



OFA Policy Forum test drive

by Wendy Omvlee, Member
OFA Executive Committee

Directors on the board of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture had an opportunity recently to test drive the proposed OFA policy forum. It's not a new car or a new truck, but it is the suggested new vehicle for the development of agricultural policy for OFA – Ontario's largest general farm organization.

Directors who attended the March meeting showed a lot of interest in the new approach to discussing and formulating policy for the organization. It's all part of OFA's restructuring process and the search for more effective and efficient ways of representing farmers.

First assignment for the day was a look at property tax treatment for on-farm value-added activities. For years there has been concern and annoyance with the way the government has been dealing with the issue. Farmers like the idea of adding value to their produce on the farm before it gets to market – and governments encourage that, but farmers grow discouraged when governments introduce new rules and regulations to tax away any gains achieved.

The second session for the day involved a look at the changing demographics and markets in today's agriculture. Dr. David Sparling, executive director of the Institute of Agri-Food Policy Innovation in Guelph took the directors through a series of slides that explored the realities, some of them harsh, that

impact today's agri-food sector.

While farmers continue to lose political clout, one of their greatest advantages is the trust Canadians place in them. Society has a strong and deep-rooted faith that farmers are doing what's right for society and the environment, he suggested. While the vast majority of farms are small in size, the farm family has gained the appreciation of society for its role in maintaining the integral aspects of rural Ontario.

He examined the point at which small farms were large enough to sustain the farm family. Dr. Sparling said a farm generating \$250,000 in gross annual income should be capable of survival without off-farm income. Part of his review included an assessment of the impact of government payments on the ability of small farms to survive in today's economy. He showed illustrations of how large farms continue to invest and expand, but small farms can't.

In his view of the future, Dr. Sparling said Ontario's farmers are going to need strategies to survive. Farmers and their organizations will have to decide where to invest their limited resources. We have to find ways of producing products that people will want to buy. There are trends developing in the food industry, according to Dr. Sparling – organic, natural and ethnic-specific – and producers need to recognize their value.

Examining where farmers can look for new opportunities, Dr. Sparling pointed to bio-products, food products with a demonstrated ability to improve health for society, and high-end products being sought by high-end consumers, both domestically and abroad.

We were told that Canadian farm families earn four dollars off-farm for every dollar of farm net income – 62 per cent of farm families earn more off the farm than from their farming enterprise. In reality, he said, cities drive employment across the province.

Directors indicated an appetite for additional sessions like that with Dr. Sparling – wanting to learn more about prospects for the future of farming in Ontario and the tools farm families will need to succeed. More information is available on the Institute's website – www.iafpi.ca

Farm issues remain after budget

Ontario farmers found out Thursday just how much work they have ahead for the coming year. While Finance Minister Sorbara remembered the renewable fuels sector in the provincial budget, many of the items essential to the industry's success were missing, says Geri Kamenz, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"That just means OFA and Ontario farmers will have to keep working to deliver the message that support is still needed to bring stability to sectors still struggling to achieve profitability," Kamenz says.

The \$520 million announced for further development of the bio energy sector will have a positive impact for grains and oilseeds farmers, Kamenz says, but they still need support for a risk management program for their industry.

OFA is optimistic the province will rely on its powers to make in-year

funding authorizations to help the farming sector with items not mentioned in Thursday's budget. Taxation issues can be dealt with by the Finance Minister throughout the year through provincial regulation. "This gives us hope that a number of unresolved items in OFA's pre-budget submission can be handled in the months ahead," Kamenz says.

We're still looking for expanded Land Transfer Tax exemptions to get more

young farmers into the industry; expansion of the list of eligible farm-related items for Retail Sales Tax exemption; resolution of concerns with tax-exemption on certain farm building materials; and an acceptable response on the farm property assessment classification issue, Kamenz optimistically notes.

"Farmers will continue to work with the government to address the outstanding issues," Kamenz says.

