

THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION
L'UNION NATIONALE DES FERMIERS

WINTER 2025
L'HIVER 2025

UNION FARMER

UNION FERMIÈRE



NFU National Board and Indigenous Leaders gather in front of our woven Deer-Hide, strengthening our shared commitment to the future. See page 9.

Le conseil d'administration national de l'UNF et les dirigeants autochtones se réunissent devant notre peau de chevreuil, renforçant notre engagement commun pour l'avenir. Voir page 9.

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

The National Farmers Union 2024/2025 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 de la convention nationale. Les membres des conseils régionaux sont élus lors de leurs conventions régionales respectives.



Jenn Pfenning
President



Phil Mount
1st Vice-President
(Policy)



Julie Maxwell
2nd Vice-President
(Operations)



Cady Foreman
Women's President



Sparrow Berg
Women's Vice-President



Claire Perttulla
BIPOC President



Sun Shan
BIPOC Vice-President



Adama Bundu
Youth President



Maia De Graff
Youth Vice-President

Regional Representatives

Region 1, District 1 (PEI): *Byron Petrie*; Region 1, District 2 (NB): *Geneviève Latour*; Region 1, District 3 (NS): *Elizabeth Milton*; Region 3 (ON): *Max Hansgen*, *Ken Bassindale*; Region 5 (MB): *Ian Robson*, *Matthew Weins*; Region 6 (SK): *Al Birchard*, *Will Robbins*, *Michael Gertler*; Region 7 (AB): *Peter Eggers*, *Glenn Norman*, *Michelle Melnyk*; Region 8 (BC): *Hannah Dwyer*, *Natasha Anderson*.

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Region 1: NB Regional Office/Bureau régional du N.-B.

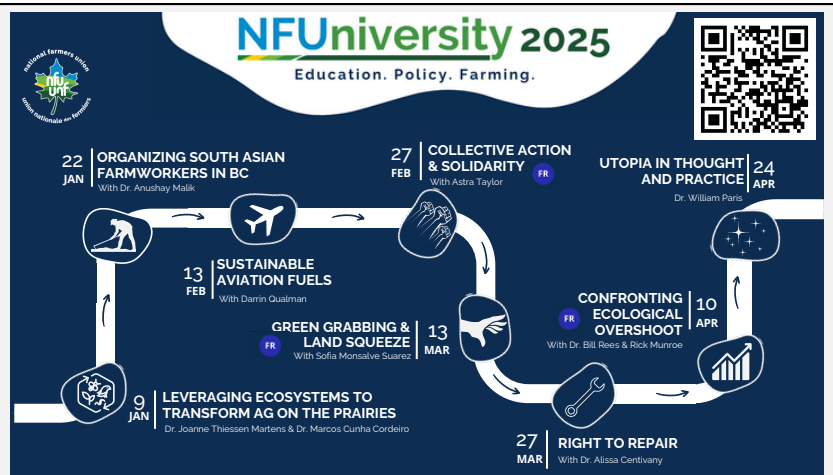
NFU in NB/L'UNF en N.-B. Suzanne Fournier, Executive Director/ Directrice Executive
Ph: (506) 260-0087, nfu.nb.office@gmail.com

Region 3: NFU-Ontario

Krista Long, NFU-O Executive Director, Ph: (705) 738-3993 Email: krista@nfuontario.ca

Deep Dives into Farming, Policy & Advocacy

Twice a month from January through April, NFUniversity brings together experts, researchers, and farmers to tackle some of the most pressing issues in agriculture—climate change, agroecology, seed policy, carbon markets, and more. These sessions go beyond the basics, deepening understanding and sharpening the skills and analysis needed to advocate for a just and sustainable food system. Catch up anytime—recordings of past sessions are available on our Past Classes page at: www.nfu.ca/nfuniversity/past-classes/





A Message from Un message de

Jenn Pfenning

*NFU President,
Présidente de l'UNF*

Coming out of another convention filled with intense debate, conviviality with like-minded farmers, informative speakers, and election of the new board, the new NFU Year began with renewed energy and commitments.

Of particular significance, it was my honour on behalf of our whole membership to receive a deer hide created by Indigenous NFU leaders as a symbol of our commitment to a meaningful Indigenous Solidarity Strategy between our Union and Indigenous nations across Canada.

Our world is facing upheavals on many fronts with political changes outside of our borders as well as here at home. Many people are asking themselves how to deal with this while facing their own personal struggles both on and off the farm. I have also been considering this question. It will not be easy.

We have to focus on the possible, and the positive. Remembering the lessons from the struggles and wins we've had in the past to help shape our future. We mustn't turn a blind eye or hide from reality. Rather, we have to reach out to our friends, neighbours, fellow farmers, and broader community. We must put our energy into things that sustain and build. We cannot squander time and energy on things we cannot change. There is still much we can have a positive influence on.

Take a few minutes to read the summary of the convention (Pg. 9), and the policy work. There is incredible work happening and space for many more hands and hearts in it. Just as this is going to print, there has been an incredible win for the environment and farming in Ontario with the transfer of 3,500 ha that had been designated for an airport in Pickering to Parks Canada as part of the Rouge National Urban Park.

As diversified, experienced farmers from coast to coast, who have always stood up for what's right, we continue to build our networks and communities through standing in solidarity with each other. We continue to create a world we want for the coming generations by staying connected to each other and holding on to the values that have been our foundation since our inception. We can and will persevere.

Au terme d'une convention riche en orateurs et en informations, et de l'élection du nouveau conseil d'administration, la nouvelle année de l'UNF a commencé avec une énergie et des engagements renouvelés.

J'ai eu l'honneur, au nom de tous les membres, de recevoir une peau de cerf créée par les dirigeants autochtones de l'UNF, symbole de notre engagement en faveur d'une stratégie de solidarité autochtone significative entre notre Union et les nations autochtones de tout le Canada.

