

# NFU HISTORY in the MAKING



Celebrating 50 years  
of fighting for fairness



**1969-2019**



## Introduction

The NFU is a voluntary direct-membership, non-partisan national farm organization made up of thousands of farm families from across Canada who produce a wide variety of commodities, including grains, livestock, fruits and vegetables. The NFU is the only Canadian farm organization incorporated by an Act of Parliament. Founded in 1969, the NFU's roots go back more than a century. NFU members reflect the diversity of production systems, farm sizes and farmer demographics across the country. We promote food sovereignty, which is a holistic approach that puts people, food and nature in the centre of the policy picture, and makes democratic control of the food system its priority.

The NFU promotes policies that will maintain family farms as the primary food-producers in Canada. The NFU believes agriculture should be economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable, and that food production should lead to healthy food for people, enriched soils, a more beautiful countryside, jobs for non-farmers, thriving rural communities, and biodiverse natural ecosystems. The NFU is a leader in articulating the interests of Canada's family farms, in analyzing the farm income crisis, and in proposing affordable, balanced, and innovative solutions that benefit all citizens. NFU policy positions are developed through a democratic process via debate and voting on resolutions at regional and national conventions, as governed by our Constitution.

**In 2019 NFU members are celebrating 50 years of accomplishments, reflecting on our struggles and renewing our commitment to building a better world for the farmers of today and tomorrow.**

## Objectives

The NFU's objectives, as stated in the incorporation Act of Parliament, are:

- A** To promote the betterment of farmers in the attainment of their economic and social goals;
- B** To conduct projects for the benefit of farmers in the development of markets for, and the marketing of, farm products;
- C** To achieve the reduction of costs and other measures designed to increase the economic benefits of farming;
- D** To conduct educational and research projects for the benefit of farmers;
- E** To promote and secure legislation and other forms of government action for the benefit of farmers;
- F** To promote a higher standard of community in agriculture;
- G** To provide services for its members consistent with its objects and work jointly with any other persons or organizations for the attainment of its objects.



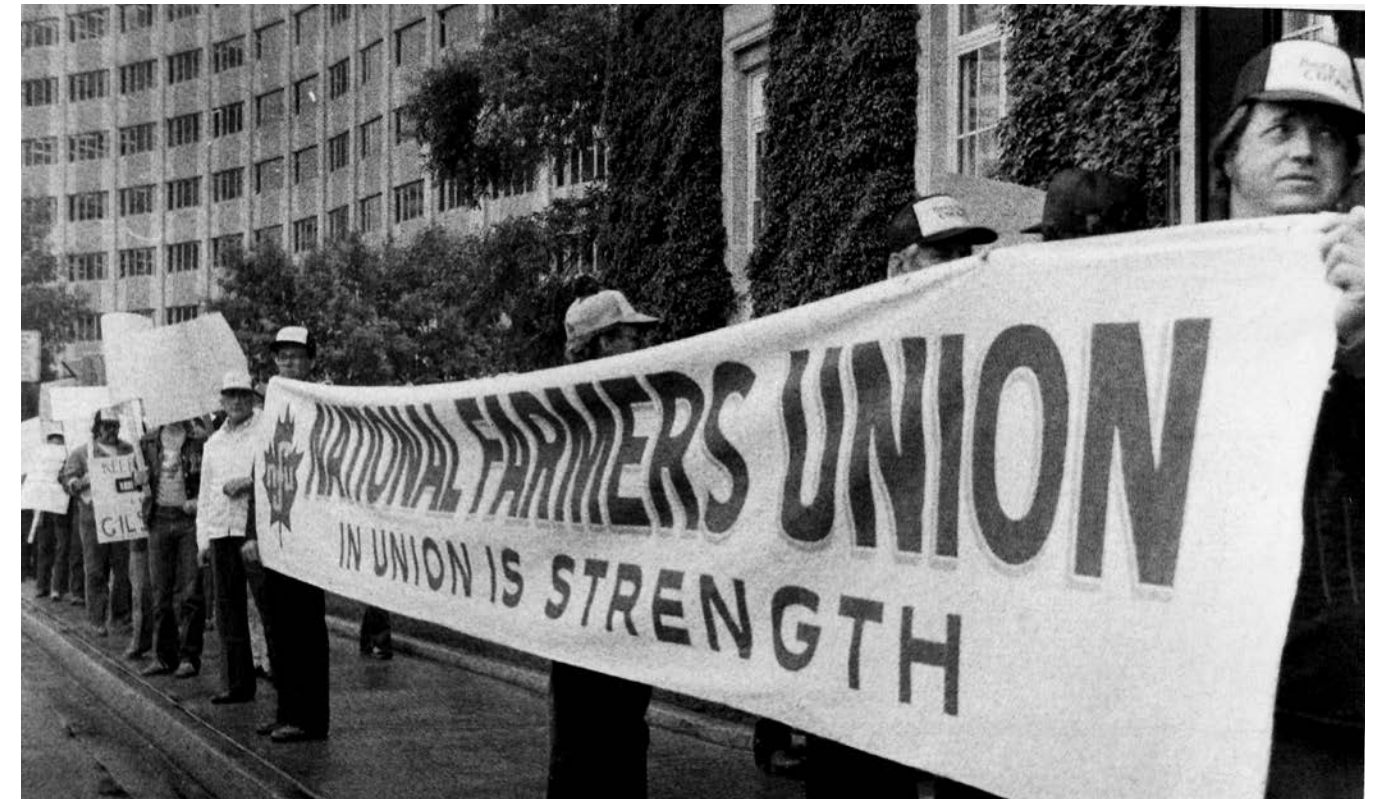
## Founding

The NFU was formed in 1969 through a merger of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, the Ontario Farmers Union, the Farmers Union of British Columbia, and the Farmers Union of Alberta. In addition to these provincial unions, farmers from the Maritime provinces who were not organized into farmers' unions at the time also became part of the NFU structure.

Prior to '69, these provincial unions each had worked autonomously in its respective province, but increasingly were finding themselves at a disadvantage in attempting to work with the federal government. In an effort to solve that problem, the unions created a coordinating body, the National Farmers Union Council, consisting of representatives of the executives of each provincial union and representatives from the Maritime provinces.

Over time, the officials and members from the provincial unions and the Maritimes realized that the major policy decisions affecting farmers were being made at the federal level. At a joint meeting of the executives of the provincial unions and others in Winnipeg in March 1968, the executive members passed a motion to strike a committee to develop a constitution for a direct membership national farm organization.

The founding convention of the National Farmers Union was held in Winnipeg in July 1969. In the following months the provincial unions were phased out and their assets and liabilities transferred to the national organization.



*NFU demonstration to Keep the Crow, Regina, Saskatchewan, 1982.*



# SELECTED NFU ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



## Pre-1969

Co-operative grain handling was first promoted by farmers' unions in the 1920s, leading to the formation of farmer-owned grain handling cooperatives in the prairie provinces.

The Saskatchewan Farmers Union (SFU) and other provincial farmers' unions pushed for federal interest-free cash advances on stored grain (the SFU first passed resolutions on this in 1951). Federal legislation was passed to implement the policy in 1957.

Locals in Ontario (the Leamington/Essex Local, for instance) and others across the country were engaged in collective bargaining for fertilizer and other products.

In 1954, the SFU began to promote the idea of a crop insurance program. Saskatchewan Crop Insurance was first available province-wide in 1973.



*Saskatchewan Farmers Union (SFU) leadership, early 1950s.*

Farmers' unions pushed for increased farmer market power; this led to the creation of the federal Agricultural Stabilization Board in 1958.

NFU precursor organizations in several provinces led movements to create supply-management systems for dairy products, poultry, and eggs. The Canadian Dairy Commission was established in 1966.

In the fall and winter of 1967, Farmers Union of BC members surveyed and built their own 35-mile road from Golata Creek to Baldonnel (near Fort St. John, in the heavily forested Peace River area). Farmers and local businesses financed the road and constructed it using volunteer labour and donated equipment.



Throughout the 1960s, provincial farmers' unions lobbied for a two-price wheat system. The resulting federal policy, which set a floor and a ceiling price for domestic millers, was introduced in 1971 and lasted until its 1989 termination (a casualty of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement).

In 1967, working with the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs of Quebec and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Farmers Union organized one of the largest demonstrations ever on Parliament Hill—20,000 Ontario and Quebec farmers.

