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The CFFO Newsletter

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Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

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Pursuing the Vision



Peter VanderZaag is on a mission. He's working hard to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live and farm.

VanderZaag has spent several years working on relief and development projects in more than 60 countries around the world. Because of his experiences, he's convinced that Ontario farmers need to remain vigilant in preserving the unique mix of ingredients that has created a strong agricultural sector in the province.

"Ontario farmers are among the most envied in the world," said VanderZaag. "Farmers in many countries lack basic infrastructure, along with access to machinery, financing and farm inputs. We need to strengthen what we have and make it work even better."

As part of his mission, VanderZaag has travelled to 11 CFFO district associations in recent months to speak about the new CFFO vision for farming. At each meeting, he tells of his entry into farming in Ontario with its challenges and surprises. He has

outlined three main themes of the CFFO Vision document: the values needed in Ontario agriculture; the abiding principles that must be upheld to undergird family farms; and a list of recommendations for action.

"I end each session with a quote from the book of Habakkuk," said VanderZaag. "It says that once the vision has been written, the people need to run with it. I want to see people make the CFFO vision part of the way they farm as well as share it with others, including the policy makers of our society."

In addition to his development work, VanderZaag serves as a Vice-President with the CFFO. Armed with a PhD in tropical agriculture, he has served the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and the International Potato Centre. VanderZaag is also Vice-President of the Canadian Private Potato Breeder Association and Treasurer of AgCare.

When he's not busy pursuing his mission work, VanderZaag and his wife Carla grow and breed potatoes on their farm near Alliston in Simcoe County.

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To obtain a copy of
"Closer to the Heart:
A CFFO Vision for Farming,"
visit our website at
www.christianfarmers.org
or contact the CFFO office.

Agricultural Policy Framework

The CFFO has been actively involved in researching and evaluating the federal government's Agricultural Policy Framework. The APF contains five "pillars," including Business Risk Management, Food Safety & Quality, Environment, Science & Innovation, and Renewal. Federal and provincial agriculture ministers plan to merge existing cost-shared programs into two nationally funded plans and have been working on the process since 2001. Responding to the Business Risk Management pillar, the CFFO has drafted a position statement on the "New NISA" and is seeking additional information from other farm organizations. The draft position statement favours endorsement of the new program and includes firm payout maximums per farmer and incentives for participation. It was developed following a successful ad hoc committee meeting which attracted 27 people to the CFFO office.

Red Tape Commission

Norm Miller, Member of the Provincial Legislature for Parry Sound-Muskoka and a member of Ontario's Red Tape Commission, came to a recent Provincial Board meeting to talk about the Rural Red Tape Reduction Project. CFFO District Board leaders provided Miller with a good list of excessive bureaucratic processes worth investigating. They include:

- Government assistance programs that involve time and costs, but sometimes end in ineligibility for farmers
- Pesticide approval procedures that limit the access by Ontario farmers to good crop protection products
- Different standards for federal and provincial meat inspection that keep Ontario lamb off the shelves in big supermarkets
- Provincial emission testing for farm trucks operating for just a few thousand kilometres during harvest
- Nutrient Management regulations
- Overly-restrictive rules for farmers willing to donate surplus production to food banks

Workshop Series

The 2003 CFFO district workshop series is now complete. Held in 19 locations across the province, the annual series drew participation from 257 members and friends of the CFFO. This year's series centred on the theme of "Saving the Family Farm: Planning for Action." Participants focused their attention on two main items: creating opportunities for fairness in the marketplace, and working towards a consumer levy on food purchases to fund environmental payments. Facilitators for the workshops were Elbert van Donkersgoed, Martin Oldengarm and Bob Bedggood. A formal report of the 2003 workshop series will be delivered at the CFFO Annual Convention, November 27, at the Cambridge Holiday Inn.

"Homework" at Provincial Board

CFFO District Boards were asked to come prepared to answer the following question at a recent Provincial Board meeting: what should be the top three priorities for the CFFO regarding policy/position work? The majority of responses from district boards dealt with four main themes, including trade issues, creating investment in agriculture, succession planning, and creating an action plan for the CFFO vision for farming. Other items included farm taxation, support for alternative electricity production, and nutrient management planning. The CFFO Executive Board will use the district board responses to guide future policy development.