Notre monde est confronté à des bouleversements sur de nombreux fronts, avec des changements politiques à l'extérieur de nos frontières ainsi qu'ici même. De nombreuses personnes se demandent comment faire face à cette situation tout en étant confrontées à leurs propres difficultés personnelles, tant à la ferme qu'à l'extérieur. J'ai également réfléchi à cette question. Ce ne sera pas facile.

Nous devons nous concentrer sur le possible et le positif. Nous devons nous souvenir des leçons tirées des luttes et des victoires que nous avons connues dans le passé pour nous aider à façonner notre avenir. Nous ne devons pas fermer les yeux ou nous cacher de la réalité. Au contraire, nous devons tendre la main à nos amis, à nos voisins, à nos collègues fermiers et à l'ensemble de la communauté. Nous devons consacrer notre énergie à des choses qui soutiennent et construisent. Nous ne pouvons pas gaspiller notre temps et notre énergie sur des choses que nous ne pouvons pas changer. Il y a encore beaucoup de choses sur lesquelles nous pouvons avoir une influence positive.

Prenez quelques minutes pour lire le résumé de la convention (page 9) et le travail politique. Un travail incroyable est en cours et il y a de la place pour beaucoup d'autres mains et d'autres cœurs. À l'heure où nous mettons sous presse, une victoire incroyable a été remportée pour l'environnement et l'agriculture en Ontario, avec le transfert à Parcs Canada de 3 500 hectares destinés à un aéroport à Pickering, dans le cadre du parc urbain national de la Rouge.

En tant que fermiers diversifiés et expérimentés d'un océan à l'autre, qui ont toujours défendu ce qui est juste, nous continuons à construire nos réseaux et nos communautés en étant solidaires les uns des autres. Nous continuons à créer le monde que nous voulons pour les générations à venir en restant connectés les uns aux autres et en nous accrochant aux valeurs qui ont été notre fondement depuis notre création. Nous pouvons persévérer et nous le ferons.

A Message from NFU Youth Caucus

The NFU Youth Caucus has been an organizing space by and for youth members of the NFU since the 1970s. This past year, leading up to national convention in Saskatoon in Treaty 6 Territory, we held our annual Youth Retreat with 18 youth leaders and reaffirmed our vision and mission: The NFU Youth Caucus is a growing network of active, empowered, and diverse NFU young farmers and farm workers organizing for change by supporting youth to be part of the collective NFU, and engaging in political education towards food sovereignty. More specifically, we (72+ youth members from across Canada / Northern Turtle Island) are continuing our four large buckets of work:

- 1) Culture of belonging and transformation
- 2) Onboarding and engagement
- 3) Youth lens and
- 4) Storytelling.

We meet every two weeks during the winter months to hang out and catch up, share updates about the whole NFU, and to work on our ongoing and emerging projects. This includes the Narrative Project with the theme of “A Just Future For Farmland”, planning the next youth retreat(!), the Mentoring Program, and much more on climate, policy, and organizing!

We are a constantly shifting the caucus as new folks enter, and some of us who have been around for decades flow out to make space. In meetings, we are often in awe at all the roles in the NFU that youth members hold. Whether on the national and regional and local boards, working groups, staff, committees, and associate membership, you’ll find us! Our past Youth President, Julie Maxwell, has shifted to another role on the national board and Adama Bundu is stepping into this role with Maia De Graff as Youth Vice President by their side, bringing loads of energy, a commitment to labour values and new ideas.

Come join us! Email wartmanpaul@gmail.com



NFU Youth members gather in Saskatoon prior to the National Convention for the Annual Youth Retreat.

A Message from Cady Foreman

*NFU Women's
President*



I am honoured to continue representing the women of this organization. It’s a significant role, especially following in the footsteps of those who have contributed so much. I look forward to another year of working together.

Even with excitement, I must pause at all the incoming changes. Our trade relationship with the USA is under strain with the looming threat of substantial tariffs (Pg. 7)—an issue affecting both Canadian and American farmers given how deeply connected our industries are. We are also in an election year, both provincially here in Ontario and nationally. Sometimes it may feel like screaming into the void, advocating for farmer interests. On top of that, our organization is undergoing significant internal changes.

What does that mean for the Women’s Advisory Committee? I find that in times where things are pressing, we should be compelled to act. I would encourage all to develop, maintain and nourish your local communities. Be active locally and do whatever it is you are capable of to nourish these bonds. Sometimes we forget how something ‘small’ can have considerable impacts.

Grassroots Awards

The NFU is proud on the occasion of its 55th Annual Convention to recognize and appreciate the following leaders for their loyal service to the farm union movement through their dedication as active members of the NFU in their communities and regions.

Region 1
Dan Murphy

Region 5
Gerry & Kelly Dubé

Region 3
Linda Laepple

Region 6
Derek & Phyllis Dewar

Region 7
Levke Eggers



A Message from Claire Pertulla

NFU BIPOC President

The caucus is reconnecting to work collectively toward a great year ahead. Meeting the new national board at the convention in November was exciting—there are already great ideas circulating! It was also inspiring to connect in person with BIPOC caucus members from across the country.

In 2024, the BIPOC caucus focused on strategic planning—defining our direction and strengthening our connections. One major project that emerged from this process is the BIPOC farmer directory, and it's almost complete! This directory will help current and prospective caucus members better understand who's who, what skills and expertise exist within our network, and who's nearby. The goal is to identify capacity, distribute leadership, and build a strong peer support and mentorship network.

Building on this work in 2025, we started the year by mapping out how caucus members are involved in the Union—whether nationally, regionally, or locally. With so much happening in the Union at all times, it can be a challenge to keep up and engage in everything. But our collective efforts amplify our impact. By understanding where everyone is active, we can better support each other's work and perhaps even identify a shared project to take on as a caucus. I'm thrilled to be working closely with Sun Shan (BIPOC Vice-President) and the rest of the caucus this year. I hope the caucus continues to be a welcoming space and a gateway into deeper union involvement—just as it has been for me.

