

Nuffield Notes

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Canada 

Plenty of Ag in Wintery Winnipeg

The annual gathering of the Canadian Nuffield Scholars has become a continuation of the educational experience. Through tours, presentations, and the sharing of experiences, the participants of the conference in Winnipeg continued on their journey of life long learning.

The visit to Richardson nutraceuticals gave people the opportunity to visit food labs used for human research and for the brave (Ian) to get their body mass index calculated. In parts of the center, electronic tongues and noses were used to do food preference evaluations while in others sections they did grain grinding and component extractions. They are working on extracting valuable components from ethanol grain before it is fermented.



Scholars tour Richardson Nutraceuticals

The sun shone brightly as we drove over the Red River Floodway Bridge and through the vast open stretches of the flood plain toward Steinbach. While water is a blessing when it nurtures the crop, it can become such a power of nature when it is in an over abundance.

In the Steinbach area we visited scholar Greg Braun's dairy and rotary milking parlour, as well as discussing issues around splitting the family farm. He proudly showed his herd of Fleckvieh, which he feels equal



Helping Ruth dress!

Holsteins in milk productions and they get the added value of beef.

After suiting up, we were also able to see the inside of Wally's cousin Orville Doerksen's state of the art layer facility. The sharing of a meal and conversation with local farmers was the icing on the day.

Day two offered a choice of activities. One group headed for MacDon, where they were given a behind the scenes look at the production of harvesting

equipment. Products include self-propelled windrowers, draper-style combine headers and combine pick-up headers. Group two went to a cooking demonstration hosted by Karen Armstrong of Manitoba Chicken Producers. As well learning new food preparation and presentation skill, they got to enjoy eating each dish after it was prepared.

The afternoon was spent making biofuels with Rex Newkirk of CIGI. The group was divided into teams and tried their hand at making fuel from a variety of oils, and then discussed the results.

Thanks to the hard work done by Wally and Ruth Doerksen, we all learned that there was plenty to see and learn about agriculture in Winnipeg in the winter!



Rex (l) giving tips to Mark Wales and John Lohr while Art Petkau and Joe Linell look on



2009 Board of Directors

Back - Barb Stephanyshyn-Cote, Ian McPhaden, Harold Perry, Barry Cudmore, Grant Ketchsen, Mark Wales. Fr - John Lohr, Wally Doerksen, Rod Bradshaw, Brent Wright

Annual General Meeting Report

Trip reports were presented on the Scholars Conference in Australia and the triennial meeting in Ireland. The triennial conference will be held in Adelaide and Perth in 2011 and in Eastern Canada in 2014. Ontario scholars reported on the Global Focus tour held there in March 08. Nova Scotia will host the tour in March 2009 and Manitoba in June 2009. Next year's AGM will be held in Ontario. Wally Doerksen stepped down as president but offered his services to continue on with the board as fundraiser. Carolyn Fuerth agreed to continue with the newsletter. New scholar Karen Daynard volunteered to assist with communication strategies. The membership authorized purchasing advertorials. (Minutes of

the annual meeting are available from the office.) Reports and presentations were received from the two completed scholarships by Harold Perry and Eric Ritchie. Karen Daynard was presented with her initial payment. Following the formal meeting, the group shared a great meal with good friends and celebrated Wally's birthday! The after dinner speaker was fellow scholar Barb Stephanyshyn-Cote. With pictures and humorous antidotes she told of her families adventures of packing up and moving to Mexico and Argentina for six months. Leaving the farm and friends behind, they learned a new language, experienced a new culture, developed new skills and built a strong family relationship.

A Current Scholar's View

By Greg Braun 2007



My Nuffield experience began over a year ago. After being awarded the scholarship, I was able to get Cover All building systems, Big Bear Genetics, Bavarian Fleckvieh, and Alltech to agree to sponsor my study. My official topic is Holistic Livestock

Healthcare, but I have found it better to keep a broad, open minded interest in everything as I travel. Everywhere I have visited has had something of value to teach me about agriculture.

In December 07 I attended the Acres USA eco farming conference in Louisville Kentucky. This was a great start to my travels and met some great people involved with organic/biological agriculture. The contemporary scholars conference in Melbourne, was a fantastic meeting, as I got to see all the great, optimistic, intelligent, forward looking people involved in Nuffield. After the meeting I stayed another week in Australia to do some farm touring on my own.

I joined eight Aussies and two Kiwis on the June Global Focus Program. We toured New Zealand, Ireland, France, USA, China and most of the group went on to the Philippines. It really was one of the best experiences of my life, exhausting, but stimulating, educational, eye opening, and fun. Many life long friendships were formed, and much discussion was had, that will hopefully continue as well.

Some of the highlights of the Global Focus Program where seeing the dairy expansion in New Zealand, meeting so many scholars at conference in Ireland, the war memorials in France, the tremendous hospitality of our hosts in the USA, and the incredible production potential and market changes of China. China was especially a highlight for me as I felt my eyes were opened and many prejudices removed or at least questioned.

In early September 08, I was back in the USA again for the Alltech Global Dairy 500 conference. This event brought dairy producers and industry people from all corners of the world together to share ideas on animal health and compare production systems..

