

FARM

NEWS

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE REPORT

January is supposed to be a dreary month, but it came up roses for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. On January 14, the United Counties council of Leeds and Grenville voted to grant \$3,000 to Leeds OFA and \$1,500 to Grenville OFA. This action was taken in response to a unanimous recommendation of the council's agricultural committee led by Earl McFadden, deputy reeve of South Crosby. The local press has portrayed Mr. McFadden as the hero of the occasion, fighting on behalf of his farm constituents and skilfully guiding his motion through a divided council, but Earl refuses to take any credit. It all belongs, says Earl, to ISM's Eric Webster, Earl McCrady and George Murray for a masterly and convincing presentation in a ten page brief to the agricultural committee.

"We just talked about some of the accomplishments of the OFA right here in Leeds County," says Eric Webster modestly. "We reminded them that their county organization had worked hard and long to bring about changes in succession duties, to set up the county ARDA program, to get farm tax rebates and to set up the Farm Labor Pool, to name just a few."

Only those involved know how much it takes in terms of time off from farm work, miles travelled, sleep lost, meetings attended, phone calls, letters, research, report writing and just plain hard thinking to bring about even minor changes and keep the organization running, never mind the major achievements highlighted in the OFA brief. Even modest financial support for these activities has been a constant problem. Although legislation exists to allow local councils to use tax revenues in support of agricultural associations, this practice had not been followed in recent years. There will be an opportunity to thank our hardworking grants committee at the annual meeting and banquet at Mallorytown on February 4.

Or perhaps other ISMs would like to follow their example and do something for the organization. One of the most useful and fascinating sessions of the recent provincial convention in Hamilton took the form of a morning workshop where ISMs from all over Ontario brainstormed the ways in which an individual member or county organization could have some impact on farm policies. The discussion was led off by a veteran of the People OR Planes committee which fought so long and successfully to save Pickering area farmland. Among an almost bewildering variety of suggestions, these ideas stood out: first of all, strengthen and revitalize your organization at the grass roots, seek out and welcome support from parts of the community you hadn't thought of approaching before, persuade non-farmers that you share common interests, make the whole family part of your organization and let them help with the work, keep up a steady flow of letters

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to the media, don't be afraid to make your objections known to politicians who are acting against farm interests and don't forget to compliment and strengthen your friends.

The provincial organization has already acted on one of these suggestions by appointing Grace Stalker and Irene Spence as our representatives on a four person producer/consumer committee which is intended to share concerns, exchange information and opinions and generally head off foolish misunderstandings before they become mutually harmful controversies.

What can the individual member here in Leeds contribute? Director Ed Richmond, who is already following this advice,