



*Strong Communities.
Sound Policies.
Sustainable Farms.*

Phone: 1-888-832-9638
E-mail: office@nfontario.ca
Website: www.nfontario.ca

Cultivating change

Our annual convention and AGM took place at the beginning of the month. It was a great weekend of engaging speakers, interesting debate, and networking with farmers and organizations who are passionate about farming and local food! Here are some highlights from the convention.

This year our theme was “grassroots organizing,” and the speakers we invited reflected how important community organizing is in many different contexts. We kicked off the convention with a keynote lecture by Joan Kuyek and Sarah Harmer. Joan Kuyek is a local author and organizer and Sarah Harmer is a renowned Canadian singer and environmental activist. In their talk, Joan discussed the key components for building a successful social movement and how to reclaim the food system through creating sustainable alternatives, and Sarah told us about her work on protecting the Niagara Escarpment and what it took to create a successful environmental protection campaign.

On Friday, we heard from a panel of activists who have worked on various social justice campaigns. Vicki Monague, an indigenous activist from Beausoleil First Nation, told attendees about her work to protect the Alliston Aquifer in Tiny Township. She noted, “Water is a human right... When we worked for water, everyone stripped themselves

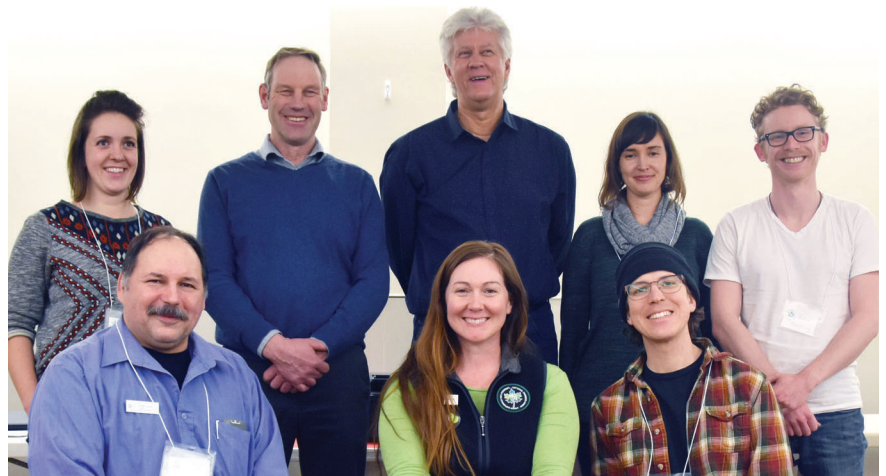
of their political divide – unity emerged from a divided community.” Next, Terran Giacomini, an activist from Local 305, spoke about international solidarity and her involvement with La Via Campesina, an international peasant rights movement. Lastly, we heard from Aric McBay, our Membership Development Coordinator, who discussed the campaign to save the prison farms and the principles necessary to build grassroots campaigns.

1. Build alliances
2. Mobilize strong communities
3. Emphasize actionable goals
4. Be proactive, not reactive
5. Escalate over the course of the campaign
6. Find points of leverage and disruption
7. Think long-term

In addition to the keynote and panel discussion, we hosted a workshop on land rights and how to manage the legal side of land succession planning, as well as a workshop around the provincial

election and issues that are important to farmers, including expanding the Greenbelt for water protection.

Our 2018 convention was a huge success! We would like to thank everyone who sponsored it, participated, and helped add to the discussions. We’ll see you again next year for another great weekend of sharing ideas and working towards a more just food system!



2018-2019 NFU-O Regional Council: front row (from left), Emery Huszka, Marcelle Paulin, Steph Laing. Back row: Ayla Fenton, Tony Straathof, Don Ciparis, Katie Sproule – IPC representative, Aaron Armstrong. Absent: Coreen McNally.

Coming Events

Renfrew Local 330 – Next meeting is Monday, Apr. 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Barr Line Community Centre. Everyone is welcome.

Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Ottawa, Prescott Russell Local 362 – Next meeting is Apr. 3, 7:00 p.m. at The Swan on the Rideau, 2730 River Rd, Manotick. Please note the change of location.

A subscription to The Rural Voice is one of the benefits of being an NFU-O member