the Pacific. As with universal health care, our federal government should set the over-arching policy and leave implementation to a regulated minimum standard up to the provinces to ensure that we are all on a level playing field. The principle of federalism, in this instance is a necessity to ensure the good of the many does not get eclipsed for the profit of the few in one particular industry or region.

Major changes are also being proposed to regulations around seed saving and plant breeding. This will be further discussed in this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* and in this and future *Union Farmer Newsletters*. NFU staff and members across the country have been hard at work since early December on analysis of the proposed changes as well as devising an awareness campaign that we will be launching shortly to fight for the preservation of farmer's right to save and stock seed on our farms.

Farmers create value with each growing season. We all know that following different practices on individual

farms, influenced by a myriad of factors that vary wildly from farm to farm, can produce a vastly differing quality of product. Seed industry players received over half a million public dollars to develop a proposed regulatory change that would allow them to capture some of that value created by farmers, without disclosing how they mean to calculate the rates they wish to charge us. There are some pretty glaring holes in the story as it has been told to us so far. We are working on your behalf with allied farm organizations and concerned eaters, to make sure your concerns on this issue land squarely in front of policy makers who should be working on behalf of farmers.

One of the most interesting aspects of this seed debate which has been rousing such passions across the country in the last couple of months is the attempt to use this issue to divide us as farmers – whether that be east versus west, conventional versus organic, or wheat growers versus everybody else. Here in the NFU, we know better. We are stronger when we stand together, and work together to craft a message that resonates with farmers, eaters, and policy makers alike. The creation of value on the farm through the skill, hard work and ingenuity of the farmer, should accrue to the benefit of the farmer. This is the foundation of our agricultural economy, and we must maintain the strength of this foundation to ensure the viability of our rural economy for generations to come.

And speaking of generations to come, I have been watching the development of this year's NFU Youth Convergence with great anticipation. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our youth members and staff who have worked so hard to lay the groundwork for this event. The workshops, training and networking opportunities look very exciting. I would strongly encourage all of you to reach out to any young farmers you know to let them know about this great opportunity for learning and solidarity.

This is the time of year to make our plans and lay the framework for the work we will be doing on your behalf this year, and I would strongly encourage all of you to get involved – whether it is making a phone call or two during our membership drive in February, holding a potluck with your neighbours to hear their concerns or celebrate their successes, joining one of our many policy and event committees, or simply reach out to your Regional, District or Local members, or staff at the national office to keep in touch.

—In Solidarity, Katie Ward

Message from the National Women's President



— by Toby Malloy, Women's President

To begin, I would like to extend greetings and good wishes for the new year to all

NFU members across Canada. As I write this report I am watching a snowy cold afternoon unfold here in Nanton, Alberta, and we are happy to see it as it has been very dry on the prairies. With the holiday season coming to a close, I have been reflecting on what was accomplished at our convention and what the Women's Advisory will be working on in 2019.

I returned from the 2018 convention in Saskatoon as the incoming Women's President and I feel privileged to serve in this role. The NFU embodies an "aliveness" that is made apparent through policies, principles and practices which celebrate and promote solidarity, engagement, thoughtful reflection, critical thinking and respectful dialogue - all made possible by our determination to uphold a genuinely democratic process.

This certainly was illustrated during the Women's Caucus meeting. We had an excellent turnout with women representing every NFU region. Our round table discussion focussed on challenges faced by women in agriculture but also on our best hopes and what members would like to see the Women's Advisory working on in 2019. Contributions included: the importance of creating connection and support; aggrandizing the place of women in agriculture and society overall; food sovereignty; creating more opportunities for eaters to learn from and network with farmers; building relationships between urban and rural citizens; and advancing the NFU's commitment to diversity and inclusion by making more space for the voices of LGBTQ2 members, female migrant farm workers, indigenous women and other women of colour. We talked about the challenges of farming with babies and children, finding accessible and affordable childcare and perceptions about female farmers as well as land

access for women in agriculture. We discussed farm succession, open pollinated seeds, teaching women, getting more kids into the fields and gardens, growing nourishing food in sustainable ways, creating awareness and action in regard to poverty and rural food "deserts" and the importance of addressing mental health concerns related to stress and isolation experienced by farmers.

Annette Desmarais, Canada Research Chair in Human Rights, Social Justice and Food Sovereignty at the University of Manitoba and a long-time NFU member provided an overview of research work undertaken in 2003-2004 on the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF). The NFU women's advisory were instrumental in securing funding to conduct research on what a women's APF would look like, as women had not been invited by the Government of Canada into the consultation process. A participatory consultation process was developed and focus groups were facilitated by members of the advisory. The networking / retreat format included non-NFU women and organizations and resulted in a wealth of data that shaped concrete policy recommendations used in lobbying and also strengthened the bond and sense of solidarity between women involved in agriculture. We hope to revisit the research and use it as a springboard to apply for available grants, organize retreats, engage more women and attract new members as we move towards the NFU's 50th anniversary.

As we move into the new year, I am reminded of Sally Atkin's poem entitled "Tell Me". She said:

"We are all in this story together. Listen: In the silence between, there is music; In the spaces between there is story. Pay attention: We are all listening each other into being."

This year we will continue to *Listen each other into being*. I welcome any questions or comments or if you would like to become involved with the women's advisory and caucus please contact me. We would be delighted to have you join us!

—In Solidarity, Toby Malloy

A Message from the NFU Youth President and NFU Youth



— by Stuart Oke, Youth President

I was happy to return to Saskatoon this past November to attend our National Convention. It is always an exciting and tiring week filled with reunions, debate, decision making and for the National Board, an opportunity to sound out the thoughts and feelings of the assembled delegates and through them the membership they represent. Delegates play an important role in helping to inform your elected board members on the issues which need be prioritized. I had lots of conversations with delegates of all ages this year and it became clear that we need to do a better job in our organization of talking to and learning from each other.

This year the Convention theme was *Unleashing the Power of Food Sovereignty*. A big topic which means many things to different people. We had

presentations on agroecological farms, as well as in-depth discussion around problems arising from Seed Synergy and a look at the work of La Via Campesina (of which the NFU is a founding member) in securing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants.

Food Sovereignty can seem like a fairly academic term and sometimes it can be unclear what connection it has to the day-to-day problems we struggle against. I know some convention attendees questioned why we spent so much time talking about these things in light of the grave issues we face like Seed Synergy, trade deal implementation and climate change. Those issues are without a doubt critically important and need to be addressed. Food sovereignty and the tool of agroecology can be a positive path and language which we will need to learn and use in order to navigate through these issues and the ones on the horizon. Those outside forces in opposition to our goals and advocacy have always sought to divide us and silo us within the issues we care about most because separately we are always easier to manage and silence.

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From March 5 to 8th, 2019 young farmers from all over the country will gather in Ontario for a convergence of young farmers. During this 3-day event participants will network, attend workshops and build connections and skills which will better prepare them for farming in the future. **We will soon be releasing an application form for farmers interested in attending to complete and submit.** The application will be posted on the NFU Facebook page and website, and may already be available by the time you receive and read your *Union Farmer Quarterly*.

