

quarterly union farmer

Fall 2020 / Volume 26 Issue 3



NFU Convention
pages 12 and 13

Tributes to Cory Ollikka
and Peter Dowling
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VISION 20/20 VISION



51st NATIONAL CONVENTION
51e CONVENTION NATIONALE

Nov 3 - Nov 28, 2020 nfu.ca/2020convention



Message from the Editorial Advisory Committee

— by Glenn Norman, NFU Vice President of Policy,
on behalf of the Editorial Advisory Committee

A lot has happened in the last three months, some good, some bad and some rather sad. And lots of it you can read about here in the *Union Farmer Quarterly*.

Our NFU lost Cory Ollikka, whose leadership, friendship, patience, wisdom and humour will be missed by us all. Our heart felt sympathy goes out to his family, he is truly missed.

Sadly, we also suddenly lost another key leader, Peter Dowling, whose wisdom and leadership will be missed. Peter was the original creator of the livestock policy committee that faded out over the last few years; a committee that has recently been revived under the leadership of Peter's son Tim. Read about the work the committee has been doing in tackling the lack of abattoir capacity that is endemic in every province across the country crippling the direct marketing meat producers. It is a problem that has been exasperated further by the crisis COVID 19 has caused in the large corporate packing plants affecting their workers, many here as temporary workers.

This year the NFU National Convention will be an online

convention spaced out over a much longer period of time with opportunities for participation by more members and guests. There will even be rooms available to socialize and catch up with old friends – not quite as good as meeting them in person over a coffee or beer but in this time of COVID 19 a good alternative. Learn more about what is planned and how it will work here in this *Quarterly*.

Speaking of online, the NFU now has its own Youtube and Instagram channels. We will both have to read about how to use these because I have never used either one and I am not really sure what an Instagram even is. Learning more about them in the *Quarterly* might be easier than asking the grandkids.

There is a lot more as well with the regular messages from the three presidents and, of course, you can find out what other regions are working on in the Regional Reports.

So far, 2020 has been one of the busiest years of work for the NFU. It feels as though we have been revitalized by this pandemic. The work on Seed Sovereignty has

yielded some positive results with the Canadian Seed Grower Association, the body that makes the rules, voting down the proposed amalgamation with three other organizations to form Seeds Canada – organizations which for the most part represent corporate ag-business. A victory, yes, but be assured that corporate greed does not disappear so easy. We must remain vigilant and not let our guard down.

That is all for now. Enjoy the read!

NOTICE OF MEETING

The **NFU Property Consortium** will be holding its annual meeting online. The date for this meeting is **Tuesday, December 1, 2020, 2 PM SK.**

Consortium Shareholders will receive information in the mail regarding this meeting and how to join. If you are not a shareholder, but wish to participate in this meeting, please call the office at 306-652-9465 or email nfu@nfu.ca for log-in information.

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A Message from Katie Ward, NFU National President

*People who inspire dedication and service,
and who make you think and laugh, are the
backbone of the NFU.*

I have been lucky enough to have a series of conversations with NFU members lately, and one subject that particularly interested me was why these farmers decided to join the NFU. Some were asked to join by neighbours. Some joined because their province has a requirement for all farm businesses to join a farm organization and the NFU seemed the best fit for them out of the available options. All of them mentioned doing some research and finding the NFU had philosophies or policies that resonated with them.

I joined the NFU originally because of Ontario's Farm Business Registration program, but all of my actual involvement with the movement can be traced back to people. People like Bernard Foley who invited me to my first Local meeting, or Charlie Nixon who asked me to stand for my first elected position as Region 3

Women's Advisor. People like Cory Ollikka and Karen Pedersen who ran a workshop at my first national Convention, teaching the mechanics and strategies of how to be more effective at farm and community meetings. People like Peter Dowling who sat at his kitchen table with me on a wintry evening working through the wording of a policy resolution that I really cared about and wanted to put forward at a regional Convention. They are the reason I encourage new farmers to join us, so they can have a chance to connect with mentors who help to build the next generation of the farm movement. People who inspire dedication and service, and who make you think and laugh, are the backbone of the NFU.