Join a Policy Committee

NFU farmers and farm workers shape the NFU's policy direction. Get involved by joining a committee—bring your experience, help advance policy, and learn alongside others. Current committees focus on **Farmland Ownership, Climate Change, Trade, Farm Workers, Seed Sovereignty, Livestock, Indigenous Solidarity, International Programs, Migrant Worker Solidarity, Grain Marketing and Transportation and more.** To join, email nfu@nfu.ca.

Beingessner Award for Writing & Creative Media

*What would a just farmland future look like for you? For your community?
And for the world?*



Tristan Nell

has lived his entire life on a family farm near Francis, Saskatchewan of 4,200 cropped acres, growing a variety of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, and spices. He owns five cows and a bottle calf that he raised over the summer. He will be attending the University of Saskatchewan for a degree in Environmental Biology. Eventually, he will likely pursue a career in farming and take over the family farm.



Abigail Scott

grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on Treaty 1 territory spending summers on the lakes of Treaty 3 territory in Northwestern Ontario. Over the last years she has volunteered on farms, conservation projects, and learned with Indigenous peoples' in New Zealand, Fiji, Australia, and El Salvador. After graduating in 2022 from the University of Winnipeg with a B.A. in International Development Studies, she wanted to work with her hands. In the seasons since, she has worked at a social enterprise farm growing food and encouraging youth to build community, managed a volunteer community garden project, and worked on a 5-acre market farm.

About the Award

The NFU holds an annual national writing and creative media competition in memory of Paul Beingessner.

Winners receive \$500.

Check out the 2024 winners at

<https://www.nfu.ca/publications/2024-winners/>

Olive Trees - Growing Resistance in Genocide

Written by Robert Massoud,
edited by NFU members Leslie Moskovits and Madeline Marmor

On September 21, 2024, at a Guelph4Palestine event in Guelph, ON, Leslie and Madeline were asked to moderate a conversation between Robert and an audience of farmers, farm and food workers and food system folks. Robert shared stories and experiences of the olive farmers he works closely with at Zatoun, a Fair Trade olive oil non-profit organization he founded in 2004. Robert's talk is abbreviated below.

The region of Palestine and the Levant is thought to have the earliest agricultural settlements in the world dating back to 8000 BCE. The importance of olive trees, their fruit and oil cannot be overstated, nor their central role in the culture and seasonal cycle of agricultural life and sustenance.

If there is no food in the house or in times of military curfews, there is always olives, olive oil and za'atar (a herb mix). The value of the olive harvest is estimated at 25% of Palestine's agricultural income, or \$21 million per year, and olives contributes to the livelihood of over 96,000 families. But their market value contribution is small compared to their importance to daily and national life.

Olive trees are the most abundant fruit tree in all parts of historic Palestine, especially in the traditional highlands of the West Bank, which are rocky, hilly and less fertile. There are an estimated 10+ million trees on hillsides, in valleys, terraces and people's yards.

The Olive tree carries the memory of Palestine. This is why Palestinians cry at their destruction, and why Israel destroys them so energetically. The tree is a symbol of rootedness to the land. Once destroyed, there is nothing to keep a family on their land, especially because it takes 50 years for olive trees to yield a mature fruit.

Cutting off the people from the land is the beginning of genocide. Killing social and national identity is also an act of genocide.

The strangulation of agriculture did not begin in 2023, nor in 2001 but goes back 100 years. In historic Palestine, the land tenure system was based on common use. Land was allocated to a village and then parcelled to peasant families to farm. Every few years, the land was redistributed by lot to ensure fairness. This centuries-old life and system began to change with the establishment of agricultural settlements by European settlers in the 1880's, the purchase of land from large absentee landowners, a systemic shift towards privatization of land, and the introduction of financing and modern agricultural technology to produce commodities for export rather than for subsistence or local consumption.

Since 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank region, it is estimated to have destroyed or made inaccessible close to 3 million olive trees. The greater portion are largely “frozen” inside “seam zones” between Israel’s undeclared borders, behind fenced or walled enclosures with access gates which are never or rarely opened for Palestinian farmers. Trees are trapped in lands annexed by Israel for military zones and in areas claimed for Israeli settlement expansion. These methods are considered legal by the state and reinforced by the Supreme Court.

In the last 5 years and into the year of genocide, the destruction of trees, people, and the communities that rely on them has increased



Word cloud image from Zatoun website: <https://zatoun.com/press/>

dramatically under ever more extremist right-wing Israeli governments. The agricultural sector has been squeezed and strangled. Mobility is restricted with walls, gates, permits, curfews, and checkpoints, which have degraded the supply chain and increased the costs of production.

And yet, the trees are still growing. The best way to support growers and farming families in Palestine is to show visible action including invitations and exchanges, expressions of solidarity in writing or at community events. This can include organizing statements, educational sessions or workshops, and promoting fundraising drives to sponsor planting more trees using Trees for Palestine. The farmers of Palestine have made the greatest contribution to nonviolent resistance to occupation and apartheid. Staying on their land, farming it against all obstacles and challenges, making a livelihood and showing “sumud” - the Arabic word for steadfastness. Take Palestine into your local communities. **Speak of Palestine, of its farmers, their challenges, for if farmers are not steadfast, who will be?**

Robert Massoud is a Palestinian-Canadian. In 2004 he founded Zatoun (www.zatoun.com/), Fair Trade olive oil from Palestine to serve as a bridge of hope and peace connecting Canadians and Americans to Palestine. He co-founded "Trees for Palestine," (www.shop.zatoun.com/products/trees-for-palestine-planting-peace-in-palestine) a worldwide project to plant 10,000's olive trees each year. Zatoun has donated over \$600,000 to projects in Palestine. Robert's core message is that Palestine-Israel is of direct interest to all humanity and its resolution vital to peace in the world and to the health of the planet.

