

THE STEWARD

MAY 2025



George Canyon

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Henk Vaarkamp

President's Address

Reflecting on the first months of this year we can see the many blessings we received from our Lord. We can look back on our local district AGM meetings and the good conversations we had.

On March 21 we had our CFFO AGM. We welcomed Three new board members, and, in the evening, we enjoyed our banquet. We were blessed with a time of worship and music by George Canyon.

While writing this, we are in the middle of a federal election and the ongoing tariff issues with the US. With the growing season upon us and all the uncertainties it is easy to become discouraged. Focusing on Ps. 46: 10 where we read, "Be still, and know that I'm God" we can be encouraged by knowing that we have a Heavenly Father who watches over us and will take care of all our needs.

As we trust in that knowledge, we can look forward to the future with confidence that the Lord is with us in everything we do.

May the Lord's blessing be upon us all this coming year.

Shalom,

Henk Vaarkamp



Annual General Meeting and Gala
Friday March 21, 2025
GrandWay Events Centre



A Night to Remember

Community, Leadership, and Inspiration at Our AGM and Gala

Friday March 21, 2025; at the GrandWay Events Centre in Wellington County was abuzz with energy as we hosted our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Gala—an evening that beautifully blended tradition, celebration, and renewed vision for the future. With an impressive turnout and a palpable sense of community, the event was nothing short of resounding success.

From the moment guests arrived, the atmosphere was electric filled with warm smiles, meaningful conversations, and a shared commitment to community growth and collaboration. It was a time not only to reflect on the past year's accomplishments but also to chart a bold course forward.

We are proud to announce exciting new developments in our leadership. Henk Vaarkamp has been acclaimed as our new President, bringing with him a wealth of experience and dedication. We are also pleased to welcome back Richard Blyeven to the role of Vice President, alongside the returning Vice President Frank Hoftyzer, whose continued leadership is deeply valued. Adding to this dynamic team, three new directors have joined our Executive Board: Daryl Herlick from Perth District, and John Lammers and John Zekveld from Lambton District. Their fresh insights and diverse perspectives are sure to drive meaningful progress in the year ahead.

After a delicious dinner that brought everyone together around the table, guests were treated to an unforgettable performance by the celebrated country music artist, George Canyon. Known not only for his music but for his uplifting presence, George delivered a powerful set of Gospel songs interwoven with personal stories of faith and perseverance. His heartfelt performance moved the audience and brought a spiritual richness to the evening that many will carry with them long after the final note.

As we look back on this memorable night, we are filled with gratitude and excitement. The future is bright, and with such strong leadership and an engaged community, we are poised to make a lasting impact.

We encourage everyone to stay connected, participate in local events, and lend your voice to the conversations that shape our shared journey. Together, we are stronger—and together, we will continue to build something truly special.

Let's keep the momentum going.

Charlotte Cuthbert

Communications Coordinator – CFFO

2025 Farm Shows

Paul Bootsma

Member Relations Manager - CFFO

To build relationships with other organizations and meet new farmers, potential new CFFO members, the CFFO hosts a booth at various industry shows during the winter months. Some of our districts do the bulk of the work at some of the local shows. Thanks to the district boards of CKE, Chatham Farm Show, Huron district, Goderich Show, East Central board for the Lindsay Farm Show.



Tom Tavani
Earlton Farm Show

The CFFO staff also hosted booths at the Poultry Show in London, the London Farm Show, the Ottawa Farm Show, the March Classic (Grain Farmers of Ontario), The Canadian Dairy Expo and the Earlton Farm Show. These are opportunities to meet farmers and network with other businesses and organizations involved in the agricultural and food production industries.



Henk Vaarkamp & Paul Bootsma
Wednesday April 2, 2025
Canadian Dairy Expo

Caldwell Securities Presentations at District AGM's

Paul Bootsma

Member Relations Manager - CFFO

For the 2025 district annual meetings held across the province, where local topics are discussed CFFO also partnered with Caldwell Securities who gave two presentations to CFFO members. These presentations are part of our accreditation requirements as a form of educational information we offer to CFFO members. The two presentations were about being prepared as an appointed executor for a deceased person and the responsibilities that come with such a position. Because of the changing of our society and government rules, there is much more to this than previously thought. It turns out that wills and estate planning should not be so "secretive" as once thought.

The second presentation dealt with managing your investments so "you can sleep at night". This presentation explains how to invest in more long-term and better income-producing accounts. Traveling with the CS - Caldwell securities reps, Andrew Munro, Cheryl Malony and Tony Cero has been a great experience.