## 1969

Creation of the NFU in 1969 enabled farm families to directly join a national farm organization that spoke on their behalf and which advocated policies at the national level.

2,000 people attended the founding convention in Winnipeg.

After some debate during the drafting of the NFU Constitution, it was decided that the organization would have a Women's President position to ensure more balanced representation and leadership development (some of the precursor provincial farmers' unions had Women's Presidents).

The NFU obtained an agreement with longshoremen to load grain during the Vancouver port strike.



*Roy Atkinson presenting NFU Membership Card Number 1 to Alfred Neiforth of Hants County, Nova Scotia, in 1969.*

Ontario NFU members in Lees, Essex, and Kent counties and other farmers withheld property taxes, protesting education funding from farm land. Their activities led to a 25% rebate on taxes, and later a 50% rebate.

## 1970

The NFU took a lead role in exposing and critiquing the 1969 federal Task Force Report on Agriculture. The NFU denounced the basic philosophy of the report, which proposed a two-thirds reduction in the number of family farmers nationally.

2,000 farmers marched on the Alberta Legislature; 7,500 marched in Regina; and 2,800 marched in a Winnipeg parade to the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) offices demonstrating support for orderly marketing.

To protest low egg prices, 200 farmers rallied at the Alberta Legislature and gave away 2,000 dozen eggs.

1,600 Ontario farmers picketed Borden Milk in Ingersoll, Ontario (other pickets marched in Belmont, Cornwall, and Peterborough), protesting imported milk powder and threatening a nation-wide boycott. The pickets were shut down by injunction on June 30. NFU Vice-President Walter Miller led negotiations with the company and secured an agreement that milk imports would stop.

The NFU Local in Leamington began collective bargaining for the purchase of vegetable containers.

NFU District 1, Region 1 (PEI) began collective bargaining for the purchase of petroleum and fertilizer.

Peace River farmers picketed elevators and withheld delivery of fescue, protesting near giveaway prices. Sixteen months of withholding fescue (until 1971) paid off when the NFU bargaining committee signed a contract for higher prices with a seed company in Beaverlodge, Alberta.

## 1971

1,200 NFU members marched on the PEI Legislature, effectively causing the demise of the then-pending Act to Prohibit Public Gatherings.



At the request of Prime Minister Trudeau, the NFU Board met with the Federal Cabinet Committee to discuss legislation affecting farming.

The NFU opposed Bill C-176 (Natural Farm Products Marketing Act) as proposed; also Bill C-244 (Prairie Grain Income Stabilization Act). Both bills were later withdrawn.

NFU president Roy Atkinson was arrested during a massive tractor blockade protesting the PEI government's refusal to meet with the NFU to discuss proposals for tax-free farm fuel, low-interest loans, and legislation to stop corporate encroachment into farming. A turning point in provincial farm politics was achieved when the blockade forced the PEI government to enter into talks with the NFU.

In an effort to gain the right to bargain collectively for milk prices, the NFU initiated a boycott of Kraft after Kraft refused to meet. The boycott was supported by labour and urban groups and succeeded in raising awareness and education about problems faced by family farmers.

To focus attention on low hog prices, 3,500 western farmers demonstrated with hog cavalcades in three prairie capitals. Farmers—many of them women—conducted information pickets at supermarkets.

The NFU put forward proposals for a "land bank" to ease inter-generational land transfers. (The Saskatchewan government implemented a Land Bank in 1973, and the program operated until 1983.)



NFU Youth Exchange, 1971.

## 1972

The NFU in New Brunswick negotiated a deal with the federally appointed Potato Stabilization Board to ensure that farmers would receive fair prices for potatoes.

The NFU sponsored joint western provincial meetings on feed grains and urged provinces to integrate feed grain marketing under the CWB.

The NFU presented land use briefs to the governments of PEI and Saskatchewan.

The NFU Task Force on Grains Policy held 40 hearings and received 350 submissions.

Submissions were made in the Maritimes on potato marketing and stability. A vote in PEI showed 64% of potato producers favoured the NFU potato marketing plan. While the PEI government went ahead

and established the Agricultural Products Marketing Act, the government called for a second vote regarding the marketing plan.

The NFU President questioned use of DES (diethylstilbestrol) as a livestock growth stimulant, resulting in a ban on its use.

In Manitoba, NFU collective bargaining committee members exposed evidence of price fixing by fertilizer manufacturers. (In response, the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs launched an investigation in May of 1973.)

## 1973

An NFU brief presented to the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council criticized contracting practices of processing companies and market dominance by Safeway (whose expansion was later limited by Alberta provincial courts).



Removal of domestic feed grain pricing from CWB regulation was vigorously opposed by the NFU, who warned of the far-reaching consequences of such a removal.

The NFU successfully countered moves by the railways to end the statutory Crow Rate.

A proposal for certified collective bargaining rights was taken to governments in all provinces where the NFU was organized. PEI enacted legislation enabling producers to vote on the NFU's proposed potato marketing plan. In the face of well-funded industry lobbying, producers turned down the plan by the small margin of 45% to 55%.

NFU youth exchanges throughout the 1970s each year involved as many as 300 youth from across the country. Youth stayed with host families in other parts of Canada and participated in educational and leadership workshops. The 1973 exchange involved 365 participants.

An NFU National Farm Women's Conference was held in Saskatoon—the first assembly of its kind in Canada.

NFU women provided leadership in the struggle for matrimonial property rights for women. High-profile court cases such as that of Irene Murdoch in Alberta in 1973 created momentum for change. The NFU was heavily involved in providing input on matrimonial property rights to provincial governments in 1977 through '79. These efforts led to the creation of the Matrimonial Property Act in 1980 in Saskatchewan, and similar acts in other provinces.

The NFU advocated orderly marketing agencies for livestock, resulting in cattle and hog stabilization boards in several provinces. Hog marketing boards were established in Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1973.

The NFU provided leadership in the creation of a producer-owned fine seeds cleaning plant in Rycroft, Alberta in the early 1970s.

## 1974

An NFU contingent attended the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) conference in Australia. NFU reps included Katie Van Ekris, Winifred Miller, Elva Kerr, Margaret Hayward, Dolores Shadd, Kay Rimer, Pat Reinders, and Women's President Evelyn Potter.

Further undermining of orderly marketing of feed grains was strongly opposed by the NFU. A Saskatchewan plebiscite of more than 40,000 farmers showed 93% wanted feed grains under the CWB; similar results were obtained in Manitoba.

In a meeting with the Canadian Dairy Commission, the NFU proposed that the level of subsidy payments be indexed to the cost of production.

Alberta NFU members pressured the provincial government for aid to farmers with unharvested crops, resulting in \$26 million in assistance.

2,000 farmers marched on the legislature in Edmonton to protest a meat packers' lockout.

The NFU undertook Operation Country Mouse: occupation of federal agriculture buildings in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina, and Edmonton, to dramatize the beef producers' income crisis.

As a result of a favourable vote among PEI producers of cole crops (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and related crops), the NFU became the collective bargaining agent for these growers.



Darlene Henderson, Wayne Easter, Pierre Trudeau, Ted Strain and Hazen Argue.



Blake Sanford, NFU tent, 1974 Plowing Match.

## 1975

1,000 farmers converged on Parliament Hill to protest the plight of dairy producers; farmers were greeted by metal barricades and massive security.

The NFU met with a committee of MPs and the federal cabinet headed by Prime Minister Trudeau.

NFU Region 8 (the Alberta and BC Peace River area) farmers expressed public concern over potential flooding of farmland by proposed BC Hydro dams.

200 people demonstrated on the "Syncrude Highway" (demonstrations escalated to over 20 highway locations). The

demonstrations culminated in a mass meeting of 1,000, who decided to pitch tents on the Alberta Legislature grounds to focus public attention on the beef producers' crisis.

## 1976

Six fertilizer manufacturing companies were charged under the Combines Investigation Branch in an action that stemmed from 1972 investigations by NFU Local 523.

300 NB farmers protested government inaction over potato growers' grievances by demonstrating on the Trans-Canada Highway at Grand Falls and giving away 5,000 bags of potatoes to focus public attention.

150 Peace River area farmers trekked to Victoria to meet with the provincial government on the question of farmers' collective bargaining rights.

The NFU undertook a massive phone-in lobby of MPs to draw attention to the cattle price crisis.

In 1973, NFU women under the leadership of Evelyn Potter undertook a major book project detailing the Canadian food system from field to table. The resulting book, *Nature Feeds Us*, was published in 1976. It was a best-seller and helped educate Canadians from coast to coast.