Goals and Plans

The CFFO Executive Board held its annual retreat recently and examined its goals and plans for the coming year. Board members carefully evaluated what the CFFO did well in 2002, and what it could have done better. As a result, the Board adopted a number of new goals and strategies including: a redesigned website; development of an action plan for the CFFO vision for farming; better targeting of CFFO communications; improved policy committees; and the development of a "hands on" project for willing district boards.

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:

- Providing an orientation session for two new board members and a commitment to seek additional leadership training for all board members
- Reviewing the 2002 audited financial statement
- Appointing Jack Kroes as the CFFO Treasurer
- Dialoguing with representatives of the Ontario Institute of Agrologists on draft legislation to regulate those giving production advice to the province's farmers
- Dialoguing with a representative of the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition on recent government initiatives regarding nutrient management
- Nominating past Executive Board members, Bob Bedggood and Jasper Vanderbas, to a newly-formed provincial advisory committee on nutrient management issues
- 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 federal Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief regarding the Agricultural Policy Framework

- Meeting with provincial Agriculture Minister Helen Johns regarding nutrient management and the Agricultural Policy Framework
- An AgCare-sponsored training session on risk communication
- Presentation of the Ontario budget
- Meeting to discuss Foreign Animal Diseases
- Annual meetings of farm coalitions and a wide variety of commodity organizations

Congratulations

Bob Bedggood, CFFO member and past president, has been awarded the title of Honourary Professional Agrologist by the Ontario Institute of Agrologists. Citing his extensive background in farm organization work, plus his ability to communicate the farm message, the OIA noted that Bedggood "is one of the most knowledgeable, highly-respected and sincere spokespersons among today's agricultural leaders." Bedggood maintains that his key message to farmers is to "value everything we do on the farm, not just production."

Promoting the CFFO Vision

Dr. Peter VanderZaag, a CFFO Vice-President, has been actively promoting the Federation's new vision for farming at district association meetings. Early this year, VanderZaag delivered a presentation on "Closer to the Heart: a CFFO Vision for Farming" at meetings in the following districts: Chatham-Kent; Dufferin-Wellington; Elgin; Essex; Haldimand-Norfolk; Huron; Oxford; Renfrew-Lanark; Rainy River; and Thunder Bay. Presentations on the CFFO Vision were also made by Federation President, John Kikkert, in Wentworth-Brant, East Central and Niagara. Finally, CFFO staff member, Elbert van Donkersgoed, presented the Vision in Centre Wellington.

District Meetings

A wide variety of meetings have taken place among the CFFO's 23 district associations. Here is a sampling of district activity:

