

THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION  
L'UNION NATIONALE DES FERMIERS

WINTER 2024  
L'HIVER 2024

# UNION FARMER

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# UNION FERMIÈRE

**The Future of Farming: IN OUR HANDS.** NFU's 2023 Convention followed an impactful lobby day and farmland rally on Parliament Hill. Read more on page 6 & 7.

**L'avenir des fermes : est entre nos mains.** La Convention de l'UNF de 2023 s'est déroulée après une journée de lobbying et une manifestation à propos des terres agricoles sur la Colline du Parlement. Plus d'informations en pages 6 et 7.



*Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms*  
*Communautés fortes. Politiques saines. Fermes durables*

# The National Farmers Union 2023/2024 Board of Directors

The National Farmers Union Board of Directors is elected annually. The Presidential officers are elected at the National Convention. The Regional Board members are elected at their respective Regional Conventions. *Le conseil d'administration de l'UNF est élu chaque année. Les membres du bureau présidentiel sont élus lors du congrès national. Les membres des conseils régionaux sont élus lors de leurs congrès régionaux respectifs.*



**From left to right, Back:** Region 7 (AB) Women's Representative: Mandy Melnyk; Region 5 (MB): Ian Robson; BIPOC Vice-President: Kishon Warmington; Region 7 (AB): Glenn Norman; 2nd Vice-President Operations: Phil Mount; 1st Vice-President Policy: John Kehinde Atoyebi, Region 5 (MB): Matthew Weins.  
**Front:** Youth President: Julia Maxwell; BIPOC President: Jordan River; Women's President: Cady Foreman; President: Jenn Pfenning.

**Not Pictured:** Women's Vice-President: Karen Fyfe; Youth Vice-President: Maia De Graff; Region 1 District 1 (PEI): Byron Petrie; Region 1 District 2 (NB): Barbara Amos; Region 1 District 3 (NS) : Elizabeth Milton; Region 3 (ON): Max Hansgen, Ken Bassindale & Jennifer Osborn; Region 6 (SK): Michael Gertler, Al Birchard & Will Robbins; Region 7 (AB + NWT): Peter Eggers; Region 8 (BC +YK): Ari Westhaver

## A Message from The Fyfe Family (PEI)

As we near the fifth anniversary in our new home, we wanted to take the time to acknowledge the incredible generosity of our community, including the NFU community after losing our heritage farmhouse in February 2019.

Thank you to our family, friends, and neighbours near and far for your support at a time of need. We know more people supported us than we can name in one small thank you note so to everyone who donated time, money, and/or material items, please know that we are endlessly grateful and we will never forget your kindness.

We wish you all a wonderful 2024.  
 ~The Fyfe Family

## Join in for these next classes!

### NFU University | L'Université NF

**08 FEB FÉV**

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CLIMATE**  
 CONNAISSANCE AUTOCHTONE ET LE CLIMAT  
 Dr. Leonardo Figueroa Helland

**22 FEB FÉV**

**BLACK FARMERS' HISTORY**  
 L'HISTOIRE DES FERMIERES NOIRES  
 Dr. Karina Vernon

**25 APR / AVRIL**

**TBA**  
 À DÉTERMINER

**14 MAR**

**WETLANDS**  
 LES ZONES HUMIDES  
 Dr. Kerri Finlay, Dr. Colin Whitfield

**11 APR / AVRIL**

**AGROECOLOGY**  
 AGROÉCOLOGIE  
 Dr. Miguel Altieri

**28 MAR**

**COLONIAL ROOTS OF MODERN FTAS**  
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## A Message from Un message de

**Jenn Pfenning**  
*NFU President,*  
*Présidente de l'UNF*

**A**s farmers we bridge the gap between ancient knowledge and cutting edge science every day. Nothing is more awe-inspiring than watching new life emerge from the soil in a process we nurture but never control completely. Each new life under our care renews hope for the future, and is an awesome responsibility to future generations.

This shared sense of care for the earth and community is an idea that I hear in most of my conversations with fellow farmers. It was evident at convention in the conversations between generations of farmers, and it is evident in the resolutions we have passed at conventions every year. This past convention was a powerful experience in democratic action and inspirational workshops, and it was the culmination of countless hours put in by our many wonderful staff.

The NFU is taking bold stands on high level policies while not forgetting the daily work of farming. The resolutions passed and referred at convention cover issues from the Canadian Grain Commission to wool and meat, and from human rights to the climate crisis —what a world we have envisioned! It is one where the land is cared for by many diverse hands that are empowered and supported by policies that protect the health of the soil and the biodiversity of our environment. Future generations are counting on us to ensure there is clean water, air, and soil to grow food.

We will be working to put the internal resolutions into policy and strategy within the NFU. This includes lobbying the government on farmland access and protection and improved rights for migrant workers. The board is reinvigorated with new energy and it is wonderful to welcome so many brilliant new and returning leaders!

**This is your Union. Your voice and energy are needed to make these resolutions become reality.** Join a committee. Get engaged with a caucus. Meet with your Member of Parliament. Let's make 2024 a year NFU farmers' voices were heard across the country.

**E**n tant que fermiers, nous bâtissons chaque jour un pont entre les connaissances ancestrales et la science de pointe. Rien n'est plus impressionnant que de voir une nouvelle vie émerger du sol dans le cadre d'un processus que nous entretenons, mais que nous ne contrôlons jamais complètement. Chaque nouvelle vie dont nous nous occupons renouvelle l'espoir en l'avenir et constitue une formidable responsabilité à l'égard des générations futures.

Ce sentiment partagé de prendre soin de la terre et de la communauté est une idée que j'entends dans la plupart des conversations que j'ai avec mes collègues fermiers. Elle était évidente lors de la convention dans les conversations entre les générations de fermiers, et elle est évidente dans les résolutions que nous avons adoptées lors des conventions chaque année.

La convention a été une expérience puissante d'action démocratique et d'ateliers inspirants, et elle a été le point culminant d'innombrables heures consacrées par nos nombreux et merveilleux employés. L'UNF prend des positions audacieuses sur des politiques de haut niveau sans pour autant oublier le travail quotidien des fermiers. Les résolutions adoptées et renvoyées à la convention couvrent des questions allant de la Commission canadienne des grains à la laine et à la viande, ainsi que des droits de l'homme jusqu'à la crise climatique. Quel monde nous avons imaginé ! Il s'agit d'un monde où la terre est entretenue par des mains multiples et diverses, qui sont habilitées et soutenues par des politiques qui protègent la santé des sols et la biodiversité de notre environnement. Les générations futures comptent sur nous pour garantir la salubrité de l'eau, de l'air et des sols pour la production alimentaire.

Nous nous efforcerons de traduire les résolutions internes en politiques et en stratégies au sein de l'UNF. Il s'agira notamment de faire pression sur le gouvernement en ce qui concerne l'accès aux terres agricoles et leur protection, ainsi que l'amélioration des droits des travailleurs migrants. Le conseil d'administration est revigoré par une nouvelle énergie et il est merveilleux d'accueillir tant de nouveaux dirigeants brillants, ainsi que ceux qui reviennent !

