

**As a compliment to the  
NFU/EFAO/CBAN G.E. Education Project,  
the Guelph Organic Conference presents:**

**GENETIC ENGINEERING & OUR ORGANIC FUTURE**

**Friday, January 23, 2009, 7:00 PM (sharp)—9:30 PM  
at Thornbrough Auditorium  
(next to University Centre)**

**PANELISTS**

- **Lucy Sharratt, ON:** CBAN - opening address on 'GE challenges for farmers'
- **Kim Delaney, ON:** organic seed grower, active in NFU women's caucus
- **Tom Stearns, VT:** Organic Seed Alliance, grower, GE sugar beet lawsuit
- **Julie Daniluk, ON:** Big Carrot retail, active in Non-GMO education project
- **Dag Falck, BC:** Nature's Path organic processing, sourcing non- GE foods

**MODERATOR:**

- **Colleen Ross, ON:** grower and activist, Women's President of NFU

**ISSUES:**

It has been over 10 years since genetically engineered (GE) crops were first introduced in Canada. How has organic sector been affected? It's time to bring forward new info about what we can expect for the next 10 years, to prepare our industry. The panel will outline the challenges of GE to organics from an 'urban-rural exchange of perspectives' featuring seed growers, farmers, consumers, retailers, manufacturers and campaigners. The panel will stress the action that people in every part of the organic sector can, and are taking, to secure strong organic goals into the future. At 8.15 pm, the mike is open for one and all. Basic Public Forum rules for questioners are simple: address an organic issue...engage the panel.

**FURTHER QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

Some of these questions may arise:

1. What political power do farmers have to oppose the release of GE foods?
2. How do consumers link up with the leading groups in this movement?
3. Are the law courts receptive to challenges to GE foods?



*NFU in Ontario*

**Newsletter**

WINTER 2008-2009

*Dear Friends,*

Well, the NFU did it again. 2008 saw the NFU grow significantly in size. That growth can be directly attributed to people like you, particularly our new members. There are many reasons that farmers tell us they join the NFU. For some, it is as simple as we are not the other organizations. For others, it is our single-minded focus on supporting the family farm. For still others, it is because of the research we do – like this year's cattle brief. For me, the reason is because we are Ontario's one-voice farm organization. The NFU is organized in such a way that we focus on what unites us - the long term economic viability of the family farm. This focus builds up a trust level amongst our farmer members to the point that if beef farmers say they need something, corn producers don't stand in their way, and likewise. When people are calling for a one-voice organization, they need look no further than the NFU to find it.

This past winter the NFU had a significant ad presence in the Ontario Farmer and other publications. That campaign was inspired by a Local that thought the NFU policy was worth highlighting to all Ontario farmers and it was made possible by the many Locals that contributed. The Ontario Farmer ad campaign is a great example of the close connection between all levels of the NFU. We are currently planning outreach activities for 2009 and would gladly incorporate your ideas.

You will receive the NFU livestock brief in your mailbox as part of the Union Quarterly. Currently, we are trying to find the means to place a summary of this in the mailbox of every farm family in Ontario. That will have a significant cost to it, but the reality is all farmers need to see this information as we try to work towards long term financial viability of the family farm. The best way to understand the cattle brief is to realize it is really a test case for a great many commodities. The findings of that study could be, without too much adjustment, transferred to many other commodities.

This has been a difficult year on our farm. It began raining this past spring and it never seemed to stop. Work to our barnyard remained undone because it never dried up enough. Haying seemed to go on forever and much of that was baled after a couple of rain showers. I know many of you have had problems as well, whether price or weather related. Yet the great thing about the

NFU is that we can still come together to share a laugh and to commiserate together. As I write this, I am looking over a sea of mud at our farm as we just had a major rain overnight, melting the considerable amount of snow that had accumulated all through November and December. I could use some of that NFU cheer right now in fact.

Finally, this year there will be two important conventions in Ontario. Our Regional Convention and AGM will be taking place on April 04, once again at John Knox Christian School in Woodstock. More information will be forthcoming, but I cannot stress enough how great these get-togethers really are. Please plan to attend. The other big event will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary National Convention in Ottawa. This will be a real celebration and an enjoyable time. I know many of you are thinking- why would I want to go to a convention? I will tell you honestly I am not a big convention goer. I really do not like them much. But there is one exception to that rule and that is the NFU Annual Convention. They are amazing. Let's help make the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Ottawa a convention to remember by getting as many members to it as possible.