This article is part of the movement (www.nfu.ca/solidarity-with-palestine-now/) within the NFU to show solidarity with Palestinian farmers and food growers (www.nfu.ca/nfu-continues-to-affirm-the-rights-of-palestinians-calls-for-lasting-ceasefire-in-israel-palestine/)

To learn more about the solidarity work within the NFU contact Terran Giacomini, International Programs and Special Projects Coordinator ipccordinator@nfu.ca.

Bolster Canadian Food Sovereignty during Tariff “Pause”

NFU Media Release: February 6, 2025

The Canadian government must use the 30-day “pause” on U.S. tariffs to bolster Canada’s capacity to protect Canadian farmers from the devastating effects of 25% tariffs on exports and the potential impacts of retaliatory tariffs on U.S. imports. We also need Canada to develop a long-term food and agriculture strategy that reduces our dependence on trade with the USA. President Trump’s disruptive strategy and lack of respect for rules means we can no longer consider trade agreements reliable. No matter what happens, Canadian farmers, workers, and consumers will be well served by initiatives that strengthen our food sovereignty and reduce our vulnerability to supply chain disruption, income loss, price increases and food shortages.

As farmers, we produce for international markets and for domestic consumption. Both markets are critical. We also use imported equipment and inputs. Strengthening food sovereignty— the democratic control of important decisions about food and agriculture— is a key strategy to withstand President Trump’s economic pressure tactics, which are brazenly aimed at annexing Canada. Top priorities for action are:

- **Defend Supply Management:** Supply management ensures that Canadian farmers can and do produce the high quality dairy, chicken, eggs and turkey Canadians consume, are paid enough to cover their cost of production and do not have their market flooded by imports. This stable, reliable system is not exposed to tariff threats. Large U.S. dairy corporations are lobbying hard to get access to Canada’s valuable markets, making our supply management a target for destruction by President Trump. Farmers and consumers alike are counting on the federal government to stand firmly in support of supply management.
- **Diversify export markets:** Canada’s export-focused agricultural policy has created a high degree of dependency on the U.S. market, particularly for beef and pork, but for grain and oilseeds as well. In the short term, Agri Stability can provide some support to participating farmers when there is a severe drop in prices and/or increase in input costs, however it is not accessible or suitable to nearly two-thirds of Canadian farmers, including many who are exposed to the U.S. tariff threat. These farmers will need effective support to allow them to survive the impending turmoil. In the longer term, we need to adopt a multifunctionality policy framework similar to the European Union’s, and structural changes to diversify

(continued on next page...)

both our markets and the crops grown for export, as well as measures that support the long term viability of these farms. Possibilities include return to single-desk hog marketing and implementing single-desk beef marketing for farms operating at a commodity scale while leaving space for small scale direct marketing to continue; re-establishing the single desk Canadian Wheat Board and expanding it to cover all commodity grains; targets and support programs to increase the proportion of production using certified organic and other bona fide ecologically sound and climate mitigating practices.

- **Promote & build regional and local markets:** Local markets are critical to food sovereignty. Local and direct sales keep dollars in communities and food production where the eaters are. As retailers seek to replace US imports, demand for Canadian food products will quickly outstrip existing supply. We need to ramp up production that serves the domestic market to reduce our dependence on imported food. Federal and Provincial governments must now commit to rebuilding our local and regional food production, processing, storage and distribution infrastructure so that Canada has reliable, long-term capacity to feed our population.
- **Protect Agricultural Workers:** Building a more resilient and robust Canadian food system means ensuring agriculture workers' jobs in both fields and food processing plants are good jobs, with fair wages, safe working conditions, and for migrant workers, full labour rights, open work permits, and a pathway to citizenship. An agricultural labour strategy that recognizes the seasonality of Canadian farming, and which provides livable incomes for farm workers year-round will be necessary to build a long term, resident labour force.
- **Manufacture farm equipment:** Canada once had a thriving and diverse farm equipment manufacturing industry producing a full line of machinery. There is a great opportunity to re-tool and expand our capacity to produce equipment designed for Canadian farms of all sizes and production types. An industrial strategy for Canada that includes farm machinery would have widespread benefits that extend beyond the agriculture sector.
- **Prevent Corporate Profiteering:** Our experience during the pandemic and Ukraine war has taught us that large corporations across the supply chain are willing to use their out-sized market power to increase their own profits at the expense of farmers, workers, and consumers alike. The federal government must therefore implement measures to prevent corporations from using the imposition of U.S. tariffs and the likely retaliatory Canadian tariffs as a cover for price gouging, wage suppression and discounting of farm product prices. Canada also needs to address the excessive concentration of ownership in the agriculture and food sector, where monopolistic behaviour has become the rule rather than the exception. Our anti-trust/competition framework has proven inadequate as seen by the approval of Bunge's take-over of Viterra. If Canada is unable or unwilling to break up monopolistic companies, other methods of regulating and limiting their market power must be put in place or they will be in charge of our food supply.

The threat of punitive American tariffs and an ensuing trade war creates uncertainty that is harmful to our livelihoods and our communities. Canadians' determination to stand together provides the resolve to not only weather the current storm, but to build a strong foundation of food sovereignty for a more secure future. We urge the government to move swiftly toward this goal.

You can find this statement in both official languages online at: www.nfu.ca/bolster-canadian-food-sovereignty-during-tariff-pause-says-national-farmers-union/ Vous pouvez trouver cette déclaration en ligne dans les deux langues officielles.

In memory of William (Bill) Zettler

With deepest sorrow, we announce that Bill passed away peacefully at his home in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba on October 6, 2024. Bill grew up on the family farm at Holyrood, Bruce County, Ontario, then moved on to farm in Riversdale, Ontario to then Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, where the farm is still active today. While farming, Bill also worked as an income tax consultant for Farm Business Consultants and the NFU for 43 years. He looked forward to seeing the same members year after year and considered it a privilege to work for them preparing their income tax returns and getting to know them and their families. Bill leaves behind a legacy of family, faith and hard work.