**Il s'agit de votre Union. Votre voix et votre énergie sont nécessaires pour que ces résolutions deviennent réalité.** Rejoignez un comité. Engagez-vous auprès d'un caucus. Rencontrez votre député. Faisons en sorte que 2024 soit l'année où la voix des fermiers de l'UNF sera entendue dans tout le pays.



A Message from  
**Julie Maxwell**  
*NFU Youth President*

I am so excited to be stepping into the role of Youth President! What an honour it is to represent such a brilliant and dynamic group of people! Young farmers are few and far between these days — especially where I live in the prairies; but what we lack in numbers we seem to make up for in passion. The energy coming from the young folks at convention was palpable, as dozens showed up to participate in lobby day meetings, resolutions debates, presentations and workshops. I think this speaks volumes to the excellent leadership of Jessie MacInnis (previous Youth President), Maia De Graff (previous and current Youth VP), and all the others who have worked so hard to foster a culture of inclusion and empowerment over the years.

Farmland access has been a major rallying issue for us this year, as the cost of farmland continues to rise far beyond its productive value, and the dream of owning a farm becomes more and more out of reach. On November 22nd, we held a Day of Action for Farmland Protection in partnership with the Migrant Worker Working Group. This included a rally on Parliament Hill and an open letter calling for a ban on investor ownership of farmland. Over a hundred individuals and organizations have signed our letter so far, including Seed Change, Food Secure Canada, 350 Canada and Climate Action Network Canada. We'll continue this work in the new year.

We are also in the process of launching a new NFU Youth Buddy program. The program pairs experienced NFU members with new NFU members. There is so much to learn about NFU's historic roots, and no better way to learn about them than straight from the horse's mouth! The energy from young farmers in the NFU is high—after years of developing relationships with one another, we want to further expand our organizing power by nurturing new relationships. It's time to pass the torch—NFU Youth are here for it! Reach me at [nfuyouth@nfu.ca](mailto:nfuyouth@nfu.ca) if you want to get involved or learn more. In solidarity!



A Message from  
**Cady Foreman**  
*NFU Women's President*

I want to send a special thank you to recently retired Women's President Bess Vanzandwyck and Vice President Kumari Gurusamy for their work, intelligence and utmost kindness. I'm eager to lead and carry on the legacy of the Women's Caucus with Vice President Karen Fyfe and step into this role of great responsibility. I hope my contributions demonstrate the tremendous gratitude that I have for this role.

Today, I see us in a pot of boiling water—issues that farmers faced in the 1960s persist today and there are far fewer of us out there. As if that is not challenging in and of itself, corporate power is far more pervasive and our support for it is entrenched in our daily lives. Simply buying groceries, selling our goods to certain retailers, purchasing tools and amendments all can be means to fund the ABCD (Archer Daniels, Bunge, Cargills, and Louis Dreyfuss) corporations that lobby against the interests of farm organisations like ourselves. It is somewhat daunting thinking of the challenge that lies before us. It's time to take the pot off the stove and cool down the water.

We need hope, connection and action. I have great confidence in people being well-intentioned and willing to work towards the greater good. I'm inspired by the support from members of the Women's Caucus and I'm excited to continue to learn from one another. Our relationships, shared knowledge and energy are fueling the work ahead of us this year.

**The Stuart Thiesson  
memorial award**

celebrates the life of Stuart Thiesson, long time member of the NFU and bold advocate of farmers'



rights. The award is granted annually to an NFU member who contributes significantly toward equity. **In 2023, Camille Koon received the award** for her work supporting and convening the BIPOC Caucus. **Thank you for your contribution, Camille!**



## A Message from Kishon Warmington

NFU BIPOC Vice President

2023 was a full year of change, action, connection, and learning, thanks to the collaboration and steady commitment of many of our caucus members working together from far and wide. This includes the series of in-person farmer-led knowledge and connection-building BIPOC workshops that were a great success. Through each workshop, as well as at the national convention, we've found the importance of strengthening cohesion, relationships, and bonds with each other.

Presently we have been reorganizing and regrouping, building our momentum within the caucus. We have organized many ad hoc working groups within the caucus; creating new leadership opportunities, furthering our collective work and furthering our identity and community building development.



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One need we have identified is the need for strong direction through a strategic plan. We are in the process of identifying a facilitator to aid us with the tools to begin planning and strategizing how to effectively implement this plan.

Other areas that we have been working on are:

- Learning together with a focus on empowering the caucus around priority issues affecting BIPOC farmers and farm workers through the establishment of a short-term learning fund
- Meeting, deepening relationships, organizing our power
- Sending care packages; supporting local BIPOC businesses and caucus members
- Virtual storytelling and in-person kitchen table relationship building initiatives

Our focus is towards building relationships, meaning, community, and inclusion within the group. We are committed to defining our collective identity. That can include YOU! **All BIPOC NFU members and prospective NFU members are invited to join us at our monthly meetings and in our work.** We communicate using a google group. If you'd like to join the group, please email Camille at [koon@nfu.ca](mailto:koon@nfu.ca) to be added. We will share opportunities and meeting times through this channel. We're looking forward to yet another meaningful year ahead of us.

## Beingessner Award for Writing & Creative Media

*As today's interrelated crises fuel unprecedented environmental disasters and human rights violations, how are young farmers envisioning and creating unified communities and agroecological futures?*



### Ellis Hamm

has spent the last seven years alternating between small-scale, regenerative agriculture in the summer, and working with people in schools and churches in the winter. They reside in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba depending on the time of year.



### Briar von der Kall

is a 29 year old nonbinary farmer-in-training in Hamilton Ontario. They are currently living on their family's biodiverse organic farm and positioned to become a third generation farmer. Though initially reticent to take over the farm, they have grown over time to become not just willing, but excited to steward the continuing evolution of their family's small plot of land.

#### About the Award

The NFU holds an annual national writing and creative media competition in memory of Paul Beingessner. Winners receive \$500. Ellis Hamm and Briar Rosemary won this year's competition. You can check out their writing submissions at <https://www.nfu.ca/pubtype/s/paul-beingessner-award/>



## NFU Members Lobby on Parliament Hill

**T**he future of farming in our hands, and our voices! This is the message from the NFU's pre-Convention Lobby Day in Ottawa on November 22nd. **Over 40 farmers, farmworkers and members from across the county met with Members of Parliament, Senators, and public officials** on asks around the creation of a Canadian Farm Resilience Agency, farmland protection and a ban on investor ownership, the protection of a public interest seed system, and freedom of association rights for all farmworkers.

The meetings overall were positive, insightful, and impactful. Members gained skills and experience lobbying together, relationships and allies were strengthened, and there are meetings with more MPs scheduled into 2024. Federal politicians are listening. Despite an overcast and drizzly day, spirits were high. The Youth and Farm Workers led a dynamic rally for farmland protection on Parliament Hill.



