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CFFO NOTES.....FEBRUARY 2003 HIGHLIGHTS OF CFFO ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

HEADLINES

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Welcome!

For 2003, the CFFO has changed its communication approach. Now, instead of receiving a magazine, all members will receive a quarterly newsletter highlighting the Federation's activities and initiatives. In addition, the CFFO is placing regular, monthly advertisements in the farm media to tell others the story of our values, principles and actions. Our newsletter will provide you, at a glance, with lots of information on how your general farm organization is moving forward to represent your interests. Suggestions or comments are always welcome --- please contact John Clement at the CFFO office.

Executive Board Elections

At the 2002 Convention, John Kikkert, a poultry producer from Smithville, was elected the CFFO President. Elected as CFFO Vice Presidents were Peter VanderZaag, a potato grower from Alliston, and Henry Stevens, a poultry producer from Palmerston.

Jenny Denhartog, a poultry producer from Arthur, becomes CFFO Past President. Elected as directors at the January meeting of Provincial Board were Bill Heeg, a pork producer and tomato grower from Hagersville, and Jack Kroes, a pork producer from Clinton.

A New Vision for Farming

Late last year, the CFFO launched a new vision for farming, with the initial presentation made to OMAF Minister Helen Johns. The culmination of four years worth of work by the Federation's members and leadership, the new vision provides a broad overview of the long-term challenges to farming. In addition, it outlines positive values, principles and actions that must be taken throughout the province to ensure that family farm agriculture continues to thrive. Now that the vision has been launched, you can expect to see a good deal of CFFO vision-related activity in the media, at our district meetings, and at our upcoming series of regional workshops. For your own copy of "*Closer to the Heart: A CFFO Vision for Farming*," contact the Federation office, or download it from our website at www.christianfarmers.org.

Nutrient Management Regulations

The CFFO is calling on the provincial government to delay the implementation of the Nutrient Management Act and to reassess whether the many goals of the Act can be better accommodated in separate "compartments"

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within the legislation. At a recent Provincial Board meeting, CFFO delegates endorsed a position statement recommending two separate “compartments” within the legislation: one part dealing strictly with nutrient management, the other dealing with the establishment of stewardship standards that all farms must meet. Included in the position statement is the expectation that all on-farm improvements that benefit the public should be funded through environmental payments to farmers. CFFO’s Provincial Board adopted the position statement after carefully considering the work done by a number of well-attended policy committees.

Limits on Livestock Operations

The CFFO is calling on the provincial government to add a statement to the Planning Act that would allow municipalities to set defined limits on the size and intensity of livestock farms. At a recent Provincial Board meeting, CFFO delegates endorsed a position statement recommending municipalities be allowed to set a maximum farm size in the range of 400 to 600 livestock units per site and a maximum density in the range of 1.0 to 2.0 livestock units per acre, depending on the environmental and cultural needs of their communities. According to the policy statement, the province and municipalities should share the implementation and enforcement of guidance for agriculture. John Kikkert, the CFFO’s President, noted that “putting caps on livestock operations will help keep livestock operations dispersed across the countryside, reducing the risk of producing more manure than some watersheds can handle.”

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

The CFFO is calling upon farmers to assist in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through voluntary strategies that minimize, reduce or absorb such emissions. At a recent Provincial Board meeting, the Federation adopted a position statement endorsing Canada’s agenda to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, implicated in global warming. The CFFO noted in its statement that it expects society to provide annual financial payments to those farmers who adopt management practices that contribute to the public good.

CFFO Environmental Payments Report

The CFFO has released a new research report ~~on incentives to aid farmers in their stewardship~~

of the environment. The 190-page report, entitled “*Voluntary Agri-Environmental and Other Incentive Programs to Protect the Environment in Ontario*,” was commissioned by the CFFO and authored by Charlotte McCallum, PhD. It provides an overview of how incentive programs are delivered in various parts of the world, why such payments are needed, and methods to establish payments. Launched at a stakeholders meeting that drew over 50 people from agriculture, government and academic circles, the report can be downloaded from the CFFO’s website at www.christianfarmers.org. Also, the report can be purchased in CD format, or in bound paper copies.

Electricity Prices

The CFFO is calling on the provincial government to encourage the production of electricity from renewable resources. At a recent Provincial Board meeting, the Federation recommended that small producers be targeted for new production through the provision of low-interest loans and a reduction in “red tape.” In addition, the CFFO is also recommending that the provincial government subsidize electricity producers during high-price periods so that uncertainty is taken out of the market.

NISA Improvements

A pair of resolutions from the CFFO’s pork committee were debated and endorsed at a recent Provincial Board meeting. One resolution called for farmers to be able to carry contribution eligibility for a new NISA forward for a maximum of 10 years. The other resolution called for NISA contributions to be pre-taxed. The resolutions developed from a discussion on the federal Agricultural Policy Framework, and what would be required to support a reworked approach to NISA.