- **Dufferin Wellington CFA** held its annual meeting on February 20 at the Grand Valley Canadian Reformed Church. The business section of the meeting saw Ale Faber elected as a director.
- **Renfrew-Lanark CFA** held its annual membership meeting on March 10 at the Cobden Civitan Club. Approximately 30 members attended.
- **Essex CFA** held its annual banquet on March 15 at Colisanti's Tropical Gardens in Ruthven. Approximately 30 members attended, along with Bruce Crozier, local MPP, and Pat O'Neil, Mayor of Kingsville.
- **Elgin CFA** held its annual meeting on March 19 at the St. Thomas Christian Reformed Church. The business section of the meeting featured the election of Dave Knaap and Peter De Kraker as directors. Nearly 20 members attended, along with Steve Peters, local MPP and provincial Liberal Agriculture Critic.
- **Oxford CFA** held its annual meeting March 19 at the Salford Community Centre. The business section of the meeting featured the election of Nico Van Den Akker as President and the interim appointment of Koert Pelleboer as director.
- **Wentworth-Brant CFA** held its annual meeting on March 19 at the Dutch Mill Gardens, Rockton. In addition, the district association held its annual spring banquet on April 4 at the Whitehorse Restaurant in Paris. Guest speaker for the meeting was John Span, a missionary to Guinea West Africa, who gave a slide presentation on his work in that country. Nearly 50 members attended the latter meeting.
- **Centre Wellington** held its annual meeting on March 21 at the Drayton Christian Reformed Church. The business section of the meeting consisted of an affirmative vote on amalgamation with Wellington North CFA.
- **Huron CFA** held its annual meeting on March 21 at the Clinton Christian Reformed Church. The business section of the meeting featured the election of Eric Nonkes, Peter Vandenberg and Evert Van Sligtenhorst as directors. The district association plans to have a display at an annual event sponsored by the Western Ontario Lamb Producers Association.
- **Simcoe CFA** held its annual luncheon meeting on March 27 at the Northwest Barrie United Church. The general theme of the meeting focused on advancing the CFFO vision for farming. Reports were heard on the CFFO Vision, the province's Nutrient Management Act, and a local Healthy Waters program. In addition, three farmers sketched out their visions for their individual farming operations. Approximately 50 members attended the event, with the business section of the meeting electing Patricia File as a director.
- **Chatham-Kent CFA** held its annual meeting and banquet on March 28 at Smitty's Pancake House in Chatham. The business section of the meeting featured the election of Dale Maris as a director.
- **East Central CFA** held its annual membership meeting on March 31 at Bethany United Church. The meeting featured "Dessert with CFFO President John Kikkert." Kikkert updated those in attendance on the Agricultural Policy Framework, Nutrient Management and the CFFO's new vision for farming. The business section of the meeting featured the election of Jane Kapteyn and Bea De Lange as directors, and Stephen Kelly as President. The district association is planning two summer picnics and an information booth at the Peterborough Farm Show.
- **Thunder Bay CFA** held its annual meeting on April 1 at the Nor'Wester Best Western Hotel in Thunder Bay. The business section of the meeting featured the election of Henry Streutker as director. Featured speaker for the meeting was Dr. Peter VanderZaag, one of the CFFO's Vice-Presidents, who spoke on North Korea's political, economic, social and agricultural issues. The district association was also involved in organizing a Spring Farm Conference, which featured VanderZaag's presentation of the CFFO Vision. Finally,

local members also participated in an educational pizza project for Grade Four students at a local school.

- **Quinte CFA** held its annual meeting on April 2 at the Quality Inn in Belleville. The business section of the meeting saw Albert Hoftyzer and Jerry Fox elected as directors. Featured speaker for the meeting was Lucy Hendrikx, who works alongside family members in a dairy, hog and cropping enterprise. In addition, Hendrikx is a councillor for the Municipality of North Middlesex, and the treasurer for the MILA Purchasing Consortium. The district association also plans to have an information booth at the Hastings Farm Show.
- **Rainy River CFA** held its annual meeting and 20-year celebration on April 2 at the Emo Christian Reformed Church.
- **Northeastern Ontario CFA** held its annual membership meeting over three consecutive days in Thessalon, Sudbury and New Liskeard. Total attendance was 37 out of possible 130. Nominated to the board was Ronald Noland from Evansville; voting will take place by mail-in ballot. A resolution to encourage both provincial and federal governments to support agricultural research for Northern Ontario agriculture was passed at all three sessions. Harold Stewart and Gary Underhill volunteered to represent CFFO on a committee to prepare a funding proposal. A resolution calling for compensation to farmers for elk damage on their farms, resulting from a recent government Elk Restoration Project, did not receive sufficient support at the meetings. CFFO also had a booth, staffed by members, at the New Liskeard Farm Show in early April.
- **Wellington North CFA** held its annual banquet on April 4 at the Palmerston Christian Reformed Church. The business section of the meeting consisted of an affirmative vote on amalgamation with Centre Wellington CFA. Featured speaker for the meeting was George Gracey, a retired school teacher from Listowel, who has devoted his time to arranging and participating in building projects in Nicaragua.
- **Haldimand-Norfolk CFA** held its annual spring membership meeting on April 14 at Parkview

Meadows in Townsend. The business section of the meeting saw Adely Van Benthem elected as director.

- **Niagara CFA** held its annual business meeting on April 14 at the Vineland OMAF building. The business section of the meeting featured the approval of Bonnie Baarda and Rodney Ricker as directors. Updates were also given on nutrient management legislation, the Agricultural Policy Framework and the CFFO Vision. Featured speaker for the meeting was Rev. Al Bezuyen who spoke on "Expressing our Faith in Agriculture."
- **St. Lawrence Ottawa Valley CFA** participated in the CFFO booth at the Ottawa Valley Farm Show in March. A summer social event is being planned.
- **Grey-Bruce CFA** staffed a CFFO information booth at the Mid-Western Agrifair in Chesley during April. A summer social event is being planned.

