



# National Farmers Union – Ontario NEWSLETTER

*Strong Communities.  
Sound Policies.  
Sustainable Farms.*

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## Growing Sustainable Communities: NFU-O AGM and Convention update

In February, the NFU-O held our 2019 convention and AGM in Alliston, Ontario. Our theme this year was Growing Sustainable Communities. Co-hosted with the Mono Mulmur Citizens' Coalition, our keynote speaker Tamer Soliman spoke about The Power of Food: How to Build Community in the 21st Century.

Tamer discussed the issues that are leading us into an age of loneliness through modern lifestyles and technology including our jobs, limited access to nature, and addiction to social media. It's becoming harder for people to feel connected to each other in our modern world, and this reality is contributing to poor health and depression. However, despite a growing sense of isolation, Tamer believes there are solutions to rebuilding a sense of community. One of the ways we can do this is through food. During his time in the Cayman Islands, Tamer learned about the deep connection between food and its power to rebuild community when natives of the island started reclaiming coconuts as a vital part of their diet. Tamer's experience and research showed how the deep connection between local food and community significantly contributes to happier and healthier lifestyles.

We were also joined by Ruth Knight from the Soil Health Coalition, who spoke about how soil health mirrors what we perceive

about community building. Soil health is the capacity of a soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans; community health is the capacity of systems within a community to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains body, heart, and spirit of all beings. She also spoke about the Soil Health Coalition in Erin that is measuring total carbon, organic matter, bulk

density, particle size, water infiltration at 28 sites.

We ended the event with a wonderful farm tour of Lennox Farm's delicious winter rhubarb and commercial kitchen. Brian French and his wife Jeannette shared the history of the fifth-generation family farm.

Thanks to the sponsors, members, and volunteers who made this event possible!



*In February the NFU-O held its 2019 Convention and AGM. Newly elected and returning NFU-O Board members in attendance were: Back row, from left, Bernard Foley (Councillor-at-large), Devan Penney (Councillor-at-large), Hilary Moore (National Board member), Don Ciparis (NFU-O President, Region 3 Coordinator). Front row: Ayla Fenton (National Board member), Erin Richan (Youth Advisor). Not pictured: Coreen McNally (Councillor-at-large), Marcelle Paulin (Women's Advisor).*



*Ruth Knight from the Soil Health Coalition was one of the speakers at the NFU-O Convention.*

### Coming Events

**Renfrew County Local 330 –**  
Next meeting is Monday,  
April 1, 7:30 p.m. at the Barr Line  
Community Centre. Everyone is  
welcome.

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