

Rarely has Valentine's Day been so sweet!

March 2003 Column, Country Life in B.C.

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On February 14th, in Canada's cold and blustery capital, I had the pleasure – on your behalf - of presenting to all five federal political parties the resolutions of 116 farm organizations calling for the removal of water from the NAFTA.

Kicked off by a 9:30 a.m. press conference in the Centre Block of Parliament Hill, I then met with and briefed Solicitor General Wayne Easter; Opposition House Leader and Canadian Alliance MP John Reynolds (together with MPs Philip Mayfield, Cariboo Chilcotin and Howard Hilstrom, Selkirk-Interlake), the special assistant/policy analyst to Progressive Conservative Party of Canada Leader Joe Clark and the senior policy advisor to MP Paul Martin. I sent copies of the Resolutions under personal covering letters to Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe and NDP leader Jack Layton.

I also met with and briefed Jennifer Fellows of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Bruce Campbell, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The message to all five political parties was the same:

1. The Farmers Resolution to Exempt Water from the NAFTA is a one-year campaign that will roll out the BC communications approach to the rest of Canada (letter from a local farmer together with the resolution, video and information package sent to all farm organizations in the province).
2. This fall – likely with the organizational support of local women's and farmers' institutes – I will do a cross Canada speaking tour to allow farmers in each province the opportunity to hear this issue for themselves and answer any questions they may have.
3. Towards the end of the year, support from the public will be elicited in a very demonstrable way. (Thanks to Lillooet's Aggie Malm, I was able to give those with whom I met in Ottawa an excellent demonstration of the community power of this initiative: in just 10 days, resolutions were gathered from more than 12 local government and community groups in Lillooet – including the Regional District, local churches and the medical clinic!)
4. Next Valentines Day, I will bring back to Ottawa the Resolutions of thousands of farm groups across Canada. The united voice of Canada's Farmers. Backed up by the clear and unequivocal support of the Canadian public.

From all appearances, international support for the Farmers Resolution to Exempt Water from the NAFTA will also be strong. On February 13th, at their AGM in Nuremberg, Bavaria, the 100,000+ member Organic Farmers European Network resolved to "stand behind Canada's Farmers" in support of the Farmers' Resolution to exempt water from the NAFTA. Similar support has also come in from farm groups in Argentina and the US.

The Farmers' Resolution to Exempt Water from the NAFTA is about empowerment and evoking change. It is about identifying farmers as local heroes within our communities and in the eyes of our young people. It is about respect for stewardship. It is about the power of voice. It is about drawing a line in the sand and defending Canadian sovereignty over our water resources. It is about democracy.

Whether you love the NAFTA or hate the NAFTA, whether you think water exports are a good or bad idea, water must be exempt from the NAFTA. Decisions concerning the fate of Canada's water resources must remain vested with Canadian communities. On that we all agree. Isn't it amazing how easy it is to stand together and make that point?

If your farm group hasn't yet passed the Resolution, do so. If you would like me to come to speak to your farm group, ask. This is the beginning of real change. Be a part of it! 604.947.2893
holm@farmertofarmer.ca, www.farmertofarmer.ca (click on "Our first outcome: water.")

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CANADIAN FARMER GROUPS THAT HAVE PASSED THE FARMER'S RESOLUTION (FEB 15, 2003)

1. Agricultural Producers Assn of New Brunswick
2. Alberni Farmers' Institute, BC
3. Alberta Milk Producers Society
4. Armstrong Women's Institute, BC
5. Armstrong, Vernon, Lumby Dist. 4-H Council, BC
6. Associated Ginseng Growers of BC
7. Ayrshire Breeders Club of British Columbia
8. B.C. Potato and Vegetable Growers Assoc.
9. B.C. Ayrshire Club
10. B.C. Branch, Holstein Association of Canada
11. B.C. Fruit Growers' Association
12. B.C. Goat Milk Producers, BC
13. B.C. Herb Growers
14. B.C. Jersey Breeders Association
15. B.C. Sheep Breeders Cooperative
16. B.C. Sheep Breeders Federation
17. B.C. Turkey Association
18. Baldonnel Women's Institute, BC
19. BC Farm Women's Organization
20. Beresford Women's Instit.-Kamloops Dist, BC
21. Big and Beaver Lake Livestock Ass'n, BC
22. Bon-Accord Women's Institute, BC
23. Brackendale Farmers Institute, BC
24. Bridge Lake Fair Association, BC
25. Bridge Lake Livestock Association, BC
26. British Columbia Women's Institute
27. Canadian Federation of Agriculture
28. Canadian Maine Anjou Association
29. Canadian Organic Growers
30. Canim Lake Livestock Association, BC
31. Cariboo Sheep breeders' Association, BC
32. Chilcotin Stockmans Association, BC
33. Coldstream Women's Institute, BC
34. Comox Valley Farmers' Institute, BC
35. Cowichan Agric. Soc. and Farmers Inst., BC
36. Creston Valley Beef Growers Association, BC
37. Creston Valley Dairymen's Association, BC
38. Creston Valley Grain Growers Association, BC
39. Dairy Farmers of Canada
40. Dairy Farmers of Ontario
41. Dairy Producers of Renfrew County, Ont.
42. Darfield Irrigation District, BC