2019 Young Farmer Youth Convergence

Thanks to a successful initial crowdfunding campaign we have been able to raise funds which will enable to us the subsidize the travel for young farmers from across the country. That being said **we are still actively seeking funds to help subsidize the travel of even more young farmers.** You can find a link to our crowdfunding campaign on the NFU website and facebook page at the following link:

<http://www.gofundme.com/farm-youth-gathering-2019-nfu>

(A Message from NFU Youth President and NFU Youth, from page 5)

In discussing agroecology and food sovereignty it is easy to see how all our separate issues are connected through common threads.

Food Sovereignty

1. Focuses on food for the people.
2. Values food providers.
3. Localises food systems.
4. Puts control locally.
5. Builds knowledge and skills to be passed on and down.
6. Works with nature.

The six pillars of food sovereignty in many ways include all the issues we face in our work with the NFU. While we will always pursue individual campaigns based on interest, resources, and timeliness I think it is important to remember the degree to which all problems are connected. The more clearly we can see and explain this, the easier we can support each other and stand in unity. As the National Farmers Union heads into its 50th anniversary it is important that we all continue to talk and understand each other's farms, businesses and problems because despite our differences the underlying issues facing many of us have roots in the same place.

—In Solidarity, Stuart Oke



NFU DAYS

FEB. 6 TO 9, 2019 - NFU MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

As part of our **50th Anniversary year**, the NFU wants your participation in our membership drive! We will be focusing our efforts over three days: **February 6 to 9, 2019**. We are asking all members who have a bit of free time to join in from home and invite other farmers to become members of the National Farmers Union.

This is a volunteer-driven event, so every single member who can set aside some time will really make a difference. We can offer you resources, regional connections and training for best practices in contacting others. What better time than our 50th anniversary to engage people about the work the NFU is doing on behalf of farmers across Canada?

We're hard at work across the country on everything from toolkits for farmland access, translating concerns about farm succession into practical actions to suggest to governments, to fighting to preserve farmers rights to save seed. This is your chance to help get that information into the hands of your farming friends and neighbours! Do you want to hold a coffee shop meet-up, farm table potluck, or just pick up the phone and chat with a neighbour? This will be a perfect time to do that.

To get involved in the NFU Days membership drive, e-mail membership@nfu.ca to sign up for outreach training. Members can also use this e-mail address to let us know when you can be available or even suggest people you think should become members and need to get a phone call.

The NFU has a growing database of resources. **Here are just a few things you can get access to by participating:**

- **Canvassing Resources**
- **Policy Resources**
- **An NFU online Town Hall on Feb. 12, 2019, and MUCH MUCH MORE!**
- **Notice of upcoming NFU events in your area**
- **Updates during the NFU Days period**

KEY DATES

- **NFU Training Session: January 30, 2019**
- **NFU Days: Wed. February 6 to Sat. February 9, 2019**
- **NFU Online Town Hall: Feb. 12, 2019 - Everyone welcome!**

Contact membership@nfu.ca to get involved in this national activity.

You have those dates booked up already? No problem, set up another period to contact people, or organize an event in your area after NFU Days – just let us know so we can help put the word out for you. One conversation leads to the next, and one NFU event leads to the next. Looking forward to talking to you soon!

Standing up for Seed Sovereignty

This is the first in a series of reports on presentations at the NFU 49th Annual Convention held in Saskatoon, November 22 to 24, 2018. Other reports will appear in upcoming issues of the *Union Farmer Quarterly*, but with seed issues at the top of the NFU's agenda this year, with the renewed threat to farmers' right to save seed through the *Seed Synergy* initiative, we felt this was the most important report to include in this issue. See the back page of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* for information on how to order a tape of this and other convention presentations and reports.

Terry Boehm is a former NFU president and current chair of the NFU Seed Committee. He farms 4000 acres with his parents 70 kilometres southeast of Saskatoon. On their conventional farm with some organic acres they grow wheat, durum, barley, yellow mustard, flax, canola, peas and lentils. His keen interest in, analyses of and expertise in seed legislation is well known within NFU circles and beyond.

Boehm opened his presentation to members and guests gathered for the 49th Annual Convention by stating, "I am here to talk about a fundamental issue that really encapsulates so much of power and politics in this country." More specifically, he said he was there to speak about an initiative called *Seed Synergy* being put forward by the private seed trade, which fits perfectly within the UPOV '91 Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) regime.

UPOV is the acronym for the *International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants*. UPOV mechanisms started in 1961 in Germany and the Netherlands and since then have slowly increased rights for private plant breeders to the point where 75 countries now have UPOV legislation - 55 under UPOV '91 and the other 20 under less restrictive '78 or '72 versions. Based in Geneva, UPOV produces template legislation for countries to adopt. Canada complied extensively with the template, when we brought our *Plant Breeders Rights Act* under UPOV '91 through Bill C-18 in 2015. With the implementation of UPOV '91 Boehm says, "we've seen a fundamental diminishment of what farmers can do with seed and a transfer of almost all rights to plant breeders/private companies that hire and own these breeders."

Although Canada's current PBR regime provides the optional farmers' privilege, that privilege can be modified, changed or eliminated based on several criteria. For example, Boehm said it can be taken away based on the number of planting cycles or by farm size or by crop kind. This fragile privilege replaces the age-old practice farmers have used for thousands of years of saving, re-using and selling seeds to neighbours and

beyond. Not only has this age-old practice been taken away, it has been criminalized.

“ we've seen a fundamental diminishment of what farmers can do with seed and a transfer of almost all rights to plant breeders/private companies that hire and own these breeders. ”

The *Seed Synergy* initiative is being advanced by the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA). It is comprised of a number of seed organizations—but the biggest players are Dow-Dupont, Monsanto-Bayer and Syngenta-ChemChina. According to Boehm, these players "have convinced farmers and the general public that we have a crisis of funding and we have a crisis of varietal development—we have a public that's out of money and that the only way, the only solution to this crisis, is to give private industry more power—more power to extract revenue from farmers, more power to take over breeding. We need to transfer the wealth of seeds, the heritage of the seeds that has been built up over thousands of years (and only in the last one hundred plus have become more or less a scientific endeavour)—that these activities have to be transferred to the private sector."

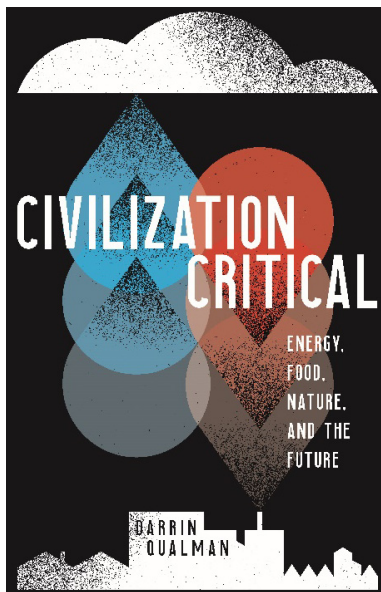
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is currently conducting consultations based on two options put forward by *Seed Synergy* to compensate the private seed sector so that they can address this "crisis". Their two options are *End Point Royalties* (EPRs) and their preference *Trailing Contracts*. The EPR option would require farmers to pay a royalty to the breeder on every bushel of grain produced. The trailing contract

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option would require farmers to pay a royalty on newer varieties when using farm saved seed. The seed synergy players say that they need these royalty payments to develop new varieties but Boehm says the money would be used “perhaps for varietal development, and perhaps not.”

