

Nuffield Notes

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Nuffield



Canada 

Canada Hosts International Conference

The second annual international new scholars' conference was hosted by Canada in March 2007 in Calgary Alberta. Present were 40 scholars from 7 different countries as well as 3 country chairmen, 2 executive directors, an Eisenhower scholar from the USA, several journalists and some Canadian organizers.

There were three days of bus tours to various Calgary and area businesses with the group touring in two buses. Hence there were 6 to 8 business establishments visited each day. These ranged from your typical feed lot operations and meat packers, to bakers, brewers, innovators in marketing and even a Hutterite Colony. At the end of each of these days there was a debriefing so that each group could clue into what the other group had been involved in that day. One day was devoted to speakers coming in and covering topics like biofuels, the Calgary Stampede, and genomes. Our own Rod Bradshaw set the tone on the first day with his look into the future of agriculture 10 years down the road. There was a free day where most went skiing in Banff, some snowmobiling in Golden and others just toured Banff buying presents for their wives and families at home.

One day there was a light snow falling with a touch of melting from the warm sun and an unnamed Canadian started an international snowball fight, which fortunately did not turn into an incident of any kind. There were the usual high jinx from the feisty scholars, but come the Friday night banquet everybody realized that the end of a good thing was at hand, and each country spontaneously came up to the podium with some words of thanks. Thanks to Marilyn Sharp for being the main organizer along with a consulting company from Calgary. It was an event worth attending. The next conference is in Australia at the end of February 2008.



Wally Doerksen,(left) Marilyn Sharp and Rod Bradshaw at the conference in Calgary

Board Approves Two New Scholars

Congratulations to the two new scholars who have become part of Nuffield Canada. Greg Braun, is a dairy farmer from Manitoba. He is interested in studying *Holistic Livestock Healthcare*. He and his father operate a 700 cow dairy with a 50 stall rotary parlor and a freestall canvas barn. They rotational graze 1000 dry cows each summer and are possibly looking at organic production.

Steve Laroque is from Three Hills, Alberta. He owns and operates Beyond Agronomy Inc., which provides innovative crop advice. He publishes a weekly crop production and market newsletter. He wants to study *the art and science of precision wheat, barley and canola production*. He became aware of Nuffield through reading Les Kletke's book, "Riding the Bus with Chickens".



Harold Perry at the Louvre

Scholars on Tour

Harold Perry, Canada's 2006 Scholar traveled with a group of Aussies and Kiwis, who were studying a diverse range of topics. The group included Andrew Bouffler - *sheep genetics*;
John Gladigau – *Corporate farming*;
Harold Perry – *Soil biology*;
Ronald Thompson – *How to use the diminishing workforce more effectively*;
Bruce Thompson – *Continuous cropping systems*;
Damien Smart – *H²O use efficiency, prescription livestock feeding, biological farming*;
Les keeper NZ – *Dairy value added consumer business*,
Jane Mitchell NZ *Farm within increasing environmental pressures*;
Cathy Harvey – *Scientifically quantify and qualify biological farming practices*;
Helen Dalton – *Economical and ecological importance of native vegetation and rice*;
David Jockinke – *Farmers influence on industry and government*.

Their travels took them to Brazil, as well as to France and England. Harold reports “The farmers we spoke to said it would be difficult to farm without subsidies. Without subsidies, the costs would force farmers into different crops or farming practices.”

He also said that of the financially successful farms throughout the tour there seemed to be a common theme. It was to be involved from producer to processor to sales or just be involved beyond the farm gate. They saw five to six success stories with farms developing markets beyond their sales for raw products.

The trip included plenty of culture, business, and pleasure.

Inbound Scholars Stop in New Brunswick

For the Canadian leg of the Global Focus Program, six Australians and Kiwi made their first stop in New Brunswick. At Coburn Farms, owner David Coburn highlighted the need to have his own feed mill facilities for his egg business to control input costs. He operates a vessel composting system for chicken manure, which allows him to address disposal issues, odour abatement and generate a revenue source from compost.

Next was a visit to Kevin Floyd's potato farm where he includes corn as rotational crop in response to the high demand for ethanol feed stock.

The participants had a tour of the McCain Foods French Fry factory where over 95% of the production is for MacDonalds in the US.

At the Potato Museum, the vice chair for the National Farm Products Council gave an overview of supply management for Canada. Gordon Hunters active role in the WTO negotiations provided insight into Canada's continuing support for domestic food production.

A visit to Kevin Antworth's beef feedlot addressed adaptation following BSE. He changed his production focus to “Naturally raised beef”. He has developed 4 streams to market his cattle, with the most profitable being a branded Angus beef destined for the US.

