

If you ate today, thank a farmer

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About \$1.7 billion over five years, according to Steve Peters, Minister of Agriculture and Food (AFP) who also attended the rally and was emphasizing the government's signing of the Agricultural Policy Frame Work which he touted as a long-term investment.

The AFP was signed in December of 2003 and is a five-pillar program with federal cost sharing and is designed to help those in the agri-business in terms of risk management, environment, food safety and quality and science.

But Howard Hampton, leader of the New Democratic Party was seemingly in agreement with farmers in terms of what needs to happen for Ontario farmers.

"Neither the McGuinty government in Ontario, nor the Martin government in Ottawa have a plan for agriculture," said Hampton.

Quebec and other provinces that have plans to ensure the viability and sustainability of farming, said Hampton who also claims that the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program (CAIS) is actually aimed at exiting farmers from farming.

Peters pointed out that Quebec made a decision to take the direction it did in terms of agriculture, over thirty years ago.

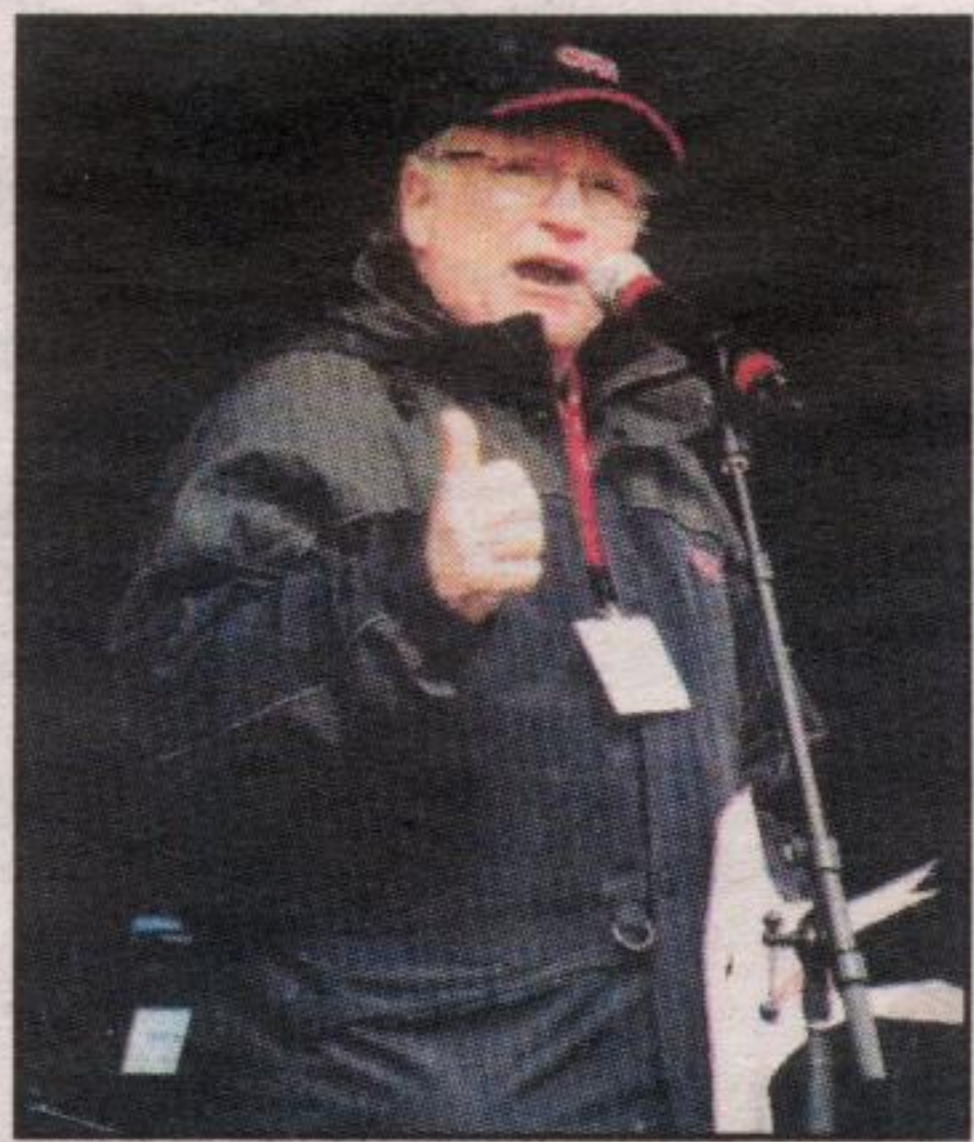
"It's very easy, once you have a program in place to maintain that," said Peters. "The challenge is to try to come up with new programs."

Farmers are not only looking for a new plan, they also want a politician to champion their industry.

Bonnett says farmers need a minister who believes in them and will stand up for what they need.

"We need a government in partnership with farmers, not fighting against them," he said.

Peters thinks that what is needed is a better deal between the federal and provin-



OFA President Ron Bonnet

cial government and took advantage of the rally to press the funding issue.

From an agricultural perspective said Peters, 27 percent of the GDP in agriculture is from Ontario and 46 percent of the agriculture; agri-food and beverage industry is from Ontario.

"That's part of my message going to Ottawa today, we need to make sure that Ontario gets it's fair share of dollars on all fronts," he said.

Perhaps one of the least expensive, and a clearly missed opportunity to smooth over some bad feelings, has been that of appreciation. Many farmers made it clear they feel taken for granted.

"We are the stewards of the land," said Troup. "Food doesn't come from supermarkets, but from the fields of farmers."

As the placards read:

If you ate today, thank a farmer.



"NEITHER THE MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT IN ONTARIO, NOR THE MARTIN GOVERNMENT IN OTTAWA HAVE A PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE," SAID HAMPTON.

The growth of Cyber-Bullying

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Both Oxley and Taylor cite the prevailing wisdom when it comes to bullying in all its forms.

It's not just a right of passage; it's not kids just being kids. Parents and society at large must buy into changing mores.

The awareness stage is where we're at in terms of society; says Taylor and once we accept that bullying is not acceptable, we'll be more open to change.

"Are we realistic in saying that we're going to stop bullying completely, I don't think so," says Taylor. "But there can be a change of perception."

For more information on cyber-bullying, try the websites www.cyberbullying.ca or www.cyber-safety.com.

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