As an organization, the NFU has made some great strides in the face of the massive challenges 2020 has posed for us all. As a community we have suffered the loss of two giants in our movement. Grief makes it more difficult to know that our community cannot gather in person for Convention this year, when the ability to lean on each other for support would be most welcome. Our capable and innovative staff have proven over this summer that community and connection can still be found in online Conventions. Their plans to transform our annual in-person gathering into the online event of the year are sure to impress. Until we meet again, you all remain in my thoughts.

In solidarity, Katie Ward

J'ai eu la chance d'avoir une série de conversations avec des membres de l'UNF récemment, et un sujet qui m'a particulièrement intéressé est la raison pour laquelle ces agriculteurs ont décidé d'adhérer à l'UNF. Certains ont été invités par des voisins à y adhérer. D'autres ont adhéré parce que leur province exige que toutes les entreprises agricoles adhèrent

à une organisation agricole et que l'UNF leur semblait la mieux adaptée parmi les options disponibles. Tous ont mentionné avoir fait des recherches et avoir découvert que l'UNF avait des philosophies ou des politiques qui les rejoignaient.

J'ai rejoint l'UNF à l'origine en raison du programme d'enregistrement des entreprises

agricoles de l'Ontario, mais toute ma participation réelle au mouvement remonte à des personnes. Des gens comme Bernard Foley, qui m'a invitée à ma première réunion locale, ou Charlie Nixon, qui m'a demandé de me présenter pour mon premier poste élu de conseillère pour les femmes de la région 3. Des gens comme Cory Ollikka et

Les personnes qui inspirent le dévouement et le service, et qui vous font réfléchir et rire, sont l'épine dorsale de l'UNF.

Karen Pedersen qui ont dirigé un atelier lors de ma première convention nationale, enseignant les mécanismes et les stratégies permettant d'être plus efficace lors des réunions agricoles et communautaires. Des gens comme Peter Dowling, qui s'est assis à la table de sa cuisine avec moi un soir d'hiver pour travailler sur la formulation d'une résolution politique qui me tenait vraiment à cœur et que je voulais présenter à une convention régionale. C'est à cause d'eux que j'encourage les nouveaux agriculteurs à se joindre

à nous, afin qu'ils puissent avoir la possibilité d'entrer en contact avec des mentors qui aident à construire la prochaine génération du mouvement agricole. Les personnes qui inspirent le dévouement et le service, et qui vous font réfléchir et rire, sont l'épine dorsale de l'UNF.

En tant qu'organisation, l'UNF a fait de grands progrès face aux défis énormes que 2020 a posés pour nous tous. En tant que communauté, nous avons subi la perte de deux géants de notre mouvement. Le deuil rend plus

difficile de savoir que notre communauté ne peut pas se réunir en personne pour la Convention cette année, alors que la possibilité de s'appuyer l'un sur l'autre pour obtenir du soutien serait la bienvenue. Notre personnel compétent et novateur a prouvé cet été que la communauté et les liens peuvent encore être trouvés dans les conventions en ligne. Leurs projets visant à transformer notre rassemblement annuel en personne en l'événement en ligne de l'année ne manqueront pas d'impressionner. Jusqu'à notre prochaine rencontre, vous restez tous dans mes pensées.

En toute solidarité, Katie Ward

Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing

Working with the family of Paul Beingessner, the NFU has established an annual literary prize in honour of Paul and his contribution to rural and agricultural journalism. Paul Beingessner was a farmer, an activist, and a writer who defended Canada's family farms until his tragic death in a farm accident in the spring of 2009. His widely-read and respected weekly columns brought a fresh and progressive perspective to rural and farm issues. Young writers are encouraged to submit their work to the Paul Beingessner Award for Excellence in Writing.

[This year's theme:](#)

What does an anti-racist and socially just food system look like to you, and how can we as youth help to build it?

Award Criteria and Details

- There will be two age categories – 15 to 21 years old, and 22 to 30 years old.
 - **One award in the amount of \$500 will be awarded each age category** for a non-fiction open letter 500-1000 words in length.
 - **Deadline for entries is November 1, 2020.**
- Applicants can only win once per age category.*

Send entries to the National Farmers Union:

By email: nfu@nfu.ca or

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

The winners will be announced at the NFU Convention in November 2020. All or some entries may be published by the NFU. We will confirm that we received your email submission within a week. If you do not get a confirmation email, please resend your entry or phone the office at (306) 652-9465.