According to Boehm, in the past “the public understood that agriculture was so important to the economy of this country—\$46 billion in sales, \$33 billion from crops—that it made sense for the public to invest in plant breeding to facilitate the well-being of farmers. It was a pretty low-cost investment to generate that kind of return to the economy as a whole.” Boehm says that we are now at a place where we have UPOV, the penalties that go with it as well as the corporate control, and we are presented with the idea that there are no alternatives. But, he says, “there are alternatives—the idea that the system is broken is wrong.” Examples of alternatives include participatory plant breeding and the check-offs that farmers pay to support public plant breeding.

CIVILIZATION CRITICAL



Darrin Qualman was the NFU’s lead researcher from 1996 to 2010.

His new book, **Civilization Critical**, takes readers on a tour of our global mega-civilization—how it’s fuelled, fed, governed, and imperiled.

**AVAILABLE
APRIL 2019**

Watch for details in upcoming issues of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* or go to www.darrinqualman.com

Qualman’s Civilization Critical is a thoughtful and thoroughly documented analysis of the runaway train we are all aboard. Anyone worried about the track ahead should read it. Those not worried should read it more than once.

—Ronald Wright, author of *A Short History of Progress*

The end game, according to Boehm, is to make it habitual for farmers to purchase seed—and if they do not they will not have access to new varieties. In response to a question, Boehm said that the original intent of UPOV was to capture vegetable growers and that they have done that to almost 100 percent, in terms of making it normal to purchase seed. For individual vegetable growers it is convenient to purchase seed and the expenditure is not that much, but when you calculate how much money that means overall, it means a lot to private industry.

“The plan is to move to a point which we’ve seen in many parts of the world where farmers cannot save and re-use seed,” said Boehm, “and this is theft, and theft in the grossest form. We’ve been subjected to propaganda in the grossest form—farmers have been co-opted around the world to think that the only way they can get new varieties and advancement in agriculture is through the private sector.” But, said Boehm, we can stand up and exercise our responsibility as citizens, and say no. A small group of people in 1961 created UPOV, and a small group of us can advance the NFU’s Farmers Seed Act.

The following two resolutions were passed at the 49th Annual Convention:

That the NFU strongly oppose the two royalty options put forward by the Seed Synergy group namely: (1) a trailing contract which would impose new costs on farmers wishing to save and re-use their seed, and (2) an end point royalty whereby farmers would be required to pay a fee on each bushel/tonne produced.

That the NFU encourage check-off funded commodity organizations plus the Western Grains Research Foundation to develop farmer-owned and registered varieties of major crops like wheat, durum, barley, peas and lentils.

—More background and information on the NFU’s extensive work to protect farmers’ right to save seed is available on our website at:

<https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/save-our-seed/>

The NFU’s Fundamental Principles of a Farmers’ Seed Act is posted at:

<https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/save-our-seed/fundamental-principles-of-a-farmers-seed-act/>

Follow the NFU’s Facebook page or keep an eye on the NFU website for updated information and action alerts as the NFU continues to push back at the Seed Synergy proposal and to stand up for the right of farmers to save, re-use and share farm saved seed, through 2019.

La Via Campesina makes history with UN adoption of peasant rights declaration

—by Jessie MacInnis, NFU Youth Vice President

This past December, the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) was formally adopted at the United Nations General Assembly by a final vote of 121 for, 8 against, and 54 abstentions. La Via Campesina (LVC) – the international peasant’s movement of which the NFU is a founding member – was the first social movement to successfully bring such an instrument from the grassroots level to the international arena in this capacity. UNDROP aims to better protect the rights of all rural people including peasants, fisherfolks, nomads, farm workers, and Indigenous people as well as to strengthen food sovereignty, the fight against climate change, and the conservation of biodiversity. Essentially, it serves as a promotion of family farming and peasant agriculture internationally. Globally, because peasants are on the front lines of internal and international conflicts, devastating weather events caused by climate variability and extremes, and natural resource extraction, stronger international instruments of support and rights protection are required. UNDROP serves not only farmers but also rural communities and consumers, given its holistic approach and the fact that peasants produce public services by feeding citizens in the urban areas and maintaining natural resources in a sustainable manner through agroecological systems.

Beginning in the early 2000’s, peasant leaders around the world began formally organizing their concerns into a body of text that would become UNDROP. It was negotiated for six years at the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), where it was approved by a majority vote in April, 2018. From the HRC in Geneva, the Declaration moved across the Atlantic to the Third Committee of the General Assembly – the committee responsible for social, humanitarian and cultural matters. It was at this stage that I had the privilege of representing the NFU and LVC North America in New York. In a final effort to garner support prior to adoption, myself and leaders from Europe, Latin America, and Asia obtained passes to the United Nations and lobbied states for their support of UNDROP. As the only native English speaker



Prior to the final adoption of UNDROP at the United Nations, New York, December 17, 2018. From left to right: Jessie MacInnis (NFU), Eduardo León Peñaranda (First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Bolivia to the UN), Alison Cohen (Senior Director of Programs, WhyHunger), Smita Nerula (Elisabeth Haub School of Law, Pace University).

among us, I was tasked with approaching delegates from what is known as the “other” region: the UK, Australia, United States, New Zealand, Israel, and Canada. It was an uphill battle. I was nearly certain that none of these states would vote in favour – and I was right. The Canadian delegation cordially avoided me throughout my ten days in New York, and in the end, gave these reasons for their abstention:

- Issues identified in UNDROP are addressed through existing international human rights instruments;
- Concern that the Declaration creates new and collective rights not recognized under international law;
- Canada is prioritizing the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) at this time.

The reasons given were not shocking, as the first two were common concerns for the majority of states who declined to support UNDROP. Their first reason was a bit of a stretch – all international human rights instruments build off of existing mechanisms, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the foundation. The concept of collective rights is threatening to neoliberal states that capitalize on

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Celebrate the 50th Anniversary year with us!



The NFU held it's Founding Convention in Winnipeg in 1969.

This year is a celebration of the work that we have done as a unique national farm union over 50 years, using our voice to advocate for fair and just policies that affect farmers and benefit the nation. We're marking 50 years of farmers helping farmers and inspiring local, national and international leaders in the farm movement. **We want to both celebrate and preserve our strong legacy.**

How can YOU get involved?

1. Consider attending the 50th Anniversary Convention being planned for **November 2019**.
2. Volunteer for the Planning Committee, or tell us about some NFU history or memorabilia you can share.
3. Members that want to contribute to historical education projects for inclusion in the Anniversary year celebrations can make **donations to the National Farmers Foundation**. Put "50th Anniversary Project" in the memo line.

Cheques can be mailed to:

National Farmers Foundation, c/o Christina Magill
146-F Clinton Street, Toronto, ON M6G 2Y3

There is also an "Anniversary Fund" option for online donations on CanadaHelps page:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/national-farmers-foundation/>

ALL IDEAS ARE WELCOME!

Pease email nfu50@nfu.ca for any of the items listed above. You can also call the national office at 306-652-9465.

Looking forward to working with all of you to celebrate our NFU achievements in 2019!

***In Solidarity,
The 50th Anniversary Planning Committee***

individualism as a societal framework. I applaud Canada for ratifying UNDRIP, but lament that they fail to recognize the complementary nature of UNDROP.