In closing, thank you again for all you do. May you and your loved ones find peace, joy and prosperity in the new year.

*Grant Robertson*

**Contact Information**

**Farm Business Registration and other  
Membership Enquiries:**

c/o Marion Watkins  
1-888-273-5545 nfu@rideau.net

**Member Services:**

c/o Joan Brady  
1-888-537-3163 jbrady@hay.net

**Region 3/Ontario Coordinator:**

Grant Robertson  
1-519-353-4033 grant@bmts.com

This past November, 11 youth from across Canada gathered in Ottawa for the DigIn! retreat co-hosted by the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, Check Your Head, and the National Farmers Union. Myself, Kalissa Regier and Nigel Smith attended on behalf of the NFU Youth.

The two-day intensive retreat was a great success, attracting a diverse group of participants involved in food and farming issues from across the country. Together we explored the meaning of food sovereignty and set to work creating a workshop on food sovereignty using popular education techniques. We piloted the workshop the following weekend at the Food

Secure Canada conference and it was met with great reviews from the 70 or more participants it attracted. Since then, the workshop has been showcased at a number of events including the NFU Convention in Saskatoon.

We are now working together to put on a youth conference on food sovereignty in November 2009. We'd love to have more NFU Youth involved, so if you are interested, please get in touch.

*In Union, Caitlin Hall*

NFU-O Youth Advisor  
519-820-1891  
hallcaitlin@gmail.com

### **Food Secure Canada, along with other partnering organizations, is launching the People's Food**

**Policy Project.** This initiative is rooted in the People's Food Commission (PFC), a grassroots project that toured the country 30 years ago, hearing testimonies about how the food system was affecting ordinary Canadians in 75 communities from Labrador to the BC Coast. The PFC final report, *The Land of Milk and Money*, predicted many of the negative trends that have now come to pass, and identified the need for a change in the direction of food policy in Canada – change which has not materialized.

Building on the PFC, the goal of the People's Food Policy Project is to build the capacity of the Canadian food movement to reclaim and transform the food system through the development of policies grounded in the principles of food sovereignty. It will be carried out by community 'animators' who are leaders in this movement, working in their regions towards this goal. After broad national debate, the project will present a proposed food policy for Canada to the National Assembly of Food Secure Canada in November, 2010.

**Information on the project, food sovereignty, and the hiring process for a Project Coordinator (deadline January 9, 2009) are at: [www.foodsecurecanada.org](http://www.foodsecurecanada.org).**

# People's Food Policy Project

The National NFU Convention provides a rare opportunity for regional delegates to the International Program Committee (IPC) to meet face-to-face. E-mails and conference calls organized by the IPC coordinator, Martha Robbins, facilitates communication during the rest of the year. The IPC carries out the international program of the NFU in Canada, and acts as a liaison for the NFU to the international farm movement La Via Campesina (LVC). Funding for the work done by the IPC comes from CIDA and Inter Pares.

In Saskatoon, delegates reviewed the work done by the IPC during the past year. This included the NFU involvement in the 5th International Conference of LVC in Mozambique; participating in counter G8 meetings and protests in Japan; hosting a LVC North American Regional meeting and an International Woman's Commission meeting; and organizing a series of public events with LVC representatives in Region 3.

We heard a presentation by Paul Nicholson, a regional director of LVC from Spain, who spoke of the increasing global stature of LVC. Several national governments are now asking LVC for information on food sovereignty. He also emphasized the importance of speaking out against violence against women in the rural world, and the need to dismantle the power of transnational corporations and eliminate subsidies for agricultural exports. He used the term "casino capitalism" to describe investor speculation in food crops.

Robert Massoud explained the obstacles facing farmers in occupied Palestine. He outlined the objectives of Zatoun, a non-profit organization dedicated to the distribution and sale of fair trade olive oil from Palestine. Proceeds from the sale of oil provides income to farmers and also goes to youth education and the planting of olive trees. Some of the ideas the IPC discussed in building bridges between Palestine and Canada were to look into twinning with an olive co-op in Palestine; sending a delegation to the olive harvest in 2009; selling olive oil in Canada; and writing letters to the Canadian government regarding the situation in Palestine.