LEAVE A LEGACY

Let's be clear – **the NFU is unique. As a farmer-led organization, there is nothing like it in Canada.** But these are challenging times for organizations like ours, continuing to tackle the tough issues on a tight budget, with volunteer farmer leadership from across the country. **The NFU needs your financial support if you are able to contribute.** If you want to talk legacies with someone from the NFU today, call or email the national office at: (306) 652-9465 nfu@nfu.ca



— Looking back at the NFU's 55th Convention in Action —

Valuing Farming, Land and People

As you can tell from the writing from the NFU Presidents, the 55th Annual Convention of the NFU was inspiring. Connections were made that carry us through the year.

The 3-day 2024 Convention in Saskatoon started on Thurs, Nov, 21 with first-time attendees learning about resolutions, rules of order, and elections in **Convention 101**.

Welcomes from NFU President **Jenn Pfenning**; Treaty Commissioner for SK **Kathy Walker**; and **AAFC Minister MacAuley**. Reports from the President; Policy team; Women's, Youth, and BIPOC caucuses; and the International Programs Committee informed attendees about the breadth of the NFU's work.

Staff presented **The NFU in Action** in the first panel session: the member-driven priorities of the union and how members can engage and lead. The day included policy resolution debates, the membership and financial update, and meetings of committees and caucuses.

The evening **Keynote address** was delivered by Austin Frerick, author of **Barons: Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry**. The monopoly power in agriculture and food was presented through the lens of seven commodities: Hogs, Grains, Coffee, Dairy, Berries, Slaughter & Groceries.

Day Two: Panelist & farmer **Bas Froese-Kooijenga**, told the story of SK-based Sunnyside Dairy owned by his wife Martha and himself. He shared the development of their small-acreage dairy, diversifying into farmgate sales of eggs, preserves and prepared foods, meats, and pasteurized whole milk. Also on the panel was **Jeff Baker** who spoke on *Miyo wicêhtowin: Indigenous Peoples, Food, and Climate Adaptation*. Dr. Baker recounted colonization-caused shifts in diets, loss of cultures, impediments placed in the way of Indigenous farmers, and impacts on people including starvation, malnutrition, and obesity.

An Indigenous Solidarity Deer Hide Protocol for Relationship Building and Solidarity in the NFU was held. At NFU's 2023 Convention, voting members passed a resolution to implement an Indigenous Solidarity Strategy. At the 2024 convention, Indigenous leaders **Celeste Smith** and **Natasha Anderson** brought a painted deer hide for attendees to

collectively create the NFU commitment by adding personal symbols, values and visions of our shared future.

The dance floor was packed Friday night with all ages. A live caller called contradances and the **NFU fiddle-band** jammed with abandon.

Day Three opened with a panel with historian **Jim Handy** on Peasant Agriculture in 18th and 19th Century England and **Trista Pewapisconias** about strengthening Indigenous communities through co-operatives. Like Dr. Baker, Trista outlined the barriers Indigenous farmers have and current face, but she also highlighted how co-operatives can help build robust food systems—help maintain cultural traditions, increase food independence, and support sustainable farming methods passed forward through generations.

Jim Hightower, former Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, gave a rollicking tour of the US farm policy landscape. His witticisms and broadsides included telling attendees about *"the wallstreet barons, the hedgefund hucksters, the pipeline profiteers, the corporateers who farm the farmers, and the billionaires who are brazenly buying out our government and our democracy."*

Convention delegates developed regional action plans on Saturday afternoon before the closing **Solidarity Forever**.

SAVE THE DATE

**NFU Convention 2025 comes to
Moncton, New Brunswick
Nov 19-21, 2025**

*See you there! (Bring your fiddle or your dancing shoes
'cause there's gonna be a Kitchen Party!)*



All panel presentations from convention are available on the NFU's website and YouTube channel for watching, rewatching and sharing.
www.nfu.ca/2024convention/ or
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtRSIGyHZLGgaoLcOhLCIj5EU3PpUoviZ&si=ZLIEPGU4iHYzThsk>





Therefore Be It Resolved...

Resolutions Passed at 55th National Farmers Union Convention— November 21-23 2024

1. Cost Accounting for Biofuels

WHEREAS using land for growing crops to produce ethanol biofuel has been the fastest growing agricultural land use in Ontario over the past two decades; and,

WHEREAS the Federal government wants to significantly increase biofuel use to meet emission targets;

WHEREAS growth of crops for biofuels and non-food purposes is contributing to the expansion of intensive monoculture production, leading to soil degradation, and biodiversity loss, and

WHEREAS federal policy and regulation related to biofuels explicitly ignore the impact of this expansion and intensification of agricultural land use on greenhouse gas emissions and the natural environment.

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU advocate that all appropriate levels of government and researchers gather data to assess the extent to which existing and planned agricultural land use for biofuels increases the expansion and intensification of agricultural land use, and impacts ecosystem functions and services;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU recommend a best estimate for the indirect impacts of biofuel production and use on GHG emissions, soil health, water retention, and biodiversity;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the NFU develops strategies on how indirect agricultural land use impacts can be accounted for in

environmental policy and regulations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the NFU pursue strategic partnerships with ECCC [Environment and Climate Change Canada] and others, to educate the Canadian public about the interconnection between biofuel regulations, food and land pricing, power structures in farming, and the conversion of new land into cropland as land uses intensify.