Bringing UNDROP to the United Nations was a seventeen-year process, but the work is far from over. Now, LVC and its allies will mobilize to support regional and international implementation processes. So, what does implementation look like moving forward? This year LVC will work to create a high profile of the Declaration in the media to promote it and raise awareness among farmers, consumers, and government institutions. In terms of states, like Canada, that abstained or have fundamental issues with the articles of the declaration, there simply is not enough political will to carry peasant rights forward. This means that grassroots lobbying will be vital. We can use democratic instruments at the national level such as referendums and law proposals initiated by MPs who advocate for farmers rights. At the regional and local level, we can work with municipalities and other councils or representative bodies to have our voices heard. Internationally, LVC has a number of strong allies including Bolivia as the chair for the Declaration process, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Hilal Elver, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food. We will need to strengthen the partnerships with these actors. In coordination with Bolivia and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a UNDROP event is being proposed at the High Level Political Forum hosted by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) taking place this July. We also hope to coordinate an international LVC gathering later this year to share region and country specific experiences in order to strengthen the use of the declaration on the ground.

The NFU can play a key role in the implementation of many articles of this declaration, so I want to encourage you to reflect on what human rights we as Canadian farmers enjoy, and what is missing. Who in your community or communities around you is being excluded? How can we as an organization fight for rights that are not equally afforded to everyone? This may seem daunting, but the NFU is already engaged in progressive policy work at the national level. United in the common struggle as farmers, as an organization we have a responsibility to fight for the rights defined by the peasant's rights declaration. Peasant rights are human rights!

—Jessie MacInnis grows mixed vegetables at Waldegrave Farm in Tatamagouche, NS. She has been an NFU member for three years, and is currently the Youth Vice President and Chair of the International Programs Committee.

Climate Change Reflections

—by *julie Enman*

In August 2018, I had the pleasure of joining delegates from several regions of the world at La Via Campesina's (LVC's) Climate Collective meetings in Managua, Nicaragua. Compared to most of the other delegates, most of whom came from *the majority world*, such as Africa, South and Central America and Indonesia, I live quite far north and far, far away. Regardless of the distances separating us, the parallels in the issues we confront were ever present.

As I departed the places I stay in Northern British Columbia and the Yukon, which are in unceded Tishman, Tlingit, and Gitxsan territories, the land around me was suffering from drought and extreme high temperatures. More than 600 wild fires were raging throughout British Columbia, and engulfing everything in their path. The highways leading north were closed, meaning food and other supplies could not enter the territories. Driving inland from the coast, the smoke was so thick that the middle of the day seems night-like. Getting on the plane for Nicaragua all of my clothes carried the scent of forest fire.

With rising temperatures, freeze-frost cycles have been disrupted across the entire country. The mountains develop less snow and reduced ice packs



Visit and celebration at a women's co-operative farm.

which leads to reduced rainfall in the coming seasons and less glacial runoff resulting in low rivers and an impact on the salmon cycle. The salmon cycle is vital to my region as a food which the first peoples and forest regrowth depend upon.

During this time of travel, I was given to pondering the ways in which we perceive and reflect upon climate change. Struggles against the pipelines have largely been painted as an indigenous issue throughout Canada and the United States in the media. This is not entirely true and many from colonizer backgrounds are opposed, and stand in opposition as allies with first nations regardless of the actions of Trudeau and Trump.

That said, it makes it somewhat shocking that LVC North America has not been able to formulate any clear initiatives on climate change, especially when we consider that many of the organizations have some connection to farming. Folks following climate issues know that food production as a whole is so often pointed to as a driver of climate change. Also, Canada and the USA are among the top ten polluters if we look at emissions per capita.

On Turtle Island (North America), we have a great need to connect more, and to be involved in more exchanges within the LVC umbrella and with other groups working on climate change and social justice issues. Additionally, I think because those living in Canada live in a relatively empty part of the world, we tend to view things regionally. Our geographic location isolates us from seeing and really understanding many things, like the refugee crisis.

Even if you cannot be on the front lines, support those who are! Unist'ot'en yin'tah is under threat at this moment.

—julie Enman farms in several spaces on and around the Highway of Tears, and helps folks develop skills they need to work in carpentry. julie has been part of the NFU for 3-4 years now. Support the efforts to STOP SITE C and the land protectors of Unist'ot'en. ACAB.

La Via Campesina's "Managua Declaration" released just after the meeting in August can be found at: <https://viacampesina.org/en/managua-declaration-the-meeting-of-the-broadened-international-collective-on-environmental-and-climate-justice/>



ANNOUNCING THE NEW NFU WEBSITE!

The new improved NFU website was launched in mid-November. It is a custom-designed site that includes all the content from the old site, and adds new features to make it more attractive and accessible on desktop, tablets and smart phones. Here is a tour guide to www.nfu.ca to help you explore.

HOME PAGE:

The main navigation has six primary drop-down menus – **About, Regions, Media, Policy, Publications, and Campaigns** – and four secondary drop-down menus – **Get Involved, Events, Help and Topics** – as well as a **Search** tool. Click on a drop-down menu for the sub-pages in that section. To use the search tool just type a keyword into the blank then click on the magnifying glass icon. The middle section of the home page highlights the most recent media releases, campaign posts, publications and policy briefs. Click on the “see all” link for older material in each category. At the bottom of the home page there is contact information, join and donate links, and social media buttons. To return to the home page click on the logo at the top.

FRENCH:

For French content, click on the FR button above the logo. Professionally translated content is posted when available. Other content is auto-translated. Auto-

translations can be manually edited, so if you notice errors, please contact the national office and we can make corrections.

ONLINE PAYMENTS:

To **join and donate**, click the buttons in the home page banner or click on the “Get Involved” drop-down menu. Fillable forms provide a convenient way to make lump sum or monthly payments.

EVENTS:

If you are organizing an NFU event, please send details to the national office so that your event can be added to the NFU events calendar.

TAGS:

Website items are “tagged” with their topic, type of post, region, campaign, NFU caucus, and so on, where applicable. When you visit an item you can click on its tag, and you will get all other items with the same tag, newest to oldest. All tags are listed under the **Topics** drop-down menu so you can navigate by tag.

To send feedback on the website, email nfu@nfu.ca with "Website" in the subject line.

PEOPLE:

Each Board and Advisory member has their own “card” with their photo and contact information. You can find them in the About Us section and under their own Region. Click on *more info* to get their full biography.

EMAIL LIST SIGN-UP:

Site visitors can subscribe to the NFU email list under the **Get Involved** tab and at the bottom of every Campaign page. New subscribers need to click on the confirmation link sent to their email address to activate their subscription.

PHOTOS:

The new site has lots of photos! We welcome more photos from NFU members. If you would like to contribute some of yours, please contact the national office.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Feel free to share links via social media. The new design is more social-media friendly and will produce more attractive posts.

Seed royalty consultation meetings reveal strong farmer opposition

In November and December 2018 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) held four *Value Creation Stakeholder Engagement Meetings* on two proposed options for imposing royalties on newer varieties of farm saved seed: End Point Royalties or Trailing Contracts. They were testing the waters to see which version would be most acceptable as they prepare to bring in new regulations in February 2020 under the UPOV '91 Plant Breeders Rights Act.

