



National Farmers Union – Ontario NEWSLETTER

*Strong Communities.
Sound Policies.
Sustainable Farms.*

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NFU-O holds annual general meeting

In February, the NFU-O held its annual general meeting and convention in Hamilton, ON focusing on addressing climate change. Lynda Lukasik, shared how protecting farmland was part of making the province more climate-ready.

Stewart Wells, Vice President of Operations, presented on the NFU's new report *Tackling the Farm Income Crisis and Climate Crisis* that was released in November, noting that the farm crisis and climate crisis are related and share similar solutions such as electrifying everything from water and space heating to trucks and small tractors, reducing nitrogen use, and diversifying cropping approaches.

In the afternoon, Bryan Gilvesy from Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) shared how farmers can receive funding for taking marginal land out of production. Pam Charlton from Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association highlighted the funding programs they administer including the Environmental Farm Plan, the Canadian Agricultural

Partnership, and the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands. Sally Miller spoke about how the Fair Finance Fund takes investments from institutions and individual and lends it to those working within the local food sector. There is no collateral requirement, and once the loan is approved, mentors support the

receiver throughout the life of the loan.

Members also heard reports from Council on provincial and national work, elected leadership, and voted on resolutions. The day ended with a shared meal which included ingredients from several members' farms.



Returning and elected NFU-O Board members are: (from left): Nick Greenacre (Councillor-at-large), Terry Byrne (Councillor-at-large), Don Ciparis (NFU-O President, Region 3 Coordinator), Arwa de Groot (Women's Advisor), Hilary Moore (National Board member), Ayla Fenton (National Board member), and Max Hansgen (Councillor-at-large). Absent: Kate Garvie (Youth Advisor).



Robbie and Christina Anderman of Killaloe, left and centre, were inducted into the Renfrew County Agriculture Wall of Fame at a recent celebration. The Renfrew County National Farmers Union Local 330 nominated the couple and were one of three organizations who had their nominees inducted. Introducing them to the crowd at the event was Local 330 president Marshall Buchanan (right).

New NFU-O Farm Labour Project

The NFU-O has been approved for a project through the Ontario Labour Market Partnership (OLMP) funded through the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. We will be investigating causes and solutions of farm labour issues across Ontario, including challenges to training and retaining farm workers and new farmers.

This project will include a mix of consultation, research, and stakeholder engagement. That work will build toward a final report clarifying the farm labour situation in Ontario and identifying practical next steps for action by farmers, farm organizations, government agencies, and policy-makers.

As a first step, we are soliciting members' opinions here: www.surveymonkey.com/r/farmlabour

Coming Events

Local 330 Renfrew – Next meeting is Monday, April 6, 7:30 p.m. at the Barr Line Community Centre. For more information, contact Connie Tabbert at rcnfu330@gmail.com or 613-646-7753.

Local 316 Frontenac, Lennox-Addington – Save the date for the Third Annual Spring Fling, our easy-going social event to celebrate the beginning of the growing season, on Saturday, May 2, 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. at Patchwork Gardens, 4649 Milburn Rd., Battersea. Everyone is welcome to attend – all ages, all connections to the farm and food network. Please bring your own cutlery, plates/bowls, and cups to minimize your ecological footprint for the potluck and bring a musical instrument for the jam session. Please dress for the weather – this is an indoor/outdoor event.

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