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Our Annual Spring Time "Good Friday" Sale will be held on April 6th. Consigned to this sale will be tools, lawn maintenance equipment, trucks, trailers, ag. equipment, welders, generators, etc. Any consignments - call early for advertising opportunities. We always have a great turnout at this sale. For info please call

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TOYS: 3-rare black Americana tin wind-up toys, Alabama Jigger, Charleston Trio, Jazzbo Jim "The Dancer On The Roof", tin wind-up Popeye carrying parrot cages, tin bubble blowing Popeye, rare J. Chein Barnacle Bill in barrel, 1929 Fisher Price Popeye pull along toy, 1953 and 1968 Popeye jack in the boxes, Popeye record player and guitar, several Popeye lunch boxes with thermos, old wooden Olive Oil and Olive puppet, several 1960's Popeye gumball machines, early Popeye soap, cups, puppets, dolls, hats, shirts, puzzles and games, Marx tin wind-up tank, tin motorcycles, Marx battery operated Fred Flintstone riding a dinosaur, talking Casper doll, Superman collectibles, Daisy rifle, Gorgi and Matchbox cars **and much more!**

Large quantity of Glassware and China: exceptional 4-flute cranberry epergne, 75 pieces of green mark Belleek including rate and hard to find pieces, 8 1/2" Royal Nippon vase, Cornflower, pink depression, set of Wedgwood dishes, **24 Royal Doultons**, Hummels, Fiesta ware, cups and saucers, etc.

Estate Jewelry: lady's 18K white gold diamond ring appraised at \$4,480.00, 3 other lady's diamond rings, costume jewelry, etc.

Collectibles: German WWII helmet, tin mule match holder, Planters Peanut jar, Popeye whirligig, Aunt Jemima writing pad, early Morbier wall clock, Quebec wood carvings signed Caron, oil paintings, prints, pictures and lithos, French Ivory, hat pins, **unique old 42 inch water crock**, 7 Wallace Nuttings, R.C.A.F. medals, old British cloth flag, tin type photos, Chicago and Boston hockey jersey, dynamite boxes, crocks and churns, child's books, comic books, etc.

Furniture: mahogany drop front secretary with lions heads, walnut 3-tier table with ball and claw feet, carved walnut cameo back settee, ball and talon trestle table, Victorian walnut corner what not stand, small tables, hall bench, etc.

Miscellaneous: 8 ft. carved wooden bear, Bradley and Hubbard piano lamp, 10 Kenmore air conditioners, wrought iron table and six chairs, linens and doilies **and much more!**

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Jack Morris Auctions Inc. Reminder Ad

Farm Machinery and Household Auction Sale
Saturday, March 31 at 10:30 a.m.

For John and Don Bell at 4113 Tecumseh Line, Jeanette's Creek. From the Town of Tilbury take Kent Rd. 1 to Tecumseh Line, then east to farm. From Hwy. 401 take either Tilbury exit to Queen St., then north to Jeanette's Creek.

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ANT. & COLL.: Primitive tool coll. incl. Beatty hay hook, wrenches, ice tongs, steam gauges, blow torch etc., cast implement seats, Marconi radar unit, watch washer, pocket knife coll., 3 hp Johnson Seahorse outboard, china, glassware, Fireking & Pyres, Matchbox toys, ladies dress, hump back trunk, sleigh, sterling & costume jewelry etc. **MODERN ETC.:** Sofa bed, 2 single beds cmplt., chests drawers, dresser, wicker chair, sm. bookshelf, child's & more books, ent. cab., marble slab top, nic nacs, area rug, mirrors, lamps, pots pans, cast fry pans, dishes, glassware, sm. kit. appliances, Sony 33" picture/TV, DVD, VCR, LPs, pool cues & access, and more. **TOOLS ETC.:** 5000 lb. cherry picker, mechanics tool chests, Devilbiss 5 hp air compressor, sm. compressors, screw saw w/cab., cir. & jig saws, mitre saw w/stand, bar clamps, pipe dies & threading, acetylene tank & cart, socket & end wrenches, 1000 watt generator, 2" air nailer, roofing air gun, 2 rotary dremel sets, wheel puller, halogen work lights, Milwaukee cordless & 1/2" drills, paper cutter, post hole digger, sm. gas heater & Reddy kerosene blow heater, tool box, many hand tools, new 6" grinder & tile saw, comm. floor polisher, drain snake, ext. cords, metal shelving, 32" french door, 2 folding doors, 9 new sm. vinyl windows, birch veneer, 6-R20 insulation, fluorescent tubes, alum. step & wood ext. ladders, wheel barrow, elect. hedge trimmer & snow shovel, leaf blower/vac., gas weed trimmer, lawnmower, garden tools, J. Deere L110 lawn tractor 42" deck & much more. **PREVIEW:** Fri. 5-7 p.m. or Sat. 8:30 a.m. **TERMS:** Cash, approved cheque, Visa & M/C.

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