

# Farmers question candidates

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He said as the going forward framework agreement is renegotiated, the Province of Ontario and federal government should sit down and the federal government should volunteer to transfer a greater amount of subsidy dollars down to the Province to reflect Ontario's fair share of national agriculture production so the Province could use that for an entirely provincially-run program.

Another audience member wanted to hear the candidates' views on the long-gun registry.

Peters said the Association of the Chiefs of Police endorse the gun registry and if it protects even one officer, "it's worth the money."

Chong said his government doesn't support the registry and it costs \$64 million a year to run. He believes that money could be better spent elsewhere to prevent crime.

Bouteiller said the police use the registry regularly, and they believe it's helpful, so he won't argue with them on that standpoint and his party would stand by it.

An audience member asked if the candidates were familiar with the results to Canada of Roundup Ready canola and what it costs our country, and what their party's stance was on "preventing the likes of Monsanto from doing any of its...business in Canada."

"I think that genetically modified crops have had an environmental benefit," said Chong.

He said genetically modified crops reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the impact on soils,

"Our proposal is to strengthen the system by allowing for international equivalencies for those products that have been approved for use in the U.S. and Europe," said Chong.

The man who asked the question fired back after hearing from all three candidates on the issue that he had "not heard too much truth" from them.

Chong responded by saying in Canada, biocides are regulated by the Pesticide Risk Management Agency.

"People that work at that agency are hardworking and diligent public servants...their job is to approve chemicals for use in this country and their base all of their decisions on scientific evidence."

"The products that are approved for use in Canada are safe for the uses in which they were approved," said Chong.

Another audience member asked about the candidates' position on urban sprawl driving farmers off their land.

Chong said one of the challenges in this area is farmers in certain sectors haven't been making a decent return on their farming.

"As a result farmers have had to rely on the sale of their core asset, their land as their retirement savings plan," said Chong.

He said governments need to continue to work toward improving farm-operating incomes so farmers have more money to put aside for their retirement.

Bouteiller said he's been in favour of the Greenbelt legislation and Places to Grow "because those documents clearly state we need to stop growing beyond our borders."

Peters said it's unfortunate that many farmers look at their farms as their retirement packages.

"I think we need to look at farm incomes to make sure they're stable so you can plan for the future so these farms are not sold off to developers but at the same time we need to make sure ...there are programs in place to help up and coming farmers.



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