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The CFFO Newsletter

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Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

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CFFO study highlights barriers to environmental program participation



Almost everyone believes that protecting the environment is a good thing. However, despite that belief, the uptake in farm environmental programs is less than optimum.

Dr. Charlotte McCallum surveyed the data and wanted to know why people haven't been rushing headlong into protecting the planet. Now, more than two years after asking the question, McCallum has her answer.

Contracted by the CFFO, McCallum conducted key-informant interviews, focus groups, a stakeholder meeting and analysis of participation in the Environmental Farm Plan and Rural Water Quality programs. Through all this painstaking work, she produced a 129-page report that concludes two types of barriers exist for participation in farm environmental programs.

The first type of barrier centers on the design and delivery of environmental programs. Many such

programs have limited amounts of money and few financial incentives for farmers who choose to participate. Complicating matters further are different approaches to delivery favoured by federal and provincial governments.

The second type of barrier centers on the perspectives of farmers themselves. Some farmers mistrust government and fear public disclosure of information about their farm management practices. Farmers also dislike the complexity of environmental programs and the resulting paperwork. Finally farmers also cite uncertainty over looming nutrient management regulations and an aversion to the broader environmental movement.

McCallum's report concludes that farm environmental programs have considerable merit but argues it will take a good deal of political will and financial commitment to achieve consistent results.

The report, formally entitled *Identifying Barriers to Participation in Agri-Environmental Programs in Ontario* was produced for the CFFO and partly funded by a grant from the Agricultural Adaptation Council. The AAC is a non-profit coalition of 55 agricultural, agri-business and rural organizations working together to support Ontario's agricultural sector and rural communities.

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To obtain a copy of
*"Identifying Barriers to Participation
In Agri-Environmental
Programs In Ontario"*
Log onto our website at
www.christianfarmers.org

or
contact the CFFO office
for

- Hard copy - \$10.00
- CD copy - \$4.50

Dead Stock Act Review

Delegates to a recent CFFO Provincial Board meeting adopted a position statement calling on the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food to review and update the Dead Stock Act. Members of the CFFO have become increasingly concerned that the Act does not reflect current and emerging circumstances regarding arrangements for handling livestock mortalities within the province.

John Kikkert, the CFFO's president, points out: "many of our producers are uncomfortable with burial as an option for management of mortalities. They are concerned about the impact of diseased animals on biosecurity and groundwater. In addition, Ontario has nothing in place, other than burial, for dealing with a large number of mortalities should a major animal disease outbreak occur in the province."

The CFFO is recommending that the following items be addressed in a review of the Dead Stock Act:

- The merits of using both on-farm and off-farm incineration need to be investigated.
- Firm recommendations need to be developed on which management approach will be used should a major animal disease outbreak occur in Ontario.
- The management of livestock mortalities needs to be coordinated with the goals of the Nutrient Management Act and proposed water source protection plans.
- Creation of assurances advocating that options for managing livestock mortalities in Ontario are environmentally sound and do not pose risks for biosecurity.
- The development of financial incentives encouraging agricultural producers to manage mortalities in the most environmentally friendly manner.

Business Risk Management

The Business Risk Management (safety nets) pillar of the federal government's Agricultural Policy Framework has received a great deal of

discussion within the CFFO. In attempting to develop a position statement on safety net issues, delegates to a recent Provincial Board meeting debated the merits of a Business Risk Management draft position statement. They also reviewed comments on safety net programs from a variety of other provincial farm organizations.

Although a position statement was not adopted at the meeting, it was clear that some areas of consensus have developed amongst members. A letter to provincial Agriculture Minister Helen Johns following the meeting stressed the following areas of consensus:

- There is strong, in principle, support within CFFO for the new NISA because it is better focused on need than the old program. It also addresses routine income fluctuations and allows farmers to determine the amount of risk for which they can seek protection.
- There is no assumption within CFFO that the proposed Production Insurance and new NISA will be able to respond adequately to "once-in-a-lifetime" disasters such as the current experience with BSE. Governments need to maintain a commitment to supporting agriculture when disasters occur.
- CFFO members are strongly committed to a firm limit or maximum on the government share of payouts to any one farmer under the new NISA. We support maximum payout of government monies of \$150,000, per person, per year.
- There are a number of details of the new NISA that have been well received within CFFO: a) government funds will only be accessed when need is established; b) producer contributions are required to establish eligibility; c) the move to modified accrual accounting; and d) allowing new account holders to build up their accounts over a three-year period.
- CFFO members are adamant that the commitment of governments to provide funds for the new NISA must be as firm as the commitment farmers are required to

make. The new NISA will require farmers to put their money into a savings account to establish eligibility. Governments cannot waffle on the idea that in a high claim year there may be some prorating of government support.

The letter to Minister Johns also noted that CFFO members have developed no consensus on other Business Risk Management features, most notably: the transition period, negative margins, interim withdrawals, cash flow impact, arms length labour and linkage between NISA and Production Insurance.