## 1977

The NFU successfully opposed a proposal for per-bushel funding check-off on grain sales to fund research, protested an arbitrary increase in maximum tariff charges by the Canadian Grain Commission, and demanded the plebiscite on feed grains marketing promised by Otto Lang.

The major Hall Commission recommendations were endorsed by the NFU. Six weeks later, the federal government formed the Prairie Rail Action Committee (PRAC), contrary to Hall's recommendations. The NFU was very critical of this move.

In Saskatoon, the NFU picketed a transportation meeting called by Otto Lang.



The NFU pressed the federal government to increase market share quotas for milk and to increase support prices. The government responded to the pressure in 1977 by raising support prices by 56 cents per hundredweight and increasing market share quotas.

After years of NFU pressure, the federal government introduced a cow-calf stabilization program in 1977.

## 1978

The NFU protested "switching"—grain company paper-trading of Wheat Board and non-Board feedgrain from one location to another; the CWB announced an end to the practice in October.



NFU highway blockade, Grand Falls, New Brunswick.

Peace Country protest against hydro dam, 1970s.





In Manitoba, the NFU opposed a per-head beef check-off.

By blockading the Trans-Canada Highway at Grand Falls, NB, the NFU protested depressed potato prices. PEI members demonstrated in solidarity.

The NFU's operation "Sky Spy"—NFU officials using light planes to locate railway grain cars—revealed evidence contradicting railways' claims of boxcar shortage. The railways committed to repair 2,000 boxcars.

150 NFU members lobbied the Manitoba government on land policy, Matrimonial Property, and a beef check-off.

Region 6 members conducted an informational picket at the official opening of a Cargill elevator at Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

The NFU gave support to the People's Food Commission, which subsequently held hearings in 65 communities across Canada and issued a groundbreaking report on the need for an environmentally sustainable and healthy food system based on justice for family farmers.

## 1979

NFU President Jim Mayne debated federal Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan on Plant Breeders' Rights legislation.

The NFU initiated a class action suit against CP and CN railways, alleging non-performance and seeking to

recover damages resulting from lost grain sales. While the lawsuit was not successful in court, it raised awareness and forced the railways to provide better service.

NFU Ontario members donated three tons of food to striking miners and their families at INCO in Sudbury.

The NFU was the only major farm group to lobby against Plant Breeders' Rights legislation when it was introduced in 1979.

## 1980

The NFU brought together 300 members and representatives of railway and grain handling unions in Saskatoon. The conference adopted a policy advocating retention of the Crow Rate and an end to railway centralization.

The NFU took a strong stand against the concept of negotiable quotas for industrial milk in its presentation to the Canadian Dairy Commission.

Plant Breeders' Rights legislation was introduced in the House of Commons; opposition to the bill from the NFU and other organizations slowed progress on the legislation and it died on the Order Paper.

The NFU-organized a leadership skills workshop for women was held in Saskatoon. The seminar explored women's contributions to the farm economy, the role of women in the NFU, and the challenges facing NFU women.

## 1981

Approximately 200 farmers participated in the "Crow Train" to Ottawa. Western farmers were joined by colleagues from Ontario and the Maritimes to lobby politicians to retain the Crow Rate. The NFU deployed in fifty groups of four members each. NFU members and officials met with Ministers Pepin, Argue, Whelan, Olson, and Axworthy, and with other MPs. NFU members in four western provinces organized similarly-timed provincial lobbies.

The Federal Court of Appeal dismissed the NFU's Class Action against CP and CN. NFU officials pointed out, however, that the threat of the class action had stimulated the railways to increase efforts to move grain.

The Federal government agreed to pay \$81 million in compensation to farmers for losses during the grain embargo of the Soviet Union. In 1980, the NFU had strongly opposed the US-sponsored embargo.

The NFU documented the degree of corporate concentration in the NB economy, and called for supply management for potatoes.

The NFU established a Working Committee to study the effects of agricultural chemicals.

The NFU initiated the Employment Practices of Farm Women study to document the contribution of all farm family members to farm operations.



1,800 farmers and supporters attended a massive "Keep the Crow" rally in Regina. Statements of support for the NFU position were heard from a variety of organizations.

NFU members joined 80,000 people in a Canadian Labour Congress-sponsored Ottawa rally to protest the federal government's high interest rate policy. NFU Vice-President Wayne Easter addressed the crowd.

NFU President Ted Strain attended the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) meeting in Rome as an advisor to the Canadian delegation.

## 1982

Federal Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin outlined government plans to

abolish the Crow Rate in Winnipeg. NFU members demonstrated at a rally in Delisle, Saskatchewan, where approximately 1,300 farmers showed up to condemn Pepin's plan. Pepin responded that farmers "were not entitled to be upset."

The NFU lobbied politicians in Ottawa for orderly marketing of red meats.

350 farmers protested the visit of federal Transport Minister Pepin to Regina. Pepin attempted to convince journalists that a "consensus" existed among western farmers to abolish the Crow Rate.

In Regina, 600 farmers protested the abolition of Saskatchewan's Land Bank.

The NFU played a key role in creating Saskatchewan's Beef Stabilization program.

## 1983

NFU members in NB donated 22 tons of potatoes to unemployed workers in the Mirimachi district.

Transport Minister Pepin outlined the federal strategy to kill the Crow. The NFU organized massive protests in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, and Edmonton. NFU President Easter called for a common front on the Crow. Walkie-talkie-coordinated NFU members cornered Pepin behind a Saskatoon hotel and gave him a personal briefing on the intensity of farmers' opposition to Crow Rate changes.

The NFU urged passage of Bill C-653, the Farmers' and Creditors' Arrangement Act, designed to aid financially strapped farmers.

The NFU undertook a massive phone-in lobby as federal Transport Minister Pepin introduced Bill C-155, legislation to abolish the Crow Rate.

NFU officials, along with members of the Farm Survival Association, met with the federal government over the need to implement Bill C-653.

The House of Commons Transport Committee began hearings on Bill C-155. NFU members made presentations at every hearing across Canada.

NFU members in Ontario urged provincial and federal governments to implement an orderly marketing system for red meats.



Wooden Crow petitions.



The NFU established a Farm Financial Crisis Committee to aid farmers facing financial distress.

The NFU and other PEI farmers scored a victory when the provincial government enacted the Lands Protection Act, limiting PEI land ownership by individuals to 1,000 acres (3,000 acres for corporations). Intense work by NFU members has since kept these limits in place.

## 1984

The NFU took the Canadian Transport Commission to court over freight rate increases.

NFU members participated in a farm gate defence action in Virden, Manitoba.

Ontario NFU members presented briefs to provincial hearings outlining the need for basic changes in the marketing system for red meats.

The NFU initiated a massive educational campaign regarding imitation dairy products.

NFU members in New Brunswick helped organize shipments of potatoes to farmers in Nicaragua.

CN Rail and the Cargill Grain Company tried to introduce variable rates in grain movement. The NFU rallied opposition to the move, and CN later withdrew its application.

A farm gate defence action at the MacPhail farm outside Charlottetown during the NFU Convention paid off; the efforts of

NFU members from across Canada helped keep the family on their land.

The NFU undertook the first of several Canadian Caribbean Youth Exchanges, in co-operation with Canadian Crossroads International.

## 1985

NFU members presented a brief to the NB government detailing problems and solutions in the farm economy. The NFU called for a Canadian Potato Commission and a National Meat Authority.

Agriculture: A Realistic Opportunity, an initiative detailing family farm transfers, was the priority project of the NFU youth.

The NFU presented a brief to PEI's government opposing Cavandish Farm's application to purchase additional farmland. The

government subsequently rejected the Cavandish application and instructed the company to divest itself of its land over the established limit of 3,000 acres.

The NFU presented a brief to the BC government detailing the farm finance crisis, the extent of foreign ownership of the Peace River country, and the need for soil conservation measures.

NFU representatives attended the founding convention of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).

The NFU presented a brief outlining farmers' opposition to "free trade" with the US to the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations. The NFU pointed out that such a plan would undermine essential orderly marketing systems.

PEI members joined striking dairy workers on picket lines at Perfection Foods.



Youth President Kim Korven speaks at Regina Legislature, 1985.



NFU members participated in a drought-relief rally at the Regina Legislature. Youth President Kim Korven was a featured speaker.