Oxford AGM
March, 2025



Wellness Dinner
April, 2025

Wellness Dinner

Paul Bootsma

Member Relations Manager - CFFO

On the evening of April 8, 2025, the CFFO in partnership with Caldwell Securities, hosted a third Wellness Dinner, on the theme of "Loving your Neighbour". This event was held at the Royal Ashburn Golf & Country Club in Whitby. The evening included a delicious meal served by the staff of the Club and presentations by Diane Bergsma, about the Three Oaks Respite Cabin and Lauren Van Ewyk, Registered Social Worker.

Invitations for this event were sent to CFFO members, Caldwell Security staff and customers, local congregations, first responders and local businesses. With this variety of guests, the message to assist those who struggle with mental health challenges went out to a broad sector of our society. In recent years, it has become well known that farmers are a sector of society that struggles the most with mental challenges in their lives and businesses.



Protecting Farmland and Farmers Task Force

Paul Bootsma

Member Relations Manager - CFFO

Concerned with how farmland is being taken over by the municipal and provincial governments, the CFFO Executive Board established a task force to study this situation in Wilmont ON and prepare a statement towards the policy of land expropriation for other purposes than agriculture. A committee of ten people were instructed to understand what expropriation means, how it should be properly executed and what the implications are and then how to respond to affected farmers. This task has become very significant as the task force has taken time to understand more than just the expropriation of farmland.

The CFFO has always defended the need to preserve farmland, especially the top classes of land. The CFFO also understands the need for development and new housing needs as the population increases. However, losing class 1 soil is not best for food production and in the long run for our society. Our concern is that the governments do not distinguish between soil classification and so one acre is the same as another acre in a different part of the province.

The task force reviewed the Provincial Policy Statement to learn how the government plans for land use in the future. The task force is concerned that the statement does not show good planning for farmland and is concerned that good soils will be taken from agriculture and used for developments of some kind.

The task force is in the process of developing an official statement that will be sent to the Executive Board for approval and then made public.



Farm Safety

Farm safety in Ontario is an essential, yet often overlooked, aspect of the agricultural industry. Ontario is one of Canada's largest agricultural provinces, with a diverse landscape of farms ranging from crop production to livestock operations. However, despite the vital role farming plays in the provincial economy, farm safety remains a critical concern that demands ongoing attention, resources, and cultural change.

One of the most common causes of accidents on farms in Ontario is machinery. Tractors, combines, and other small & large equipment are integral to modern farming, but they also present significant risks. Workers, especially those not properly trained, can get caught in moving parts or experience rollovers, which can lead to severe injuries or even death.

Livestock handling is another area of concern. Whether it's cows, pigs, or poultry, farm animals can be unpredictable and, at times, aggressive. Injuries from animal-related incidents, such as being kicked or crushed, are not uncommon. Farmers and workers who are unfamiliar with or unprepared for these risks are more vulnerable.

Improving farm safety in Ontario begins with comprehensive education and training. CFFO has partnered with WSPS and Elite Agri Solutions to provide resources, courses, and safety guidelines to help farmers, and their employees identify and mitigate risks.

Training in equipment handling, First Aid, chemical safety, and emergency procedures is vital, but it's also important to cultivate a safety-conscious culture within farming communities.

Farm safety is not just about physical

well-being—mental health is an important part of the conversation. Farming can be isolating, especially in rural Ontario where support systems may be scarce. The pressures of running a farm, combined with financial stress, extreme weather events, and long working hours, can lead to mental health struggles like anxiety, depression, and burnout. These stressors can, in turn, affect decision-making and reduce a farmer's ability to assess safety risks effectively. Isaiah 30:23 "He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful".

Farm safety in Ontario is a multi-faceted issue that requires ongoing attention and improvement. Despite the advancements in technology, and safety protocols, the agricultural industry remains a high-risk environment. A continued focus on education, mental health, training, and accessible resources will be key to reducing the number of injuries and fatalities on Ontario farms. By fostering a culture of safety and investing in both physical and mental well-being, Ontario can ensure that the province's agricultural workforce remains healthy, productive, and safe.

God, we pray for your protection over our farmers, for your blessing on them, even as we thank you for them; they are evidence of your grace toward all of us. We praise you for them and pray for them. Thank you, our Heavenly Father.

Charlotte Cuthbert
Communications Coordinator – CFFO



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Watch your emails about the upcoming Family Picnics in your local area. Make sure you attend and get to know your local farmers and discuss topics that may concern you.

Have your voice heard.

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