A Message from Coral Sproule, NFU Women's President

As I write this report I hear what has come to be the constant background of my work from home over the last 6 months — my children running wild, as I struggle to complete a task. Since schools closed in March this has been the reality of many working from home. Others have struggled to access childcare which means they sometimes face the loss of their jobs or other farm income when they are unable to access it. Thankfully I have had the support of my parents for child care while I am at my off-farm job or occasionally to get some work done around the farm or home office. Weekends are filled with catch up from the week before, and trying to do the jobs like moving fences, tractor work, and weeding which I struggle to do with the kids.

The pace of life during the pandemic has not exactly been slow. Little tasks often seem overwhelming amid the stress of this health crisis, elder care in our families, and back to school and worker safety concerns. The weight of these immense pressures is very often carried unfairly by some in an increasingly inequitable world. Many in the NFU have been working towards a more just recovery from the negative impacts of the pandemic. Members of the NFU Women's Advisory recently submitted a

letter to the Prime Minister and cabinet to seek implementation of a Universal Pharmacare Program and a Universal Childcare Subsidy, in order to alleviate just a few of the many stresses felt by so many parents and others.

In rural schools, many families are facing challenges to access safe, or in some cases any, transportation for students from our farms to schools. Many distance learning options are currently underfunded, delayed or otherwise inaccessible, and a safe return to school seems especially perilous for rural families. Many fear this may also lead to closures of rural schools as parents face tough decisions and many have had to keep their children home. With student registrations down and inadequate financial support from many provincial governments in education governments may feel justified in closing rural schools.

At this time the recognition of the intersections of gender, race, class, social, physical, and environmental contexts are more important than ever. Members of several committees of the NFU are undertaking meaningful actions towards the inclusion of more diverse farmer, worker and food producer voices. Hearing first hand lived experience which differs from our own is powerful in creating change in our organization and communities that is truly democratic.

*We seek to envision
a more just future amid
the many crises faced
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peasants worldwide.*

In coming months we will be busy, not only with preparations for changing seasons, but also on making our very first virtual convention dynamic and a reflection of the theme of *Vision 20/20*. We seek to envision a more just future amid the many crises faced by farmers and peasants worldwide. This year I especially hold dear the memories of times with all of you, and memories of friends no longer with us.

We recently lost both Cory Ollikka and Peter Dowling, whom I feel incredibly fortunate to have known and called friends and brothers. They each in their own unique way have been mentors, and allies to many in the NFU and in all facets of their lives. They have exemplified fair and democratic processes, beautifully acknowledging our unity while also being effective at encouraging youth, women, and others to express their unique voices and visions for moving forward together.

We hope you will join us at convention, and look forward to seeing you there.

In Union, Coral Sproule



A Message from Stuart Oke, NFU Youth President

It feels like I have only just lifted my head from the work of the farm as I write this in early September, realizing that fall arrived. Perhaps it was the seasonal lows and risk of frosts which shocked me out of the stupor I usually live in until the end of October – the time when our crops are out of the field and into storage - but this season feels amongst one of the longest I can recall in my, admittedly short, decade of farming. Chief amongst the reasons was COVID-19 and the implications it's brought to our farm and the food system as a whole.

The pandemic has certainly revealed the inequities present in our food system, from the vulnerability of migrant workers to the volatility of international markets in the wake of border closures. Personally I know the pandemic has tested our farm and that of many young farmers I have spoken to this season. Many direct marketers have experienced more interest in local food than in recent years but have also experienced much undo anxiety in the wake of the uncertainty of farmers' markets and abattoir closures. These farmers have had to re-evaluate, with little notice, marketing and crop plans in order to accommodate a changing and volatile situation. For many young farmers have expressed even

greater feelings of isolation on their farms and in their jobs, an effect of the quarantine and social distancing. Even as those requirements start to loosen more broadly in our society a feeling of anxiety persists that keeps farmers worried about getting sick, not just for the sake of their own well-being but in concern for their businesses and the customers who rely on them.

The youth caucus which always struggles to organize throughout the growing season has found the pandemic a further complication to our work. With a few check-in sessions throughout the year, the caucus has digitally met to touch base with each other and create a space for a connection however imperfect it may be. It has also been a chance to discuss as a caucus what projects we would next like to take on. More recently we have been convening to discuss how we as an organization and as a caucus can work to dismantle systemic racism where it exists both within the NFU and in the broader food movement as a whole. These conversations are on-going and a new working group is being formed under the International Program Committee (IPC). Newcomers are always welcome. Contact the NFU office to be linked into the new working group.