Lobby Day was not just a singular event. It helped clarify and direct months of collaborative action and policy work across the NFU, provided an impetus to engage over 50 members in communications and policy training, and bolstered a momentum and eagerness for advocacy that is at the heart of the NFU and continues beyond this one event.

Here's to our ongoing political work and the power of collaboration, raising our voices, and working for a just future!

## A look back on NFU's 54th National Convention

### The Future of Farming: In Our Hands

**T**he NFU's inspiring, energizing 54th national convention in Ottawa in Nov. 2023 was definitely the highlight of a very invigorating year! Having galvanized ourselves with a well-planned, highly successful Lobby Day and a rally on Parliament Hill, NFU members learned more about key issues from our three speaker panels.

#### **Confronting Power**

**Dr. Kelly Bronson**, author of *The Immaculate Conception of Data*, examined the use of data collected when farmers adopt precision agriculture tools and management apps. She demonstrated how corporations are utilizing data collection and legal agreements to lock farmers into dependency on their products, agglomerate data to assess and potentially control markets, extract revenue and build power.

**Tim Wise** talked about researching his book, *Eating Tomorrow*, noting "the overwhelming power agribusiness firms wield." In meetings with farmers and officials in Malawi, Mexico and elsewhere, he investigated how corporations such as Monsanto/Bayer seek to control food systems around the world, and how people are resisting.

**Stuart Trew** reflected on nearly forty years of trade agreements and how these agreements "set limits on democracy" and constrain national policy

spheres, including for food and agriculture. He observed we are now enmeshed in agreements that fail to create jobs, improve equality, and protect biodiversity and our planetary future.

#### **Keynote Speaker:**

**Fatima Syed**, journalist, detailed her team's investigation of the heavy-handed Ontario government actions to open up protected lands for development without notice, consultation and transparency. They uncovered the machinations used to fundamentally undermine protection of Ontario farmland and environmental lands. This exposure helped reverse some of the most egregious decisions.





### **Creating the Future We Want:**

**Gabriel Allahdua** urged understanding migrant workers' conditions, including denial of basic human rights, exclusion from Canadian residency and tied employment. He spoke of the injustices at every level of government, the climate of fear, and racism of the programs. He highlighted the critical importance of permanent residence status and called out silence as complicity.

**Aabir Day** presented seed policy in an international context, and the benefits of Canadian farmers being involved in plant breeding and seed policy advocacy. The corporate concentration around proprietary seed varieties is reducing our genetic diversity and farmers' access to diverse seeds. Day called for a massive recommitment to publicly funded public plant breeding programs and regulatory support for farmer-led seed initiatives, including protection of seed for organic production.

**Rav Singh** spoke about the Ontario Greenbelt, its value and the 2022/23 Ontario government attempt to develop housing and roads on Greenbelt land. Collaboration among the farm groups and other local organizations, supported by good journalism, pushed the government to reverse its decisions.

Throughout the convention, friendships were rekindled, music, dancing and deep discussions were enjoyed, and we all renewed our commitment to continue to fight - collectively.

All of the presentations are available on the NFU's website and YouTube channel for watching, rewatching and sharing. <https://www.nfu.ca/2023convention/> or [www.youtube.com/@NationalFarmersUnionCanada](https://www.youtube.com/@NationalFarmersUnionCanada)

### **Organizing for Change:**

**Stewart Wells**, NFU lifelong leader presented the many successes of the NFU, emphasizing the importance of "being present" throughout our history. He highlighted our roles in the grain marketing co-ops such as the Prairie Wheat Pools; the Canadian Wheat Board; Supply Management; and blocking the introduction of both rBGH and GM wheat. He concluded with the multi-decade struggle to counter corporate-friendly trade agreements, including the WTO.

**Amanda Wilson**, also urged us to remember our victories. "Our dominant social institutions work in such a way as to encourage us to forget the impressive social movements and collective actions that came before us." She pointed to the Winnipeg General Strike; farmers organizing in the Great Depression against foreclosures; and more. Wilson shared campaign organizers' success stories where disruption, humility, and friendship were key.

**Karen Ross**, ED of Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS), shared how the farmer-led coalition advances agricultural emissions reduction. She underscored FCS's effectiveness, including its significant contributions to establishing the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) and the federal-provincial Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP).

## **Plus, NFU's First Indigenous Learning Circle at Convention**

**M**embers of the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group (ISWG) came together at the 54th annual NFU Convention to lead an interactive Learning Circle on relationship building and decolonization. Participants of the convention were guided by Indigenous principles of relationality and governance. They came together to learn and share about their relationship to land, how colonization has impacted them and their families, and to dream a future vision for a just and equitable food system.



**“*Natasha and Celeste brought so much honesty, generosity and humanity to the circle. The ways in which the whole facilitation team worked together really modeled relationship-building, trust, and good ways of working together.*”**

In addition to the Learning Circle, members of the Farmland Committee and the ISWG were able to pass a resolution (see page 14) for the NFU to create an Indigenous Solidarity Strategy. **The ISWG invites you to participate in this collaborative work towards holistic, concrete, and collective action towards reconciliation in the NFU!** Email Terran at [ipccoordinator@nfu.ca](mailto:ipccoordinator@nfu.ca) to learn more.





## Standing up to Farmland Financialization

—by Cathy Holtlander, NFU Director of Research and Policy

**F**armland financialization happens when farmland is owned as a financial asset for its investment value instead of for its ability to produce agricultural products. Farmland is often promoted to potential investors as “gold with dividends” because it holds its value like gold, and the rent farmers pay is like a dividend paid on stocks in a company. The relationship between an investor-owner and the land is quite different from the relationship between the farmer and the land. While the farmer lives on or near the farm and earns an income by planting crops and/or raising livestock (in often uncertain conditions), the investment company shareholders may have never seen a farm, yet “farm the farmers” through rent and land price increases.

One farmland investment company that already owns over 83,000 acres (130 square miles) says it “provides investors with the opportunity to participate passively and indirectly in the consolidation of agricultural land primarily in the Province of Saskatchewan. The Agricultural Land LP seeks to generate returns for the Agricultural Land Trust via the capital appreciation of its growing portfolio of farmland and the leasing of its land holdings.” Its investors must buy a minimum of \$25,000 worth of trust units to get in on the game. These investments are RRSP eligible, and also provide other tax benefits to the investor in addition to the rent and eventual share of the land’s selling price.

Other investment companies with similar structures, goals and investment strategies include Veripath, Manulife, Nicola Wealth Management, and Bonfield.

Farmland investment companies rely on farmers to operate the farms to produce returns. In some cases, renters are themselves large farms that have grown in size and complexity to the point they can no longer be considered “family farms”. These extra-large farms can be well over 30,000 acres, made up of both owned and rented land, and which hire non-family seasonal labour and managers.

