

FARM

NEWS

Ontario Federation of Agriculture Leeds County

Lloyd Willows of Toledo was elected president of Leeds County OFA at the recent annual meeting in Mallorytown. Other executive members include: Past president, Earl McGrady; First Vice President, Marie Jordan; Second Vice President, Hubert Ferguson; Directors, George Murray and Ed Richmond; plus Alan Dennyson, Eric Webster, Ralph Smith, Walter Humphrey, Ed Jackson, Gerd Vonhone, Doris Crowe.

Highlight of the meeting was an address by CFA President Charles Munro, a Canadian farmer known all over the world who draws on many years of service in provincial, national and international farm organizations to form a global view of agriculture. Mr. Munro sees food shortages in many parts of the world as largely a political problem -- uninformed decisions plus refusal to face the fact that if you want food you have to pay a fair price for it. Here in Canada farmers face overwhelming pressures from highly organized interest groups of all kinds -- many levels of government environmentalists, retailers, manufacturers and consumers -- but too many farmers are still loners. They still cherish the ancient biblical ideal of every farmer secure under his own vine and fig tree. A beautiful thought, but fig tree security has gone forever, says Mr. Munro: 'security now lies in organization. Here in Leeds County we can cite a couple of recent examples of what organization can do. Eric Webster reports that at the beginning of February steers sold through the Leeds OFA Marketing Service brought as high as \$400. at a unit cost of \$16. For further information on the service call James Astleford, RR 2, Addison, 345-1961.

And thanks to OFA actions, there are signs of a breakthrough in the farmer's constant battle to keep down the cost of chemical inputs.

Our new provincial president Peter Hannam met with Eugene Whelan in January to present a well-publicized brief on the hardships Ontario farmers face in their dealings with large chemical companies and their frustration at being prevented from importing cheaper U.S. supplies for their own use. Last year Atrazine, for example, retailed at \$3.00 a pound and up, but in February, after OFA's campaign in the media and vis-a-vis the federal government, one major supplier took the hint and began advertising atrazine 80w at \$1.95 in an eastern Ontario farm paper. Can we expect Bladex and Sutan to follow suit? Matters are arranged to favor the dealer and the large scale operator to the disadvantage of the individual farmer -- unless, as Charles Munro would remind us, he seeks his security in organization.

According to the latest census there are about 1,400 farms in Leeds County. Roughly a quarter of those are OFA members, but every farmer reaps the benefits of federation activities. Think what a majority membership could accomplish!

Our major March activity will be a one-day bus trip to visit the United Co-operatives Livestock Sales Agency at the Ontario Livestock yards in Toronto, with dinner provided by the Co-op and a tour of the sales facilities. For information watch your local paper, listen to Charlie Tanner on Thursdays at noon on CFMK-FM, or contact a member of the executive.

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