The End Point Royalty approach would require farmers to pay a royalty on their harvested crop (a per bushel royalty) if they grow a newer, UPOV '91 protected variety. The Trailing Contract approach would require farmers to ask the seed company for permission to plant seed saved from a previous crop of a newer variety and make farmers pay them a royalty when using farm saved seed.

The seed industry expects to collect over \$100 million of dollars every year from these compulsory payments. This money would go to seed companies such as Bayer, Syngenta, BASF and DowDupont. The system for charging a royalty on crops harvested from farm saved seed would be developed for wheat first, with the intent of applying it to other cereal crops, pulse crops, and other crop kinds including vegetables and forages later.

There was a strong turnout of farmers, including NFU members, at each of the meetings which were held in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Edmonton. There will be another one in Atlantic Canada in January. An online survey will also be launched in early 2019.

At each meeting AAFC, CFIA's Plant Breeders Rights office, the Grains Value Chain Roundtable co-chairs, and private and public plant breeders all made presentations. They attempted to make a case for imposing royalties on farm saved seed by suggesting there was a crisis in plant breeding for wheat due to a lack of private investment. The evidence provided were charts showing a decline in wheat acres and showing low levels of private investment in cereals compared with corn and canola. In the latter crops, seed companies require farmers to buy new seed every year and pay royalties because the vast majority of seed is either patented GMOs, hybrid or both.

Most farmers at the consultation meetings were strongly opposed to royalties on farm saved seed. They called for continued public plant breeding, and if more money is needed it should be provided by increasing the check-offs to commodity groups.

At the Winnipeg meeting, one farmer told Manitoba Co-operator reporter Alan Dawson that wheat yields on his farm have improved more than canola, and that the decline in total wheat acres has to do with demand, not seed quality. Dawson checked Manitoba crop insurance records and found that since 2008 spring wheat yields increased by 28.6 % while canola yields only went up by 25.2 %. In Saskatoon one farmer mentioned this article and suggested AAFC should be looking at how to bring canola breeding back under the public system.

Most farmers at the consultation meetings were strongly opposed to royalties on farm saved seed. They called for continued public plant breeding, and if more money is needed it should be provided by increasing the check-offs to commodity groups. Some pointed out that farmer investment is also private investment, but AAFC is not recognizing that. Farmer-directed investment in plant breeding is transparent and accountable, but how private companies spend their royalty dollars is confidential business information. AAFC estimates private companies only put 10 – 30% of their royalty revenues into research.

AAFC tried to assure farmers that the federal government intends to continue investing in plant breeding, but would focus on "discovery science." Once promising results were achieved they would look for a private company to bring new varieties to market. Thus the public would pay for years of hard work in development but the private company would be able to register the final product and collect the royalties on it – and on future varieties bred from it.

Farmers raised many other concerns. Why is the government "enabling" giant multinational corporations?

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How might “trailing contracts” be tied to grain delivery contracts, input purchase contracts and the like? What would it mean for seed companies to have detailed information about who planted what variety on which land? Who would end up paying the additional administration costs of a royalty system? If seed companies get what they want this time, what will they go after next?

The last part of each meeting was small group discussions where people at each table were asked to decide which option of the two options they liked best and report back to the room. By Saskatoon, nearly all rejected both options, and called for increased public and farmer levy funding instead. During the report back at the last meeting in Edmonton, NFU Region 7 Board member Peter Eggers said that he called for a show of hands on two questions. The first was, “how many farmers in this room think it should be your right, or at least privilege, to use and reuse your seed without royalties or additional charges?” He reported that almost all hands shot up. His second question was, “Farmers in this room, by show of hands tell me if you like the two proposals presented here today with government-enabled corporate tax on our seed?” Only two hands went up, according to Eggers. In spite of this strong statement, the AAFC representative would not

acknowledge the results, saying votes like this do not really count.

The NFU will continue to stand up for farm saved seed rights. Everyone is encouraged to visit the NFU website at www.nfu.ca/campaigns/save-our-seed/ for more information, including useful materials to share with others.

PODCAST

Canadian farmers may be forced to pay royalties to save and reuse seed

Agriculture Canada recently launched consultations on a model that would make the ancient practice of freely saving and reusing seed illegal. The proposed royalty scheme would force farmers to pay millions of dollars to seed companies every year and make the ancient practice of freely saving and reusing seed illegal. Vancouver Cooperative Radio speaks with Ian Robson, Manitoba Regional Coordinator for the National Farmers Union:

Listen at <https://bit.ly/2Qiw2t>

The National Farmers Union would like to take this opportunity to thank the following Sponsors of the NFU's 49th Annual Convention!



Getting to know our members

As we start a new year, we are once again introducing you to some of the new board members. In this issue of the *Union Farmer Quarterly* we are getting to know a couple of members from the East Coast - Jesse MacInnis, our new Youth Vice President and Riley Côté-DeMerchant, our new Region 1 Board Member.

JESSIE MACINNIS Youth Vice President



Hi everyone! My name is Jessie MacInnis, and I am the new Youth Vice President. This is my third year as an NFU member, and I'm so grateful for the opportunities and feeling of solidarity it provides. I am originally from Halifax but have been primarily living in Tatamagouche since I began farming in 2015. Between farming seasons, I have alternately worked in kitchens and travelled to India twice where I completed my first intensive yoga teacher training.

If you had told me in 2013 that I would be farming today, I likely would have looked at you blankly and been utterly confused. That year I graduated from Mount Allison University with my undergraduate degree in International Relations and Spanish. Geopolitics and sustainable development were always my passions, and I expected I would seek work abroad upon graduation. However, my post-grad life spun me through a cycle of treeplanting in Northern BC and traveling the Americas, where I found myself on a number of small-scale farms. Working with peasant farmers in California and Ecuador, my eyes were opened to a lifestyle and career path that I had never before considered.

In 2015, I was hired as an apprentice by Cammie Harbottle – long-time NFU member and former Youth President – at Waldegrave Farm, where we grow certified organic mixed vegetables for market and a small CSA program. I knew from that first season that farming would play a fundamental role in my life. I was immediately drawn to Cammie's tremendous work

ethic, efficient systems, and commitment to food sovereignty and ecological responsibility. I felt I had found truly meaningful work, something that combined my drive for hard physical labour, environmental stewardship, and tangible political action. It was Cammie who encouraged me to get involved with the National Farmers Union understanding that I, like her, wanted to engage in the struggle for a more just food system on and off the farm. With four seasons under my belt, I'm more excited than ever for my future in farming. I am so inspired by the passionate farmers I have learned from thus far, and look forward to the opportunity to give back to the NFU community. Thanks for all you do, farmers! ■

RILEY CÔTÉ-DEMERCHANT Region 1 Board Member



My wife Chantal and I reside in Summerfield, New Brunswick, in the heart of New Brunswick's potato belt. That being said, we do not grow potatoes, but keep mainly livestock. Our farm consists of around 330 acres of land, 100 acres of fields with then the remainder as forest land in various stages of growth.

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We also rent another 70-100 acres each year for hay production and growing grain.

