

# Interest rates hurt farmers, but will bankrupt few

Soaring interest rates are bad news for Acton and area farmers and their financing costs will mean higher food prices but few will go out of business because of rising costs.

North Halton farmers aren't much different than their colleagues throughout the province, they are feeling the pinch of rising interest rates, according to Agricultural Rep. Henry Stanley.

High interest rates are "critical" to farmers who have had to buy new machinery and they are facing soaring seed, chemical and fertilizer costs.

However, Stanley says, there isn't as much danger of North Halton farmers going out of business because of inflation and interest rates as in areas like Bruce and Huron Counties because there are mostly established farmers here and few new farm operations have been set up in recent years.

Fertilizer prices have been rising every few weeks for months now Stanley says and seed prices have gone up about 25 per cent.

One indication of how increasing production costs and rising interest rates are hurting area farm operations according to the ag. rep. is that farmers are giving up land they had previously rented and fields plowed last fall won't be planted this summer.

Stanley cited grains as an example of the crops which will be cut back because of production costs are higher than prices.

The kinds of financial woes farmers are facing

now have been a few years coming he said but the "crunch" brought on by interest rates, was delayed because farmers "got by" with heavy planting, higher total yields covered costs.

Farmers have already been hit hard by interest rates. They had to buy seed, chemicals and fertilizer weeks ago, so even if rates quite leaping up weekly it won't help them.

The problems aren't limited to cash croppers either, according to Stanley. Farmers raising cattle and hogs are feeling the pinch too, though dairy farmers will "weather" the interest rates storm as well as anyone since their prices rise as costs increase. Beef and pork producers aren't as fortunate and their prices are depressed now. Hog prices

cover only about 70 per cent of production costs and beef prices aren't meeting production costs either.

Many farmers have already paid high interest rates last fall to buy animals and borrowed for feed all winter only to find prices are far below what they have spent.

Ralph Denny, RR 2 Acton, said interest rates won't hurt him because he's a long established farmer but financing costs could well bankrupt younger farmers.

"This country continues to give the consumer the cheapest food in the world. The sooner the consumer pays, and I mean pays, the better off we'll all be," Denny declared. He suggested consumers forget about their boats, cottages and snowmobiles

and start paying for food.

Frank Anthony, an RR 1 Limehouse cash cropper with his brother Fred, says interest rates are "just out of line".

While he's in no danger of going out of business, "at least for a year or so anyway," he's sure 18 or 19 per cent interest rates will put some farmers out of business.

"It will be reflected to the consumer, it can't help but be. High interest rates are affecting everyone."

Prices for cash crops are holding now, but will go down just like hog prices. Anthony predicted, because grain exports by the United States to Russia will be curtailed. The feed market will slip too.

This farmer thinks he has a solution to the interest rates dilemma. High interest rates, say 30 per cent, should be charged for the purchase of luxury items while low rates are charged for mortgages and business loans.

## It's Tooth Week

Dental decay is the most prevalent disease known to man. It's rare that any individual goes through life without a tooth becoming decayed.

Dental Health Week in Canada is this week, from April 13 to 19.

The three Acton dentists, Dr. Jeff Facey, Dr. Bob Steen and Dr. Al Mikelenas agree that prevention of tooth decay by a combination of measures is the greatest single way today's youngsters can ensure a head full of good teeth in adulthood.

They are also in agreement over the value of fluoride in chemically strengthening the teeth to withstand the onslaught of caries (cavities).

Although Acton water is now fluoridated, all the dentists feel topical fluoride (external) applied properly is an excellent backup to the very small amount of fluoride ingested.

"It's been proven (to work)" Dr. Mikelenas comments, "my children have fluoride supplements."

Oral hygiene, with training beginning in infancy, is the most important single factor in caries prevention says Dr. Steen. Dr. Facey agrees cleaning the mouth and teeth at night is far more important than doing it in the morning to freshen breath. He says it's imperative to remove food deposits from teeth before the eight-hour sleep period takes place.

He cautions it's wise to brush frequently during the day and rinse the mouth with water.



Kim Arnold received undivided attention from two Acton dentists, Dr. Bob Steen and Dr. Al Mikelenas. This week is Dental Health Week.

mouth with water. Dr. Steen is pleased to see youngsters adhering to better diets and becoming conscious of tooth care from baby teeth onward.

With the tremendous amount of research work being done in dental caries prevention and the consciousness raising of the public, both Dr. Steen and Dr. Mikelenas feel confident that the teeth of the population will gradually improve.

