



# National Farmers Union – Ontario NEWSLETTER

*Strong Communities.  
Sound Policies.  
Sustainable Farms.*

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## Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis: a new report from the National Farmers Union

*“The farm crisis and the climate crisis share many of the same causes, and many of the same solutions.”*

Canadian farm debt has nearly doubled since 2000, standing at a record \$106 billion. An ever-increasing use of synthetic inputs, fuel, chemicals and plastics increases emissions while lowering farmers’ incomes. Between 1985 and 2018, input suppliers captured more than 95 per cent of every farm-earned dollar, leaving farmers only five per cent.

The farm crisis is a threat to Canadian farms, but also an opportunity to re-orient our farms to become more integrated, life-sustaining and community-sustaining. In this historical moment, as the changes in our climate system force us to reduce energy use and emissions, farm families have a chance to break free from approaches that extract farm wealth, decimate farm numbers, weaken communities, and force children to leave farming.

We need to incentivize low-input, low-emission agricultural approaches. Ten thousand years of history makes one thing crystal clear: farming does not create Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, petro-industrial inputs create GHG emissions. The core of Canada’s agricultural policy focuses on

maximizing production and exports. But, maximizing outputs also means maximizing inputs.

The good news is that knowing that high-output, high-input agriculture is the primary cause of the farm crisis and the primary cause of increasing GHG emissions from our farms and food-production systems is also knowing that by lowering farm input use we are increasing the net farm income while reducing GHG emissions.

Both the climate crisis and the farm crisis are so complex that no single report can provide all the answers. This report, however, does have many answers—some of which could be implemented right away. Others provide a starting point to opening up the climate conversation in the agricultural sector. Options that will work for different geographic locations, soil types, or types of farms will be explored, but there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The NFU’s proposal is that we must increase soil carbon levels and embark on emission-reduction strategies simultaneously.

If you want to read the full report, please visit [www.nfu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Tackling-the-Farm-Crisis-and-the-Climate-Crisis-NFU-2019.pdf](http://www.nfu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Tackling-the-Farm-Crisis-and-the-Climate-Crisis-NFU-2019.pdf)

### Tree Planting Project for Local 316 Members

Local 316 is continuing the celebration of the NFU’s 50th anniversary in 2019, with their “50 Years, 50 Trees” project.

**They will be offering up to \$500 worth of tree seedlings to each of their member families or farm units for planting next spring.**

The Local has arranged for 2,700 trees from the Ferguson Nursery in Kemptonville – 200 conifers (white cedar and white spruce) and 700 deciduous trees (hard maple, high bush cranberry, chokecherry, shagbark hickory and red osier dogwood).

**The first opportunity to sign up for trees will be at the Local 316 Annual General Meeting, Thursday, January 23, 2020 at Inverary United Church hall, Inverary.**

*Come to the annual meeting to learn more and to complete an order form for trees for planting next spring (delivery around April 1, 2020).*

### Coming Events

**Local 330 Renfrew** – Next meeting is Monday, January 6, 7:30 p.m. at the Barr Line Community Centre. Save the date for the AGM on Monday, February 3. For more information, contact Connie Tabbert at [rcnfu330@gmail.com](mailto:rcnfu330@gmail.com) or 613-646-7753.

**Local 341 Perth Oxford** – Directors’ Meeting is Wednesday, January 8, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Pam and Andy Megens, 2877 Perth Rd. 119 (Hwy. 7). All members are welcome. For more information contact Local President, Julie Fleischauer at [goldenacresfarm@hotmail.com](mailto:goldenacresfarm@hotmail.com)

**Local 316 Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox-Addington** – Annual Meeting is Thursday, January 23 at Inverary United Church Hall, Inverary. Gathering and socializing starts at 5:45 p.m. with a potluck supper at 6:15 p.m. The theme is Getting Involved in Climate Action – the NFU in international, national, regional and local climate actions. All welcome. Bring a friend!

**Local 347 Simcoe Dufferin** – Annual General Meeting will be held at the Small Hall in Stayner (241 William Street, Stayner) on Saturday, February 8 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It will be a potluck lunch, and all are invited to attend.

### Register Now!

With support from the Gosling Foundation and the McLean Foundation, the NFU-O and the Ontario Farmland Trust will be holding a series of land-matching workshops that will allow young farmers to access land and retiring farmers to identify possible successors as well as provide legal resources, conservation information and other support.

**Saturday, January 25**  
Guelph Organic Conference

**Monday, January 27**  
Ottawa/Lanark

**Tuesday, January 28**  
Kingston

**Wednesday, January 29**  
Prince Edward County

**Thursday, January 30**  
Durham/Peterborough

**For times and registration, visit:**  
[farm-workshops.eventbrite.ca](http://farm-workshops.eventbrite.ca)

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