NFU and Oxfam Canada announced the "Brigade to Nicaragua," in co-operation with Nicaragua's UNAG. The Brigades involved Canadian farmers travelling to Nicaragua to provide technical and other assistance to farmers in that country.

NFU Women's President Elaine Driver was a delegate at Forum 85 in Nairobi—a conference run parallel to the UN conference on the status of women.

Region 1 Coordinator Gordon Vessey delivered a brief to the NB government linking soil erosion to "a broader failure of our agriculture system."

## 1986

To draw attention to the continuing farm crisis, NFU members across the country occupied several Farm Credit Corporation offices.

NFU members staged a demonstration in support of deficiency payments at a Saskatoon reception for Prime Minister Mulroney in July. The government announced on October 3 that \$1 billion would be made available to cover the grain income shortfall of Canadian farmers.

In March, the NFU was represented at a large anti-free trade rally held in Massey Hall, Toronto. President Wayne Easter addressed the crowd.



Gil Pedersen, soup kitchen protest, 1986.

The NFU submission to the Canadian Dairy Commission warned that the proposed Canada-US Free Trade Agreement would be detrimental to Canada's dairy industry.

Ontario members picketed Maple Leaf Mills in Windsor to protest imports of cheap US corn.

22 young farmers—half from Canada and half from Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenada—met in Feudal, Saskatchewan.

After much hard work by NFU members, the National Farmers Foundation was founded. The NFF is a non-profit, charitable organization that works to organize and implement programs of education and research on the development of rural Canada.

## 1987

NFU Vice-President Art Macklin held two sets of country-wide hearings to meet with Farm Crisis Committees to discuss issues and strategies.

In Saskatchewan, members engaged in sit-ins at provincial land-bank offices to protest cancellations of Crown land lease agreements.

About 4,000 farmers from Quebec and Ontario, along with thousands of trade unionists, rallied in Ottawa to protest free trade and inaction on acid rain. NFU President Wayne Easter addressed the crowd.

NFU members demonstrated against free trade at the Prime Minister's visits to North Battleford and Swan River.



Land Bank rally, Saskatchewan Legislature.

NFU Women completed the women's resource handbook *Weaving New Ways*.

NFU Youth published *Farm Transfers: Generation to Generation*, a book on intergenerational transfers.

members on tractors, blocked the Ambassador Bridge linking Windsor and Detroit to demonstrate against the proposed plan. NFU President Wayne Easter was featured at a large Pro-Canada Network Rally held in Regina.

NFU officials participated in a tractor parade held in Brainerd, Minnesota protesting the FTA. It was clear that US farmers were as leery of this deal as their Canadian counterparts.

## 1988

The NFU was very active in nation-wide debates on so-called "free trade."

Canada's two-price wheat system ended July 31, a casualty of the then-pending Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA or CUSTA). Months prior, an estimated 4,000 Canadians, including many NFU



Drought relief rally, Swift Current, 1988.



NFU members in Region 3 provided leadership to the GROW coalition to block federal legislation for Plant Breeders' Rights. Bill C-107 died on the Order Paper.

NFU Local 611, under the leadership of NFU Women's Vice-President Nettie Wiebe, launched one of the country's first rural childcare co-operatives under the new federal childcare policy.

PEI members were involved in a campaign for orderly potato marketing. Following a plebiscite on a plan that had not been discussed by producers, NFU members were successful in gaining an injunction.

Angered by inaction on the farm income crisis, nearly 1,000 farmers marched in a national Day of Protest. Events in Charlottetown, Regina, Chatham, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Winnipeg, and elsewhere included mock funerals (for the family farm) and news conferences.

## 1989

NFU members actively participated in CWB District Meetings. 22 meetings passed resolutions calling for the reinstatement of oats under the CWB.

NFU members endorsed and supported the campaign of the organization Rural Dignity, which pressed for an end to closures of rural post offices.

An Anti-Privatization Rally took place at the Saskatchewan Legislature. NFU members,

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour representatives, and others comprised a crowd of 5,000 loudly opposed to Premier Devine's privatizations and layoffs.

The NFU protested to the Federal Agriculture Minister regarding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) ruling on ice cream and yogurt.

NFU efforts in Ontario succeeded in gaining a public inquiry into the unauthorized release of BST-treated milk for public consumption by the Ontario Milk Marketing Board.

## 1990

The NFU opposed the end of federal interest-free cash advances. Following that pressure, the federal government agreed to reinstate advances for one year.

The NFU pushed to get canola under the CWB.

The NFU fought check-offs on farm products in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and BC.

NFU President Wayne Easter attended a counter-NAFTA conference in Mexico City, organized in part by the Pro-Canada Network.

NFU Women developed the "Cultivating Hope" kits, a community-organizing package for farm women.

## 1991

The NFU condemned the US/UN attack on Iraq, since sanctions had been beginning to show results.

800 farmers converged on Regina to protest the Gross Revenue Insurance Program (GRIP) and called for a better program of government financial assistance.

NFU officials called for Canadian negotiators to "walk away from the table" at the GATT talks, to protest the loss of Article XI and the subsequent threat to supply management.

PEI NFU members exposed a scheme wherein the province's Milk Marketing Board was facilitating dairy quota trading outside the quota exchange. While technically legal, the practice was highly unethical because some PEI farmers were not "in the loop" and so the spirit of fair quota exchange was broken.

800 farmers rallied at the Manitoba Legislature to call for emergency financial assistance.

President Wayne Easter travelled to Geneva and Brussels to press Canadian farmers' demands for preservation and enhancement of Article XI of the GATT.

NFU members attended a rally of 1300 farmers in Brandon, Manitoba. Farmers dumped a truckload of wheat to dramatize the need for an immediate support payment.





Charlottetown tractor demonstration, 1990.

## 1992

Over 40,000 farmers from across Canada converged on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to protest the federal government's apparent willingness to sacrifice supply management at the GATT negotiations.

NFU women undertook a Farm Women's Radio Project to broadcast rural women's perspectives on major issues.

NFU members in Fort St. John, BC helped organize a large rally calling for adequate prices for their products and the strengthening of orderly marketing systems.

The NFU helped found La Via Campesina. Longstanding linkages and exchanges between NFU women and women in Nicaragua's UNAG (including the Farmers' Brigades to Nicaragua) led to an invitation to NFU President Easter to address UNAG's annual conference in Managua. There, the first steps

were taken toward the creation of La Via Campesina, a worldwide movement uniting landless peoples, peasants, small- and medium-sized farmers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities.

## 1993

The NFU announced its intent to launch a class action lawsuit to help recover damages resulting from the federal government's mishandling of the potato disease PVYn.



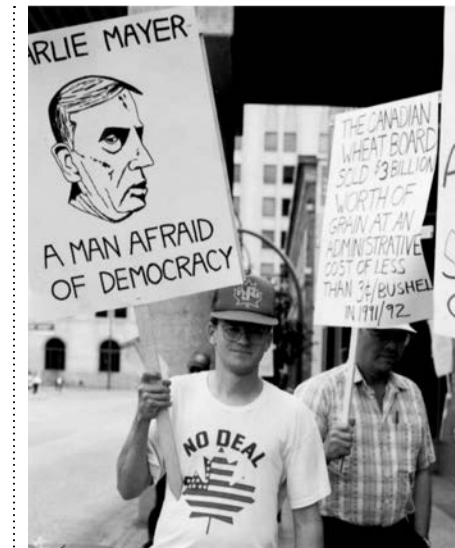
NFU women participated in a rural childcare conference in Quebec City.

13,000 farmers converged in Saskatoon demanding: (1) an immediate "third line of defence payment;" (2) a strengthened Canadian Wheat Board; and (3) no change in the method of payment of the Crow Benefit. NFU President Art Macklin delivered a thundering speech to the crowd.

Region 8 members met with Bill Barlee, BC Agriculture Minister, to discuss the drought.

The NFU held a forum on the potato disease PVYn in Charlottetown, bringing in experts from Ontario, England, the US, and PEI to discuss the political and scientific aspects of PVYn.

NFU members in PEI staged a demonstration at a federal/provincial agriculture ministers' meeting. The rally focused on the attack on orderly marketing.



Chris Tait, protest against continental barley marketing, 1993.

At Winnipeg and Emerson, Manitoba; Regway and North Portal, Saskatchewan; and Coutts, Alberta, the NFU joined with US farm groups to protest the "continental barley market." Two months later, the Federal Court ruled that the federal government cannot use an Order-in-Council to alter the CWB mandate.

