



Long-Term Thinking
for Today's Issues

The CFFO Newsletter

*Published for members and friends of the
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario*

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Focus on District Leadership

Building a better district association

Peter VanderZaag is a busy man. In addition to running a potato farm, VanderZaag is also involved in international potato breeding initiatives, short-term mission work and federal politics. He also knows a thing or two about running a successful district association.

VanderZaag and his fellow directors at the Simcoe Christian Farmers Association have created a steady stream of annual activity to serve local farmers. And they have done it in a way that is cost-effective and which puts the CFFO's messages in front of a wider audience.

One of the most prominent events the Simcoe CFA participates in is an annual Agricultural Knowledge Forum, held in cooperation with other farm organizations and local municipalities. VanderZaag points out that the Simcoe CFA has been in the leadership chair on this event and has designed most of the agendas and identified the majority of the speakers. The event usually costs about \$5,000, including a free dinner for those attending, but the cost is largely underwritten by local sponsors. Last year's topic allowed local farmers to discuss how they could produce their own on-farm energy and displace what they purchase. Approximately 150 people attended.

VanderZaag says "it's all about building bridges with others and partnering with key people. The spin-offs have been great: I gained an opportunity to speak about my vision for development north of Toronto, at a meeting of municipal and provincial politicians. It was only by invitation."

The Simcoe CFA has also worked closely with three local conservation authorities. The district association has been actively giving the authorities farm-based input, which in turn gains publicity for the local CFFO chapter. In return, representatives from the conservation authorities attend the district association's annual meetings and provide reports.

VanderZaag says "it has helped us to gain a broader profile. And it has allowed us to present the CFFO Vision document to the authorities, plus outline our views on environmental payments."

A major focus of the Simcoe CFA has been to provide a good annual meeting. Rather than creating a boring situation in which people feel duty-bound to attend, the Simcoe CFA's annual meetings tend to be all-day affairs with up to 50 members attending. According to VanderZaag, "the format is to involve as many members as

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Inserts

CFFO Seminar Series 2006
Environmental Farm Plan
Small Farm Canada

possible in making presentations. In the morning we provide an overview of farming, with farm-level discussions in the afternoon."

Finally, the Simcoe CFA has hosted summer picnics over the past seven years. The association generally has a musical group and offers good food in a good facility. Attendance has ranged from 80 to 150 people for the annual event.

VanderZaag offers the following tips for those involved in district leadership:

- **Be sure to involve other organizations and groups in your plans.** VanderZaag says, "there is great synergy in doing it that way, both in financial resources and ideas. To not include others is one of the biggest mistakes we can make at the district level."
- **Be sure to involve both spouses in district work.** VanderZaag says "it has to be both content oriented, plus light. It has to be broad-based in theme and also a burning issue. You have to think of your clientele when planning events."
- **Be sure to impose no financial hardships for those attending events.** VanderZaag says "get sponsors to pay for everything. If you do a project well, sponsors are anxious to be involved with your efforts."
- **Be sure to make your events and meetings fun.** VanderZaag says "it has to be a nice place, a nice facility. And it should be all catered and taken care of so that everyone can have a good time."
- **Be sure to keep local boards dynamic.** VanderZaag says "you have to allow for philosophical discussions, as well as the business. It's the drawing card for involving people."
- **Be sure to have a good mix of people on your local board and don't waste their time.** VanderZaag says "remember that people can't volunteer too much. They're all involved in other things. It has to be worth their time so that they will make time on their schedules. It has to be fun at the board level and in the planning stages."

Getting the basics right at the district level

*By Henry Stevens
President, Wellington
Christian Farmers Association*

The long term success of the CFFO as a grass roots organization depends directly on the success of its districts. Some districts are better positioned to be active than others, but there are a few key things that all districts, regardless of location, can accomplish.

A district needs to begin with an interested, enthusiastic board that wants to see the district thrive. If board members are not keen on building the local district, how can we expect other members to become interested?

The best way to keep your members informed of what you are doing locally is to put out a quarterly newsletter. In Wellington, we have found this to be very effective. Keep it short but interesting enough to keep the readers' attention.