Executive Board Business

The CFFO’s 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:

- A review of the Agricultural Odyssey Group’s report
- Preparing for the Executive Board annual retreat and its goal-setting session
- Discussion and debate regarding nutrient management regulations, the rights of farm

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workers, alternative fuel sources for farming, and the federal government's Agricultural Policy Framework

- Preparing a list of nominations for Executive Board elections
- 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
- Discussion on a number of concerns and proposals from the broader farming community

Representing the CFFO

The CFFO's Executive Board and staff have represented our members at a wide variety of coalition and industry meetings. As a sampling, Board members have been involved in the following activities over the past few months:

- Meeting with OMAF Minister Helen Johns to present *Closer to the Heart: A CFFO Vision for Farming*
- Annual meetings of farm coalitions and a wide variety of commodity organizations
- Meeting to discuss Foreign Animal Diseases
- A wide variety of Nutrient Management meetings on Stage Two regulations

Agricultural Odyssey Group

Bob Bedggood, a former President of the CFFO, has been busy doing communications work on behalf of the Agricultural Odyssey Group. As one of CFFO's representatives to the group, Bedggood has been passionate about farmers charting their own destiny. In a speech before the annual meeting of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Bedggood passed along these words: "This is my industry, this is your industry, this is our industry. Let us embrace this report, let us develop this report and let us take control of our future."

District Leadership Development

Martin Oldengarm, CFFO Field Services Manager, has been busy meeting with board members from the Federation's 23 district associations. Nearly all board members participated in these sessions. A key part of

these meetings has been leadership development and a refresher on the responsibilities of board members. In addition, district association leaders have been able to provide their input on a couple of key action items contained within the CFFO's new vision *Closer to the Heart: A CFFO Vision for Farming*.

"Homework" at Provincial Board

CFFO District Boards were given a "homework" assignment for a recent Provincial Board meeting. Local boards were asked to come to Provincial Board prepared to answer a few questions related to the new CFFO vision for farming. In particular, district boards were asked: what are the barriers and opportunities for a levy on food purchases? And, what projects on the farm are good choices for environmental payments? A wide variety of answers were given by the district boards and have been tabulated. No detentions were handed out for incomplete homework.

The "Visionary" VP

CFFO Vice President Peter VanderZaag is passionate about the new CFFO vision for farming. In fact, during the launch of the new vision at the CFFO Convention, VanderZaag announced that he would travel to each of the CFFO districts and explain why the province needs this new approach. VanderZaag is available, at your invitation, by contacting the CFFO office.

CFFO Annual Convention

The CFFO Annual Convention for 2003 is Scheduled for Thursday, November 27 & Friday, November 28. The location is the Cambridge Holiday Inn, at Highway 401 and Highway 24.

District Meetings

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:

- **Grey-Bruce CFA** held its annual membership meeting on January 23, at the Keady Community Centre. Those in attendance heard Lynda Bumstead, a dietician, speak on “Sustainable Food Choices”
- **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. In the planning stages are a local workshop on the new CFFO Vision (February 27) and an annual district meeting (March 27)
- **East Central CFA** held an information meeting to promote the new CFFO Vision. Held January 27, at Bethany United Church, the meeting featured Dr. Peter VanderZaag, one of the CFFO’s Vice-Presidents
- **Haldimand-Norfolk CFA** is holding its annual banquet on February 15 at the Jarvis Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church. The entertainment for the banquet will be provided by Circle of Friends, a vocal group that has sang at more than 500 events in more than 50 cities, including last year’s CFFO Convention
- **Centre Wellington & Wellington North CFA’s** are seriously considering a merger, in order to have a more effective voice in their region by pooling their resources and energies
- **Quinte CFA** is playing a lead role in a local Tri-County Rural Water Program, funded by the Healthy Futures Program, for improving rural water quality and making efficient use of water resources
- **Rainy River CFA** is making plans to celebrate their 20th anniversary in early April with a dinner in Emo. Their small, but vibrant

group of over 30 members does have a presence in the District. Congratulations!

Farm Show Activity

A CFFO “Food & Farming Trivia” contest, complete with prizes, will be held at some of the following shows.

- Canadian International Farm Equipment Show, February 4-7, at the International Centre, Airport Rd., Toronto
- Peterborough Farm Show in early March 6 & 7, East Central CFA
- Ottawa Valley Farm Show, March 18 – 20, Ottawa’s Lansdowne Park, St. Lawrence-Ottawa Valley CFA & Renfrew-Lanark CFA
- New Liskeard Farm Show, April 4 & 5, New Liskeard, North Eastern Ontario CFA
- Mid-Western Agri-Fair, Chesley, Grey-Bruce CFA
- Pork Congress, June 19 & 20, CFFO Pork Producers Committee members

Did You Know?

- *The CFFO has laneway signs available. If you would like one, Contact the CFFO office.*
- *If you have more than one family at work on your farm you can obtain additional CFFO memberships. Contact our office to find out more.*
- *The CFFO holds an annual workshop series for members from February onward. See the attached flier for more information.*