

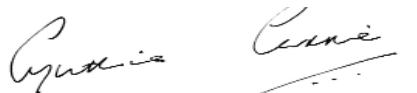
National Farm Products Council

FOCUS Newsletter

Holiday Message

As 2003 comes to an end, the members and staff of the National Farm Products Council would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our readers and industry partners, their staff and families, a happy and joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

It has been a pleasure to work with you in the past year and we look forward to a productive and exciting New Year.



Cynthia Currie
Chairperson

New Minister of Agriculture Appointed

Mr. Robert Speller (Haldimand - Norfolk - Brant) has been named Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. On hearing of his appointment, Council Chair Cynthia Currie said, "Personally, I am extremely pleased with Prime Minister Martin's decision to appoint Bob Speller as the new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. I look forward to working with the new Minister, whom I have known for many years." She added, "His experience will be a tremendous asset as he works with the Canadian agri-food industry."

Minister Speller was first elected to the House of Commons in 1988. Most recently, he served as a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and a member of the sub-Committee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investment. He served as Chair of the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Future Opportunities in Farming, Chair of the Liberal Rural Caucus, and Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. Mr. Speller was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, and held membership in the Parliamentary Steel Caucus and Joint Inter-Parliamentary Council.

In addition, the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Mark Eyking as the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary (Agri-food) and Mr. Georges Farrah was appointed the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary (Rural Development).

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COMMENTS or QUESTIONS

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Council Business

Chair Attends Meeting with Prime Minister

On Monday, December 15, Council Chair Cynthia Currie was among several hundred public service executives who attended a meeting with Prime Minister Martin. On returning from the meeting, Mrs. Currie informed staff, "These are exciting times – the new administration is keen to make a difference in the way that Canada functions. I am confident that this new approach will be of benefit to us all and to Canada as the government repositions itself on a variety of fronts."

The Prime Minister is committed to changing the way government works, to have more outreach to the provinces and cities and to work towards narrowing or eliminating the disparities amongst provinces and cities across Canada. Amongst other priorities, he intends to reassess, with a view to revamping, the role Canada plays on the international scene, so that we are a more confident sovereign country. Another important priority for the Prime Minister will be resolving some of the issues we have had for many years in the First Nations communities.

The Prime Minister spoke about the role of Parliamentary Secretaries, which in his administration will be different from previous administrations. Parliamentary Secretaries will be much more active, and much more involved with departments and agencies.

Council Met December 16 and 17, 2003

The Council had a busy schedule during its two-day meeting of December 16 and 17, 2003. Presentations were received from three of the four poultry and egg marketing agencies. The Canadian Beef Promotion and Research Agency was also present, providing Council with a progress report and update on its activities. Council also met with representatives of the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council and the Further Poultry Processors Association of Canada, and took part in an informative dialogue on activities and developments in the poultry and egg sector.

Due to a complaint having been received against decisions taken by CEMA, Council was unable to meet with the CEMA Executive at this time. The complaint relates to a request by this agency for the prior approval of its quota and levies orders.

CBHEMA

During this week's meeting, Council prior-approved the Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency's 2004 preliminary allocation to the signatory provinces of 624,089,286 broiler hatching eggs. This allocation is effective during the period beginning on January 1, 2004 and ending on December 31, 2004.

CEMA

Saskatchewan Signatories Complaint

On December 12 the Council received a letter from the three Saskatchewan signatories to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Agreement for Eggs requesting that the Council refuse to prior-approve the Agency's 2004 Quota Order and Levies Orders.

At their December 16 meeting the Council considered the Saskatchewan signatories request and has decided to hold a hearing on the Saskatchewan complaint. Once the parties of the complaint have been consulted a date for the complaint hearing will be set.

British Columbia Signatories Complaint

On December 17 Council received a letter from the three signatories to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Agreement for Eggs filing a complaint on CEMA's 2004 Quota Order. At time of publication Council had not considered the merits of the complaint.

CFC

Council prior-approved an amendment to the Canadian Chicken Marketing Levies Order by extending the expiry date of the Order to December 31, 2004. The levy rate prior-approved by Council is a combination of the CFC levy of 0.44 cents/kg and the respective provincial marketing board portions. Effective January 1, 2004, the total levies imposed on producers remain unchanged from 2003.

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CTMA

Council prior-approved the extension of the Canada Turkey Marketing Levies Order's expiry date to December 31, 2004 and amended provincial levy rates. The levy rate that is prior-approved by Council is a combination of the CTMA's levy of 1.6 cents/kg (live weight) and the respective provincial marketing board portion. Effective January 1, 2004, the provinces of B.C., N.S., and N.B. will change the provincial portion of the total levy.

Staff Brief Chinese Delegation

On November 19, 2003, NFPC hosted an information session for a visiting delegation from China. The 17-member group was made up of officials from China's national and provincial governments, academics and business people. Their visit to Canada was a fact-finding mission to better understand the Canadian poultry, dairy and livestock sectors, and their supporting legislative and regulatory frameworks, programs and organizations. While in Canada the delegation had meetings with Chicken Farmers of Ontario, which organized tours of a broiler farm and a chicken processing plant for the visitors.