In Wellington, we try to have three public interest meetings a year, along with our annual banquet and a summer picnic/barbeque. In 2004 we consciously moved our meetings out of churches. Making the change to new locations exposes more people to the local association and

helps create opportunities to encourage membership in the CFFO. To help cover the costs associated with these moves, we have asked our local businesses to sponsor these events. We have met with very positive results. We invite our sponsors to come to our events and we recognize them publicly for their support.

Another important thing for building a strong district is to build a relationship with local media outlets. Get to know your editor, invite him or her to all your events, and issue news releases.

It is also very important to build a good relationship with local representatives to the provincial and federal governments. We meet with our elected members at least twice a year and keep them informed about CFFO policies and position statements.

Last, but not least, I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is for every district association to have representation at our provincial policy meetings. In doing so, your district association has direct input into policy development and first-hand knowledge of what is happening provincially.



New Executive Members

Three directors have been elected to the Executive Board of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario.

Glen Duff, Lorne Small and John Van Dyk were elected during a recent meeting of the CFFO's Provincial Council, a gathering of farmers from 22 district associations across Ontario.

Glen Duff, a 66-year-old hay and sheep producer from Rockwood (Halton), brings to the CFFO Executive Board a host of business and professional experience. Along with his wife Sharon, Duff has developed a flock of purebred Rideau breeding stock, with a focus on high herd health status. Duff holds a Bachelor Degree in Biochemistry following studies at the University of B.C, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and post-graduate work at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia.

Duff served for 35 years as director of Issues Management in the pharmaceuticals division of Ciba-Geigy Canada Ltd. He was responsible for Government Relations, Strategic Planning and Public Affairs. Following early retirement, Duff served as a political lobbyist in Ottawa on intellectual property rights from 1996-98 for Novartis Pharmaceuticals, a Swiss multinational. From 1998-2001, Duff coordinated a major international project for Novartis Animal Health, traveling throughout major continents and working out of his home and in Switzerland. In 1995 Duff was a recipient of the Governor General's commemorative 125th anniversary medal, in recognition of a "significant contribution to compatriots, community, and to Canada."

Lorne Small, a 60-year-old sheep producer from Kenilworth (Wellington), also brings a varied background to the CFFO Executive Board. He and his wife Jennifer, have been farming on his family's century farm for the past 13 years. Small holds a B.Sc. in Animal Science and a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Guelph.

Small has been on the Board of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency for the past six years as a director. He has also worked as an agricultural representative with OMAFRA in the Ottawa-Carlton Region, Northumberland and Elgin counties; and as a Farm Management Specialist in Guelph. Small was also the first appointed General Manager of the newly-privatized Ontario Dairy Herd Improvement Corporation. The Small family also owns a printing business in Toronto.

John Van Dyk is a 38-year-old dairy farmer from Tavistock (Perth). He and his wife Anna, have completed their third Nutrient Management Plan on the family operation. Van Dyk serves on the Perth County Milk Committee of Dairy Farmers of Ontario and as Vice-President of the Oxford Milkway Transport Co-op. Van Dyk is also an active participant in the CFFO's supply management committee.

The newly-elected directors join incumbent director Peter Payne, from Reaboro. Rounding out the CFFO board are President John Kikkert, from near Smithville, and vice presidents Henry Stevens, from Palmerston, and Clarence Nywening, from Thamesville. Kikkert, Stevens and Nywening were acclaimed at the recent CFFO convention.

Convention Report

Members and friends of the CFFO met in Markham last November to hear speakers discuss how farmers can take control of their destiny.

Peter Apedaile, professor emeritus in the department of rural economy at the University of Alberta, was the keynote speaker. His main message was that rapid change is taking place within agriculture and old ways of organizing the farm voice are becoming irrelevant. He said that farm families need to broaden their outlooks and make common cause with urban needs and interests. His take-home messages to those attending the convention stressed:

- Farmers need to gain knowledge, because knowledge is power.
- The ability for farmers to organize their

knowledge provides some measure of control.