2. Public Plant Breeding Advocacy

WHEREAS, there is continual pressure to reduce funding and support for public plant breeding within the Canadian government;

WHEREAS public plant breeding has developed varieties which have improved the Canadian economy (for every \$1 million invested in the Crop Development Centre's plant breeding program in Saskatchewan, the benefit to farmers is \$7.1 million); and,

WHEREAS there is a lack of awareness in the general public on the importance of public plant breeding.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU advocate for the establishment of a national day for public plant breeding to educate and secure continuous support and funding for strong, public plant breeding in Canada.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU find like-minded allies to support a Public Plant Breeding advocacy day in Canada.

3. Standardized Grain Contracts

WHEREAS grain contracts supplied by elevator companies contain lots of fine print and largely favour grain companies when disputes between producers and elevator companies arise,

BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU work on and collaborate with other organizations to create a standardized grain contract that would apply to grain and oilseeds deliveries.

4. Sustainable Aviation Fuel

WHEREAS commercial aviation is one of the most energy intensive sectors and that aviation driven by the combustion of fuels is inherently unsustainable; and

WHEREAS over 60 airlines operating in Canada are building a coalition of industry stakeholders and government to accelerate the commercial production and use of "sustainable aviation fuels (SAF)" in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Indirect emissions from land use change (iLUC), are not accounted for in calculating the lifecycle carbon intensity of a fuel at this time by the federal regulations'; and

WHEREAS the commodification of farmland and the limited number of available acres mean that expansion of broad acre production to support SAF inevitably means less area for the production of food.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU publicly state that commercial aviation driven by combustion of any sustainable aviation fuel (SAF or conventional) is unsustainable;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU lobby all government departments to increase pollution pricing on aviation fuels to reflect the social cost of its dangerous pollution and constrain growth in the sector;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU advocate for alternative (low emission) public transportation and public high-speed data connectivity in rural and remote areas to displace the demand for commercial air travel;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU lobby all government departments to include all direct and indirect emissions related to the production of all biofuels, particularly SAF (including land use change emissions) in any calculations of lifecycle carbon intensity;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU advocate, and lead by example, to reduce commercial air travel.

5. Solidarity with Cuba

WHEREAS Canadians have numerous and significant economic, historical and cultural ties with Cuba;

WHEREAS the developments of Cuba's biotechnology sector in the creation of vaccines and agricultural innovations can benefit Canadian farmers in promoting local, sustainable and resilient farming models; and

WHEREAS the international community, including Canada, has repeatedly shown its support for the Cuban people, particularly through votes at the United Nations General Assembly; and,

WHEREAS the longstanding US economic blockade of Cuba has led to severe resource shortages that affect the daily lives of Cubans,

WHEREAS the American economic sanctions and the economic blockade against Cuba violate international law, as well as the right to self-determination and the

human rights of the Cuban people.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU call upon the Canadian Government to:

1. Ask United States representatives, through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to lift the blockade against Cuba as well as to remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism;
2. Reaffirm the importance of the Cuban people's human rights and denounce the blockade against Cuba as one of the key barriers to the Cuban people's full enjoyment of their human rights; and
3. Ensure that Canadian relations with Cuba continue to be based on equality and respect for sovereignty, independence and the right to self-determination.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFU strengthen its relationship with ANAP and organize a humanitarian educational exchange of members to visit sites of urban and sustainable agriculture, permaculture, agricultural cooperative farms and other activities.

6. Divest from military tech, invest in food sovereignty

WHEREAS the Canadian government is bound by a commitment to NATO and NORAD to allocate Canadian federal tax dollars to support these international commitments; and,

WHEREAS provincial governments have no such obligation to spend tax dollars on the military; tax dollars that could be invested in programs which support food sovereignty and food security,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU advocate for provincial governments to divest from surveillance and military technology, research, and manufacturing; and invest in agricultural programs and food sovereignty instead.

7. Pension for all Farmers

WHEREAS many direct market farmers are landless and do not have access to the equity generated by land ownership; and,

WHEREAS despite producing significant amounts of food and employment, these farmers generate a small net income that will likely never allow them to purchase land, generate savings or maximize pension contributions,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU initiate discussion groups to explore the feasibility of a national farmer pension plan so that all farmers can continue producing food, providing employment, and be able to retire with dignity.

8. Differentiated Poultry and Egg Production

WHEREAS regulation and policy regarding quota distribution, minimum quota amounts, quota-exempt production limits and new entrant opportunities vary greatly across the country; and,

WHEREAS there is a growing movement of small-scale and diversified farmers in Canada developing and serving niche markets with differentiated poultry and egg products; and,

WHEREAS provincial supply management frameworks do not provide an adequate path to growth for these farmers, limiting economic opportunities and reducing consumer choice; and,

WHEREAS the NFU believes that the supply management system is capable of responding to these farmers' aspirations in a constructive manner that will strengthen Canada's food system and its orderly marketing frameworks; and,

WHEREAS the NFU Policy Book already supports policy and public education efforts aimed at making space for small flock chicken and egg producers within supply management (policies I-3-31 & I-3-32);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU build an interprovincial coalition of farmers and farm advocacy organizations to develop and advocate for recommendations that can be implemented within the supply management system to promote a path to growth for differentiated poultry and egg production.

9. Member Written Article Award

WHEREAS the National Farmers Union members have a healthy tradition of submitting articles to various newspapers and publications across Canada that have led to positive perspectives being spread to the masses, and

WHEREAS some members are powerhouse writers and do it all on their volunteer time and deserve some type of recognition, and

WHEREAS we are seeing a decline in member generated news submissions and yet new members might see the joy of writing to publications if they gave it a try and caught the bug!

WHEREAS there are members who would be willing to support an awards fund.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NFU will create an annual award or awards for best member written article(s) that get printed in a known Canadian news publication using criteria that includes but is not limited to: creativity, structure, and NFU collected data or campaign literature.

10. Carbon Capture and Storage

WHEREAS, carbon capture and storage (hereafter written as CCS) refers to the capture of carbon dioxide from industrial processes, its separation from other gasses, compression, transportation, and storage of compressed carbon dioxide, usually in underground spaces such as underground saline aquifers for sequestration or into producing oil fields as part of Enhanced Oil Recovery.