In thanking the NFPC for its presentation, Mission Leader Mr. Liu Yongtai expressed his appreciation for the welcome his group had received in Canada and for the information provided. He said that the Chinese government is investigating various production models that could be adapted to assist his country in further developing their agricultural industry.

Hearing Scheduled

Council has scheduled a hearing for March 9, 2004, based on a complaint filed by the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council (CPEPC), regarding Chicken Farmers of Canada's (CFC) decision to reduce the co-efficient for leg quarters under its Market Development Program. In July, CFC decided to reduce its co-efficient for leg quarters under the Market Development Program. Its rationale for this decision was that the reduced co-efficient would better represent the reality of yields in today's market, compared to

1997 when the Program began. CPEPC feels that the reduction in the co-efficient would be damaging to exporters and have a negative impact on fresh domestic sales.

Subsequently, CPEPC contacted Council requesting that a hearing be held. At Council's request, CFC and CPEPC met but they were unable to resolve their differences. However, they did agree on a delay in the implementation of the new co-efficient in order to allow both sides to review the impact of the decision, and to allow time for a hearing to be held if required. The implementation of the change is now scheduled for Period A-60 (beginning August 1, 2004). CFC has also decided to re-evaluate the issue and to hear all stakeholders' views at a Market Development Committee meeting, to be held in January 2004.

Modern Comptrollership

The implementation of Modern Comptrollership practices has begun at the National Farm Products Council. The federal government has placed a high priority on the modernization of management practices in departments and agencies. Modern Comptrollership brings together all elements of a management framework including strategic leadership, sound business planning, risk management, shared ethics and values, motivated people, integrated performance information, clear accountability and rigorous stewardship. All of these are key to modernizing management practices.

Council started with a capacity assessment study of Council's internal business processes. Based on the resulting report and its findings, a series of projects were identified to be carried out over the next three years. These will help Council to implement policies and processes that support Council's 2003-2006 Strategic Plan in the area of improved effectiveness and integrity of administration.

New Council Staff

Kevin McBain joined Council staff, as a Commodity Advisor, on December 1, 2003. Kevin comes to Council from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada where he has worked for the last eight years, most recently as Senior Portfolio Advisor.

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He was born and raised on a chicken farm north of Quebec City. Kevin's arrival is part of Council's active succession planning.

Portfolio Update

Minister Vanclief Announces Retirement

Minister Lyle Vanclief announced his intention to retire from federal politics, having served six and a half rewarding years as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and 15 years as the Member of Parliament for Prince Edward-Hastings. During his press conference on December 11, 2003, he stated that he will be staying on as MP for his riding until the next federal election, expected in the Spring of 2004.

On hearing of his retirement, Council Chair Cynthia Currie said, "I have known and worked personally with the Minister for many years, dating back to his time in Opposition. He is a man of integrity who gave a great deal to Canadian agriculture." She continued, "I can attest to the fact that he worked extremely hard to push the case for Canadian agriculture on many different fronts."

Canadian Agricultural Policy Research Institute Slated For Development

On December 5, 2003, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief announced the formation of the Canadian Agricultural Policy Research Institute, a new arm's length organization that will advise government and participate as an independent voice in the ongoing policy debate.

The policy institute will be made up of top recruits from a broad cross-section of Canadians, including the agriculture industry and the academic community. It will focus on big picture policy

issues and a clear vision for the agriculture and agri-food sector.

The institute's mandate will be to discuss alternative solutions to emerging issues before they become problems, to provide balanced views on difficult issues, and to provide advice and a third voice – apart from industry and government – when policy decisions are made.

The institute will be a forum to bring research results and expertise from academia, industry and other research organizations into the policy debate. As part of this work, the institute will synthesize existing policy research, identify gaps in knowledge, define research priorities and commission key research projects.

Agency Business

CTMA 2004 Generic Marketing Campaign

The CTMA is working with the advertising agency Ambrose Carr Linton Carroll Inc. (ACLCL) on a revamped 2004 marketing campaign. ACLCL has recommended a national TV and print campaign. Advertising will be concentrated in the non-peak period for turkey demand: post-Christmas (February) through pre-Thanksgiving (September).

The primary medium will be TV, with 15-second commercials airing on network and specialty channels, beginning in February 2004. The secondary medium will be print, starting in April 2004. New in the campaign will be the use of animated characters suggesting that turkey is a great substitute for chicken, beef and pork. CTMA's current website, www.turkeytuesday.ca will be replaced by www.turkeyfordinner.ca, placing more emphasis on the inclusion of turkey on the menu on an everyday basis, year-round.

Upcoming meetings

Jan. 28-29	Chicken Farmers of Canada	(Ottawa)
Feb. 4-5	Canadian Egg Marketing Agency	(Ottawa)
Feb. 9-11	Canadian Poultry & Egg Processors Council	(Ottawa)