Currently we have 70 ewes and most of these will start lambing in April, 2019. In 2018 we raised 115 lambs, 25-30 of these are direct marketed with the remainder going to Northumberland Lamb Marketing Coop in Truro, Nova Scotia. Northumberland is a great asset to sheep producers in the three Maritime provinces. Along with the sheep we currently have 14 cow-calf pairs. The cows were purchased to help utilize some extra ground and eat the hay the more selective sheep will not eat. We try to finish and direct market as much beef as we can.

I also do some custom hay work for a few neighbors, mainly round baling and some hay mowing. In our area, as years pass there are generally fewer cows, resulting in fewer balers.

Chantal and I both work off farm in the forest industry and have diplomas in forest technology from the Maritime College of Forest Technology in Fredericton NB. Chantal and I met at Forestry College where among many things we learned how to view nature in a whole new light. Some of my desire to join the NFU has come from my past experiences in the forest industry, which in New Brunswick has many challenges.

We are relatively new members to the NFU, but we share the values and purposes that NFU members accept. Many Canadians take for granted the great country we live in, but many fail to realize that we need to be very mindful of corporate agendas and the comfortable relationships that industry maintains with our public and elected officials. ■

ATTENTION

REGION 5 (MANITOBA) MEMBERS

NFU Region 5 (Manitoba) will be holding their Annual Regional Convention:

**Friday, March 8, 2019
Brandon, Manitoba**

Bring your ag policy and farming concerns to this meeting for discussion.

This is the NFU 50th year and we invite you to make this a celebration!!

Please contact other concerned farmers and invite them to attend.

Watch your mailbox for more details coming soon.

Celebrating



Years !

Reports from First-Time Convention Attendees

The following reports are from the 49th Annual Convention bursary recipients. The Convention Bursary Fund was created in 2016 to encourage new people to participate at National Convention by reducing financial barriers. The fund is entirely funded by voluntary contributions from our members. This year's donors to the bursary fund include: Shannon Storey, Bill Bocock, Stewart Wells, Fritz and Linda Laepple, and NFU Grey County. **The Bursary Fund is accepting donations!** Donations to the bursary fund will help increase participation at future conventions. Those who have attended National Convention know what a rich experience it is. This is your opportunity to provide the opportunity for someone to experience National Convention for the first time! And next year will be a big one, being the 50th anniversary.

—by Brian McMaster, Region 1 (Prince Edward Island)

Although my wife Lorna and I have been NFU members for over 5 years, this was the first time we have attended the National Convention. In spite of the distance, I don't know why we waited so long.

What was most inspiring about the Convention was the democratic process. In a lifetime of meetings, public hearings, and government proceedings, I have rarely seen such commitment to, and depth of knowledge of the process by which we dealt with resolutions to make policy, decide on actions and choose leaders and representatives. I was honored to serve as a delegate for Local 103 and tried hard to absorb the details of debate and carefully weigh in on the votes. It is a credit to the membership and especially those who chaired the sessions that we were able to smoothly, civilly and relatively quickly work our way through so many resolutions on such a wide range of issues.

We arrived early enough to see the screening of *Modified*, a visually beautiful, moving film which educates us on the issue of genetically modified food crops, set against the background of one family's experience and their rich traditions of growing, cooking and eating local food. We found that it fueled many discussions throughout the week.

Other highlights were an after-hours tour of the NFU offices, as we tagged along on (and hopefully assisted with) a search through the extensive archives for material that could be helpful in preparing for the upcoming 50th Anniversary of our Union. Publications, newspaper clippings, and photos from the membership sketched out a picture of solidarity, adaptability and endurance over a number of decades that left me with optimism that together we have the strength to grapple with the serious issues facing farmers today. Further unofficial history lessons were enjoyed later in the pub.

Although I had long known that the NFU represents our interests in Ottawa, attending the Convention brought home how much NFU members support each other in facing the many difficult issues we all contend with. Across many types and sizes of farms, our commitment to the Union brings solidarity that serves us all.

We are grateful to the Convention Bursary Fund and its contributors, and to our Local for the chance to experience the convention, and expect to be more active members over the next year in preparation for attending the 50th Anniversary Convention in 2019. ■

—by Kirsten Livingstone, Region 1 (New Brunswick)

November 2018 was my first time attending the National Farmers Union National Convention. I am grateful to Shannon Storey and Bill Bocock, whose financial contributions helped make it possible for me to attend. I am an NFU member from New Brunswick, where I farm with my husband.

It was wonderful to meet new people at the convention and hear their experiences and views. I even met a couple who had lived within 30 minutes from us about 30 years ago, when we and they were living in the States. That was pretty amazing to have our paths cross and realize that it is a small world, after all!

The national convention was a good experience for me in understanding more about what the NFU does, what it supports, what/who it represents, and how it functions on the national level. Unlike most organizations that we deal with, the NFU is governed largely by democratic concepts, and its members take pride in that as it allows members to voice their concerns and be heard effectively. I am certainly impressed by the work of the predominantly volunteer boards. Many people have put countless hours in over the years to get this organization to where it is after almost 50 years.

At this convention, a lot of focus and energy was put on women's issues, and even more was put on supporting the international peasant movement. I feel that it is essential and wonderful to support and further these causes, and it is awesome that we have the time and resources to do so.

However, I will venture a concern that we not lose sight of supporting our Canadian farmer on issues pertinent to us. We are facing a federal government that is increasingly non-supportive of small businesses and farmers; a food safety organization that is intent on catering to large corporations and seemingly unwilling to address the unique needs and issues of small to medium farms; and an alarming rise in suicides, depression and mental health issues unique to those in the agricultural sector. I feel that the NFU could offer resources in these areas, or at least help lobby the government to address them. I was a little surprised to hear very little discussion on these issues. ■

(continued on page 21...)

Therefore be it resolved....

Resolutions passed at the NFU's 49th Annual Convention
November 22nd to 24th, 2018 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

1. AMICUS BRIEF

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU consider filing an Amicus brief supporting the Federal Government's right to enact policies that will mitigate climate change.

2. SEED SYMPOSIUM

WHEREAS industry organizations have gathered together to pre-plan and push the federal government to make drastic changes to our seed system under the title of "Seed Synergy", and WHEREAS there has been a corporate push for new "value creation" models to be implemented by the federal government in seeds that would cause the prices of seeds to increase for farmers, and

WHEREAS the Federal Government has been slowly reducing its seed research funding dollars;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU explore options for the strategic purpose of organizing a 1 or 2 day seminar on the topic of seeds which would entail topics like: seed research, seed sharing and seed ownership.

3. SEED SYNERGY

WHEREAS an industry-driven group, called "Seed Synergy", is currently pushing a plan to impose new restrictions and costs on farmers that wish to save, re-use, and sell seeds, and; WHEREAS the federal government is currently taking the "Seed Synergy" proposals seriously and holding public consultations on the proposals, and WHEREAS the federal government seems to be withdrawing from public varietal development,

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU strongly oppose the two seed royalty options put forward by the "Seed Synergy" group, namely: 1. a "trailing contract" which would impose new costs on farmers wishing to save and re-use their seed, and 2. an "end point" royalty whereby farmers would be required to pay a fee on each bushel/tonne produced.

4. FARMERS INPUT INTO CPP

WHEREAS Canadian farmers should have the right to fully participate in the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and

WHEREAS a farmer's gross personal income can fluctuate drastically from year to year due to changing environmental and other conditions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU request the Canadian government reform the Canada Pension Plan to give individuals who operate a farm business, *as determined by Government of Canada Income Tax Folio S4-F11-C1, meaning of farming and farming business* the choice to make the maximum allowable annual contribution to their CPP regardless of gross personal income.

