

# Some win, some lose in freer trade

There will be some losers and some winners if Canada negotiates freer trade with the United States, according to Dr. Larry Martin, professor and chairman of the Agricultural Economics and Business Department at the University of Guelph.

Speaking at a free trade seminar, organized by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, Dr. Martin suggested a program must be developed to hear both sides, and that certainly, there are advantages and disadvantages to freer trade.

In trade talks with the U.S., Dr. Martin said farmers should press for three basic gains:

1. Clear definitions of what subsidies qualify for countervailing duty action.
2. To improve access to the U.S. market by lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers.
3. To guarantee this access in a binding treaty, by establishing an effective and equitable mechanism for the settlement of trade disputes.

Dr. Martin pointed out one third of Canada's agricultural output is exported and agricultural exports account for about half of gross farm income.

Ruth Grose

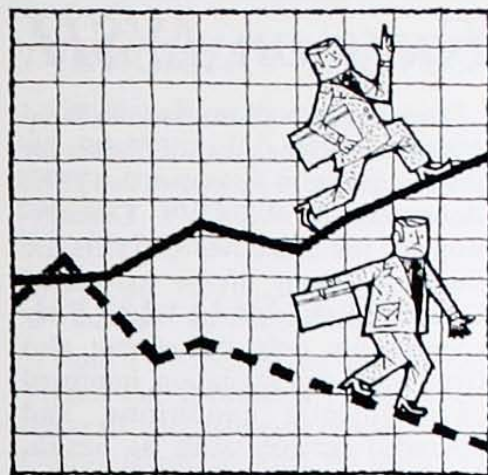


All this leads to the conclusion that most of Canadian agriculture is heavily dependent on international trade and, therefore, on access to foreign markets.

During the rest of the day-long seminar, held in November in Guelph, participants listened to a panel discussion on free trade as well as the statements of eight Ontario commodity boards.

Discussion groups tackled five different statements reflecting the various components of the free trade issue. Comments on the statements were shared in a plenary session.

Although the seminar was organized by FWIO, it was sponsored by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. Three other free trade seminars are being held across the country in an effort to collect the ideas and opinions of people involved



in agriculture on the free trade issue. Reports from the four seminars will be used in a brief to the federal government.

About 100 people attended the seminar in Ontario, representing Junior Farmers, 4-H, Ontario Farm Safety Association, Junior Women's Institutes, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation, Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies, and many other organizations.

**Ruth Grose chaired the FWIO Free Trade Seminar**

## WI branch hosts public information meeting

A meeting to inform WI members and the public about problems facing today's farmers was organized by Hay Bay Women's Institute, and held in October.

Called Problems Facing Our

Farmers and What Can Be Done To Help Them, the evening included a panel of speakers and a question and answer period. The speakers were Eric Kaiser, a well-known, local chicken farmer; Garnet Mills, agricultural

representative for Lennox and Addington; and John Wise, a part-time fruit and vegetable farmer.

Hay Bay Agriculture and Canadian Industries Convener Barbara Ander was the moderator for the evening. She hoped that not only would participants (about 75) learn more about farming, but they would be moved to do something about the situation.

Although many favorable comments were made at the event and afterwards, there was no response to a suggestion that volunteers set up a committee to see if any follow-up action could be taken by people in the community.

After the meeting, two copies of Carol Giangrande's book **Down To Earth: The Crisis in Canadian Farming** were donated to the local library by Hay Bay WI. A classified ad was placed in two issues of the local newspaper announcing the book was available.



Pictured above are people involved in the Hay Bay WI evening. In the front row, l to r are Hay Bay WI President Barbara Weese; Lennox and Addington Ag Rep Garnet Mills; event convener Barbara Ander. In the back row are farmers Eric Kaiser and John Wise. (Photo courtesy The Napanee Beaver)