

# Farmers advised to plan ahead in *Between Generations*

BY DOUG HARRISON  
The Acton Tanner

Both Jan Pope and Leslie Beckman feel agriculture education should be part of the school curriculum, otherwise small family farms will become obsolete with the land becoming housing subdivisions.

Their comments come on the heels of a recent broadcast of *Between Generations*, a special TV show sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). It revolves around succession planning – transferring the farm from one generation to another.

Pope and Beckman, who live together on a rural Acton farm, had a pond on their property filmed as the host exterior of the production.

"It's a very pretty spot. The gentleman before us had trout in it. It's very picturesque," says Beckman, 53, who rode with the Eglinton Pony Club 35 years ago.

"It's amazing what can be done with scenery. Certain scenes of the pond – which took six to eight hours to shoot in snowy, rainy and



LESLIE BECKMAN



JAN POPE

windy conditions – make the host look like he's in four or five different places when in reality he only moved about three feet."

The show, produced by Kat

Mullaly of Marconi and Cheese Communications Inc. in Toronto, talks about transferring the family farm from one generation to the next.

*Between Generations* is also an in-depth resource kit that gives farm families the information needed to start the transition process and make the

best decisions.

It is said that over one-third of the producing farms in Ontario are in the position to actively consider the transfer or sale of their assets.

"Usually with farmers, plant growing is top priority and business management of farms is secondary," explains Mullaly. "A farm is a business. You have to have money coming in and have to plan for it that way."

"Planning is often left too late. We want to prevent farm loss when it's not necessary."

Sometimes, Mullaly adds, it does become necessary if two brothers who worked for their dad before planning, differ on the future plans of the land, especially if the one can't buy out the other.

Any family that is thinking about transferring the family farm from parents to sons or daughters, should watch *Between Generations* as a beginning to understanding the emotional and business issues involved, Mullaly stated.

Actonites can view a re-broadcast of the one-hour show on CKCO-TV on Feb. 11 and 18 at 10 am.

Pope, 43, says she will have to start thinking about succession planning with her two children.

"Farming is very hard work for very little profit. I don't know if a lot of people today understand hard work any more," the Toronto native says. "Are kids who are better educated today going to want to work on a farm that long to make that little? You have to really love it out here to stick with it."

The show is available on video in a kit for loan with other information materials and 30 workshops are to be held across Ontario this winter.

OMAFRA also offers families the opportunity to talk one-on-one with farm business advisory staff.



UNITING: The Acton Ministerial "Service of Unity" was held recently at the Legion. Clergy taking part included, back row from left: Pieter van Harten, Knox Presbyterian; Claude West, Evangel Pentecostal; Bob Matton, Trinity United; guest speaker Dr. Joel Nederhood and Emrys Jenkins, Churchill Community Church. In front are Shawn Brix, Bethel Christian Reformed; Mark Tiller, St. Alban's Anglican Church; Larry Jennings, Salvation Army and Tom Cullen, Acton Baptist Church. (Eve Martin photo)



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