"It's not any one thing," says Dr. Steen, "but all contributing factors." "People have discovered it's cheaper to have a better diet than to eat junk food," he continues, "and it's cheaper to keep your teeth than to lose them."



Dr. Jeff Facey puts Pat Smith at ease before beginning work on her teeth. It's dental health week and Acton's dentists are promoting dental caries prevention.

## PROFILES

with JENNIFER BARR



Melanija Bray

The tragedy of flowers is their short lives. People have been preserving the beauty of flowers by drying for centuries. Methods have been less than perfect. Flowers would eventually crumble and fade into dust.

Melanija Bray of Elizabeth Drive, Acton, has been preserving flowers in a unique and very successful way for six years. Her craft has developed into a full time business involving the whole family. Everlasting Creations turns out approximately 500 flower arrangements under glass per year, selling for \$15 to \$300. When one realizes that Melanija spends an average of six hours on each creation after the flowers are preserved, it's easy to see how it's become a full-time occupation.

Melanija's background as an artist (her paintings adorn every room of her house and her famous Acton mural graces the Public Library) and a student of botany combined with a green thumb and a talent for gardening led her into the job of preserving nature.

However, many people dry flowers. The difference with Melanija's flowers is the chemical composition of the drying. With the help of her chemist husband, Joe who is vice-principal of Lord Elgin High School in Burlington, she has come up with a special formula that dries the flowers to a state of permanence allowing them to last indefinitely.

Garden supplies flowers

Her garden, larger than average, supplies her with the greatest source of material, although nature walks are used to gather driftwood, bark and moss used in the open natural arrangements. Melanija is fond of doing. Flowers are picked at the peak of freshness around 11 a.m. after the dew is dry. They are then filled with the chemical mix developed by the Brays. They aren't just dipped in Silica gel, although this is part of the formula. Each bloom is completely filled and covered in the substance to insure that every cell is dried and preserved.

After drying, a process which can take up to a week—"it's a guessing game," says Melanija—the blooms are packed in plastic containers with more chemicals. It's important all moisture and oxygen is removed from every bloom. A heavy nitrogen filled atmosphere is necessary to insure preservation.

The Bray rec room is filled with thousands of labelled containers, protecting dried blooms dating back as long as five years.

Summer is the time to preserve, which leaves the colder months for making the flower arrangements. The whole family gets in the act preparing flowers but only Melanija has the knack for making the arrangements.

"She thinks in three dimensions," husband Joe comments proudly.

Melanija feels the involvement of the family is very good for her four children, Paul 16, Mark 14, Melanie, 12 and Peter 10.

"It's important for children to know about their environment," Melanija comments, "They notice more (of the world) around them."

Peter contributes preserved butterflies for many of the arrangements.

Long process

Melanija advises would-be flower preservers who are interested in taking up the hobby as a craft to "get into something else."

"You have to work so far in advance", she says referring to the work involved preserving this year's flowers for next year's arrangements.

Most of the Brays flower arrangements are sold through specialty craft shows. Melanija is already preparing for a big show at the Botanical Gardens at the end of May. She really enjoys the shows, she says.

"I prefer to do craft shows. This is still relatively new and I prefer to introduce it myself."

"I'm still hung up on it (the craft). I can't believe that I've done it. I still can't believe that I've actually preserved this gorgeous thing," and Melanija caresses a perfect rose.

## Town to advertise road reconstruction

The town plans to advertise when it is going to do road reconstruction in the future so people can object if they feel it will harm their business.

Monday Halton Hills general committee endorsed a plan proposed by engineer Robert Austin calling for notice of road reconstruction to go into local newspapers for four weeks before each project so people can bring their objections to council.

After hearing objections council can either direct staff to make changes or proceed with a project.

Austin said this will give people a chance to object to road work before it has started and will mean they will give its impact on their business some thought before the road is ripped up.

A firm brought legal action against the town over reconstruction of Main Street North in Acton.

Councillor Roy Booth was worried if people object to a reconstruction project and the town still proceeds it could be viewed as an admission of guilt later in court.

Austin said it wouldn't be an admission of guilt and added where con-

cerns and complaints are known ahead of time often problems can be solved.

This new policy of advertising projects ahead of time will be carried out for the first time for the widening of Guelph Street in Georgetown.

## Hydro office changes hours

Office hours at hydro commission offices in Georgetown and Acton have been changed to an opening time of 8:30 a.m. and closing time of 4:30 p.m. to conform with the

hours in all other town offices.

The Acton and Georgetown Hydro Commissions and the rural area have now been combined in Halton Hills Hydro.

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