I have been excited to participate in the recent work the NFU has been doing to provide leadership within the sector on

Farmers for Climate Solutions is a coalition... seeking to push the government to support farmers in their efforts to fight back against climate change and to help farmers transition to climate-friendly growing techniques.

combating the climate crisis. From the excellent work of Cathy Holtslander on the NFU's vision for a post-pandemic recovery to the advocacy work done by *Farmers for Climate Solutions* this is a file which the NFU is taking seriously, as we recognize the existential threat the climate crisis is bringing to our farms. For those that do not know *Farmers for Climate Solutions* is a coalition, in-part founded by the NFU and other farmer-led organizations, seeking to push the government to support farmers in their efforts to fight back against climate change and to help farmers transition to climate-friendly growing techniques. The coalition has already garnered a lot of interest from the public and government. *Farmers for Climate Solutions* recently met with the Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister for the Environment, in an effort to ensure that any climate plans we see in the future recognize the positive effects farmers can have.

In Solidarity, Stuart Oke



Region 1: District 2

Provinces of New Brunswick
& Nova Scotia

—by Suzanne Fournier, Executive Director / Directrice exécutive

REGIONAL REPORTS

NOTICE OF REGION 1 CONVENTION Sunday, October 18, 2020

Une AGA et le congrès de la région 1 virtuelle conjointe auront lieu le dimanche 18 octobre 2020

Les affaires de l'AGA du Nouveau-Brunswick prendront la première tranche de temps et de la région 1 membres sera donné un temps de rejoindre pour les résolutions. Des présentations supplémentaires peuvent suivre. Les membres de la région 1 (N.-B. / N.-É. / Î.-P.-É. / T.-N.) peuvent envoyer des résolutions au bureau de la NFU-NB par courriel à nfu.nb.office@gmail.com. Bien que les affaires de l'AGA du Nouveau-Brunswick prennent le plus de temps, tous les membres de la Région 1 sont invités à y assister et auront accès à toutes les présentations ou contenus supplémentaires fournis.

Au N.-B., nous encourageons de petits groupes de membres (maximum 5 ou 6 personnes) à se réunir dans une maison des membres pour assister à la réunion ensemble et discuter de la lutte contre la crise agricole et climatique. Nous espérons collaborer avec le Service des bibliothèques publiques du Nouveau-Brunswick pour permettre aux membres d'utiliser leurs bibliothèques locales pour assister à la réunion, s'ils le souhaitent.

Le conseil d'administration du Nouveau-Brunswick tiendra des élections et demandera à toute personne intéressée de contacter les membres actuels du conseil ou Suzanne du bureau. Veuillez envoyer vos résolutions au bureau avant le 9 octobre.

A virtual joint AGM and Region 1 Convention will be held Sunday, October 18, 2020

New Brunswick AGM business will take the first timeslot and Region 1 members will be given a time to join for resolutions. Additional presentations may follow. Members of Region 1 (NB/NS/PEI/NF) are invited to send resolutions to the NFU-NB office by email at nfu.nb.office@gmail.com. While NB AGM business will take up the most time, all Region 1 members are invited to attend and will have access to any additional presentations or content provided.

In NB, we encourage small groups of members (maximum 5 or 6 people) to meet in a member's home to attend the meeting together and discuss *Tackling the Farm and Climate Crisis*. We hope to collaborate with the New Brunswick Public Library Service to allow members to use their local libraries to attend the meeting, if they wish.

The NB Board of Directors will be holding elections and ask anyone interested to reach out to existing board members or Suzanne in the Office. Please send any resolutions to the office by October 9th.



Photo: Aiden, son of Dean and Rose-Anne Harder.

Leave A Legacy!

A legacy donation to the NFU or National Farmers Foundation empowers the next generation.

Contact Mara Shaw at shaw@nfu.ca to discuss estate donations.