Long-Term Declining Prices

As part of its discussion on Business Risk Management programs, delegates to the CFFO's Provincial Board explored a basic question: Is risk management defined as stabilizing prices (reducing the highs and the lows of price cycles, especially the lows, through counter cyclical payments) enough or does Ontario agriculture also need risk management defined as support for long-term declining price levels?

A draft position statement on long-term declining prices noted several contributing factors to long-term price declines, including the rising value of the dollar, the rapid adoption of more and new technology as well as the large domestic and export subsidies in the United States and the European Union. Also noted is the observation that long-term support payments for declining price levels carry serious drawbacks, including continued over-production for economic demand, still lower prices, over-production of livestock in response to low feed prices and pressure to expand and adopt more technology.

No consensus emerged from the discussion. The draft position statement will be circulated to CFFO committees for additional work.

Pork Partners



Pork producers within the CFFO were concerned when a major Ontario processor told farmers by letter that

their company now requires all purchased hogs to be fed according to strict, new feeding guidelines. The guidelines call for all feed to be free of meat and bonemeal. Concerned about additional feed costs, and the disposal of offal and dead stock products, these producers asked the Federation's Provincial Board to endorse a letter to provincial Agriculture Minister Helen Johns and to the Farm Products Marketing Commission about the processor's demands. The motion for endorsement at Provincial Board noted that "CFFO pork producers are disturbed that an industry partner is setting a standard for the industry without sound basis and without consulting the other partners, thereby creating an unfavourable business environment for the whole livestock sector."

Dairy Exports

The thorny issue of international trade in dairy products has drawn heated discussion within the CFFO. To help producers work their way through the issues, the CFFO offered two study sessions early in the summer and invited speakers and members. Within those study sessions, a majority of CFFO members argued that exports outside the system pose a threat to supply management, while a few voices countered that such exports are not harmful and could actually be helpful in the long run. Finally, at a recent Provincial Board meeting, delegates voted in favour of a motion calling upon Agriculture Minister Helen Johns to intervene in a provincial tribunal's decision regarding the export of milk outside the supply management system.



WTO Agricultural Negotiations

Delegates to a recent CFFO Provincial Board meeting debated a draft position statement on World Trade Organization agricultural negotiations. The draft statement advocated a number of proposals to support supply management and the grain and red meat sectors. After discussion, the Board sent the draft

statement back to staff and committees for more work.

Executive Board Business

The CFFO Executive Board regularly deals with a wide variety of items regarding the governance of the organization. Over the past few months, those items have included:

- Learning more about the BSE crisis and planning a CFFO study session to inform members who raise beef cattle or other ruminants.
- Conducting a review of the risks and opportunities facing the CFFO. Appropriate strategies will be developed to take advantage of agreed-upon opportunities and to minimize overall risks.
- Conducting a review and editing of the CFFO's constitution and bylaws. The bylaws have been fully edited to reflect updates over the organization's history and draft changes have been made to reflect upgrades to the governance structure. The draft changes will be circulated to both Provincial Board and the Annual Convention for discussion and potential adoption.
- Reviewing a telephone survey of members who had not registered yet for 2003, or who had switched their membership to another general farm organization.
- Financial reports on the organization's operations, and progress reports on the Farm Business Registration program.
- Reports from Board members who serve as CFFO representatives to the various agricultural and rural coalitions in which the organization is involved.

Greenhouse Growers

Skyrocketing natural gas prices have caused concern for CFFO greenhouse growers. After circulating a petition to the Federation's Executive Board seeking support in dealing with rising prices, an ad hoc meeting was scheduled, but postponed due to the hydro blackout. To be rescheduled, the meeting will feature industry speakers and

will introduce the concept of a capital grants program to assist growers in coping with rising energy costs.

District Meetings/Events

A wide variety of meetings have been held, or are in the planning stages, for the CFFO's 23 district associations. Here is a sampling of district activity:

Centre Wellington/Wellington North

Following a vote by the two memberships earlier this year, the two district associations will be merged into one new district: Wellington County CFA. An official meeting will be held later this year to finalize details. The first joint picnic for the new association was held July 17, at the Kieftenburg farm. A great evening of family fun resulted, with 70 people in attendance.

Simcoe County CFA

Simcoe County CFA has been active in a number of areas. Partnering with the local OFA and the Nottawasaga Community Economic Development Corporation, the Simcoe County CFA helped plan and deliver an educational afternoon aimed at local farm programs and services. Well over 100 members and friends attended the annual Barbeque in July, which was held at the Enderlein Rose Nurseries near Lisle. Door prizes, great food, perfect weather, the best of Christian fellowship and fine musical entertainment made this an unforgettable evening.

Chatham-Kent CFA

The Chatham-Kent CFA held their annual summer picnic on August 8th at Ferguson Park in Thamesville. Excellent BBQ food and a variety of games were enjoyed by a group of approximately 30.

