



National Farmers Union
Union Nationale des Fermiers



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 1, 2018

To the Membership of NFU District 1, Region 1:

District Convention

Our annual District Convention will be held on **Tuesday, April 3, 2018** at the Milton Community Hall in North Milton. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. with the meeting getting underway at 10:00 a.m. (Storm date is the following Thursday). The registration fee of \$20 per person includes a noon buffet as well. Elections will be held for the three district director positions - District Director, Women's District Director and Youth District Director. Resolutions will be considered and if passed, those of a regional or national nature will go on to the regional meeting later in the year. This year we will hear a presentation from an Agriculture Canada scientist on the trend of organic matter levels in Island soils. The new Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Robert Henderson has been invited to attend, and we have asked the new Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, Hon. Richard Brown to speak on the Lands Protection Act. At the time of writing this newsletter, neither Minister has confirmed his attendance. If you need childcare in order to attend the Convention, please call Edith Ling at 902-368-1262 as assistance is available to those members requiring it.

Fuel Negotiations - The Collective Bargaining Committee will meet soon to negotiate a petroleum agreement for NFU members for the coming year. For the past number of years, we have had a collective bargaining agreement with Island Petroleum.

Land Symposium - Cooper Institute is organizing a symposium on the Lands Protection Act. This meeting will be held at the Milton Hall on Saturday, March 3 beginning at 1:00 p.m. The storm date is the following Saturday. Included on the agenda is a panel which will discuss the history of the land and various aspects of the Lands Protection Act.

Land - The NFU continues to be greatly concerned about the apparent loopholes which have been found and used in the Lands Protection Act. We are disturbed to see large holdings of land being bought up by multi-faceted corporations, thus making it very difficult for young farmers to obtain land or for existing family farms to expand or maintain rented land. The NFU met with the Select Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment on November 2, 2017 and a copy of our presentation can be found on our website at nfu/pei.ca. If you prefer to have a hard copy, please call Edith Ling at 902-368-1262. The Standing Committee passed a motion to have the Irvings, Vanco Farms and representatives of the Buddhists appear before the Committee to disclose information on their land holdings in this province. At the present time, no date has been set for this meeting. The Lands Protection Act definitely needs

to be tightened up to keep our land available for Island farm families and to prevent land speculation by foreign investors. The problem as we see it is that the political will is just not there to do anything about this problem. This has to change!

Forestry - Almost equally disturbing is the wholesale clear cutting of Island woodlands. It is difficult to understand why this is happening as woodland is not considered part of a land owner's aggregate land holding. Woods are so beneficial to help maintain the water table, to reduce wind and soil erosion, and to provide a wildlife habitat. Now with carbon pricing on the horizon, trees are important to sequester carbon from the atmosphere so it is all the more reason to maintain our woodlands.

Water Act - The new Water Act was rushed through the Provincial Legislature in its dying days. One good point is that fracking is now banned in this province. Work will continue on writing the Regulations under the Act. Public meetings are supposed to be held on developing the Regulations, and I would urge everyone to attend a meeting when they are held. Water is so important for all forms of life, and it must be preserved and protected.

Many irrigation ponds were constructed and new wells dug in the past year, no doubt in an effort to get into place before the Water Act came into being. These ponds were constructed with no regulations - just a sheet of "recommendations" from the Dept. of Environment. Many of these ponds have several wells pumping water into the pond, and a tremendous amount of water is being extracted from the ground. Government officials continue to explain that the ponds can be supplied by snowmelt and spring run-off - by the time the water is needed for irrigation, I am afraid the snowmelt and run-off water will be long gone due to evaporation. It will be very interesting to see what the Regulations have to say in regard to these holding ponds and wells.

Meeting with Minister of Agriculture - The NFU has a meeting scheduled for February 6, 2018 with Hon. Robert Henderson. Many of these issues will be discussed at that time.

AGRICULTURE AND NAFTA - The United States wants to end Canada's supply management system for dairy and poultry within the next decade. The US also wants to end a special program known as Clause 7 which allows Canadian producers to sell a certain cheese-making protein at less than world prices. This reduces American imports into Canada, and the US has an oversupply of this protein. Future talks on NAFTA are planned for late February.

In Union is Strength

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