Region 3/NFU-O:

Province of Ontario

— by Don Ciparis, Coordinator

National Farmers Union-Ontario Provincial Council hopes that this report finds our provincial and national members safe, healthy and happy in this very unique time in our history. Please take good care of yourselves as you are an essential service in Canada. Ontario producers have seen a summer with prolonged periods of considerable heat and drought, interrupted by minor, and at times, excessive rainfall events which crops could not always benefit from. As winter wheat missed some late spring/early summer rains, yields ranged from average to below average. Early September assessments of corn crops suggest that yields could be above average, while soybean yields appear to be more average because of the widespread incidence of SDS (Sudden Death Syndrome) fungus. Fruit and vegetable crops seemed to get beneficial rains when absolutely needed, which resulted in a mostly average yield. The labour to secure those fruit/vegetable crops, domestic and foreign, continues to be an issue.

As elsewhere in Canada, accessing affordable and productive farmland for beginning farmers is a challenge that the NFU-O continues to monitor. Our Land-Linking and Farmland Conservation workshops (nfuontario.ca/new/land-workshops/) attempt to connect land-seekers with established or retiring farmers. Taking the

challenge further, we are helping one couple - Angel and Raph in their search. Good luck to you both as future farmers.

Our Farm Labour Project Coordinator, David Thompson, continues to compile experiences, concerns and visions on farm labour which will be critical in building our capacity to address workplace issues and develop high priority actions and policy recommendations for regulators. The pandemic has complicated this farm labour study but may be helpful in presenting weaknesses inherent in our present planning, production, securing of labour and marketing tasks.

Our livestock committee continues to investigate the causes of the capacity shortage in provincially licenced abattoirs across Ontario. The number of provincially licenced abattoirs in Ontario has dropped from 300 in 1995 to 110. This decline has had a considerable impact on small and medium scale livestock farmers and the general health of the agricultural fabric of Ontario. The pandemic has seen an increase in demand for locally raised meats but has been complicated by the backlog of businesses booking animals, some into the fall of 2021.

Our summer intern, Ashlee Redmond has worked to contact all provincially and federally licenced abattoirs in Ontario to determine what the major issues are for their businesses. Questions centred around three areas - regulations, expanding capacity

and labour. Interestingly, all respondents cited an overload of paperwork, as well as inconsistencies and abrasiveness of inspectors as having a major impact on productivity as well as staff morale. With this information in hand, the committee is fine-tuning recommendations to be submitted to the provincial government including a two-tier regulation system, improved access to qualified labour and a more cooperative inspection model that works with business owners to make improvements as they are needed.

The U.S./China trade war of 2018/2019 resulted in a number of initiatives to compensate U.S. interests injured by Chinese tariffs on exports to that country. One such initiative was the USDA Market Facilitation Program (MFP) with broad-based payments to agriculture producers totalling at least \$28 billion (\$12 in 2018 and \$16 billion in 2019), \$7.1 billion of which was to U.S. Soybean producers. Ontario and Canadian soybean producers compete against the subsidized U.S. producer in an integrated market, but without the U.S. level of subsidies, which affects competitiveness. NFU-O Provincial Council drafted a letter identifying these concerns to the Grain Farmers of Ontario. A discussion was held and further developments may ensue.

Lastly, Provincial Council was saddened to learn of the passing of Peter Dowling. Peter worked tirelessly to advance the goals of the NFU both provincially and nationally and will not be forgotten. Our thoughts and our gratitude go out to Diane and family with this loss.

Stay safe. •



Region 5:

Province of Manitoba

— by Ian Robson, Coordinator, and

Anastasia Fyk, Board Member

NFU Manitoba held our 51st Annual Convention by Internet via Zoom in July. Session one was a meet and greet and intro to Zoom meetings on July 15. On July 22 our three hour meeting was co-chaired by Kate Storey and Dianne Dowling. Resolution topics were identified and then worked into resolutions for debate at the resolutions ZOOM session which was held on July 29.

Convention speakers were:

NFU President Katie Ward on NFU actions, seed issues, to COVID-19, and the need for access to more livestock processing capacity;

Darrin Qualman, NFU Director of Climate Crisis Policy and Action, on soil, farm practices, and eight things we should know about this to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase our net farm income;

Dustin Peltier from Loaf and Honey, a raw milk cheese processor, on how government food processing inspectors are not helping to give guidance for this product. This cheese is processed and sold in other provinces, but here there are excessive or unclear rules. NFU Manitoba has called on our Manitoba

government to clearly help this food processing business with competent advice and;

Justin Girard from Direct Farms Manitoba, on crop insurance for market garden crops in cases of clear loss, such as from flood or hail. This coverage is available in other provinces and Manitoba NFU has asked Manitoba Crop Insurance to set up coverage here. Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation is investigating this coverage.