Farmland investment companies put pressure on farmer tenants to maximize yields in order to pay high rents. They encourage draining wetlands, cultivating native prairie, and cutting down hedgerows and shelterbelts to increase the farmable acres and to make it easier to use large equipment that can till, seed, spray and harvest more land faster. Even when renters want to maintain natural habitat on the land, the owner can easily rent to someone else who would be willing to farm it corner to corner.

The vicious circle of large farms, high rents, high land prices, and rising interest rates make it increasingly impossible for smaller farms to expand, or for young farmers to buy land even if they are from a farming family. The cost of borrowing millions of dollars for land and equipment is prohibitive, and banks are less willing to take risks on lending to small and/or less experienced farmers.

Like the input companies, the banks, the grain companies and the railways, farmland investment companies use their size and market power to take more than their fair share of what the farmer produces. They use excess profits to enrich investors and to buy more financial assets to further enhance their power. This leaves less and less of the value of farmers’ crops and livestock in the hands of farmers to maintain and improve their own farms or spend in their communities.

Over the past five years, [Agricultural Land Trust](#) made an annual return on investment ranging from 12.61% to 19.69% while [Statistics Canada](#) reports that Saskatchewan farmers’ return on assets ranged from 1.8% to 8.3% over same period. This farmland investment company getting a higher return from collecting rent than what farmers make from growing crops.

Farmers in many other countries are facing the same kind of problems. Many of the Temporary Foreign Workers working on

(continued on page 2...)



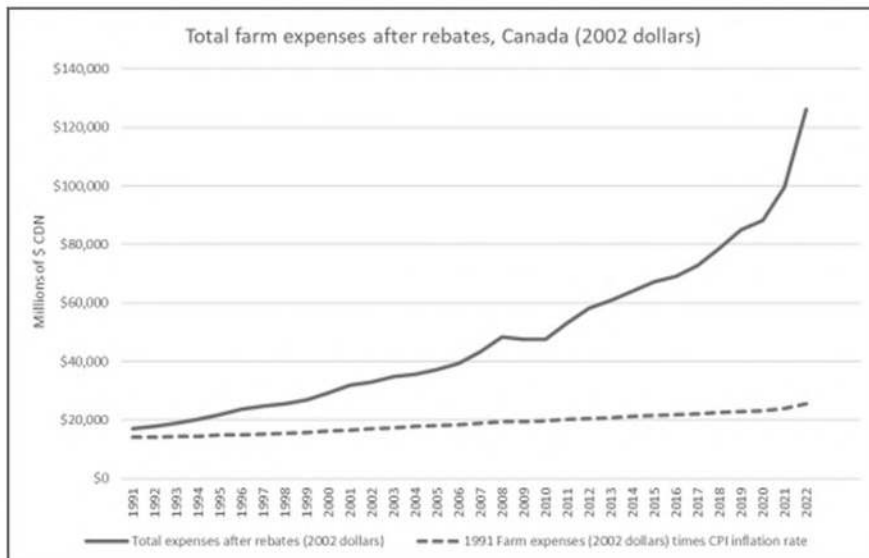
*(Standing up to Farmland Financialization, from page 1)*

Canadian farms are from countries where people are being pushed off their farms and forced to look for jobs in the city or abroad to support their families.

In Canada, the total net income farmers earn from the market has been stagnant for decades. The purchasing power of these dollars has dropped, as the costs for land, inputs and equipment have risen faster than prices for the consumer basket used to calculate the Cost Of Living in Canada. The solid line on the graph (right) shows rising total farm expenses, adjusted to constant 2002 dollars, and the dotted line shows total farm expenses in 1991 multiplied by the Consumer Price Index. This shows that the cost of farming has risen much faster than the cost of living in Canada. Because of this, it is necessary for each farmer to sell more and more product – this has to come from more input-intensive farming and/or farming more land. Larger farms means fewer farmers.

Farmland financialization is a one of the ways our economy extracts wealth from farmers and the land, and is a key factor in the process of dispossession that driving farmers off the land.

The increasing consolidation for farmland ownership, with larger tracts of land under the control of farmland investment companies and investor-like



Source: Statistics Canada

large farms, is both a symptom and a cause of the farmland access crisis that acutely affects young people and marginalized people who wish to farm. Unchecked, this cycle of consolidation and extraction will continue to eject farmers from the land and fundamentally change the character of our food and agriculture system.

To reverse the farmland consolidation, policy responses are needed. This is why the NFU is calling for a ban on farmland investment company ownership of farmland and why we support enactment legislation in all provinces along the lines of the Prince Edward Island Lands Protection Act, to limit the total amount of land an individual or a corporation may own. ■



For more information about farmland issues, visit <https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/farmland/>

If you are interested in joining the Farmland Action Committee to work with other NFU members on farmland issues, contact the national office at 306-652-9465 or [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca)



# A short History of Food Sovereignty

—by Cathy Holtlander, NFU Director of Research and Policy

The NFU's roots go back more than 100 years to when farmers fought back against their exploitation by the railways, banks and grain companies. We continue to fight corporate power by organizing like-minded farmers and farm workers, and working with allies. Now, Food Sovereignty is our guiding principle. *Food sovereignty* means democratic control of the food system – it's not just having enough to eat, but having a say in how our food is produced, determining who benefits from the food system, and making sure that what we do today will support a good future for the next generations. It's worth looking back to when the concept was developed by farmers (including NFU members), peasants, Indigenous peoples, herders, fishers and other food producers in Canada and internationally.

In the early 1990s the World Trade Organization (WTO) was created to set up a world-wide system of trade rules. While government-level negotiations were going on, peasant and farmers' organizations from the Global North and South were meeting and talking about what this would mean to farmers. They understood that the WTO would take agriculture policy out of the realm of national governments, and would put WTO rules above any demands made by the people of each country. This would seriously weaken our national-level political actions. Furthermore, farmers in the North and the South alike were being exploited by the same multinational corporations. The WTO rules that support companies' global power simultaneously restrict farmers' democratic power.

La Via Campesina (LVC) is the international movement of farm and peasant organizations that came together to resist the WTO and all it stood for. In 2017, former NFU President Nettie Wiebe, who participated in founding the LVC, reflected on the challenge of finding the right words to express what they were fighting for:

*This was about more than producing more food or distributing it more efficiently. We were grappling with fundamental questions of power and democracy: Who controls food producing resources such as land, water, seeds and genetics and for what purposes? Who gets to decide what is grown, how and where it is grown and for whom? We needed to have language that expressed the political dimensions of our struggle.*

*Food Sovereignty is such a term. It provokes the necessary discourse about power, freedom, democracy, equality, justice, sustainability and culture. Food is taken out of the realm of being primarily a market commodity and re-embedded in the social, ecological, cultural and local contexts as a source of nutrition, livelihood, meaning and relationships.*

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***...Food Sovereignty is our guiding principle. Food sovereignty means democratic control of the food system...***

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In 2007, NFU members went to Mali for the historic Nyéléni International Forum on Food Sovereignty. The [Nyéléni Declaration](#) includes this paragraph:

*Most of us are food producers and are ready, able and willing to feed all the world's peoples. Our heritage as food producers is critical to the future of humanity. This is specially so in the case of women and indigenous peoples who are historical creators of knowledge about food and agriculture and are devalued. But this heritage and our capacities to produce healthy, good and abundant food are being threatened and undermined by neo-liberalism and global capitalism. Food sovereignty gives us the hope and power to preserve, recover and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity.*

Attending the Nyéléni forum sparked the *Peoples Food Policy Project*, led by the late Cathleen Kneen, and involved many NFU members. Through a three-year participatory process, it introduced and spread the concept of Food Sovereignty throughout the food movement, and changed the conversation in Canada. You can read more about the project on Food Secure Canada's website.