Members in Ontario helped organize anti-GATT rallies in Renfrew and Essex counties, Ontario; NFU members lobbied the federal government protesting the loss of Article XI.

NFU Women's President Nettie Wiebe joined anti-GATT demonstrations in Europe and spoke to French farmers concerned with GATT agreement implications.

NFU Youth President Chris Tait participated in a Canada-Mexico Labour Exchange.

Annette Desmarais represented the NFU at the First International Conference of La Via Campesina, in Mons, Belgium, where the international movement was formally constituted.

## 1994

PEI potato producers launched a class action suit against the federal government for its mishandling of the PVYn potato disease; PEI farmers won a \$15 million settlement. NFU members in New Brunswick and other growers there launched a similar PVYn class action which was finally settled in 2008.

NFU women met with other farm women's groups in Ottawa to develop an agreement on the need to push for rural childcare.

NFU Vice-President Carol Masse and Women's President Karen Fyfe lobbied, along with other NFU members in Ottawa, on the genetically modified dairy hormone rBGH, rural childcare, and the farm financial crisis.



CWB support rally, 1993.



Region 3 NFU members pushed the Ontario Milk Marketing Board to take a strong stand against rBGH and push for the continuation of supply management.

Manitoba NFU members were involved in the fight to ensure that Louisiana Pacific complied with environmental regulations and adopted sustainable forestry practices.

Region 3 organized a lobby around rBGH that also drew involvement from many non-farmers.

NFU members and other Canadian Wheat Board supporters attended an anti-CWB meeting organized at Regina's Turvey Centre by the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. NFU members arrived at the meeting in advance of the Wheat Growers and stole much of the media coverage.

## 1995

With her election as President of the NFU, Nettie Wiebe became the first woman elected to head a major farm organization in Canada.

NFU members campaigned in the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee elections. CWB supporters won 11 out of 12 positions.

NFU Youth President Karen Pedersen attended an NGO forum at the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

The NFU condemned Manitoba's move to unilaterally end single-desk hog marketing.

Although the Crow Benefit ultimately was lost, years of struggle by the NFU prior to 1995 had held the Crow Rate and Benefit in place for a decade-and-a-half, putting more than \$10 billion into farmers' pockets.

## 1996

NFU members played key roles at 15 Western Grain Marketing Panel Town Hall meetings. Members called for votes at these meetings; the vote results all were decisively in favour of maintaining and strengthening the CWB.

NFU-organized rallies in Regina, Swift Current, Shaunavon, Assiniboia, and Gravelbourg (Saskatchewan) and Grande Prairie (Alberta) decried the recommendations contained in the Western Grain Marketing Panel report.

In August, the NFU was part of a coalition that organized rallies in Edmonton, Alberta (150 attended), Oak Bluff, Manitoba (900), and Rosetown, Saskatchewan (1,700). NFU Vice-President Chris Tait addressed the rally in Oak Bluff.

NFU officials attended the Rome World Food Summit as part of the official Canadian delegation.

Youth President Karen Pedersen made a submission to the federal Youth Employment Task Force.

The NFU and four other farm organizations created the Farmer Rail Car Coalition (FRCC). The coalition was successful in preventing a sell-off of government rail cars to CN and CP.

Federal Agriculture Minister Ralph Goodale addressed the NFU National Convention.

Over several weeks, the NFU held "Wheat Board Wednesday" protests in Regina, Swift Current, Shaunavon, Assiniboia, Gravelbourg, and Grande Prairie. The NFU was key in organizing a Pro-CWB Coalition protest at the Alberta Legislature.

Five NFU farmers went to Cuba to forge links with ANAP, Cuba's National Association of Farmers.

NFU President Nettie Wiebe was elected Coordinator for the North American Region at the Second International Conference of the Via Campesina held in Tlaxcala, Mexico (the sole woman on the International Coordinating Committee). 69 organizations from 37 countries attended.

## 1997

NFU members and officials appeared before the House of Commons Agriculture Committee hearings on Bill C-72 (Amendments to the CWB Act) and also made presentations at cross-Canada hearings. The following year, the NFU took the lead in opposing C-72's successor, Bill C-4.

PEI members protested in front of the legislature in Charlottetown.



NFU members worked hard in the "Barley Vote"; pro-CWB forces won the vote 63% to 37%.

The NFU provided support in the CWB's "level of service" complaint against CN and CP.

NFU President Wiebe testified in the Barley Charter Challenge; the CWB and farmers won.

The NFU became one of the first organizations to ring an alarm bell about hog mega-barns in western Canada. The NFU vigorously opposed the Saskatchewan government's unilateral termination of single-desk hog marketing.

The NFU took a lead role in opposing the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). NFU President Wiebe addressed 500 at a Saskatoon rally organized by the NFU, the Council of Canadians, and their allies—the first large public meeting in Canada to voice concerns about the MAI. The NFU and citizens around the world won, successfully stopping the MAI.

The NFU wrote to the Ontario Minister of Agriculture in opposition to a two-thirds super-majority requirement that the Ontario Wheat Producers Marketing Board would have had to achieve in an upcoming vote in order to retain its single-desk powers. Weeks later, the OWPMB vote was cancelled.

The NFU began its defense of the Canadian Grain Commission against government cuts. The NFU wrote the Minister opposing cuts to inward weighing and inspection.



CWB support rally, 1993.

## 1998

An NFU delegation attended the International Conference on Women in Agriculture in Washington, DC.

The NFU played a major role in the first elections for the CWB Board of Directors, where 8 of the 10 directors elected were strong CWB supporters. NFU members continued to play a huge role in subsequent CWB elections.

The NFU published the "GAPS" report on its website. The report by Health Canada scientists revealed "procedural and data gaps" in the approval process for Monsanto's genetically-modified (GM) bovine growth hormone, rBGH.

The CWB, NFU, and farmers won "the CTA case." The Canadian Transportation Agency ruled that "CP failed to furnish adequate and suitable accommodation for the delivery of CWB Grain to Vancouver" and as a result, the railways made

payments to farmers. The National Farmers Union contributed to the win as an intervener.

The NFU played an important part in a successful civil-society-organization coalition to stop bank mergers.

The ETC Group, NFU, and others began a (so far) successful campaign to stop the introduction of "Terminator" seeds.

NFU members in PEI provided critical input into the Round Table on Resource Land Use and Stewardship and the Lands Protection Act.

## 1999

The NFU worked with the Council of Canadians, Grain Services Union, and others to hold rural-urban forums focused on saving elevators, branch lines, rural communities, and farms.



Approximately 300 farmers demonstrated at an NFU-organized protest in Prince Albert at the annual Agriculture Ministers' meeting. Farmers called on ministers to scrap the Estey Report on grain transportation and deal with the income crisis. The NFU met with the Federal Minister.

After a 10-year struggle, the NFU and its allies won: the federal government agreed to keep Monsanto's GM dairy hormone rBGH out of Canadian milk.

The NFU withdrew from the Kroeger grain transportation consultations, in explanation citing "railways' success in blocking discussions on creating real, effective competition."

NFU members opposed Alberta's proposed Bill 209, a bill to create an Alberta wheat and barley board. The bill was defeated.

Nearly a dozen NFU officials and members attended the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meetings in Seattle, Washington, and participated in mass demonstrations. NFU members marched beside farmers from Mexico, Central America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the US.

Hundreds of NFU members across Canada participated in "Operation Alexander," a phone lobby of federal MPs to draw attention to the continuing financial crisis confronting farmers.

President Cory Ollikka led an NFU contingent to Toronto's "Family Farm Tribute" concert.

NFU Vice-President Fred Tait and other NFU officials worked with organizations in Manitoba to found HogWatch Manitoba.

Director of Finance and Administration Bob Pedde and NFU members developed a "property consortium," bought a building, and moved the NFU National Office from its long-time downtown Saskatoon location to a new home on Wentz Avenue in the city's north end.

The Canadian Grain Commission released its Program Review and Governance Review documents. The NFU panned both, thereby draining support from the recommendations. As a result of that NFU push-back, two decades later the majority of damaging recommendations contained in the Reviews remain unimplemented.

## 2000

Women's President Shannon Storey represented the NFU at a Farm Women's Leadership Coalition meeting with federal ministers Mitchell and Vanclief.

The NFU played a major role in the second set of CWB Board of Directors elections: eight of the ten directors elected were strong CWB supporters.

