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National Farmers Union

N.B. Chapter Has Annual General Meeting in the Village of Gagetown

by Paul Breau

This year the National Farmers Union (NFU) N.B. chapter chose the Village Gagetown as the location of their annual general meeting. The original plan was to have the meeting take place at Gagetown Fruit Farm, however; with the increased attendance from local Gagetown residents and others, they had to change the location to the Gagetown Legion. Gagetown Fruit Farm catered lunch and coffee breaks, and it was noted more than once that the food was the best they had ever experienced at any of their meetings!

One quarter of the meeting was devoted to resolutions and association business and the balance of the day was made up of presentations from five guest speakers. The first guest speaker was Mr. Jan Slomp, a dairy farmer from Alberta and the National President of the National Farmers Union. Mr. Slomp's presentation was on the topic of "Building Alternatives for a Better Farming and Food System". He covered the beginning of the NFU which began in 1969 in Western Canada and explained its role in the development of economic and social policies which help maintain the family farm as the primary food producing source in Canada. Jan stressed that the NFU also believes that social policy is linked to ecological policy.

The next speaker was Dr. Gregory Heming, a council member of the town of Annapolis in N.S. The title of his presentation was "How Small Cooperative Approaches to Agriculture and Finances

can Revive Rural Communities". His presentation was about how and why the town of Annapolis has decided to attempt 80% self-sufficiency in food and energy by the year 2050. Other objectives are to provide affordable housing for all, and to keep air, water, and soil clean and uncontaminated.

Jean-Maurice Landry, a representative of the North East N.B. Blueberry Association made the next presentation to the group. Mr. Landry described the issues facing blueberry producers in north eastern N.B. in light of the recent land swap the N.B. government made with Oxford Frozen Foods of N.S. Randall Affleck of Bedeque P.E.I. gave a presentation on the proposed Bill C-18, Agriculture Growth Act. The content of this act, being presented to parliament, has some potentially disturbing aspects as follows; a sweeping increase in the rights of plant breeders to control new varieties; a limited provision for farmers to save and clean seeds for replanting; a virtually unlimited scope for present and future governments to use regulations to take away or further restrict the farmers' privileges; and a system designed for seed companies to get more money from farmers.

The final presentation was made by Gerald Chevrier from the N.B. Department of Agriculture. Mr. Chevrier updated the group on the programs available to farmers from the recently approved Growing Forward 2. This is a



The National Farmers Union in New Brunswick promotes policies that aim to revitalize agriculture in New Brunswick by strengthening family farms. On local, national and international levels, the NFU advocates alternative structures and government policies that resist corporate control of food. With farmers and consumers, NFU works to encourage vibrant rural communities, environmentally sustainable practices and the production of safe, wholesome food. For more information:

<http://nfunb.org/en/>

program cost-shared between the federal and N.B. governments and is available from 2013 to 2018; it provides assistance to farmers with research and innovation, market and business development, food safety and environmental stewardship.

In conclusion the National Farmers Union was very pleased with services provided by our Gagetown Legion and certainly was very impressed with catering services provided by Gagetown Fruit Farm. The day proved to be a very informative and educational opportunity for all those who were able to attend.