



National Farmers Union – Ontario NEWSLETTER

Strong Communities.
Sound Policies.
Sustainable Farms.

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COVID-19 and policy updates

The NFU continues to speak up for our members on calls with AAFC staff on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Issues we've been raising include that the Canada Emergency Business Account still does not help owner-operators with payroll under \$20,000 and AgriStability does not meet the needs of most farmers. Among the many other issues discussed at the roundtable are the role of provinces in determining which essential services are eligible for wage top-ups; worker safety; the reception of temporary foreign workers; and depressed capacity for livestock processing.

AAFC is encouraging the use of AgriStability and has extended the deadline for sign-up until July 3. We know it doesn't meet many of your needs, but AAFC insists that this is the year it will be of value to farmers, so take a look. AAFC is hearing from every organization in the farm sector that a return to pre-Harper levels is absolutely necessary for AgriStability

to work. They report that they are in negotiations with the Provinces since it is a cost-shared program.

We'll continue to push for changes to make financial structures work for you. We can make our case even stronger by providing policy makers with specific details from our members. You can help by emailing shaw@nfu.ca about why AgriStability does or doesn't work for your farm. We will keep all information you send us confidential.

At the NFU-Ontario web site, we have linked to details on government programming and our responses, as well as various commodity sector updates. You can also find a guide to the *Rights and Responsibilities of Farm Employers and Employees during COVID-19* we created, which will help you navigate on-farm employment during this time.

Find these and more by visiting nfuontario.ca and click COVID-19 Resources or go to nfu.ca for national updates.

Local 316 Tree Planting project

To celebrate the NFU's 50th anniversary in 2019, Local 316 organized the "50 Years, 50 Trees" project for member families.

The Local purchased about 2600 bare-root trees from the Ferguson Nursery in Kemptville, including conifers (white cedar and white spruce), and deciduous trees (hard maple, high bush cranberry, chokecherry, shagbark hickory and red osier dogwood), and offered 50 trees per family to Local 316 members.

In late April, trees were distributed to about 45 member-families who had ordered trees during the winter and early spring.

Most of the trees went to farmer members to be used as windbreaks, shoreline protection and to support biodiversity; as well, some trees went to the Local's associate members.

A number of food-related trees (chokecherries, hickory and maple) were donated to the edible forests at the Lakeside and Oak Street community gardens in Kingston. Local 316 is proud to support community gardens as important sources of food for our community.

This project was funded by money raised through our annual Farmers Fall Feast. The generosity of our volunteers and supporters allows the Local to fund educational opportunities for young and new farmers, and to fund climate change mitigation projects such as soil carbon testing and improvement, seed-saving grow-outs and this tree planting project.

Many thanks to Jeff and Sue Peters of the Inverary area for organizing and implementing this project, and for hosting the pick-up location.

"If you want to be happy for a year, plant a garden; if you want to be happy for life, plant a tree."

– English proverb

2020 NFU-O Farm Labour Survey

Have farm labour shortages affected your ability to bring food to Ontario tables?

How is COVID-19 impacting your staffing needs in 2020?

Let's work together to find sustainable solutions to farm labour issues in Ontario.

NFU-O farm owners and operators, we want to hear from you!



Follow the link below to complete a short survey.
Fill it out for a chance to win a surprise prize!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/farmlabour>



If you have questions about the survey, please contact Dave Thompson at david@nfuontario.ca

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