

Farmers' land no longer their own - O.F.A. head

Farmers must accept that their land is no longer their own, Ontario Federation of Agriculture president Gordon Hill told the OFA's annual convention. He was addressing more than 500 farmers from across the province at the Oshawa meeting.

"We must accept that for the good of all the people in Ontario, society has the authority to decide the purpose for which our land can be used."

In return, Hill seeks a fair deal for farmers. He demanded three chief guarantees:

Assurance by the provincial government that farmers who produce food on land locked into farming can make a profit.

Special areas in each county set aside for poultry and livestock production. "It is not acceptable that livestock and poultry units built in good faith be closed down because of odour complaints."

No more big city garbage dumps outside the city limits. "If our urban friends have sufficient funds to squander this country's natural resources in such profusion, they had better have enough

money for recycling."

Land-use legislation passed in early summer gives no such guarantees, claimed Hill. "These three bills are really planning for development rather than planning to put our land to the use for which it is best suited."

He also reprimanded farmers for leaving it up to the trade and governments to find and develop export markets. "They have failed, and farmers may lose market opportunities today because we've sat on our butts."

Take Initiative

He called on farmers across Canada to unite, and take the initiative in exporting farm products. "If farmers were strongly organized today, I'm sure we could sign up long-term contracts. I'm also sure we could be selling a larger degree of processing in our export products."

However, farmers are losing these markets by default, added Hill, because they are not strongly organized to take advantage of the seller's market that exists across the world today.

"Regardless of how efficient we are as producers, if we do a poor job of marketing, we are throwing money away." He told the farmers present the first step to cornering export markets is for farmers across Canada to band together. Then, they would be strong enough to work with governments and the trade as a team.

Success, he added, will only come with an industry-wide approach, not a continuance of the hit-and-miss efforts of the past. He warned that quibbling between provinces over export markets must end.

Hill predicts another round of soaring input costs at the farm gate during coming months.

"Farmers can expect to pay another \$15-million next year when the price freeze on fuels is lifted. Ontario farmers can count on a 5c-a-gallon increase on heating oil and a 6c-a-gallon increase on diesel oil and gas."

Hydro hike

Hydro costs will be up another 10 percent in the new year. Fertilizer prices on some analyses are already 35 percent above last fall's prices. Hill alerted farmers to the short supply of fertilizer for the coming spring, and the tight delivery problems they can expect.

He called on the Canadian government to negotiate with the U.S. government to ensure that Canadian farmers have enough phosphates to supply their needs. Hill pointed out that the U.S. depends largely on Canadian potash and natural gas (used to produce nitrogen) to supply its fertilizer market. Canada, in turn, is deficient in phosphate rock which is shipped up from the Southern U.S.

Although Canada should be in a solid bartering position, Hill warned that Canada's fertilizer plants are divisions of international companies. "Our Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan said publicly



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Greetings

Here's to a very Merry Christmas full of peace and happiness.

from everyone at
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Christmas Greetings

On that first Christmas, a special Star shone bright over the Mother and Child. May the Christmas star of peace, joy and happiness shine bright over you and yours for Christmas and all through the year.

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The Legend of the Christmas Rose

According to legend a little shepherd girl from Bethlehem followed the shepherds on their way to the manger. All the shepherds had gifts for Jesus but the little girl had none. She felt very sad and unworthy about this and hung back from the others. Just before they reached the stable, an angel appeared in a blaze of light and scattered lovely white roses before the little girl. So she gathered them up and laid them before the manger.



O, Holy Night

Each year at Christmas, the sacred story lives anew. As we reflect upon that holy time, of a Child born in Bethlehem, may we find inspiration in His life, to guide us on our way. Sincere greetings to all.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
OF THE
TOWN OF ACTON**