NFU officials from Ontario and other provinces participated in Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) consultations and strongly recommended that FCC maintain its farm focus.

The NFU released its influential report *The Farm Crisis*, EU Subsidies, and Agri-Business Market Power. Officials presented the brief to Canadian parliamentary committees and to UN delegates in Geneva.

The NFU Convention passed a forward-looking policy on GM food, calling for a "moratorium on the production, importation, distribution, and sale of GM food until questions regarding consumer acceptance, human health, environmental implications, technology ownership, and farmer profitability are answered to the satisfaction of the majority of Canadians."

NB NFU officials and members took a lead role in forcing that province's government to backtrack on deep cuts to its agricultural budget.

In Bangalore, India, NFU officials attended the 3rd International Conference of the Via Campesina.

Alberta NFU members and community members opposed a huge hog barn proposed by Taiwan Sugar Corporation. The NFU and its allies won; the barn was stopped.

The NFU picketed the United Food and Commercial Workers head office in Winnipeg to protest the union's support for ending single-desk selling of hogs.

The NFU urged farmers to mail shirts to Ottawa, to communicate the message that "We're losing our shirts!"



## 2001

The NFU played an important role in stopping the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). In 2000, the NFU and allies organized a meeting critical of FTAA. In 2001, a large NFU delegation went to Quebec City to protest the FTAA negotiations; NFU reps addressed the counter-summit.

NFU Board member Terry Boehm addressed a rally of farmers and citizens in Mont-Pellier, France. 2,000 rallied to show support for French farm activist José Bové.

The NFU's 32nd Annual Convention featured a special session in Indian Head, Saskatchewan, commemorating 100 years of farm activism: "The Territorial Grain Growers Association to the NFU—1901 to 2001."

## 2002

After years of work by Regional members and officials, NFU Region 3 (Ontario) gained accreditation under Ontario's Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act and successfully defended accreditation against an appeal by the OFA. "Stable funding" in Ontario has since been a key tool for building membership in that province.

Former NFU President Roy Atkinson was named a member of the Order of Canada.



*Colleen Ross (right) and Jessica Weatherhead, Colleen's daughter (left), display NFU Region 3 (Ontario) sign after receiving accreditation under Ontario's Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act.*

The NFU organized a "feed and bedding exchange" program to assist western members hit by drought.

The NFU was one of the first organizations to look critically at agrofuels such as ethanol.

## 2003

The NFU released its report *The Canadian Farm Family at Work: Exploring Gender and Generation*, culminating years of work by NFU women within the Employment Practices of Farm Families project.

The NFU sent two farmer delegations to the UK to help

farmers there understand the realities of GM crops. NFU reps included Stewart Wells, Wayne Amos, Lyle Wright, Dave Bailey, and Jim Robbins.

The NFU wrote to the Competition Bureau asking it to block the Maple Leaf takeover of Schneiders meat packing operations.

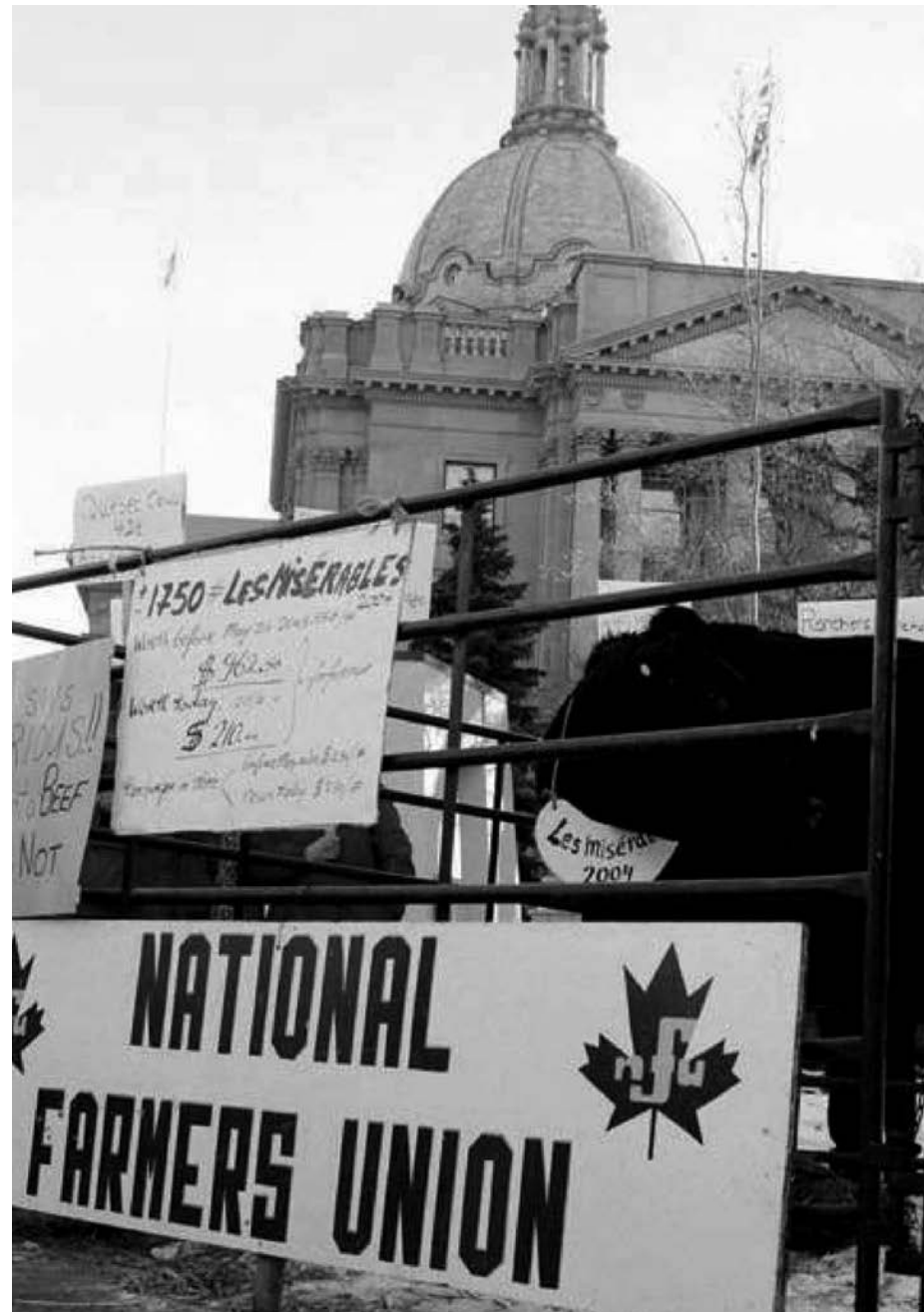
NFU members, local farmers, other constituents, and several non-governmental organizations staged a protest at Agriculture Minister Vanclief's Constituency Office. The protesters brought a loaf of homemade GM-wheat-free bread to Vanclief.

NFU Youth President Martha Robbins attended the WTO Ministerial meetings in Cancun, Mexico.

The NFU urged farmers to use market power against Monsanto, advising that "If you don't want GM wheat, don't buy Roundup."

## 2004

Monsanto discontinued "breeding and field level research on Roundup Ready wheat." The NFU played a lead role in this victory, through actions including: a major 2001 Winnipeg news conference of diverse groups (NFU, APAS, CHC, CWB, C of C, Greenpeace, KAP, SARM, SOD); a 2001 multi-organization Ottawa lobby; the 2003 "Planting the Seeds of Doubt" tour; a 2003 appearance before House of Commons Agriculture Committee; and work to expose links between glyphosate and fusarium.



*Les Miserables 2004, the cow NFU Board member Jan Slomp presented to Alberta Ag Minister Doug Horner.*

The "Seed Sector Review" released its report recommending royalties be charged on farm-saved seed. Days later, the NFU released a lacerating critique of the Review's report, discrediting it and sidelining most of its recommendations.

The NFU launched its "Seed Saver Campaign", an extremely successful initiative that included numerous public meetings and generated broad public support.

NFU President Stewart Wells addressed farmers at a Canadian Agricultural Income Support (CAIS)

program "update" conference and called for opposition to \$3 million program payment caps. Later, the NFU organized an Ottawa media event utilizing a huge ball cap to communicate the message that "A three million dollar cap doesn't fit family farmers!"

The NFU in PEI gained accreditation and "stable funding" under the PEI Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act.

