

# High fuel costs hurting everyone

*Lack of competition a key issue*

BY ANDY COMBER

Essex Liberal candidate Susan Whelan and Dan McTeague, incumbent Liberal candidate in Pickering-Scarborough East, met with farmers and owners of trucking companies, wineries, and gas bars Oct. 9 to discuss the issue of high fuel costs.

A critic of rising energy and fuel prices, McTeague is known for his accurate predictions of gas prices at the pumps on a website dubbed "Tomorrow's gas price, today."

"I've asked him to come down here," Whelan said, "because, what I've been hearing at the door, at the farm, at the factory, and the greenhouse, is that their energy costs or their fuel costs, that's what is causing them the greatest concern."

"That's what is going to

put them out of business unless something is done about it right now," she said.

McTeague said there is a vital need to get more competition in the gas and fuel industry.

"Energy prices are much higher in Canada than they are in the United States," McTeague said. "The current near-monopoly of gasoline and diesel is pointed directly at efficient, independent operators, be that farmers or whether that be manufacturing, all of these things have contributed, vitally, to the decline in Canada."

High fuel and energy costs have also had a negative effect on consumers, making it more difficult to "make ends meet," McTeague said. "We have to act and we have to act decisively, or we're going to compromise Canada's economic viability, including right here in this



Known for his accurate predictions of gas prices at the pumps, a Liberal incumbent from Pickering-Scarborough East, Dan McTeague, right, spoke with Essex Liberal candidate Susan Whelan and local farmers, including Bernard Nelson, president of the Essex County Federation of Agriculture, Oct. 9.

region." McTeague called for the restoration of the government's office of petroleum pricing, which was scrapped by the Harper government in 2006. He also called for government support for the "innovators" who are using "cutting-edge" technology in dealing with energy and its costs.

The lack of competition within the energy and fuel industry remains a major issue, said McTeague.

"We have literally painted ourselves into a corner and allowed only one or two players to determine price and to control the market, not only at the level of crude (oil), but more importantly right here at the retail level," said McTeague, insisting the government act as a watchdog over the industry, an industry he said is acting in its own best interests.

"It is now having enormous implications for consumers," McTeague said.

markets is essential to the success of Canadian farmers. We are counting on the support of our federal government to promote the reputation of Canadian food products at home and around the world.

There are a number of issues important to farmers and their industry that will require action by the federal government following the October 14th election:

- Improvements to Canada's food labelling regulations;
- Elimination of the excise tax on farm fuel (coloured diesel);
- A regionally flexible farm income program to address Ontario's specific needs;
- Payment of the one hundred million dollars promised May 1, 2007, to address increasing production costs, and
- A workable and profitable deal for Canadian farmers at the WTO.

The immediate need for agriculture is to have everyone vote for the candidate most likely to support our industry's farmers and their families.



## The critical part for agriculture

by Don McCabe, Vice-President  
Ontario Federation of Agriculture

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and its members have worked hard during this current election campaign to seek out the candidates willing to support agriculture after the October 14th election. The critical part now is to ensure the farm vote gets out and makes its vote count for agriculture – its issues and its people.

Throughout the election campaign the OFA and its national partner, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, have worked to put agriculture's issues before the candidates. While doing this, we also brought valuable information about agriculture to thousands of urban Canadians.

Hopefully the non-farm population gained some knowledge of agriculture's issues and will place their

vote for the candidates most likely to understand and support the needs of our industry in the caucus and in the House of Commons.

During the campaign, CFA reached out to urban voters to remind them that a healthy and prosperous agriculture provides them with valuable benefits – a wide range of socioeconomic perks that make their lives better. This outreach was achieved when a debate on farming's issues was televised on the Internet.

Beside the obvious benefits from agriculture – things like safe, nutritious food, and beautiful surroundings in the rural countryside, there is a bountiful supply of ecological goods and services that farmers provide to society as they do their daily chores – things like providing habitat for endangered species and

ensuring a source of clean drinking water.

In return for all of this, agriculture is asking the election candidates to acknowledge what benefits their constituents derive from agriculture and support our industry's needs in the House of Commons.

Candidates with their sights set on Ottawa need to be reminded of agriculture's push for improved food inspections. For many years now, farmers and their organizations have taken a proactive role in developing HACCP based on-farm food safety programs. These programs remain critical to the nation's food safety, and more funding is needed from Ottawa to advance this process.

Being able to put the safest possible Canadian food products on both the domestic and international

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