WHEREAS, poses a number of risks, including groundwater contamination and CO2 leakage which threatens the lives of livestock, wildlife, and human beings. CCS projects have also created CO2 bubbles, the eruption of which has led to numerous animal and human fatalities.

WHEREAS, first responders are not adequately trained or equipped with proper vehicles to respond to CCS leaks.

WHEREAS, CCS can allow for oil and gas corporations to feign climate action while avoiding real emissions reduction and legitimizing

their “business-as-usual” operations.

WHEREAS, CCS projects have required substantial amounts of government subsidy to be economically viable, with few successful examples to date.

WHEREAS, the State of Queensland in Australia has banned CCS projects in the Queensland Basin due to the risks of groundwater contamination for agricultural and human use.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the National Farmers Union opposes the use of CCS projects to extend the social license of fossil fuel corporations to continue with their “business-as-usual” operations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Farmers Union opposes the use of pipelines to transport captured carbon, which threatens both traditional Indigenous lands and farmland.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Farmers Union lobby against the use of public money to support industrial CCS projects.

Membership Matters: Join, Engage, Strengthen

An update from the Membership Development Committee (MDC)

With a slight dip in membership numbers in 2024, the MDC is going back to basics by reminding farmers why the NFU is unique and how the more members, the stronger the voice.

Onboarding new and newly engaged members is a key opportunity to build long-term engagement and empower regional organizers. To support this, the MDC is hosting regular onboarding sessions called “Welcome to the NFU”! See www.nfu.ca/series/2025-member-onboarding/ for dates. The sessions introduce new members to the NFU’s structure, current campaigns, and ways to get actively involved. They also highlight the new members-only page on our website.

Members Only Page!

Visit nfu.ca/membersonly and enter password **nfu2024** to access valuable resources on NFU history, advocacy, and how to get organized.

First-time membership discounts of 50% are now available year-round, reducing barriers to join as a member. More than a discount, membership is about collective action. Reach out to your regional leadership to see how you can support new member outreach this winter.



New NFU member, baby Niamh, at 2024 Convention.

We invite all members to bring a membership lens to their work across the union. Have ideas on other membership efforts? Join the Membership Development Committee to get involved— email Rebecca at macinnis@nfu.ca. And for committee chairs, regional coordinators, and caucus leaders—consider how member outreach can strengthen your events and campaigns. The union makes us strong, and together, we make it stronger.

THE EXCHANGE—cultivating diversity in agriculture

THE EXCHANGE has welcomed its first cohort of 20 equity-deserving farmers, kicking off a dynamic year-long program for co-creation, professional development and knowledge exchange that supports career advancement in agriculture. Cohort 1 has made strides through skill-building workshops, resource sharing and business development discussions online and in-person. Highlights so far included a week-long national gathering in Saskatchewan that began with a 2-day retreat where members connected with each other and participated in expert-led workshops on flax production, business development, farm future visioning, and policy work, followed by three days of learning at the National Convention.

To learn more, visit us at www.nfu.ca/theexchange today. Questions? Contact hakimian@nfu.ca or bunyan@nfu.ca.

L'ÉCHANGE—cultivent la diversité dans l'agriculture

L'ÉCHANGE a accueilli sa première cohorte de 20 agriculteurs méritants, donnant le coup d'envoi d'un programme dynamique d'un an pour la cocréation, le développement professionnel et l'échange de connaissances qui soutient l'avancement de carrière dans l'agriculture. La première cohorte a progressé grâce à des ateliers de développement des compétences, au partage des ressources et à des discussions en ligne et en personne sur le développement des entreprises. Les faits saillants à ce jour comprennent un rassemblement national d'une semaine en Saskatchewan qui a commencé par une retraite de deux jours où les membres se sont connectés les uns aux autres et ont participé à des ateliers dirigés par des experts sur la production de lin, le développement des affaires, la vision de l'avenir de la ferme et le travail politique, suivi de trois jours d'apprentissage lors de la Convention nationale.

Are you a farmer interested in joining THE EXCHANGE? Apply Now! **Applications for Cohort 2 are now open until February 28, 2025 at 12am EST.** For more info visit nfu.ca/theexchange/apply/



Êtes-vous un fermier et souhaitez rejoindre L'ÉCHANGE ? Posez votre candidature dès maintenant! **Les candidatures pour la Cohorte 2 sont ouvertes jusqu'au 28 février 2025 à 00 heure de l'Est.** Pour plus d'informations, consultez le site nfu.ca/theexchange/apply/.

Funded by The Government of Canada through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's AgriDiversity Program, an initiative under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Présenté par l'Union nationale des fermiers. Financé en partie par le gouvernement du Canada dans le cadre du Partenariat canadien pour une agriculture durable.

Keep up to date with the NFU

The NFU is making changes in the way that we communicate. **We have decided to no longer interact on X (Twitter), and make a move to Bluesky.** We are also re-evaluating how we interact on Meta's platforms— Facebook and Instagram, but will continue to post on these platforms as a way to keep reaching and informing the public.

Now more than ever, staying informed and organized is essential. Get the latest updates on our website: www.nfu.ca. To make sure you never miss important news, sign up for NFU email updates today: www.nfu.ca/subscribe.



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National Farmers Union Canada

Se tenir au courant des actualités de l'UNF

L'UNF procède à des changements dans sa façon de communiquer. **Nous avons décidé de ne plus interagir sur X (Twitter), et de passer à Bluesky.** Nous sommes également en train de réévaluer la manière dont nous interagissons sur les plateformes Meta – Facebook et Instagram mais nous continuerons à publier sur ces plateformes pour continuer à atteindre et à informer le public.