Region 5 (Manitoba) election results are as follow:

– Region 5 National Farmers Union Board directors:

Anastasia Fyk from Garland, crop and processing of crops; and *Ian Robson* from Deleau, crops and livestock

– Region 5 Women's Advisory:

vacant

– Region 5 Youth Advisory:

Justin Levesque from Winnipeg, market gardening and Community Supported Agriculture

– Region 5 International Program Committee Representative:

Murray Jowett from Winnipeg, studying Agriculture and involved with crop farming.

If you are interested or know of someone who is interested in being the Manitoba representative to the Women's Advisory please get in touch.

Harvest is underway. Frost arrived here on September 8 and 9, after several years of quite unusual first fall frosts in late September or early October.

Nature has limits. Farmers work with nature. Increasingly nature is mistakenly seen as in the way, if its a tree, bird or insect. What is your view of the current population of beneficial insects? Mosquitoes have been very rare this year, yet they are food for many beneficial birds. There seem to be fewer song birds. What needs to be done to save our environment? Those insects help build our soil. Our farming is long term, rather than just next year's spread sheet. What I learned from my grandparents and university only briefly touched the environmental agriculture subject.

Anastasia Fyk has done four interviews (two in French) for Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS) focusing on soil health and setting up a policy framework to get the support of the general public so that farmers can be economically able to choose practices beneficial for the environment. As part of soil health, she emphasized the importance of soil testing and that agricultural chemical distributors have a vested interest when prescribing the application of fertilizer or pesticides (herbicides, fungicides, insecticides). Thorough tests, such as soil nutrient tests, must be conducted by independent or governmental bodies with no vested interest. •



Region 6:

Province of Saskatchewan

— by Glenn Tait, Coordinator

As I write this in early September the provincial harvest is approaching 50% completion. It is more like 5% here in the Northwest, but the forecast is good. The yield is mixed as always, but with a few exceptions, not quite as good as we thought it would be. Then there are the bits close to Moose Jaw where it just did not rain at all. There is no such thing as an average year.

Region 6 “Zoomed-in” for a successful convention on August 10th and 11th. Much thanks goes to our two chairs - Dianne Dowling from Region 3 and Kate Storey from Region 5, as well as to attending staff, especially Executive Director Mara Shaw, for taking notes. Our featured speakers were Darrin Qualman speaking on climate change (<https://youtu.be/CrnDLKjF5ik>) and University of Saskatchewan professor Dr. Christy Morrissey speaking on pesticides in the environment (https://youtu.be/EJO2Z_Ez6ik). Reports and other discussions included progress on the carbon levy case, the right to save seed, and the provincial government's announcement of a \$4 billion irrigation project. The latter prompted a resolution in opposition to the project.

Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau has been criticized for

under funding our sector during COVID-19 and in general. The last package she announced is about 10% of what the Canadian Federation of Agriculture asked for. She has had some qualified successes with the surplus food and foreign worker programs, and she has backed off on saying farmers must spend all of the Business Risk Management (BRM) money available before more federal cash is forthcoming, but efforts have been underwhelming. I do, however, temper my criticism with fiscal realities. It is fortunate that Saskatchewan crop producers have, for the most part, been unaffected by COVID-19, even benefiting from greater access to rail transportation this spring. Conversely, livestock producers were left with no place to go. I think that the \$10 million in assistance offered by the provincial government ran out quickly.

It seems Minister Bibeau's legacy will largely be her attempt, however it ends up, to reform the BRMs. This is still better than former Minister Gerry Ritz's legacy.

New federal Conservative party leader, Erin O'Toole's agricultural policy was called ‘rather thin’ by agriculture columnist Kevin Hursh in the August 20 issue of the Western Producer. In Saskatchewan agricultural policy is politically irrelevant. No matter how brilliant

Liberal, NDP, or Green agriculture policy may be rural areas will not vote for them. No matter how weak or destructive Conservative policy is....well, you know. Hursh noted that the only policy of O'Toole's which is not just a vague promise of improvement is the elimination of the carbon tax. Correct me if I am wrong, but I believe carbon pricing is the only method of CO₂ reduction by government that has been shown to work? The new Conservative agriculture critic is Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MP Lianne Rood. She grew up on an Ontario vegetable farm but she also brags about working with David Anderson and Gerry Ritz to end the Canadian Wheat Board so...