Public events IPC delegates suggested as activities for 2009 included sponsoring two LVC representatives to travel through the Maritimes speaking on the subject of food sovereignty, and co-hosting a spring conference in Ottawa with the Canadian Bio-Technology Action Network. It is hoped that proposals submitted to CIDA will provide the IPC with money to carry on these activities as well as fund our co-coordinator in the coming year.

—Submitted by Phil Laflamme, Local 310

*Hilary Moore is the Region 3 representative for the International Program Committee and can be contacted at (613) 296-0599.*

## **A Day with Elaine Ingham - Nobleton**

**January 12th (Monday) - 9 AM to 4 PM** - EFAO and Grey Bruce Farmers Week have joined forces to bring Elaine Ingham to Ontario.

Dr. Ingham will speak during the Ecological Afternoon on Saturday, January 10 at Elmwood for Grey Bruce Farmers Week and then join EFAO all day on January 12th. Her talks on soil microbiology and soil health will be complimentary but each session will be unique.

Cost of Monday will be \$65 for EFAO members and \$85 for non members. Lunch will be included. **Please pre-register for this event.** We will turn people away at the door.

**For more information contact the EFAO office at [info@efao.ca](mailto:info@efao.ca) or call 1-877-822-8606.**

## The Farm Crisis and The Cattle Sector Toward a New Analysis and New Solutions

Plans are underway to provide each farm home in Ontario with a clear synopsis of the Farm Crisis and the Cattle Sector Report. It will outline the study and the major findings, offer a list of solutions and provide the reader with the means to receive a complete report. It will also promote a series of meetings that will be held throughout the province. Some of these meetings will feature NFU's Research Director, Darrin Qualman and others will feature NFU members with beef industry experience. The meetings will be of interest to anyone that produces livestock as many of the crisis conditions and solutions can be applied to other livestock commodities as well.

NFU members are encouraged to attend and invite their neighbours to begin to understand this new analysis and consider potential solutions.

To receive additional copies of the synopsis report or the executive summary, contact Joan Brady at the Member Services Office at 519-237-3163.

### CATTLE SECTOR MEETINGS

**Darrin Qualman, NFU's Director of Research will be presenting the findings of The Farm Crisis and the Cattle Sector at the following events:**

- **January 17, 2009**, 10 AM—3 PM at the SUDBURY WEST NIPISSING CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION Meeting to be held at the Day's Inn, 117 Elm St., Sudbury. Everyone Welcome, RSVP by January 10, 2009 to James Barrett at 705-671-9137.
- **January 19, 2009**, 7 PM, RENFREW COUNTY at Barr Line Community Centre, Barr Line (between Cobden and Renfrew). For more information, Contact Dave McKay at 613-256-2361.
- **January 20, 2009**, 7:30 PM, FRONTENAC CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION Meeting, to be held at Trinity United Church Hall, 2170 Unity Rd., Elginburg. For more info., contact Ron Taite, 613-353-6101.
- **January 21, 2009**, 7:30 PM, BRUCE/GREY COUNTIES at Elmwood Community Centre, Elmwood. For more information, contact Joan Brady @ 519-237-3163

Tentative meetings are planned for various other areas as well including Huron/Perth, Lambton/Middlesex and Peterborough. If you would like more information or to arrange a meeting in your area, please contact Joan Brady at the Member Services Office at 519-237-3163.

### An Introduction to Holistic Management

*Holistic Management is an approach to managing resources that builds biodiversity, improves production and generates financial strength. It improves the quality of life while enhancing the environment that sustains us all.*

*The course will be led by HM certified instructors, Fran and Tony McQuail, mcqufarm@hurontel.on.ca*

**For more information on HMI, visit: [www.holisticmanagement.org](http://www.holisticmanagement.org)**

The **course will be offered in Eastern Ontario** at McIntosh Country Inn and Convention Center in Morrisburg, just off the 401. **Participants can book their own accommodations at the Inn at 1-888-229-2850.** The **dates are Friday, February 6 to Sunday, February 8, 2009, and Friday, February 27 to Sunday, March 1, 2009.** Pre-registration is required and space is limited.