Plus que jamais, il est essentiel de rester informé et organisé. Retrouvez les dernières mises à jour sur notre site web : www.nfu.ca. Pour ne rien manquer, abonnez-vous à nos courriels dès aujourd'hui : www.nfu.ca/subscribe.

– Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)= *Sacrificing Affordable Food?* –

By Darrin Qualman, NFU Director of Climate Crisis Policy & Action

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) will affect nearly all aspects of agriculture: crop prices, cropping choices, fertilizer use (and, thus, GHG emissions), soil health, retail food prices, and land prices and access. Other than climate change, nothing will alter agriculture more in the coming decades than the decision to proceed with SAFs.

In November, the NFU released its report: **Sustainable Aviation Fuel: A Critical Analysis, with a Focus on Agriculture, Land, and Food.** The Executive Summary is key; please read those four pages.



Governments have agreed to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Airlines have made similar pledges. To do so, they plan to shift the energy supply for the global aviation fleet from oil fields to farm fields.

SAFs are lower-emission, non-petroleum, “drop-in” fuels that require no modifications to aircraft or engines. SAFs will be made largely from biological sources: corn, soybeans, and canola initially; then adding straw, corn stover, and other “agricultural residues” as feedstocks; and then adding purpose-grown energy crops such as farmland-grown trees and grasses. (Forestry residues will provide a minor portion.) There is a third phase proposed: to use renewable energy to extract hydrogen from water and carbon from the air and combine these into a liquid fuel. But such “Electro-fuels” remain speculative, costly, and probably unfeasible.

Airlines plan to switch to farmland-sourced fuels even as they double flights and flying by 2050. In that year, they’ll need two-thirds of a trillion litres of fuel annually.

Here are some main take-aways regarding SAFs and their agricultural impacts:

- The SAF megaproject will raise **grain and oilseed prices**. This is a positive for farmers, but at what cost? See the following.
- **Soil health** will suffer, sequestration rates will fall, and carbon levels may decline if we attempt to produce billions of litres of jet fuel by removing millions of tonnes of straw and stover.
- Producing more grain and oilseed tonnage will require more **fertilizer**. Removing straw and stover removes nutrients, again requiring more fertilizer. Record-high Canadian fertilizer use will be pushed higher, as will agricultural **emissions**. The aviation industry’s climate solution creates an agricultural emissions problem.
- Increased demand for grains and oilseeds (and competition for acres from energy crops) will increase retail **food prices**. SAF = “Sacrificing Affordable Food”?
- The SAF megaproject vetoes **agricultural sustainability**. Huge biomass demands will come atop similar and wholly unsustainable multi-billion-tonne demands for:
 - BECCS (bio-energy with carbon capture and storage), negative-emission electricity from agricultural residues, energy crops, etc.—the same feedstocks targeted for SAF;
 - Biofuels for ocean shipping;
 - Biomaterials to replace plastics; and
 - Food for an additional two billion people.
- There will be negative impacts on **water** use and quality, **biodiversity**, and **wetlands**.

“ *We are in a climate emergency... No matter what the fuel source, doubling air travel by mid-century is incompatible with any responsible, science-based assessment of the challenges and trade-offs we face or the painful and damaging impacts already occurring and set to multiply in coming decades. And any plan to fuel that doubling of air travel largely from the planet’s oversubscribed land base reveals an ignorance of the magnitude by which we have already transgressed planetary boundaries...* ”

Questions? Email nfu@nfu.ca.

Thank you to NFU's Director of Climate Crisis Policy & Action, Darrin Qualman

*A message on behalf of NFU Climate Committee members
Rick Munroe and Joanne Brown*



For a total of 19 years, Darrin Qualman has used his leadership and critical thinking skills for important issues facing Canadian farmers. In his role as Director of Climate Crisis Policy & Action over the past 5 years, he has engaged farmers, academics, politicians and corporations in meaningful discussions that provide a

foundation for policy recommendations. He is a master of engaging individuals and groups who want to have their voices heard within the context of Canadian agriculture. Those who have had the honour of working closely with him will miss his energy, expertise and wry sense of humour. All the best to Darrin as he puts his efforts into another book that we will all look forward to reading.

Thank you to NFU's Communications Manager, Gill Cormier

*A message on behalf of President Jenn Pfenning and
Executive Director, Mara Shaw*

As NFU Communications Manager Gill Cormier leaves the NFU for new adventures in Brazil. We thank her for her professionalism and skill. The regular e-bulletin, the reminders for



Gill Cormier (left), Stewart Wells (middle) and Mara Shaw (right) holding Stewart's french lentils & mustard seeds won in the 2024 Youth Auction.

NFUniversity, the publication of policy reports, management of all the social media platforms: That was Gill. And she did it bilingually, while farming with an NB co-op. Thank you, Gill! It has been a pleasure to work with you! Bon voyage !

NFU Member Benefits

As an NFU member, you have benefits! Check out the many benefits, including ServicePlus at <https://www.nfu.ca/join/member-benefits/> to learn more!

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Thank you to NFU's Executive Director, Mara Shaw

*A message on behalf of the NFU Executive Board, Jenn Pfenning,
Phil Mount and Julie Maxwell*

Mara Shaw's leadership as Executive Director has been of invaluable service to our Union. Her commitment to the NFU values has— for the past 5 years— pushed her to serve well beyond the confines of her job title and description. She has made her time in this role count and the organization, our staff, farmer leadership, and members are all better for it. We look forward to Mara's continued role as an active NFU member and convention band cellist! Please reach out to share your appreciation to Mara as she dives into work in her local community this spring.



Find Mara and her cello, complimenting any NFU gathering.



Katie Ward (left), Mara Shaw (middle) & Jenn Pfenning (right) pre-lobby day, Ottawa 2023.



Transition in leadership: Adama Bundu (left), current Youth President, and Julie Maxwell (right), outgoing Youth President (and current VP Operations) at the 2024 National Youth Retreat.

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