The NFU's International Program Committee, or the IPC, connects the concerns and demands of farmers in Canada with those of our sister organizations in the LVC, helping us better understand how corporate power and governments that support corporate power are harming us here at home. These relationships also connect the NFU more closely with the struggles of Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world, and with migrant workers – who are often farmers displaced from their home countries.

*(continued on page 4...)*



*(A Short History of Food Sovereignty, from page 3)*

We also look at policy issues within Canada through the lens of Food Sovereignty. Seed is fundamental to farmers' livelihoods, identity, culture and autonomy, but for corporations, control of seed is a way to transfer enormous wealth to their shareholders. This is why seed is the site of power struggle, and why seed issues are such a high priority for the NFU. When the USA decided to use the Canada-US-Mexico Trade Agreement (CUSMA) to challenge Mexico's decision to ban imports of GM white corn used for making tortillas and dough, we urged Canada to stay out of the dispute. We are working with allies in Mexico, Canada and the USA to support Mexico's food sovereignty. Land is also a critical foundation of our food system. We oppose land grabbing within Canada, as well as internationally. Rapid increases in land prices mean only the very wealthiest buyers can afford to pay for land. To keep farmland in farmers' hands we are calling for a ban on its ownership by farmland investment companies.

The NFU has always supported institutions like the Canadian Wheat Board, the provincial hog marketing boards and Supply Management. They provide farmers

with market power, are democratically governed by elected farmers, and limit the power of multinational corporations. Such institutions ensure farmers of all sizes can access markets, and are paid full value for their products. These institutions are examples of food sovereignty in action at a larger scale. They show us how food sovereignty is able to deliver better quality of life, more prosperity, less inequality and enable more ecological sustainability.

We are facing many serious problems in the world. Who has power, who has the say over how we organize our production, who gets to define the problem and decide what we can and cannot do about it is what really matters. Confronting this kind of power means people need to work together in solidarity. As people of the land, our concerns are long term – we are thinking of future generations. We can support each other and build food sovereignty together. ■

*This article is based on the presentation Cathy gave at the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations' Food Sovereignty conference in Saskatoon, September 2023.*

## Connecting the dots ...

When I read this morning's paper, I was struck by the front-page headlines: ***Two local CEOs among highest paid in nation*** and ***Farmers' mental health a growing concern***. I read that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' ***report on CEO pay*** shows Ken Seitz, CEO of fertilizer giant Nutrien, got \$11,353,564 in compensation in 2023. Meanwhile, the farmer mental health story highlights studies showing thoughts of suicide are twice as high among Canadian farmers than in the general population, with financial difficulty, along with isolation, as a key factors. These two stories reminded me of the article, ***FCC says 2023 crop was the most expensive crop ever for farmers***, where Farm Credit Canada said the situation was due to higher input costs and lower commodity prices.

Nutrien is Canada's largest fertilizer company, created when Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and Agrium merged in 2018. It now has 44% of Canada's ammonia market and 46% of the urea market. Notably, farmers' fertilizer expenses increased dramatically following this merger. When so few companies control the sector, they can make windfall profits at the expense of farmers. In the NFU's brief to the Competition Bureau, ***The Competition Act as a Tool for Democracy – Fairness for Farmers***, we called for changes to enable it to address anti-competitive behaviour and abuse of dominance.

Another aspect of rising input costs is that, without market power, the main strategy cash crop farmers have to improve their incomes is to maximize yields by using inputs. Yet, the more we produce, the easier it is for buyers like Cargill and Bunge to depress prices and still make a profit.

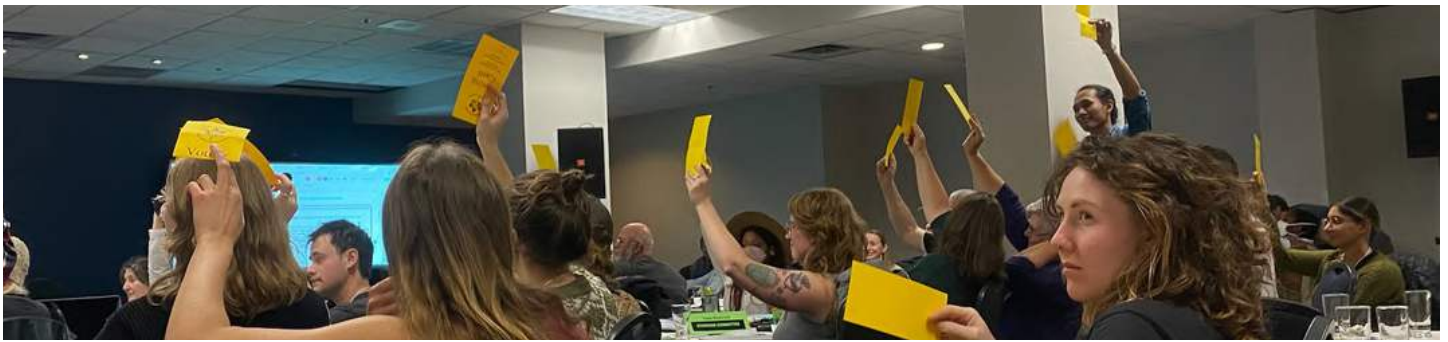
***Field Notes: Looking Upstream at the Farmer Mental Health Crisis in Canada***, by the NFU's Mental Health Working Group Chair, Zsafia Mendly-Zambo, concluded that pervasive economic uncertainty and precarity is at the heart of the mental health crisis – and that government policies to address unfettered corporate concentration in the food sector, consolidation and financialization of farmland, climate change, and trade liberalization are needed to change this.

Being involved with the NFU lessens isolation, and by organizing for change, we can push for government action to limit corporate power – and rebuild economic dignity, along with the health of our people and our planet.

