



## Wanting 'better' from government

by Geri Kamenz, President Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Frequently I hear Premier Dalton McGuinty say he wants his government to 'do better.' As president of Ontario's largest general farm organization, I certainly want to see the government 'do better' for our farmers.

If it's going to happen, it will require a collaborative approach – elected and staff people on the government side, along with agriculture's leaders. The government has identified its priorities, and agriculture knows what it can do to help.

The province has a keen desire to protect and improve the environment, and agriculture is in a position to produce clean, renewable sources of energy, both electrical and combustible, and continue to play a significant role in water quality preservation.

Ontario's recent budget document outlined plans to increase the province's minimum wage. We applaud that plan for its social

objective, but we need to work with government officials to find ways to accomplish this without damaging agriculture's opportunities – some sectors of agriculture are labour intensive. A higher minimum wage would take \$100 million out of horticulture's already-thin margin.

Farmers are going to have to get to know all of the candidates in the October provincial election in order to be certain they elect MPPs who understand agriculture. Too often in the past, the people elected neglected to gain an understanding of agriculture and its value to the economy, or they underestimated the impacts of their decisions.

If governments are truly interested in doing a better job for agriculture, they must learn the direct connection between short and long-term investments budgeted for all aspects of agriculture and the ongoing economic struggle being experienced by farmers and

their families.

Agricultural research has long been recognized for its essential contribution to the growth and development of the industry and the province's overall economy. Over the past decade, we've watched as successive budgets have placed diminishing importance on investing in agricultural research.

More recently, Premier McGuinty hosted agri-food summits, looking for ways to stabilize and give direction to the industry. The vision statement following the second summit stated: 'Ontario's agri-food sector will be innovative, sustainable and provide opportunity for profit for all participants.'

These words suggest some involved in the process saw a need to 'do better' for the industry. A committee set up by the

minister was directed to examine everything from capturing opportunities in the bioproducts markets area to consideration of a niche market strategy and how best to implement a Verified Health Quality Strategy / branding initiative.

Knowing some of the people involved in this committee, I am confident they were seeking ways of doing things 'better' for the agri-food industry. However, I remain concerned about those involved in the decision-making process in government who aren't as committed to a successful future for agriculture.

Yes, Premier McGuinty, I believe we all can do better for agriculture, but I also believe a much stronger commitment will be essential – more from some than others.

## Jack Morris Auctions Inc. Auction Sale

2.278 Acres w/house and 2 extremely good machine sheds, Saturday, May 12, contents and tools at 10:30 a.m., property at 1:30 p.m.

at 1129 Hwy. 77, south of Staples, for Fred Wiebe  
**Property** consists of 2.278 acres with a 3 bedroom brick ranch home, full basement, nice kitchen, beautiful hardwood floors, 3 pc. bath, municipal water, new roof, windows, eaves trough and flashing, heat is oil furnace with wood supplement. Machine Shed #1: approx. 100'x38' w/20'x65' addition on south side, has cement floor, insulated workshop w/water hookup; Machine Shed #2: Quonset machine shed approx. 32'x52' w/large overhead door, cement floor and cement wall foundation; both sheds have 220 wiring.

To view this property call auctioneer.

**Terms:** 10% down day of sale, balance on or before July 13, 2007. Property sale subject to owner approval.

**Tractor, Tools, Primitives, etc:**

**Super 'H' Tractor** in excellent condition: **Tools and Shop Equipment:** 550 watt BTQ power diesel generator; twin cylinder stationary air compressor; Cannox welder; power hacksaw; wrenches; vice; grinders; rotating bolt holder; stand alone drill press; Troy Bilt rototiller; steel shelving; some lumber and plywood; misc. shop items. **Primitives:** cross cut saw; cream separator; platform scales; etc. **R.R. Jacks:** 2 large old railway jacks. **Wood Burning Stoves:** 3 good wood burning stoves. **Household:** dining room table and chairs; buffet; bedroom furniture; pictures; china and glassware; plus misc. items. Camper Trailer: 1979 Layton Skyline approx. 17' dual axle camper trailer.

**Terms on contents:** cash or personalized cheque day of sale. Owner or auctioneer not responsible for accident day of sale. Lunch available.

**Proprietor:** Fred Wiebe, 687-3520

For info call **Auctioneer:** Jack Morris, 519-687-2530 or 1-800-462-3561

www.jackmorrisauctions.com

## Jack Morris Auctions Inc. Auction Reminder

Saturday, May 5 at 10:30 a.m.

For the estate of Barb Cowan at 4 Centre St., Tilbury, one block north of Hwy. 2 and Queen St. Selling furniture, appliances and numerous other items.

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Details and photos at www.jackmorrisauctions.com

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