43. Deep Creek Farmers' Institute, BC
44. Delta Farmers' Institute, BC
45. District "A" Farmers' Institute, BC
46. District "C" Farmers' Institute, BC
47. Driftwood Women's Institute, B.C.
48. Durham East Junior Farmers, Ontario
49. Durham Region Milk Committee, Ontario
50. F.A.R.M. Community Council, BC
51. Farmington Farmerettes, BC
52. Forest Grove Farmers' Institute, BC
53. Forest Grove Women's Institute, BC
54. Fort St John Seed Cleaning Cooperative, BC
55. Fraser Valley Cole Crop Growers Ass'n, BC
56. Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Assoc., BC
57. Fraser Valley Strawberry Growers Ass'n, BC
58. Gardom Lake Women's Institute, BC
59. Glenwood Women's Institute, BC
60. Groundbirch Women's Institute, BC
61. Heritage Dairy Farmers' Association, BC
62. Horsefly Women's Institute, BC
63. Interlakes Cattlebelles, BC
64. Island Farmers Alliance, BC
65. Islands Farmers' Institute, BC
66. Islands Organic Producers Association, BC
67. Kersley Farmers' Institute, BC
68. Kiwi Fruit Association of BC
69. Lakeview Women's Institute, BC
70. Lanark Dairy Producers, Ontario
71. Landry Women's Institute, BC
72. Langford Women's Institute, BC
73. Langley 4-H Council, BC
74. Little Fort Women's Institute, BC
75. Little Shuswap Women's Institute, BC
76. Lillooet Livestock Association, BC
77. Lillooet-Lytton Farmers Group, BC
78. Lone Butte Farmers Inst. & Livestock Ass'n., BC
79. Lynn Creek Women's Institute, BC
80. Mainland Dairywomen's Association, BC
81. Manitoba Milk Producers
82. McBride Farmers' Institute, BC
83. Mud River Beaverly Farmers Institute, BC
84. Nanaimo-Cedar Farmers' Institute, BC
85. National Farmers Union, Local 102 (PEI)
86. Nicola Valley Women's Institute, B.C.
87. Nor' Pioneers Women's Institute, BC
88. North Okanagan Organic Association, BC
89. North Pine Farmers' institute, BC
90. Northside Women's Institute, Vanderhoof, BC
91. Okanagan-Kootenay Cherry Growers Assoc., BC
92. One Island Livestock Association, BC
93. Organic Producers Assn. - Cawston Keremeos BC
94. Overlander Women's Institute, BC
95. Oxford Dairy Producers Committee, Ont.
96. Parkland-Sweetwater Farmers' Institute, BC
97. Pavilion-Upper Hat Creek Women's Institute, BC
98. Peace River Dairywomen's Association, BC

99. Peace River District Women's Institute, BC
100. Pemberton Women's Institute, BC
101. Peninsula Agricultural Commission, BC
102. Pitt Meadows Farmers Institute, BC
103. Powell River & Dist. Women's Institute, BC
104. Prince Edward Dairy Producer Committee, PEI
105. Prince Edward Island Milk Marketing Bd, PEI
106. Prince George Farmers' Institute, BC
107. Punchaw Cattleman's Association, BC
108. Quick Women's Institute, BC
109. Regroupement pour le jardinage ecologique, PQ
110. Reid Lake Farmers' Institute, BC
111. Rock Creek Farmers' Institute, BC
112. Rock Creek Women's Institute, BC
113. Rose Hill Farmers' Institute, BC
114. Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute, BC
115. Shuswap Thompson Organic Prod. Assoc., BC
116. Similkameen Okanagan Organic Prod. Assoc, BC
117. Sinkut Women's Institute, BC
118. Slocan Valley Women's Institute
119. Smithers Farmers' Institute, BC
120. South Coastal Dairy Education Association, BC
121. Stormont Dairy Producers Committee, Ont.
122. Surrey Farmers' Institute, BC
123. TaTa Creek Farmers Institute, BC
124. Tatalrose Farmers' Institute, BC
125. Triangle Women's Institute, BC
126. Vinsulla Women's Institute, BC

INTERNATIONAL FARM GROUPS THAT HAVE PASSED THE FARMERS' RESOLUTION

1. El Grupo de Productores Organicos Certificada dos Huerta Vida, Argentina
2. North East Organic Farming Assn of New York, USA
3. Organic Farmers European Network (AGM, Nuremberg, Bavaria Feb 13, 2003)

AFFILIATED GROUPS IN SUPPORT OF THE FARMERS' RESOLUTION

1. Assoc. cooperative d'economie familiale de l'Estrie PQ
2. Coalition Eau Secours, Quebec
3. ConcertAction Femmes Estrie, PQ
4. District of Lillooet, BC
5. Farm Folk City Folk, BC
6. Fountainview Farms, BC
7. J.K Agro Industries Inc.
8. Kamloops Food Policy Council, BC
9. Lillooet Fall Fair Association, BC
10. Lillooet Farmer's Market Society, BC
11. Lillooet Friendship Society, BC
12. Lillooet Medical Clinic, BC
13. Lillooet Naturalist Society, BC
14. New Brunswick Partners in Agriculture
15. Peace Valley Environmental Association, BC
16. Public Citizen, Washington, DC
17. Ravenwood Farms, BC
18. Rimby and District Clean Air People, Alberta
19. Soil and Water Conservation Soc.-BC Chapter
20. St John Baptist Catholic Church, Lillooet, BC
21. New Beginnings Community Society Lillooet BC

22. United Church Women, St Andrew's Ch, Lillooet BC