- by New Tobacco Alliance Committee

Tobacco Growers are in a desperate situation. They are closely regulated and have not been allowed to sell their quota for several years. This past season they were allowed to grow only 7% of their quota. Now after 10 years of losses in revenue due to grow able quota reductions, their Agricultural Stabilization is running out. This level of stress is taking an awful toll on families and the communities.

Because the value of their quota accounts for a large part of their equity (debit) and their equipment and infrastructure is highly specialized they are trapped. The assets are not saleable and they cannot profit if they grow tobacco at the present volume. Additional new debt was added when the growers were forced to invest in expensive modifications to their drying systems in 2001, the year before the market went into freefall.

Much of the responsibility for the lost bulk tobacco sales rests with the Provincial and Federal Governments who both failed to enforce the laws around illegal cigarettes. The market for domestically grown tobacco has been hammered down 85% in the last 10 years. Illegal cigarettes now account for almost 50% of the retail market in Ontario and Quebec. The tobacco in those cigarettes is almost all foreign. In order to compete with contraband the cigarette companies have almost completely replaced higher priced domestic tobacco with lower priced foreign tobacco.

The New Tobacco Alliance Committee has been created with guidance from the NFU and the Landowners Association to help protect our mutual members caught in this crisis. The goal of NTAC is to be sure that tobacco growers get fair compensation before any changes are made to the marketing system. The governments and

industry are determined to cast out the farmer controlled quota marketing system. They insist that the system will be replaced with a growers contract system controlled by industry. In the NFU we know that farmers will be abused under any new system that farmers do not control.

Most of our members would be ready to quit growing tobacco. The problem is they have no way to quit and move on without going bankrupt. Much lobbying has been done to get a buyout for growers to leave the industry. The reality is that even if the Federal Government came good on their election promise of \$1.05 per lb of quota and the Provincial Government could be talked into giving their traditional 40% the resulting \$1.74 per lb of quota would not pay off growers bank loans. Several years ago the Tobacco Marketing Board commissioned an accounting firm to determine what the average grower would need to get out of the industry. The figure was \$3.30 per lb of quota.

Presently NTAC has legal opinions on two issues. Can the Tobacco Marketing Board change from the current quota marketing system to a contracting system without changes to the provincial legislation? Are there grounds to sue any parties for damages? On both of these issues we believe we have actionable legal grounds. NTAC, under advisement from our lawyers and from our members, has been waiting for the Marketing Board and the Governments to do the honourable thing and resolve the mess they have created.

Time is running out and NTAC is ready and prepared to take all the legal action necessary to protect our members.

- Garry Proven,  
NTAC and NFU Local 301

## Local Activities and Events

### Leeds/Grenville NFU

The Leeds/Grenville local of the NFU brought a resolution to the Region 3 Fall Convention asking for support for Bill 132. They have worked in support of members Marsha and Gene Countyman, owners of Countryman's Estate Winery in Maitland and Leeds-Grenville MPP Bob Runciman and his private member's bill.

Bill 132 received second reading. "I am very optimistic with the response and debate during second reading" said Runciman. "My hope is that we will see Ontario fruit wines sold at farmer's markets this summer". The general government committee will be the next step and the Leeds-Grenville MPP hopes hearings will be scheduled in January or February.

### Local 1- Prescott/Russell, Stormont/Dundas/Glengarry, Ottawa

The Local met on Dec 11th at Brian's Bar and Grill in Casselman for a Christmas dinner meeting which was very well attended (30 members) and enjoyed by all. Caroline Levesque, coordinator of the VanKleek Hill Feast of Fields (Savour the Region) spoke about the Feast of Fields and invited the Local to participate as a sponsor. (Prescott/ Russell) . The Local has also been asked to sit on a local food committee formed by the counties of SD&G. A member will attend a meeting on Dec 19th. The goal is to promote local food and a local producers' directory is already in the works. Plans were made to place ads in 3 local farm newspapers to promote the NFU as a choice for the FBR 2009, along with best wishes for the New Year. **The next Local meeting will be held Monday January 19 at 7:30 pm at Knox Presbyterian Church in Moose Creek. Everyone is Welcome.**

### Haldimand/Norfolk/SE Oxford

**Annual Membership Meeting on January 14, 2009 at 7:30 PM at the Courtland Community Centre, Courtland.** A dvd of National Convention Keynote Speaker Raj Patel will be shown. Everyone is encouraged to attend as this address explains our current problems in agriculture in a humorous, yet gripping way. There will be updates on the tobacco situation and elections for local executive will be held.