— Cathy Holtslander, NFU Director of Research and Policy



Source: Statistics Canada



*Delegates raise voting cards in person for resolutions. The Future of Farming is In Our Hands.*

## Therefore Be It Resolved...

# Resolutions Passed at 54th National Farmers Union Convention— November 23-25 2023

### 1. Protection of Prime

#### Agricultural Land

**WHEREAS** protected, prime farmland around major urban centres is under immediate, irreversible threat, in the face of a rush to increasingly unfettered development; and

**WHEREAS** the current wave of development has been made possible by multiple, unilateral changes to legislation and regulations by a single political party in power, with no meaningful consultation or input from stakeholders outside of the development community; and

**WHEREAS** the previous legislation, regulations and policies providing a framework for development represented a balance of societal forces and priorities, negotiated over generations; and

**WHEREAS** farmland is lost forever, and for future generations, once developed for urban settlement or aggregate extraction.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU push all politicians to publicly pledge to limit urban sprawl, including highways, onto all farmland, and hold as their highest priority the protection of prime agricultural land (including class 1, 2, and 3 soils) from irreversible destruction via urban development or aggregate extraction.

### 2. Public Lands to Productive Agricultural Lands

**WHEREAS** the maritime provinces lead the country in unused

farmland; and

**WHEREAS** many young and marginalized farmers face barriers to access farmland;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU lobby governments at all levels to establish protocols for transitioning fallow government/public-owned farm land to public/community managed food gardens, farms and food distribution outlets, as a means of making that land accessible to new and marginalized farmers.

### 3. Healthcare for Migrant

#### Workers

**WHEREAS** migrant workers are valued members of our communities and their contributions are critical to the Canadian food system; and

**WHEREAS** migrant workers pay income taxes and contribute to the economy; and

**WHEREAS** all workers in Canada have the right to public health care access; and

**WHEREAS** some provinces give migrant workers access to provincial health care coverage upon arrival;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU advocate to provincial and federal governments that ALL migrant workers in Canada have access to provincial health care upon arrival in Canada, in addition to any private health care coverage.

### 4. Public Transit to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**WHEREAS** NFU policy states it will lobby the government to invest in



*Josh Suppan, Region 3 speaks to resolution*

regional public transit, and

**WHEREAS** 'The NFU demands that all levels of government acknowledge the need to massively and urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.'

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU lobby the national and provincial/territorial governments for the construction and renovation of public transportation systems to move people and goods, particularly agricultural labour and produce, with emphasis on rail based systems powered by renewable energy.

### 5. Interprovincial Electrical Grid

**WHEREAS** the NFU's Tackling report calls for the electrification of everything possible, and

**WHEREAS** the latest Federal budget allocates money to create an



east-west inter-provincial electrical grid, which is necessary to help manage the intermittent supply from renewable solar and wind via connection to existing hydro,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU support the creation of a publicly controlled interprovincial electrical grid, particularly between BC-AB-SK-MB and between Ontario and Quebec to accelerate the transition to a net-zero national electricity grid and the clean energy opportunities the new connections would create.

## **6. Updating Meat Freezing**

### **Guidelines**

**WHEREAS** the advent of plastic and refrigeration has led to the standardization of meat processing, including the breaking down of a carcass and storage in vacuum-sealed bags within 24 hours of slaughter.

**WHEREAS** provincial and federal governments have based their food safety guidelines for frozen beef on these standardized practices.

**WHEREAS** beef processing practices have expanded since the establishment of these standards to include a greater variety of aging techniques, dry aging being best-suited to extending shelf-life as a frozen product. However, governmental food guidelines have not been updated to reflect these advancements in meat-processing techniques.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU contact the appropriate government departments to request freezing guidelines be updated to reflect the modern techniques and technologies being used to preserve and enhance the flavour of beef and the impact they have on frozen shelf life.

## **7. Declaration on the Rights of Peasants**

**WHEREAS** after nearly 20 years of advocacy and negotiation by La Via Campesina, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018; and

**WHEREAS** Canada abstained in

this vote, but the UNDROP still became part of international law, which Canada and all UN member states must respect; and

**WHEREAS** the UNDROP outlines multiple rights demands that are relevant to the Canadian agricultural context, such as the right to access land, water, and means of production, the right to seed sovereignty, and the right to work in safe and healthy working conditions; and

**WHEREAS** the UNDROP defines 'peasant' with the intention to distinguish small-scale farmers from agribusiness operations, a broad category which many NFU members fall into without explicitly referring to themselves as 'peasants'; and

**WHEREAS** the UNDROP is precedent-setting, as it identifies 'peasants' as a political social class and elaborates on new, distinct rights that must be respected by member states to ensure just agrarian livelihoods and pathways to food sovereignty; and

**WHEREAS** the NFU states the struggle for food sovereignty as one of its guiding principles.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU advocate for the Canadian government to vote in favour of the UNDROP at the UN General Assembly; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the NFU advocate for the implementation of the UNDROP across production scales and legal jurisdictions and urge the Canadian government to respect and uphold the rights contained within its articles both in Canada and its relations abroad.

## **8. International Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**

**WHEREAS** climate change is primarily caused by the burning and extraction of fossil fuels; and

**WHEREAS** climate change is already impacting farmers by adversely affecting water security, reducing crop yields, and harming livestock, and farm workers with increased exposure to extreme weather and forest fire smoke; and

**WHEREAS** in 2021, a block of Pacific nations spearheaded an initiative at COP26 to call on all governments to develop an

"International Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty" that would halt the expansion of any new coal, oil, or gas production and phase out existing production of fossil fuels in a manner that is fair and equitable, and ensures a global just transition that provides universal access to clean energy.

**WHEREAS** endorsing the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty would align with NFU's current work on climate change,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU endorse the call to create an International Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty and publicly endorse the call by becoming a signatory organization;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the NFU call upon the government of Canada to use all diplomatic measures to create and endorse a binding International Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty as soon as possible

## **9. Lands Protection**

**WHEREAS** PEI has a Lands Protection Act that protects the island from land ownership consolidation; and

**WHEREAS** Ontario's greenbelt is also a protected farmland, woodland and wetland area; and

**WHEREAS** there are other protected areas in Canada that should be protected from being purchased by a sole entity or person; and

**WHEREAS** we see the problems of monopolies and especially oligarchies (ie. a few owning everything) in our broader society;

**WHEREAS** land is a finite resource that should be available to all.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU advocate for similar legislation to the P.E.I Lands Protection Act, across the provinces and territories which protects provincial and territorial lands from ownership consolidation, be applied across the country.

## **10. Canadian Grain Act Summit**

**WHEREAS** Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has initiated a Review of the Canada Grain Act (CGA) that is well underway; and

**WHEREAS** the CGA was introduced in the early 1900s to balance the

relationship between farmers and the grain industry with regulatory provisions that historically provided farmers with the surety of being treated fairly in their dealings with grain companies: and

**WHEREAS** the oversight role of the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) has been significantly diminished in recent decades; and

**WHEREAS** the CGA Review is of supreme and urgent importance as it will impact the relationship between farmers and the grain industry into the future; and

**WHEREAS** the recommendations advanced by key farm organizations are similar between these organizations

**BE IT RESOLVED** that, to safeguard the interests and rights of producers, the NFU urge the Alberta Federation of Agriculture (AFA), Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), National Farmers' Union (NFU), and SaskWheat to help jointly organize a Canada Grain Act Summit of concerned organizations to review common CGA policy objectives and to develop and endorse common CGA policy recommendations that maintain the effectiveness and integrity of both the Canada Grain Act and the Canadian Grain Commission to act in the interests of producers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the common CGA policy recommendations from the Summit be communicated to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the three CGC Commissioners with the request for a follow-up meeting on an urgent basis.