5. GREYHOUND/BUS SERVICES

WHEREAS adequate common carrier bus service is essential for the livelihoods and wellbeing of farm families and for sustainable rural development and;

WHEREAS the Saskatchewan Transportation Company has been closed down without any viable successor, and

WHEREAS Greyhound Canada has announced termination of all passenger and freight service in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby for government reinvestment in regional public transit, and, furthermore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU seek opportunities to encourage new Crown, co-operative, and Indigenous organization partnerships to share in promoting, funding, and operating appropriate and innovative regional and interprovincial bus services.

(continued on page 19...)

6. TAX LOOPHOLES

WHEREAS Canadians are subject to a tax system that deprives the Government of Canada of billions of tax dollars, and

WHEREAS Canadians demand that tax loopholes be closed that allow the rich to stockpile billions, and deprive the government of up to 12 billion every year;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that *the NFU urge the Government of Canada* to create a tax system that is fair to everyone, closing tax loopholes that allow major corporations, banks and businesses to move profits off-shore, shelter income with dividend gross- up tax credits, employee stock options and deductions of business entertainment expenses.

7. EGG QUOTA

WHEREAS all egg quota in NB is owned by 17 families and none is available for sale, and

WHEREAS the 199 bird limit makes it impossible to turn a profit;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU engage with provincial marketing boards to advocate to raise the limit of non-quota laying hens on a farm to at least a maximum of 500 birds across the country.

8. LABELLING FOR IMPORTED BEEF

WHEREAS imported beef can be further processed in Canada, and

WHEREAS this imported beef can be legally labelled as made in Canada, and

WHEREAS this label could be misinterpreted as Canadian beef by consumers intending to purchase Canadian beef;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU urge Canadian Food Inspection Agency to make the meaning of labels on imported beef products accurate as to product origin.

9. LOCAL FOOD

WHEREAS local food initiatives help to sustain a new “crop” of farmers, and

WHEREAS local food initiatives have been a key ingredient to “food sovereignty” which the NFU has supported for many years;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the NFU campaign to various forms of governments to support more local food related initiatives.

10. FARMER OWNED VARIETIES

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU encourage check-off funded commodity organizations plus the Western Grains Research Foundation to develop farmer-owned and registered varieties of major crops like wheat, durum, barley, peas and lentils.

11. FARMER’S MARKET BEST PRACTICES

WHEREAS NFU Local 345 has been supporting the Peterborough Regional Farmers Network, a group of local farmers and food advocates in the Peterborough region, in their attempts to reform policy at the Peterborough Saturday Farmers’ Market, and

WHEREAS farmers across the province are subject to unfair practices at long-established regional farmers’ markets, and

WHEREAS direct marketing and access to local markets are crucial to the survival and success of small to medium-scale and start-up farm enterprises, and

WHEREAS there exists no clear and uniform provincial legislation with regards to the definition and governance of regional farmers’ markets and;

WHEREAS farmers’ markets across the province are dealing with issues of transparency similar to those documented in Peterborough by CBC’s Marketplace episode of September 29, 2017 and; WHEREAS the current situation creates confusion for consumers, to the detriment of local farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union:

- 1) Collaborate with consumers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders, to develop policy advocating for a minimum standard for the definition of the term “farmers’ market” wherein a farmers’ market is defined as having 50% plus one farmers and a farmer is defined as selling products they produce themselves and requiring any products not produced on their farms to be accurately labelled as to sourcing;

(continued on page 20...)

- 2) Collaborate with consumers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders, to develop policy advocating for a minimum standard for the governance of farmers' markets across provinces;
- 3) Lobby government to adopt said policies as legislation.

12. SOIL HEALTH

WHEREAS maintaining soil health is crucial to sustainable farms, food and climate systems and,

WHEREAS soil organic matter (SOM) —a key determinant of soil health—is decreasing on much of Canada's farmland, and

WHEREAS SOM is an environmental benefit for all Canadians - those currently living and future generations - that supports ecosystems, water health, human health, and farmland;

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU advocate for Canada (and provinces) to provide concrete supports for farmers to build soil health and minimize soil contamination (such as funding programs, expanded extension services, and clear, objective, and measurable goals for soil health as well as steps for achieving them);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU advocate for provinces to work with conservation authorities and municipalities to set local soil health standards and baselines, and then incentivize farmers who meet them.

13. ANTI-POVERTY AND LIVING WAGE SOLIDARITY

WHEREAS the National Farmers Union has always supported the fair and equitable compensation of farmers and supported the ability of family farms to be economically sustainable, and

WHEREAS we reject any false dichotomy that other people winning means we lose;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Farmers Union visibly engage with and express public solidarity with living-wage and anti-poverty organizations in our locals/regions and at the national level.

14. MITIGATING EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

WHEREAS extreme weather events are becoming increasingly more common, and

WHEREAS extreme weather events such as prolonged drought and heavy rainfalls cause significant infrastructure, financial, and human damage;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the NFU conduct a literature review to investigate actions to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events, and include soil health as a means to reduce the effects of these events.

15. SUPPORT FOR NEW LISKEARD RESEARCH STATION

WHEREAS the NFU is a strong supporter of public research, and

WHEREAS through its SPUD Unit the New Liskeard Research Station undertakes unique research and plant propagation which is critical to the success of berry, potato, garlic and asparagus growers across Ontario , and

WHEREAS organizations like the Berry Growers of Ontario are receiving conflicting messages about the continued operation of the New Liskeard Research Station;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU continue to advocate for and build support for public research by using NFU publications like the UFQ and the Rural Voice to highlight some of the unique work, such as that done by the SPUD Unit at the New Liskeard Research Station, undertaken by various public research stations across Canada to support farmers.

(continued on page 21...)



NFU members participate in an interactive session entitled "Food Sovereignty's Super Powers" at the NFU National Convention in Saskatoon, November 2018.

16. WEED CONTROL USING BINDWEED MITES

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU lobby provincial governments to undertake field bindweed control programs exploring the deployment of bindweed mites.

17. BOARD TRAINING

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Board apply for funds to provide training for board members & new board members with leadership training in mind.

18. INFORMING MEMBERS IN REGIONS 7 AND 8

WHEREAS the boundaries of Region 7 and Region 8 has been adjusted so that the Alberta portion of Region 8 has been added to Region 7, making the boundaries of Region 7 the entirety of Alberta, and Region 8 is limited now the province of British Columbia, and

WHEREAS the numbers of Locals in the NFU traditionally starts with the number of the Region, and

WHEREAS the numbers of Locals in the former Alberta Region 8 area don't conflict with existing locals in Region 7, and

WHEREAS the NFU National Board has decided the appropriate revisions that are necessary;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Region 7 (Alberta) members be informed of the new membership local and district numbers that apply to them in writing. ■

Reports from First-Time Convention Attendees

(continued from page 17)

—by Shanon Zachidniak, Region 6 (Saskatchewan)

I was fortunate to receive a bursary to attend the 2018 NFU convention. Without this bursary, I would not have been able to attend and I greatly appreciate the opportunity. I'd like to send a special shout out to NFU Grey County (in Ontario) for their support of this bursary!

