



# National Farmers Union – Ontario NEWSLETTER

*Strong Communities.  
Sound Policies.  
Sustainable Farms.*

Phone: 1-888-832-9638  
E-mail: [office@nfuontario.ca](mailto:office@nfuontario.ca)  
Website: [www.nfuontario.ca](http://www.nfuontario.ca)

## Young farmers gather to address the future of farming

More than 60 young farmers from across Canada came together March 4-7 outside Parham, Ontario at RKY camp for an intensive 3-day long young farmer convergence. The event organized and hosted by the National Farmers Union was filled with thoughtful conversation on a range of important topics affecting young farmers now and in the future. The dynamic event sandwiched young farmers wall-to-wall in the dining hall of the camp and created an inspiring and motivating experience which emphasized the importance of peer-to-peer sharing and used the collective knowledge of the participants to help create a truly meaningful experience. One young farmer said:

*“One thing I took away from the convergence actually came out of attending one of the impromptu break-out sessions on mental health in farming. I learned about the issues facing farmers with regards to mental health and some ways young farmers are coping with the long hours and stress of farming. As someone new to*

*farming, but coming from a high-stress and mentally exhausting work environment, I was able to relate and take away strategies others are using to maintain good mental health throughout the season.”*

The event touched on important topics such as how to farm in light of climate change, how to build a food system which supports farmers, and how to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Participants left having made meaningful connections with each other, making pledges on how they can use their farm to fight climate change, and with the knowledge that collective action and cooperation amongst farmers can lead to meaningful changes in our communities and on eaters’ plates.

Organizers with the National Farmers Union brought the group of young farmers together to help build connections between young people across the country and develop skills in organizing and production for the

next generation of farmers. One young farmer at the event succinctly illustrated this goal, saying:

*“Farming can be an isolating career, especially during the peak season when there may be little time to socialize and interact with others at the same experience level. Events outside of the core season, such as this convergence and other conferences, workshops, and retreats, are highly important to help young farmers integrate into the greater community and interact with other young farmers to gain a sense of solidarity. I left feeling that I had made connections with a number of folks and expect to maintain these newfound friendships throughout my farming career.”*

A big thanks to all those farmers and eaters that donated to the crowdfunding campaign that helped support the event and to the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario for their assistance.

### Coming Events

**Renfrew County Local 330** – Next meeting is Monday, May. 6, 7:30 p.m. at the Barr Line Community Centre. Everyone is welcome.

**Local 362 Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Ottawa, Prescott-Russell** – Guest Speaker Christopher Kelly-Bisson will share his findings on farmland consolidation by financial entities in Eastern Ontario during the May 9 meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Riverbend Restaurant 3256 River Rd, Manotick. All are welcome.

**Local 351 Brant, Hamilton, Halton** will host four major events through our local this year: Skill Share - June 29 at Manorun Farm (782 Highway 52, Copetown ON); BBQ – Summer 2019, Location TBA; Film Night – Fall 2019, Location TBA; and AGM - Date and Location TBA. We hope to see you there.



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