- Farmers control their destiny better through sound understanding and anticipation than through adaptation.
- Farm organizations need to move towards broader public interest causes and away from traditional self-interest.

Gib Drury, President of the Quebec Beef Producers, told those attending the CFFO Convention how Quebec farmers took over control and ownership of a provincial beef plant. The take-over involved a combination of using provincial legislation effective lobbying, public demonstrations and solid business acumen. His take-home messages to those attending the convention stressed:

- Farmers gain great power through collective marketing.
- In order to gain more control over their destinies, farmers need to strengthen public sympathy for their challenges.
- Farmers can continue to have many farm organizations, as long as a single message is developed on key issues.
- A farm organization that is inclusive has great strength.

Lori Stahlbrand, an author and food policy consultant, discussed the possibilities of creating formal alliances between farmers and consumers. A proponent of a new, Ontario-based initiative called Local Flavour Plus, Stahlbrand said her aim is to create the following services to farmers:

- Managing a third-party verification system for local, sustainable food products.
- Expanding markets and opening new markets by brokering relationships between local sustainable growers and institutional purchasers.
- Assisting with developing local supply chains and local infrastructure.
- Providing media promotion and point of sale material.

Jim Judge, a founding member of the Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op, told those attending the CFFO Convention the story of the cooperative and the challenges it faced along the way. He offered the

following advice to those thinking about pursuing a similar project:

- A sound business plan and solid commitment from members is a prerequisite.
- The initiative must have solid financing, a strong, committed board and a general manager with solid expertise.
- The enterprise must focus on what it does best and strive for excellent communications.

Thumbs down on Clean Water Act

While supportive of locally-developed source water plans for the province's watersheds, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario is not supportive of Ontario's proposed *Bill 43: Clean Water Act, 2005*.

"Landowners have no guarantees that they will be consulted when a source water protection plan is developed," said John Kikkert, president of the CFFO. "In addition, the draft act allows municipalities to prohibit normal farm practices without reimbursing farmers for the costs of changing their farming practices."

Kikkert's comments were made following the CFFO's adoption of a position statement on the *Clean Water Act, 2005*. The legislation is the province's attempt to ensure that both municipal growth and water protection can take place through empowering local communities to minimize or eliminate any threats to source water.

"We would like to see the proposed legislation changed so that the Ministry of Environment is prohibited from approving any source water protection plans that do not include an assessment of the costs of implementation and a defined budget for the implementation," said Clarence Nywening, a CFFO vice-president. "If the public wants higher water standards than currently provided by acceptable, normal farming practices, then the public should be willing to pay farmers for their additional costs."

For the CFFO position statement on the Clean Water Act, 2005, log on to www.christianfarmers.org and proceed to the "policies and issues" button. Background information on the proposed legislation can be found at <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/cwa.htm>



District News

Chatham-Kent

Local CFFO members co-sponsored two well-attended, all-candidate meetings (federal election) together with members of the local OFA, and NFUO, in the Chatham-Kent-Essex and the Lambton-Kent-Middlesex ridings. Agriculture and government accountability were high on the agenda. Final details for the local bursary application forms are nearing completion. Many of the approximately 1,800 local farmers at the recent Southwestern Ontario Agricultural Conference at Ridgeway Agricultural College stopped in at the CFFO booth.

East Central

Former CFFO President Bob Bedgood, will be the guest speaker at the upcoming membership information meeting. Bedgood will address the impact of the greenbelt surrounding Toronto. CFFO President John Kikkert, will be the main speaker at the March annual business meeting.

Essex

An open forum on local environmental stewardship issues was held recently. Resource people included CFFO staff member Elbert van Donkersgoed and representatives from the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Other topics on the agenda include: the future of CAIS, alternative safety nets, the greenbelt, and new land use rules under the Planning Act (especially severances). The local annual banquet is planned for early spring

Grey-Bruce

Recent activities included co-hosting an all-candidates meeting with the local OFA at the Keady Community Centre. Board members also met with local Conservative MP, Larry Miller, and Green Party candidate, Shane Jolley. Preparations are underway for the upcoming annual business meeting as well as setting up a booth at the annual Midwestern Agrifair in Chesley in early April. President Simon De Boer and Gerald Poechman recently held discussions with representatives of Southern Ontario Greenway, whose main goal is to protect Green Space for the Grey & Bruce Counties.