### **11. Farmworker Protections from Climate Impacts**

**WHEREAS** farm workers are and will be increasingly impacted by climate crisis events and face associated health risks, as well as lost wages, creating an impending (and preventable) health and safety crisis that threatens Canadian food sovereignty; and

**WHEREAS** although producers who are saddled with extraordinary costs due to the climate crisis can

apply for payments through Business Risk Management programs, these programs do not address the costs incurred by farmers in implementing the controls needed to keep workers safe and employed; and

**WHEREAS** Provincial or Territorial Occupation Health and Safety (OHS) Acts do not contain or have insufficient regulations to protect workers from dangerous work conditions related to the climate crisis; and regulations which do exist are often vague, optional, or unenforced;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** that the NFU advocate for proactive and responsive measures from all levels of government, including OHS regulations, that make farm workplaces safer such as effective PPE and mandatory risk reduction protocols that limit exposure to heat, smoke, and other climate hazards; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the NFU advocate for long term public investments in

**a)** support programs for all farm workers whose incomes and health will be impacted by lost work hours due to acute climate emergencies

**b)** supporting farm employers who will incur additional implementation costs for OHS equipment and protocols related to the climate crisis; and

**c)** support for organisations, including unions, farm worker organisations, and migrant worker organisations mobilising on this issue.

### **12. Indigenous Solidarity Strategy**

**WHEREAS** the NFU is committed to relationship building and solidarity with Indigenous farmers, food provisioners, and land stewards; and

**WHEREAS** that solidarity must include a recognition of the colonial history and present-day reality of the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands; and

**WHEREAS** the meaningful integration of Indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews into land management and food production is key to creating sustainable food systems for all; and

**WHEREAS** Indigenous sovereignties are recognized under diverse Indigenous legal systems, Canadian Aboriginal Law, and Tribal Sovereignty in the US, Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island are Nations and Peoples on equal footing with nation states like Canada and settler governments; and

**WHEREAS** rematriation involves establishing peaceful relations with one another and the Earth by, inter alia, honouring Indigenous ways of being and knowing, defending Indigenous rights and sovereignties, and affirming collective ways of caring for each other and the land;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the NFU create an Indigenous Solidarity Strategy, involving Indigenous NFU members, and working across committees and Caucuses, to continue to reflect on and educate ourselves about Indigenous sovereignties, land justice and rematriation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, wherever possible, the NFU endeavour to include Indigenous sovereignties, land justice, and rematriation in our land-related communications, policy development and advocacy.

### **13. De-Escalation of Conflict in Israel-Palestine**

**WHEREAS** thousands of people have been killed and key agricultural areas have been destroyed in the rising conflict in Israel-Palestine;

**WHEREAS** the bombardment and the blockade of humanitarian aid and other basic necessities to Gaza has led to a humanitarian crisis;

**WHEREAS** farmers and food provisioners throughout the region have been devastated by this acute bombardment, as well as by the ongoing restriction of movement, access to land and resources, and ability to practice traditional foodways while under occupation; and

**WHEREAS** our partners in La Via Campesina have called upon all social movements to mobilize and support the Palestinian people and to pressure their governments to de-escalate this military conflict and initiate a process of negotiation and dialogue;



**WHEREAS** the Canadian Government has unequivocally condemned attacks carried out by Hamas, has already called for the release of hostages held by Hamas, and has reaffirmed Canada's longstanding support of Israel and its right to defend itself while "emphasizing the importance of taking all possible measures to protect civilians and to minimize casualties",

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Government has offered humanitarian assistance to address urgent needs stemming from the crisis in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, yet has not called for a ceasefire or the lifting of the blockade of Gaza.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that, in accordance with The Geneva Conventions, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, among other international law, the NFU affirms the rights of Palestinian people to sovereignty, including food sovereignty in their homelands.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the NFU join with the hundreds of other humanitarian, civil society, labour, and faith groups in calling on the Government of Canada to:

- Call for an immediate ceasefire in Israel-Palestine
- Call for an end to the blockade of Gaza and for the restoration of humanitarian aid and access to the basic necessities of life
- Use all diplomatic means at its disposal to support the negotiation of a just and lasting peace in the region.
- Call for Israel to meet its commitments under the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law

**14. Wool Production**

**WHEREAS** wool is not recognized as an agricultural commodity at provincial and federal levels.

**WHEREAS** there are limited opportunities for domestic wool production and limited access to federal or provincial funding programs.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU encourage Agriculture Canada to recognize wool as an



*NFU members put resolution into action—attending National March On Ottawa Free Palestine on November 25th.*

agricultural commodity.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the NFU encourage governments to direct funds to encourage governments to direct funds to support the processing of wool locally and domestically.

**15. Crown Lands**

**WHEREAS** the Saskatchewan government has sold off approximately 2 million acres of Crown Land since 2007, has raised rents and reduced prices to incentivize leaseholders to purchase land, and has neglected to adequately consult First Nations and Metis stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS** agricultural landholdings are increasingly concentrated in the hands of corporations and large landowners at the same time that impediments to entry and viability for beginning and moderate-sized operators increase; and

**WHEREAS** Crown Lands often include the best remnants of Prairie grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands, and whereas privatization undermines our collective capacity to address climate change, conserve biodiversity, and support sustainable farming and ranching; and

**WHEREAS** Crown Lands are a provincial patrimony and a public good vitally important to present and future generations, and are policy instruments for meeting a wide range of sustainable development goals;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU calls for a halt to privatization of Crown Lands;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that

the NFU calls on provincial governments to monitor and analyze the ecological, economic, and social impacts of Crown Land sales; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the NFU calls for the free, prior and informed consent by First Nations and other Indigenous groups with legal and customary claims prior to any Crown Land sales or auctioning of Crown Land leases, for Indigenous prerogatives of first refusal to be honoured, and for Indigenous access and use rights on such lands to be guaranteed.

**16. Red Seal Program in Butchery**

**WHEREAS** local abattoirs are becoming scarce across the country; and **WHEREAS** local butchery is treated as unskilled labour, which leads to unnecessary waste of the animal at a cost to the farmer;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the NFU promote a national Red Seal program in butchery and advocate to the relevant authorities, for the establishment of more local abattoirs and improved butchery training, including culturally-specific training programs.

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A legacy donation to the NFU or National Farmers Foundation empowers the next generation. Contact [shaw@nfu.ca](mailto:shaw@nfu.ca) to discuss estate donations.

# NFU Participates in La Via Campesina's 8th International Conference in Bogotá, Colombia

**F**rom 1-8 December 2023, three NFU members attended the La Via Campesina's (LVC) 8th Conference in Bogotá, Colombia— a landmark conference for building unity and deepening respect for diversity as we fight for global food sovereignty, agroecology and peasant rights.