Ongoing NFU community outreach work in Ontario on local food, and sustainability led to the first NFU "Feast of Fields" event.



*Peter Dowling (shown here in the over-size headgear) was one of several NFU members on hand to help President Stewart Wells get the message out that "A 3 million dollar cap doesn't fit family farmers!"*



## 2005

NFU President Stewart Wells and Women's President Colleen Ross represented the NFU at the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial.



*Women's President Colleen Ross (in photo) and President Stewart Wells attend the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong.*

Several years of work by NFU members in NB and elsewhere resulted in the closure of that province's largest hog mega-barn.

Federal Minister of Agriculture Andy Mitchell addressed the NFU National Convention.

The NFU began offering group-rate health, dental, disability, and life insurance services to members.

The NFU was (and remains) the only farm organization to oppose proposals to tighten up Plant Breeders' Rights based on the draconian UPOV 1991 Convention that would have severely restricted

farmers' traditional practice of saving and reusing their own seed. In the face of the NFU's work, proposals for a UPOV '91-based PBR system were back-burnered for nearly a decade.

## 2006

An innovative process produced the groundbreaking report Farm Women and Canadian Agricultural Policy.

Harold Culberson and a team of volunteers in NB undertook a massive and successful membership canvass to position the NFU for stable funding in that province.

Several years of coalition work by the NFU and other organizations succeeded in gaining property tax relief on Saskatchewan farmland.

The NFU and the University of Regina jointly organized a symposium on the CWB.

Women's President Ross and President Wells addressed a "Solidarity Rally" on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

The NFU took the lead in organizing a counter-meeting to Federal Agriculture Minister Strahl's closed-door Saskatoon meeting with CWB opponents.

The NFU undertook a campaign to fax pro-CWB letters to all MPs. 500 letters were sent to each of the 305 MPs—more than 150,000 faxes in all. Passages from many of those letters were subsequently cited in House of Commons debates.



*NFU members showed their support for the CWB and single-desk selling at a meeting in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, March 23, 2006. Eric Sagan (right) speaks with Federal Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl prior to the meeting.*

## 2007

The NFU and Friends of the CWB won a landmark court case. Barley remained under CWB jurisdiction and the government's Order-in-Council strategy was ruled illegal. (The NFU and Friends of the CWB later won again, by withstanding a federal government appeal decided in early 2008.)

The NFU in Ontario submitted a major report to the province's Ombudsman charging that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs was "failing to live up to its public trust."

NFU staff person Martha Robbins, NFU Youth Vice President Kalissa Regier, and Women's President Colleen Ross represent NFU at the World Forum on Food Sovereignty in Mali.



## 2008

NFU Ontario Locals launched the "Food Down the Road" project—an initiative to build local food networks and capacities.

The NFU gained accreditation and "stable funding" under New Brunswick's Agricultural Producers Registration and Farm Organization Funding Act.

The NFU released The Farm Crisis and the Cattle Sector report and began a multi-year campaign to "change the way business is done in Canada's beef and cattle sectors."

The NFU and Brandon University organized a shortline symposium in Manitoba.

NFU Vice-President Terry Boehm completed a speaking tour of Australia, during which he outlined Canadian experiences with GM canola. (In 2009 he took that message to meetings in Switzerland.)

The NFU helped organize (and provided speakers to) public meetings critical of agrofuels. Thousands across Canada attended these "Crops, Cars and Climate Crisis" meetings.

A direct legacy of the NFU's coalition work on the Farmer Rail Car Coalition was a Canadian Transportation Agency ruling that railways were overcharging for hopper car maintenance and that farmers' freight rates must be lowered by \$72 million annually.

NFU Region 3 launched the "New Farm Project" to build local food capacity to meet local demand.

Ongoing NFU work shone light on farmer-damaging variety registration and deregistration proposals, and warned of a "variety treadmill."

Women's President Colleen Ross, Youth President Nigel Smith, and Youth Vice President Kalissa Regier represent the NFU at La Via Campesina's 5th International Conference held in Maputo, Mozambique.

## 2009

The NFU held two dozen meetings in seven provinces in the spring to build support for a cattle-sector overhaul.



Delegates of La Via Campesina International Women's Commission (IWC) meeting held at Loyola House in Guelph, Ontario from April 21st to 25th, 2008.

The NFU worked hard to assemble political support to successfully "hoist" Bill C-13, an Act intended to weaken and dismantle the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC). MP action catalyzed by strenuous NFU work deflected a potentially fatal blow away from the CGC.

The NFU was the only farm organization to oppose the 2009 Tyson/XL packing plant sale and the 2005 Cargill/Better Beef merger.

Due to strong citizen and organization push-back, 10 years after the Seattle launch of a new round of World Trade Organization talks, no WTO Agreement on Agriculture has yet been reached.

The NFU took a lead role in the struggle to preserve Canada's prison farms by holding meetings, informing the media, and meeting with policymakers.



Supporters and representatives of various local farm groups opposed to prison farm closures demonstrate at Parliament Hill in Ottawa on April 30, 2009, National Day of Action. (left to right: Andrea Cumpson, Dave Perry, Wayne Easter, Liberal Agriculture Critic, NDP MP Malcom Allen, and Peter Dowling).

The NFU celebrated 40 years of successes by holding a special National Convention in Ottawa.

## 2010

The NFU Youth launched the Campaign for New Farmers as a network, support system, policy watchdog, and a resource to create alternatives to the dominant model of agriculture that has pushed out our young people.

After seed from GMO Flax caused market collapse, the NFU successfully fought to protect farmers' right to use uncontaminated farm-saved seed, and supported a private member's bill that would have required assessment of market harm before approval of new GM crops.

NFU was a leader in the international mobilization that got a United Nations ban on Terminator Technology, a genetic engineering technique that renders seeds sterile.

Ontario Local 316, led the "Save Our Prison Farms" Campaign, spearheading national opposition to the closure of prison farms and calling for revitalizing the program and re-orienting it toward sustainable farming and food security for the prisons and for local



Kingston rally in support of prison farms.

communities. After nine years of NFU and allies' campaigning, the Government of Canada committed federal budget dollars to re-opening the Prison Farms at Kingston starting in 2018.

The NFU published Losing our Grip to detail corporations, investors and foreign interests buying up of farmland in Canada, and expose links to farm debt, input financing and international landgrabbing. It recommended policies to reclaim farmer autonomy and food sovereignty. In 2015 the NFU produced an updated and expanded version of Losing our Grip.

## 2011

The NFU rang the alarm about the Canada-EU CETA trade agreement's impact on farmers, especially for dairy farmers and seed rights.

As the federal government moved to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board despite an election promise of a farmer vote, the NFU and allies continued to defend the CWB.

La Via Campesina was finally recognized by the United Nations as the voice of small scale farmers. As a Via Campesina member the NFU influences international policy at the highest level.

Many NFU members got involved in Food Secure Canada's People's Food Policy process. The NFU also held member workshops on Food Sovereignty to further develop understanding of its meaning and potential.



Canadian Wheat Board rally, Saskatchewan, 2011

## 2012

The NFU continued to object to CETA and to the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) which Canada joined in 2012 because the deals are less about trade and more about restricting elected governments' power over global corporations, entrenching market-based globalization and intensifying attacks on supply management.

NFU members were present in the House of Commons when the law ending the single desk, farmer-controlled Canadian Wheat Board was passed on December

16. The marketing clout wielded by prairie grain farmers in Canada was destroyed. The NFU supported pro-CWB farmers who launched a charter challenge and a series of lawsuits in efforts to recover assets and damages.

## 2013

NFU women facilitated Food Sovereignty workshops on International Women's Day.

In Jakarta Indonesia, NFU members participated in the 7th Via Campesina Conference which

focused on food sovereignty, climate change and agroecology, land grabbing, migration, and health.

The NFU developed and published a model for the legal sale of fresh unpasteurized milk within the supply management system.

The NFU, with CBAN, organized Days of Action against GMO Alfalfa, culminating in 37 public demonstrations coast to coast on April 9. In July, NFU members initiated an environmental assessment of GM alfalfa under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. The NFU and allies continue pushing for deregistration of GM alfalfa varieties.



One of 37 rallies on the Day of Action against GMO Alfalfa

## 2014

When the federal government moved to put Canada under UPOV '91 Plant Breeders Rights rules the NFU re-launched the Save Our Seeds Campaign. The NFU's alternative vision was set out in A Seed Act for Farmers written by NFU President Terry Boehm.