Our provincial Ministry of Agriculture is doing a competent job at the small stuff and missing the mark with the bigger plans. They reasonably support research ventures (especially the production and utilization of pulses), extension agronomy, animal transport and welfare, and they are very good at blaming the federal Liberals for everything they cannot make better themselves. On the mega-plan side they have already cost us billions with their support of the end of the CWB, continue to push for maximum exports instead of maximum profitability, and they have not really thought through the \$4 billion irrigation project. Finally, there is hope, if not for our political leaders and departments, for our succeeding generations. My 23-year old son was using a handy fist-sized stone as a hammer to knock loose some rusty machine parts we were repairing. When a slab of the stone split off he started singing “Breaking rocks in the hot sun...”



Region 7:

Province of Alberta

— by Doug Scott, Coordinator

2020 will be a year we will all remember. It has become the year of world changing events. The most distressing part is that it is not over. My generation is the baby boomers. So, in our history we read about world changing events but we did not experience them first hand. WWII and its problems were behind us. Korea was a long way from home and most of us could not find it on the map. Then came Vietnam and the baby boomer generation emerged. We were referred to as the generation which had been somewhat gifted, then September 11th happened and things were brought much closer to home. And now we find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic and our once respected neighbour to the south is on fire and the best our poor neighbours can get out of their

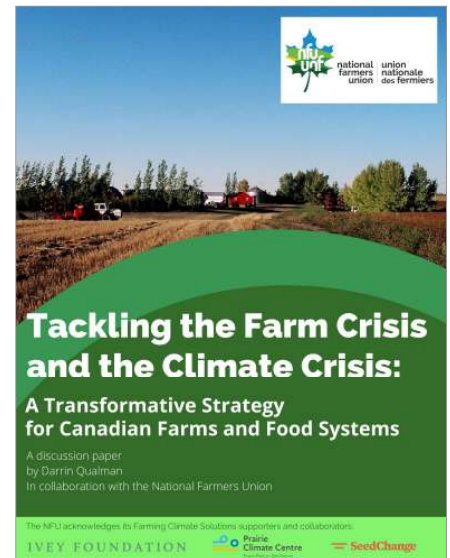
president is, “What the hell is going on?”. The world has become a very complex place and all countries are in need of good leadership. We can only hope that our neighbours make the right call on November 3.

We held our Region 7 virtual Convention on September 12. I would like to thank everyone who helped make it run so smoothly. And special thanks to our presenters Darrin Qualman, Toby Malloy and Peter Eggers. What a ton of information! And to everyone who participated, thank you so much. One of the problems we have always had with our convention is that Alberta is a big place and driving time was a problem. Our virtual experience was great. We got all the necessary things done. Our presenters were fantastic and I think we had near record turnout. I think virtual conventions are here to stay.

Harvest is at various stages across the province with yields in the above to below average range – higher in the south and much lower as you move north. In our area there was significant rain in June which led to localized flooding. Fields with good drainage and slope have fared much better.

I want to pay our deepest sympathies to the Ollikka and Dowling families. The tragic loss of Cory and the untimely passing of Peter have left a big hole in the hearts of the NFU family.

In closing, I will steal a few lines from the late Jack Layton, “Love is better than hate, optimism trumps pessimism, and hope is better than fear.”



Find the NFU on Instagram and YouTube

NFU summer student Steve Edgerton has raised our visibility while not losing our focus. Find farmer interviews, talks, and webinars from past conventions on our [YouTube channel](#). Follow us on [Instagram](#) for posts about our campaigns and to see the inspiring, innovative work being done by our members.



[YouTube: National Farmers Union](#)



[Instagram: NFUcanada](#)

The NFU's new report, ***Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis: A Transformative Strategy for Canadian Farmers and Food Systems***, by Darrin Qualman, is available to download from the NFU website at:

www.nfu.ca/publications/tackling-the-farm-crisis-and-the-climate-crisis/

If you would like a printed copy, please contact the NFU National office at nfu@nfu.ca or call 306-652-9465.

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