LVC is a global movement of small-and-medium scale farmers, peasants, farm workers, Indigenous peoples, landless and migrant workers, women, youth and LGBTQIA+ farmers on the frontlines of resistance to the corporate takeover of food, colonization, racism, and patriarchy. The NFU is a founding member of this movement— considered by many to be the largest social movement in the world!

Celeste Smith, co-chair of the NFU's International Programs Committee (IPC) and Jessie MacInnis, former NFU Youth President, represented the NFU as delegates. Nettie Wiebe participated as an honoured guest in recognition of her long-standing contribution to the movement (including as the first woman leader of the LVC North America region!).



*La Via Campesina's 5th Youth Assembly. "Unity in diversity, youth peasants change the world!"*

The International Conferences, which take place every four years, are the highest decision making body for the movement. Key political decisions will shape the movement for generations to come:

- **A gender and sexual diversities assembly took place for the first time**, paving the way for formal recognition of this group as an official "articulation" (along with the women and youth articulations). This was a very moving assembly with powerful and open dialogue about the significance of gender inclusivity and the contributions of LGBTQIA+ peoples contribution to a more inclusive food sovereignty;
- **Additional spaces were created for youth** from all 10 regions of LVC to participate in the movement's International Coordinating Committee.
- **Organizations that are part of the Arab and North Africa Region officially gained status** as members of LVC, and efforts are underway to build an additional LVC region in the South Pacific.

The conference also marked a significant step in the renewal of the North American region, of which the NFU is a part. Along with four other organizations— the National Family Farm Coalition, the Farmworker Association of Florida, the Family Farm Defenders and Union Paysanne, the NFU is engaged in an on-going regional rebuilding process, laying the groundwork for equitable and collaborative work across differences, and to strengthen our collective will to create a more just and life-affirming food system for all.

*"Faced with global crises, we build food sovereignty to ensure a future for humanity!"*

Learn more and get involved in international solidarity building by emailing Terran at [ipccordinator@nfu.ca](mailto:ipccordinator@nfu.ca)

## Grassroots Awards

The NFU is pleased on the occasion of its 54th Annual Convention to recognize and show appreciation to the following leaders for loyal service to the farm union movement through their work as proud and dedicated members of the NFU in their communities and regions.



**Stephanie Coburn • Elizabeth Stocking • Lisa Chemerika • Kyle Korneychuk • Doug Scott • Katherine Aske**



# Collective Action on Climate Change

## An Update on NFU Work by Darrin Qualman

The NFU continues working toward policies that help farmers adapt to climate change and speed emissions reduction from all sectors, including farming.

During the NFU's Lobby Day (*see page 6*), NFU members and officials met with elected representatives and their staff to make the case for a Canadian Farm Resilience Agency (CFRA). A CFRA could train and deploy extension agrologists, provide soil testing, create demonstration farms, protect or restore wetlands, assist with accessing government programs, and generally aid farmers in implementing low-emission and adaptive practices. Policymakers were receptive to the CFRA concept, and further meetings will occur throughout 2024.

At Convention, NFU delegates passed several resolutions related to climate, including calls for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and a publicly controlled interprovincial electrical grid (*see pages 12 + 13*). The NFU followed up with a news release and media work on the Non-Proliferation Treaty: <https://www.nfu.ca/nfu-endorses-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty/>

Convention also provided an opportunity to discuss recently published NFU reports on agricultural emissions in Saskatchewan and Ontario. More reports are coming, including one for the Atlantic provinces and another for Manitoba. See <https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/climate-change/>

The NFU has called for the federal government to reinstate efficacy testing for non-fertilizer supplements— to ensure that farmers have credible data on the effectiveness of biological and other soil amendments and yield enhancers.

Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, would exempt propane and natural gas used by farmers for grain drying, from Canada's carbon levy. To learn about the NFU's unique and balanced position on this bill, see: <https://www.nfu.ca/nfu-supports-the-passage-of-bill-c-234-to-exempt-grain-drying-fuels-from-carbon-levy/>

The NFU continues to serve on the Federal Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Advisory Committee (SAS-AC). There, the NFU is strongly advocating for *authentic* sustainability and transformative change.

The Federal Government's final Strategy report is expected to be made public in mid-2024.

The NFU is a founding member of the coalition Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS) and we take active roles in FCS's work, including a position on the Board of Directors and participating in the current Task Force of scientists, economists, and farmers looking at ambitious paths to agricultural emissions reduction to 2050.

The Climate Committee meets monthly to discuss issues, offer feedback to staff, plan actions, and more. Working Group meetings focus on specific issues. Between meetings, members share information and perspectives via an email group. Activity on the Climate Committee includes:

- Learning from each other on topics such as emissions sources, emissions reduction, carbon sequestration, emissions offset protocols, and bioenergy and biofuels;
- Setting NFU priorities for climate-related policy work;
- Selecting topics and speakers for our NFUniversity webinar series;
- Representing the NFU in federal and provincial hearings on legislation;
- Doing media outreach on crucial issues;
- Shaping climate-related NFU publications; and
- Connecting with policymakers to build support for NFU policies such as the CFRA.

**The Climate Committee wants to expand its work to fully include the next generation of farmers and intersections with topics such as Food Sovereignty, Indigenous self-determination, and social justice.** Email [qualman@nfu.ca](mailto:qualman@nfu.ca) to join.

### Join a Policy Committee!

So it is you, NFU farmers and allies, who drive the NFU's direction and policy development. Join a committee to bring your experience, advance our policy work, and learn. Current committees are working on: **Farmland Ownership, Climate Change, Farm Workers, Seed Sovereignty, Livestock, Indigenous Solidarity, Migrant Worker Solidarity, Communications, Grain Marketing and Transportation.** To get involved in this work, please email [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca).

## Depth of Field: Films About Farming

### New Releases and How to Organize a Community Screening

Short documentaries from Depth of Field: Films About Farming are **now available online** with new films being released weekly. You can watch them at [nfu.ca](http://nfu.ca), on YouTube, or at a screening near you.

The films showcase Canadian farmers and farm workers, many of whom you know! Farmers highlight their own priorities, including rotational grazing, seed saving, building healthy soils, supply management, collaboration, succession planning, climate solutions and social justice.



Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the AgriCommunication Program.

**Host a film screening** and convene your neighbours to talk about farm policy & action. Explore the free **Community Screening Guide** (available at <https://www.nfu.ca/filmsaboutfarming/organize-a-community-screening/> for step-by-step instructions.

**NFU DAYS**  
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

**Jan 29 - Feb 29, 2024**

We encourage all NFU members to dedicate time during NFU Days to invite farmers to join the NFU!

Contact [members@nfu.ca](mailto:members@nfu.ca) for materials, event dates & more!




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**The NFU would like to thank our colleagues at CUPW for printing and mailing this issue of the Union Farmer. In Solidarity!**





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