Before leaving for Prince Edward Island the group stopped at Eastern Greenway Oil, the first farmer owned Biodiesel plant in Canada. Ray Carmichael, business manager, reviewed how biodiesel on its own is not profitable, and how the company has diversified into higher value added products like food grade lubricants, fuel additives and bio fumigants. www.greenwayoil.ca



Visitors walk across the "Longest Covered Bridge"

Ontario Scholars Gather at Brian and Jane Ellsworths



Left to Right: Jim Clarke, Joyce Sprowl, Meredith Robb, Carolyn Fuerth, Mac Sprowl, Ann Gordon, Jack Rigby, Ruth Clarke, Jim Rickard, Donna Rigby, Cam Gordon, Brian Ellsworth and behind the lens Jane Ellsworth

The secluded backyard at the Mississauga home of Brian and Jane Ellsworth was a ideal gathering place for a summer barbeque. The group covered a 50-year span of becoming scholars, with Mac being awarded his in 1953. Over drinks and fine food, the group reminisced their travels and tackled diverse farm issues. They shared family stories, talked farm politics and planned their trips to the AGM in Cuba. All had a good time.

Vissers Host Western Summer Picnic

Doug and Evelyn Visser', on the banks of the North Saskatchewan was a perfect setting for an afternoon of touring, chatting and admiring the forest which they use for trail rides for schools. Last fall at the AGM we saw the marketing part of Doug's operation and now we saw the growing part. Doug and Evelyn have a daughter who is involved in the farming operation. She also looks after City Farm, which involves people coming out to the farm to learn about farming and see animals and vegetables first hand. Of course, there are games and music and we saw people having just a fine time. What a good way to promote the farming community. In addition, it was interesting to note the many changes on the farm since I was last there some ten years ago. I remember Doug struggling to think which way he should go with his operation and it is good to see how things are turning out. Scholars present were: Joe Linnell, Norm Janssen, Ian McPhadden, Rod Bradshaw, Neil Reed, Doug and myself. – Submitted by Wally Doerksen

⊃ Come to Ireland ⊃

For the 2008 Nuffield International Conference

- * Pre-conference tour- Belfast June 5-8
- * Conference June 19-13 Dublin Kilkenny
- * Post Conference - SW Ireland June 14-17
- * June 19 – You're invited to Scotland

More details on website by mid-Nov
www.nuffield.ie

Nuffield Canada Annual General Meeting To be held in San Antonio Havana Cuba Saturday Feb 16 2008

Join scholars from across Canada for the complete conference Feb 10th – 17th

Learn about business experiences of Canadian farmers in Cuba, have interesting farm tours, shop in the market and escape the cold weather!

Cost is \$50 per day including meals and accommodation
Contact John Lohr jellycupboard@ns.sympatico.ca

President's Message

My first "official" job as chairman of Nuffield Canada was to attend the gathering of the new scholars in Calgary. It was nice to sit in the background and watch the planners and the organizers at their busy best. My congratulations to Marilyn for running a "tight ship" at the conference. It was so tight in fact that the chairman of Nuffield Canada missed the first tour bus out on Sunday morning. This was much to the consternation of my Australian room mate who thought he was safe in the chairman's company. But "smooth" Harold Perry came to the rescue and got us a ride with his friends to the grounds at Spruce Meadows.

It was really nice to see first hand the enthusiasm and energy of this year's crop of scholars. It gets to be a little contagious and I hope it shows in the energy that I apply in the position of chair this year. It was also good to talk to the chairs of Australia and England and to know they are in our corner and wishing our organization well.

Marilyn, Rod and I also had a conversation with the president of the firm that organized the Calgary conference to see what her company would be able to do for us and at what price. The 2 – 3 year plan that she produced had a price tag that eludes us at the present but it is possible that we may be able to cherry pick a few of the more prominent things at an affordable cost. Once I have a quote I will pass it on to the board of directors to act on.

There seems to be a positive buzz in the air about our Cuba tour and AGM. I certainly feel that way and it helps when scholars from the UK are coming to join us there. Both Alan Beckett, and the British chair, Campbell Tweed have indicated that they are joining us. There was a UK group who were planning their own tour that would have overlapped with ours, but it got cancelled.

We have two scholars approved by the board of directors for next year, which is one short of our target, but double our last year's output. I know one of the scholars personally, as I have taken numerous Nuffield scholars to his place over the last 5 or 6 years, and am excited about the potential of young Canadian farmers with vision for the future joining our ranks. Perhaps we should target for 4 scholars for next year to make up for the one we did not get this year. Remember the slogan I quoted in the last newsletter..... *We are the people we have been waiting for!*

Wally Doerksen

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Membership Form

Return with \$100 cheque payable to **Nuffield Canada** for your 2008 membership
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