Grey-Bruce CFA

Grey-Bruce district held their third annual picnic on July 24th at the Victor Bicknese's poultry farm. Good haying weather provided

competition for the meeting, but 20 people enjoyed fellowship & vigorous discussion on prospects for the beef industry.

East Central CFA

East Central held two summer picnics. The Western picnic was held on July 12th at the Kelly farm with over 40 in attendance; the Eastern picnic was held on June 28th at the Brinkman farm with approximately 30 present. In other news, East Central Board Chairman, Stephen Kelly is involved with area farmers in the current proposed bypass for Hwy 7A near Manvers.

Haldimand-Norfolk CFA

An annual summer social for Haldimand-Norfolk was held on August 8th at Bill & Monica Heeg's farm. Over 60 people attended and enjoyed BBQ pork chops & musical entertainment provided by the Sonnenberg's from Wallenstein.

St. Lawrence-Ottawa Valley CFA

In order to accommodate as many people as possible from across this vast district, the St. Lawrence-Ottawa Valley CFA have planned two area corn roasts. The first is to be held on August 22nd at the dairy farm of Brian & Liz VandenBerg of Winchester; the second will be held on August 28th at the organic dairy farm of Mike & Heidi Krol near Williamstown.

Oxford CFA

Oxford district held their Annual picnic & sports night on June 20th at the dairy farm of John & Helen Ysselstein in Woodstock. A tour of the barn, a great volleyball game, excellent food, and a wiener roast were enjoyed by over 40 people.

Huron CFA

The Huron County Annual Family BBQ is scheduled for August 22nd at Peter & Cathy Van den Berg's poultry farm near Gorrie.

Essex CFA

Essex county held their annual picnic at the Diemer family farm in Woodslee. There were over 30 people who enjoyed great fellowship & food as well as train rides for the kids. An interesting talk was presented by Rick Fuerth about their sheep farm and

their abattoir-for-sheep-only operation.

Quinte CFA

Quinte district has scheduled their summer picnic for August 15th at Don & Greta Prins' dairy farm near Wooler. Everyone is reminded to follow proper bio-security protocol.

Farm Shows Alert

The brand-new 2003 CFFO "Food & Farming Trivia" contest, complete with prizes, will be held at the following shows:

- Hastings Farm Show - August 20 & 21
- Canada's Outdoor Farm Show - September 9th - 11th
- Temiskaming Plowing Match-September 26 & 27 (tentative) - in English (et en Français)

Here's who to call for BSE help

Farmers now have three direct lines they can call to get answers to their BSE-related questions. The new BSE Help Line is live effective Tuesday, August 5, 2003. The BSE Help Line will be functioning 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and there is an option for clients to leave a message and OMAF staff will get back to the client within 24 hours.

BSE Help Line: 1-888-292-5856

The new BSE Help Line has been established to better meet the information needs of clients affected by the BSE situation in Ontario. The BSE Help Line gives callers access to a team of OMAF specialists who will be able to offer technical advice to help producers make informed management decisions.

The Canada Ontario Recovery Program: 1-877-838-5144

This line is available for inquiries about the compensation package and includes information about the compensation package now available for processors.

The Farm Line: 1-888-451-2903

This line is for confidential stress counseling. This is a very important service available at this time of incredible stress, so please call if you need help or even just someone to talk to.

Reproduced from the August 12, 2003 Ontario Farmer

CFFO Annual Convention

Date: Thursday & Friday **Nov. 27 & 28, 2003 D.V.**

Location: Cambridge Holiday Inn, Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 24

Book your reservation now for special Convention rates:

Holiday Inn (519-658-4601) - \$99.95 (double/single)

Comfort Inn (519-658-1100) - \$86.00 (double/single)

Featured Speakers:

Dr. Rev. Gordon Gatward, Arthur Rank Centre, United Kingdom, will speak on

“Lessons from the UK: Linking Agriculture and Environment; Surviving the Foot and Mouth Disease Horrors”

Doug Powell, of the Food Safety Network at the University of Guelph, will speak on **“Food Safety: Every Day, Ordinary Issues”**

A panel presentation will also explore **“The Energy Question: Challenges for the 21st Century”**

More details will be provided in the autumn issue of the CFFO Newsletter, and on the CFFO website.

Please mark the dates on your calendar - we’re eager for your fellowship!

CFFO MEETINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 <i>Executive Board Gencor-Guelph</i>	5 <i>Greenhouse Growers Simcoe OMAF Centre (tentative)</i>	6
7	8	9 <i>BSE Study- Gencor-Guelph</i>	10	11	12 <i>S & P East Napanee</i>	13
Canada's Outdoor Farm Show 9th -11th						
14	15	16 <i>S & P West Gencor-Guelph</i>	17	18	19 <i>Pork Producers Gencor Woodstock</i>	20
21	22	23	24 <i>Provincial Board Gencor-Guelph</i>	25	26	27
28	29	30			Temiskaming Plowing Match	