Halton-Waterloo-Wellington

In December, CFFO members living in this area received mail-in forms to indicate whether they wanted to change over to one of the surrounding CFFO district associations, or to remain members-at-large in this area. Earlier efforts to start a formal CFFO district here did not yield positive results.

Haldimand-Norfolk

At last November's membership meeting, several members committed to writing letters to their local federal and provincial politicians, Diane Finley and Toby Barrett. They also agreed to write to the provincial and federal ministers of agriculture. The main purpose of this ambitious project was to raise awareness of the current, critical state of agriculture, and to encourage the government to seriously consider what farmers are saying about the future of farming. The local board co-sponsored an all candidates meeting with the Haldimand-Norfolk OFA. Organizers were pleased to see that several questions on pressing farming issues, prepared ahead of time, were well received and treated seriously. Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot, Ontario Farmer's regular columnist of "Adventures on the Farm," will be the feature speaker at the annual banquet in March.

Middlesex

CFFO President John Kikkert, was guest speaker at last November's open forum membership meeting held in Komoka. He answered many questions on his role as CFFO's official representative and spokesperson at industry and government consultations. The next meeting is planned for later on this winter.

Northeastern Ontario

A conference call is planned for the near future to make plans for this year's annual business meeting, which will be held again on three consecutive days in three locations. The board plans to have a CFFO information booth at the New Liskeard Agricultural Conference and Farm Show.

Perth

Dr. David Biesenthal from Walkerton, was the feature speaker at a recent meeting. His farm was the

focus of the Walkerton water tragedy and he explained how vulnerable farmers can be in water-related situations. Biesenthal explained the programs and procedures they had in place on their farm at that time, which helped them immensely during the lengthy and grueling investigation that followed. The board will meet soon to plan activities for this season.

Quinte

CFFO Executive Board member, Gerald Poechman, shared his experiences of farming organically. Many questions were asked following this very informative presentation. For the upcoming annual business meeting, plans are to invite a speaker on the subject of source water protection. In August the board hopes to run the CFFO information booth at the annual, two-day Hastings Plowing Match.

St. Lawrence-Ottawa Valley

Local board members, together with the Renfrew-Lanark board, will be managing the CFFO booth at the Ottawa Valley Farm Show, scheduled for mid-March. The local annual business meeting is planned for the end of March.

Simcoe County

Board members participated in a three-day 'Ag Info Days' in Barrie, where they had opportunity to meet a number of farmers and urbanites in the CFFO information booth. Upcoming activities this winter include the now traditional, annual Agknowledge Forum, co-hosted with the local OFA and the local District annual business meeting in March.

Wentworth-Brant

OMAFRA Water Engineer Jake DeBruyn, addressed the subject of 'alternative energy' at a membership information meeting held in the Rockton Town Hall late last year. Many questions followed a well-illustrated and informative presentation.

Wellington

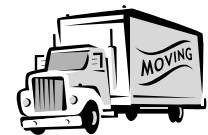
Late last year, two area farmers and a representative from Farm Credit Canada shared their views on large-scale versus small-to-medium farms. At an information meeting held in February, CFFO staff

member, Elbert van Donkersgoed, will introduce a number of topics currently under discussion at CFFO policy meetings. A spring banquet is planned for early April. Board representatives from the Wellington and Perth CFA's attended a meeting with Agriculture Ministers Leona Dombrowsky and Andy Mitchell, along with representatives from various commodity groups, financial institutions, and OMAFRA staffers.