**"Transition to organics"** course which is facilitated by EFAO and sponsored by NFU Local 301. Members are offered a \$25 discount on registration fees. The dates are Mar 4 & 5 2009 at the Cornell Community Centre, 185221 Cornell Rd, Cornell (east of Tillisonburg). For further info contact EFAO at 1-877-822-8606 or Martin Driesse at 519-863-5050.

### Renfrew

**Introduction to Ecological Agriculture Workshop**, sponsored by Ottawa Valley Food Cooperative, Renfrew County NFU and Renfrew County Stewardship Council on Saturday, January 31 and February 07, 2009, 9 AM to 4 PM. Cost \$60 per person which includes a delicious local food lunch on both Saturdays. To Register contact Cheryl Keetch at 613-756-3384 or [ckeetch@webhart.net](mailto:ckeetch@webhart.net). Pre-registration and a \$30 deposit is required.

### Middlesex

**Executive Board Meeting** on Thursday January 15th, 2009 at 7:00 PM at 25425 New Ontario Road, RR3 Denfield. This meeting will focus on plans for the 2009 year. All NFU members are welcome to attend - bring your ideas. For directions or information contact Karen Eatwell 519-232-4105.

### Huron

**Annual General Meeting** on March 10, 2009 at 7:30 PM at the Clinton OMAFRA office, Don St., Clinton. Terran Giacomini, NFU Local Food Researcher, will be welcomed as our speaker and the "Food Down the Road" film clip will also be shown. Elections for Executive members will be held. For more information, Contact Tony McQuail at 519-528-2493.

## Local Activities and Events

### Wellington/Waterloo

On November 15, the Wellington/Waterloo Local of the National Farmers Union held a series of presentations to introduce new and emerging ideas for sustainable innovation on family farms. The event was held at the St. Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, between 2 PM and 5 PM. More than 30 members and interested public attended. Speakers included Jay Mowat of Erin, Ontario on the Everpure Biodiesel Co-operative (EBC) and its closed-loop, food-to-fuel-to-food production system. Jasmin Hoffer from Energrow Systems spoke on the mechanical screw press expeller that is capable of producing both vegetable oil and high-energy, high-protein, pelletized feed out of raw soybeans that she had developed. Mike Larson, a cattle buyer for Kerr Farms had a different message. He stated that the livestock industry is in such a state of crisis that survival is really the only concern, and that "innovation" is, at this point, a financial impossibility. Harro Wehrmann was the last to speak. Mr. Wehrmann hails from a 1000-acre organic farm in Ripley, ON. He recommended looking outside of Ontario – to Saskatchewan, Europe and Australia – for innovative ideas that can be put to work on our farms.

For a full report on the day, contact Wellington/Waterloo President Ron Weber at 519-343-4803.

### Brant/Hamilton/Halton

Thursday, January 15/09, 7:30 pm, Copetown Community Centre. 1950 Governors Rd (Hwy. 99), just east of Hwy. 52 at Copetown.

<http://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&q=1950%20Governors%20Rd,%20Copetown,%20ON%20Canada>

Please call 519-647-0307 or 905-526-1845 for more information. **Feature: Film: "The World According to Monsanto"** which examines this company's history of environmental health problems.

Sunday 9:30 to 11:30 am, Jan. 25, **Guelph Organic Agriculture Conference, Greenbelt Issues: Protecting Farmland Inside and Outside of the Greenbelt.** Contact Ella Haley for more information 519-647-0307; Co-sponsored by Sustainable Brant and the Ecological Farmers of Ontario.

**February: Date TBA. Feature: The NFU report on the Canadian cattle industry.**

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

# NFU Region 3 (Ontario) Convention and NFU-Ontario Annual General Meeting

**April 04, 2009**

**John Knox Christian School**

**800 Julian Drive, Woodstock, at Hwy 59 and Hwy 401**

**More information to follow.**