Thank You

The CFFO would like to thank Paul and Anita Frayne of Goderich, Ontario for their generous donation of a stained glass window hanging. The stained glass piece was created by Bridgette Wolf of Reflections Glass Studio in Lucknow, Ontario and portrays the theme of "*Faith, Family & Farming*". It will hang in the glass vestibule at the CFFO office. Many thanks to the Fraynes.

CFFO Meetings

- Dairy Producers Study Session West
Tuesday, May 27 at Gencor/CFFO offices, Guelph
- Dairy Producers Study Session East
Friday, May 30 at Royal Canadian Legion Hall, Napanee
- Sheep Producers Committee
Tuesday, June 3 (location to be finalized: either Gencor office, Woodstock or Gencor/CFFO offices, Guelph)
- Pork Producers Committee
Friday, June 13 at Gencor office, Woodstock
- Stewardship and Policy West Committee
Wednesday, June 18 at Gencor office, Woodstock
- Stewardship and Policy East Committee
Friday, June 20 at Royal Canadian Legion Hall, Napanee
- Provincial Board
Wednesday, June 25 at Gencor/CFFO offices, Guelph

Policy Briefs

Nutrient management legislation and the Agricultural Policy Framework have received the most attention within the CFFO in recent months. However, there are a number of other policy items that have been either discussed or earmarked for further work. The following is a sampling of some of the items that have received attention within the CFFO:

- **Deadstock.** A number of CFFO members have raised questions regarding deadstock disposal and some initial discussion has taken place within the Federation's policy committees. In response, a policy statement has been circulated for further discussion. The draft statement calls for the development of an industry-wide solution to managing deadstock containing sulphur drugs. Possible solutions include publicly-managed regional sites for composting, incineration or burial. The province would be asked to help with start-up costs, while operations would be conducted on a cost recovery basis. It is expected that CFFO's policy committees will review the draft statement more thoroughly before Executive Board agrees it is ready to move to Provincial Board for debate and possible endorsement.
- **Water Resources.** As part of an initiative spearheaded by farm groups in British Columbia, the CFFO is debating a draft policy statement designed to protect Canadian sovereignty over water resources. The draft statement calls for an explicit exemption for water under the goods, services and investment provisions of North American trade agreements. In addition an explicit exclusion for water and water-related services would be sought under other international trade agreements. Finally, a moratorium would be called for on any new water export initiatives until such exemptions are in place. The resolution contained within the draft CFFO policy statement already has the support of 116 farm organizations. It is anticipated that CFFO's policy committees will further review the draft statement before Executive Board agrees it is ready to move to Provincial Board.
- **Foot & Mouth Disease.** Since the tragic Foot & Mouth crisis in Great Britain and greater Europe, CFFO members have maintained a keen interest in preventing the spread of infectious diseases in Canada. Various levels of discussion have taken place within the Federation's policy committees, with requests made for continued attention to the subject matter. The CFFO will continue to monitor federal and provincial proposals on infectious diseases.
- **Antibiotics.** The CFFO Executive Board has asked staff to begin developing policy perspectives on antibiotic use. The Board notes that Europe has already moved to ban a number of animal antibiotics, with a number of Canadian health organizations calling for similar bans in this country.
- **Marketing and Trade.** The CFFO Executive Board has asked staff to monitor marketing and trade issues in an effort to aid members in staying informed about potential impacts to farming.
- **Marketing Legislation.** The CFFO Executive Board has asked staff to begin developing a draft policy statement on enhanced marketing legislation. The statement is part of the CFFO Vision action plan, which calls for "the strengthening and enhancing of marketing legislation to protect the rights of all farmers to organize and negotiate a fair share of the consumer food dollar for their contribution to the food chain."
- **Retail Food Levy.** The CFFO Executive Board has asked staff to begin developing a draft policy statement on charging a levy on retail food purchases. The statement is part of the CFFO Vision action plan, which calls for "the establishment of a small charge on the retail sale of food in Ontario to pay for environmental services and joint farmer/consumer initiatives."