I was a first-time convention attendee and it was very interesting to see NFU members from across the country convene and discuss important issues together. In fact, I was so moved by some of the presenters that I left convention seriously considering how I might be able to purchase a farm! That thought is still in the back of my mind, even though that course of action isn't very feasible for me at this point in my life.

I am also thankful for all of you who farm on a regular basis. I've worked briefly on farms in the past and even though my experience is limited, I know enough to have an appreciation for how demanding, time consuming, and energy intensive farming can be. (I also experienced how rewarding and fulfilling farming can be.) It takes a very dedicated and passionate person to successfully run a farm and the level of commitment it demands cannot be understated. My hat is off to all of you who are running farms and feeding your communities every day.

One thing I found impressive about convention was the diversity represented there. There were members from across the country, a diversity of ages in attendance, both official languages were represented and a variety of topics and viewpoints were presented. I also noticed that attendees were able to respectfully disagree with each other when their viewpoints didn't align.

I'm excited to be a part of the NFU now and looking forward to continued involvement. I hope to be able to come to the next convention and attend even more of the events associated with it. I look forward to watching the NFU continue to evolve and grow and I hope the organization continues to be successful in achieving its goals. Thanks again for such a great opportunity and hope to see you all again soon! ■

The Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing

The National Farmers Union (NFU) would like to congratulate **CHERRY HALCOVITCH**, winner of the Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing. Cherry, 28 years old, is a first generation farmer currently residing in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and working as Community Grower for Roots to Harvest, a youth focused not-for-profit that uses agriculture and food to promote community and connection.

The Beingessner Award is part of the NFU Youth's Campaign for New Farmers, and is given to the authors of the best 500-1000 word essay on agriculture and food issues in Canada. The theme of this year's essay was *What will farming look like for young farmers in 30 years?*

The Beingessner Award is named after Paul Beingessner of Truax, Saskatchewan, who passed away in the spring of 2009 in a tragic farm accident. Paul was born on April 26, 1954, and returned to the family farm after obtaining his BA (Hon) in Psychology in 1976 and working with youth in Regina for a few years. Described as the "god-father of modern shortline railways" by former NFU President Stewart Wells, Paul was instrumental in the founding of Saskatchewan's first shortline railway, Southern Rails Co-operative, and served as general manager from 1991 to 1997. When he left Southern Rails, he stayed on as a board member, and worked with the Ministry of Highways Short Line Advisory Unit supporting other efforts of farmers to start shortline railways. Since 1991, Paul wrote a weekly column on farming and transportation issues with a social justice focus featured in papers across Western Canada. After leaving the government in 1999, his expertise on transportation issues resulted in consulting work across Western Canada and the United States. Beingessner also served as a Sask. Wheat Pool Delegate from 1996 to 1998, was an ardent supporter of the CWB and ran for the position of director in 2008.

—What will farming look like for young farmers in 30 years? —

It is easy to imagine that the next thirty years will look a lot like the headlines of today. Power and wealth will continue to consolidate, governments and private interests will blur together, and the poor and common people will have their share of prosperity whittled down to splinters. We have seen a steady downward trend in the number of people farming, an alarming rise in the corporate share of agriculture, and abuses of farmers internationally and here at home. But the future of young farmers looks more promising than it first appears, for two reasons primarily.

First, the untold or less-proclaimed stories of triumph. In the last three decades the wins in agriculture include the CSA farm model entering the mainstream; programs like Farmstart, the CRAFT network and Young Agrarians; and the many extraordinary farms that have been born from nothing more than a corner of disused pasture and a



Cherry Halcovitch

lot of sweat. These stories are not over – they are becoming more and more common as emerging farmers find success, and three decades from now we will celebrate more wins just like these.

Second is the fact that the technological revolution is advancing exponentially faster than any era before. Societies all over the world are being catapulted forward, and struggling to reconcile the present with the institutions of the past. This presents an unstable path forward, but in that uncertainty lies the opportunity to

preserve a piece of something simpler. It will be the young farmer's burden to carry on the work of their predecessors while the landscape around them takes new and strange forms. In thirty years from now, the world will be hotter than it has been in recorded history, weather patterns more unpredictable than ever, pests, diseases, parasites all diverged from their

(continued on page 23...)

old habits. Big business will loom tall over the small farm owners and operators. And those businesses will be leveraging GM crops, independent AI tractors, and unforeseeable new technologies to drive their competitive edge. Meanwhile, young farmers can find an answer by combining history with innovation and intention.

Eaters will continue to seek out community, connection and authenticity. They will find none in the world of corporate agriculture. It is up to the next wave of farmers to capture the market of those who want their food to come from a good place: from a family like their family, or a person like themselves. The CSA model called up something that was lost. Two generations before the CSA became commonplace, most people had a farmer in their family. Agriculture was familiar and commonplace. And the alienation that grocery store shoppers felt in the second half of the twentieth century, when many of these family farmers had disappeared, gave rise to community supported agriculture. Consumers demanded to connect with producers once more. Maintaining a human

connection will be an indispensable part of the new farmer's survival, as it has been for some time now.

However, technology cannot be ignored. It will have its place in the toolbox. But young farmers starting out will have to be discerning in selecting technology that serves them and their goals. They will choose innovations that bring them closer to their land and closer to their customers. "Bad tech" imposes unwarranted disassociation from the land and the work.

Farmers have always been innovative and resourceful, by necessity. No one can survive in farming without learning to roll with the many punches that every season has in store. As the years tick on, young farmers will have to draw on those qualities to find the niches and margins that allow them to capture the attention of eaters. Farming as an overall industry will be invisible to many, as it is now. But farmers will find success by being sincere and upfront in a way that a corporation never can.

—Cherry Halcovitch (age 28)
Thunder Bay, Ontario

We Remember



BRENDAN FLOOD

Members of the National Farmers Union in Prince Edward Island were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of long-time NFU member, **Brendan Flood** on October 30, 2018. Brendan was born in 1926 on the family farm in South Melville, PEI. Earlier on in life, he took a carpentry course in Charlottetown and worked at this occupation just long enough to purchase a farm of his own in South Melville.

Brendan was a farmer through and through. Farming was his lifelong passion. He took great care of his livestock and the land in his care. He knew how to nourish and protect the soil - he was a great steward of the land.

Even at 92 years of age, he kept up to date on happenings in the agricultural community. Just days before his passing, he expressed great concern about the US, Canada and Mexico trade agreement and its impact on dairy farmers and those in other supply managed commodities.

Brendan attended almost all NFU meetings and was even able to take part in our District Convention in April 2018. He never was bashful about saying what was on his mind. It is safe to say there would not be one Minister of Agriculture in PEI who was not "straightened out" by Brendan - and usually rightfully so. During one of our demonstrations at the Provincial Legislature, Brendan asked the youthful Premier of the day if he had eaten breakfast that day, and if so, he (the Premier) better do something to help the farmers. He was a great supporter of the family farm and of the National Farmers Union.

His well attended funeral was held on November 2, 2018 and he was tenderly laid to rest in St. Joseph's Parish Cemetery, Kelly's Cross - just a short distance from the farm he loved.

Sincere sympathy is expressed to his wife Barbara, his step-children, nieces and nephews and other family members.

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