The NFU began action against neonicotinoids with numerous briefs and by appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. The NFU's position was crucial to the Ontario government's decision to restrict the use of this insecticidal seed treatment.

Advocating for farmland protection across Canada, the NFU supported keeping BC's Agricultural Land



NFU President Terry Boehm relaunching the Save Our Seeds campaign in 2014

Commission strong and effective, and supported keeping PEI's moratorium on deep water irrigation wells and upholding that province's Lands Protection Act.

The NFU opposed Bill C-48, which would have ended the Canadian Grain Commission's mandate to regulate in the interests of farmers. While there was no vote on the Bill, attacks on the CGC's authority continue. The NFU highlights the need for the CGC and continues to oppose all attempts to weaken it.

## 2015

Through research, analysis, and experience, the NFU articulates what the loss of the CWB single desk authority cost farmers. A substantial share of the west coast port price of wheat has been taken from the farmer's pocket and put into to grain companies' bank accounts.



La Via Campesina gathering, "Globalizing the struggle, globalizing hope".

The NFU raised awareness about the government's privatization of the CWB, and in 2016 called for a public audit of all federal money spent on the privatization.

The NFU denounced the Government of Canada passing the Agriculture Growth Act that brought in the UPOV '91 seed regime. The NFU campaigned for a re-commitment to public plant breeding and continues to devote time and expertise to defending farmers interests regarding seed law and regulations.

NFU youth participated in the International Forum on Agroecology in Mali, Africa, a farmer to farmer

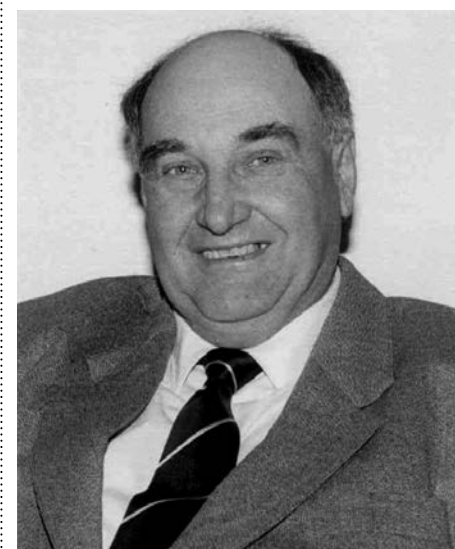
encounter on agroecology in Florida, and a food sovereignty tour in the Basque region of Spain.

The NFU established the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group to extend and deepen our understanding of Indigenous food sovereignty and settler colonialism in Canada in order to better act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples fighting to defend their territories and rights.

## 2016

Roy Atkinson, the first President of the National Farmers Union, passed away on May 16. A large celebration of his life was held in Saskatoon

where many NFU members, farm leaders, and political figures shared remembrances.



Roy Atkinson (1924 – 2016), founding President of the NFU.



In response to the Canadian Transportation Act Review the NFU recommended improving grain transportation, limiting the monopoly power of railways, and called for railways to be regulated and governed as vital infrastructure to serve the larger interests of Canadian society.

The NFU established the Migrant Worker Committee in support of migrant farm workers and in solidarity with farmers and farm workers around the world. The NFU endorsed the Mobility, Voice and Equality for Migrant Workers campaign.

The NFU initiated a major research project for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, and found that reducing fossil fuel-based inputs would increase farm profitability, reduce greenhouse gases, and improve crops' resilience in extreme weather.

With CETA and TPP threatening the supply management's survival, the NFU produced a major report called Strengthening Supply Management – Defending Canadian control of our market space and advancing food sovereignty.

## 2017

The NFU, with Food Secure Canada, pushed for food sovereignty as the basis of Canada's first National Food Policy. NFU's Youth President told the Standing Committee on Agriculture this would limit the power of corporations and support the next generation of farmers.



NFU President Jan Slomp speaks to tri-national allies opposing NAFTA 2.0 in Mexico, 2017

Agriculture Canada began preparations for adding new royalty payments on farm saved seed under UPOV '91 by asking farmers to choose between end point royalties and trailing contracts, both designed to raise the price of seed and transfer millions to seed companies. The NFU led fierce resistance, building upon opposition previously mobilized against UPOV '91.

When Omnitrax closed the port of Churchill and abandoned the Hudson Bay railway, the NFU pointed to the roots of the problem: privatization CN Rail and the destruction of the CWB.

## 2018

17 years of work by the Via Campesina was rewarded when the United Nations adopted

The Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. Via Campesina will use the Declaration to advance the rights and dignity of the world's small scale farmers and rural workers.

NFU continues to deepen knowledge and application of agroecology principles. NFU Youth travelled to Cuba for the first Global Encounter of the Via Campesina Agri-Ecology Schools and Formation processes. There, young leaders learned how international politics and historical events have shaped Cuba's unique agriculture sector.

The 2017 discovery of GM wheat plants along an Alberta road was revealed. The event confirmed NFU opposition to open air GM test plots is justified and demonstrated the importance of the Canadian Grain Commission's ability to test samples



NFU Youth VP Jessie MacInnis (left) celebrates the UN adoption of The Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

and provide assurance that Canada's wheat shipments were not contaminated.

The NFU supported the Redwater Appeal at the Supreme Court of Canada to ensure that "the polluter pays" if farmland is damaged or contaminated when oil companies with surface leases go bankrupt.

The NFU joined public interest intervenors to uphold federal jurisdiction over pollution pricing when the Saskatchewan government launched a constitutional challenge against the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.

## 2019

As climate change impacts become more frequent and severe, extreme weather increases production risks for farmers, making it more urgent to revisit and revise agriculture policy and farm safety net programs. Protecting and supporting small scale farming is becoming more challenging, complex, and vital. The NFU partners with like-minded groups to initiate a climate emergency strategy that puts agriculture and farmers on the best footing possible.

The NFU continues to oppose the federal government's plan to eliminate farmers' right to freely use their own seed and efforts place our seed system under corporate control.



Ian Mauro of Prairie Climate Centre speaking at NFU event, Climate, Food and the Future.



For more than 50 years, the National Farmers Union members have been on the front lines, defending farmers' interests and advocating for better ways. The NFU has taken on — and very often won — the difficult but critical struggles within the Canadian agricultural and food systems.

The members of the NFU — farm families and their urban allies — have racked up a long and impressive list of victories, including: blocking the introduction of GM wheat, gaining recognition for the contribution of farm women, defending Canadians' rights to save seeds, keeping GM dairy hormones out of Canadian milk, defending supply management and fighting for the CWB, winning changes to our tax systems, and stopping railway attempts to raise grain freight rates.

Within Canada and internationally, the NFU is making a difference on the front line issues of our times. NFU members have been advocating for climate change action for twenty years. Our leaders were key to developing and spreading the ideas of Food Sovereignty and Agroecology, and they provided in-depth analysis of trade deal implications for farmers and larger society. The NFU shared knowledge of our supply management system to struggling dairy farmers in the USA and Europe. Our members stand in solidarity with indigenous land protectors and migrant farm workers within Canada and abroad. The NFU is pushing back against landgrabbing by farmland investment corporations and advocating for policies that would

rebuild the farm population and bring better quality of life to rural communities. NFU members of all ages are working to create the conditions for with young and new farmers to succeed and in turn be able to pass their own legacy of accomplishments on to future generations.

Over the past five decades, the work of the NFU has put billions of dollars into the pockets of family farmers across Canada, countered rural isolation and created a positive vision for our common future. We can look back with pride, and

look forward to the next 50 years knowing we will face serious challenges as well as many opportunities for NFU members to work together building stronger communities and advocating for sound policies that will support sustainable farms.

If you're not an NFU member, please join us and help support and expand our work. If you are already a member, please ask a friend or neighbour or relative to join.

## Here's how to join:

- 1 The easiest and quickest way to become an NFU member is to join online at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)
- 2 The second quick and easy way to become an NFU member is to call (306) 652-9465. You can give your name and address to the NFU office staff and pay with your credit card—no forms to fill out; nothing to mail.
- 3 The next easiest way is to mail a cheque to the National Farmers Union, 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6.

Associate members receive all the benefits of membership with the exception of the right to vote in the NFU's policy making processes or to hold office. If you want more information before you join, call the NFU office at 306-652-9465 or email [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca).





[NFU.CA](http://NFU.CA)