CFFO at Farm Shows in 2006 – Winter & Spring

- Feb. 7-9, 2006-Toronto Int'l Farm Equipment Show
- March 1 & 2, 2006-East Central Farm Show, Peterborough,
- March 14-16, 2006-Ottawa Valley Farm Show
- April 4 & 5, 2006-Midwestern Agrifair, Chesley, ON
- Mar. 31 & Apr. 1, 2006-North Eastern Agricultural Conference & Trade Show, New Liskeard,

We're moving
.....sort of



The CFFO has located its offices at the Gencor complex, north of Guelph, for the past five years. We're sticking with Gencor, but we're moving to different offices within the complex. The move has been made to achieve cost savings. Members attending CFFO meetings will not be affected by the move, with our regular gatherings still being held in the main Gencor building. However, you will need to enter the building from the main entrance of Gencor which is door #1, located on the South side of the building (opposite the original CFFO entrance). After March 17, direct all correspondence to our new address. You can reach us at:

Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
7660 Mill Rd
RR #4 Guelph, ON N1H 6J1

Our phone number remains 519-837-1620,
as does our fax at 519-824-1835.

New CFFO Position Statements

Representatives of the district associations (22 across Ontario) of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario recently met to discuss issues affecting family farms. Representatives adopted the following position statements:

World Trade in Farm Products

Agricultural trade negotiations tend to be long, drawn-out affairs that last months at the earliest, and years at the latest. CFFO members adopted a position statement on World Trade Negotiations that emphasizes fairness in trade, sustainability, a bottom-line on which trade-offs are acceptable and unacceptable, support for maintaining supply management and the creation of fairer opportunities for grain and red meat producers.

Financial Assistance for Farm-Fed Grains

Late last year the federal government announced financial assistance for grain and oilseed production but neglected to include payments to those growers who feed their grain to livestock. The CFFO wants to ensure payments apply to all grains and oilseed production, with certain restrictions.

Clean Water Act

The CFFO is in favour of mandatory locally-developed source water protection plans in watersheds across Ontario. However, it does not support the province's proposed Clean Water Act. The CFFO does not agree with the Act's stipulations that affected landowners shouldn't be consulted about prohibitions of their activities, nor that costs can be added to farming operations without public reimbursement.

Minimum Distance Separation Formulae

Ontario's land use planning policy holds to a view that incompatible uses need to be kept apart. MDS Formulae are designed to minimize nuisance complaints about farming odours. The province recently proposed changes to those Formulae. The CFFO supports some of those changes, while rejecting others.

For more details on any of these position statements, visit the CFFO website at www.christianfarmers.org or contact our office.

GET INVOLVED !

There is room for you to become involved in the CFFO's development of policy options for farming.

If you have a desire to address the issues of the day, strongly consider attending one of the CFFO's Stewardship and Policy Committees. These committees meet throughout the year in Guelph and Napanee. Not only will you become better informed, you'll also be helping the CFFO to chart new policy directions that will benefit all farmers.

To get involved, or to be added to our mailing list for committee mailings, contact the CFFO office.

By phone: 519-837-1620, Fax: 519-824-1835
or by email: committees@christianfarmers.org



UPCOMING MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE BOARD GUELPH	MAR 7, 2006
PORK COMMITTEE WOODSTOCK	MAR 10, 2006
STEWARDSHIP & POLICY W. GUELPH	MAR 15, 2006
STEWARDSHIP & POLICY E. NAPANEE	MAR 16, 2006
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL GUELPH	MAR 29, 2006
CFFO CONVENTION	Nov. 10, 2006

Ontario Budget Priorities

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario recently had the opportunity to present its views on the upcoming 2006 provincial budget to the Honourable Dwight Duncan, Ontario's Finance Minister.

The CFFO told the finance minister that our organization endorses the proposed Risk Management Program, as long as payouts are capped. In addition, the Federation welcomes adjustments to Ontario's farm product marketing legislation that allows the many benefits of this legislation to be applied within supply chain arrangements.

Basic research needs to continue to be funded by the province and payments need to be made to farmers who provide environmental services on their land to benefit the public. Finally, Ontario can benefit from replacing certain food imports with domestic product. The CFFO also supports new sources of income for rural municipalities.

For a complete copy of the presentation to Ontario's Finance Minister, please contact the CFFO office.



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RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO

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