My Nuffield experience so far has been a tremendous adventure, and learning opportunity, and I am especially grateful for the wonderful people I have met. There is more travel to come as time and budget allow, and I can see how this can turn into a lifelong exchange within and beyond the Nuffield network.

Healthy Soils Producing Healthier Crops for a Healthier Population

By Harold Perry 2006 Nuffield Scholar,

The aim of my study is to understand how to create healthy soils. Balancing the chemical, physical, and biological properties of soil is important. Having one balanced while another is imbalanced will not produce the desired results. Physical properties including air, water, soil particle, and tillage management need to be correct. Chemically, the nutrients need to be in proper ratios to one another to optimize nutrient availability and correct other aspects of the soil. Biologically, when the chemical and physical properties are in line, the soil organisms can diversify and grow in balanced ratios to optimize nutrient cycling in the soil. When these properties are in balance, nitrogen fixing organisms and soil carbon sequestration (soil organic matter) are optimized reducing input costs. Remaining nutrients must be added as the chemical balance of the soil requires them. Through photosynthesis, the plant provides energy to the symbiotic organisms in the soil. The more energy the plant supplies to the soil organisms, the more nutrients these organisms make available to the plant, thereby increasing the soil organic matter. Soil organic matter increases the field moisture and nutrient holding capacities, which means less nutrient leaching and soil erosion. Soil porosity will increase with proper soil management, allowing roots to penetrate further and break up compaction and hard pan layers. When a healthy soil is accomplished, minerals and nutrients are more easily transported throughout the plant, achieving a more nutrient dense food. A diet of nutrient dense food creates an environment for improved metabolic functioning, allowing the body's nutrient requirements to be fulfilled with less food.

With special thanks to Nuffield Canada



President Wally (L) congratulating Harold Perry



President Wally recognizing Eric Ritchie

Alternative Energy Crops Grown in Rotation to Potato

By Eric Ritchie 2006 Nuffield Scholar

My Nuffield study has evolved into exploring the alternative energy crops that can be grown in a complementary rotation with potatoes.. Potato rotations in Western New Brunswick consist of a year of potatoes followed by a cereal crop under-seeded to a forage crop. Increasing disease pressure has resulted in low yields and high disease infection for cereals restricting their suitability for livestock feed. When combined with low commodity prices they have not generated sufficient income to cover the cost of production.

Climbing oil prices have renewed interest in agricultural crops for their energy potential. Climatic conditions limit corn production for ethanol and other oil seed crops for biodiesel. A review of solid biomass sources found coppiced willow and switch grass crops offer alternatives but their perennial crop cycle prevents incorporation in a three year rotation. Non traditional uses for drop residues (straw) and cereal grains by direct combustion are the most promising.

Cereals are already important in a potato rotation. Burning does not involve transformation into a fuel source, resulting in a strong energy balance. Farmers are experienced with crop production and have a high degree of expertise. On-farm infrastructure is in place to grow the crop with no new equipment needed. Burning provides an environmentally friendly outlet for diseased material and is carbon neutral. Utilizing cereals for their heating value (BTU's) can generate revenue per acre two to three times the inputs expenses when compared with displaced fossil fuel costs.

From the President's Desk

Firstly, I want to thank the previous President, Wally and his Board for their efforts in moving Nuffield Canada forward. Wally's commitment to our organization has strengthened Nuffield Canada's presence both Nationally and Internationally.

It is a great honour for me to have been chosen by you to be President for the upcoming year. High Standards have been set by past-presidents. With your support, together we can move Nuffield Canada forward..

The committee of John Lohr, Barb Cote, Jack Rigby, Harold Perry, and myself have prepared a draft plan for Nuffield Canada. Many of you have replied with comments and suggestions. We appreciate you taking time to respond. We all want a plan that not only make sense but can be implemented in a timely manner. Following this input period, the committee will have a document to present to the membership and then to the board for approval.

We recognize the constraints that we live under. We live in a vast land and are dependant upon your volunteer contribution. Australia also is a vast land. However they have been able to grow into a strong organization that supports many new scholars each year. Nuffield Australia has been successful in finding long term supporters for their new scholars. In time, we can do this too. Our immediate goals should be to get beyond one scholar per year, and as well to give the organization financial stability.

It's been said that if one doesn't know where one is going any road is satisfactory. I believe that the plan we are working on will be a plan with well defined directions to get us to where we want to be. The developing of the plan is the easy stuff, implementation is the tough stuff. If we choose to be successful, we will be. In fact we have all been successful in our own way before our Nuffield experience, so why shouldn't it continue. This is an opportunity where we all can participate, both recent and not so recent Scholars.

I have been invited by Jim Geltch and Peter Nixon to join them in the USA to look at the Eisenhower program. They are keen to have a stronger relationship with like-minded groups in the USA. This should be an opportunity for Canada as well. I welcome this opportunity to strengthen the relationship between Australia and Canada and as well to establish a personal connection with Peter and Jim. The results of these meetings will be reported back to the membership.

Plans for the 2009 AGM are progressing. At our last AGM, it was suggested that we try and have this event around the time of the National Young Farmers Conference in Ottawa. We are exploring how this might be possible. Getting exposure at this conference would be very positive for Nuffield Canada.

John Lohr and Richard Melville are hosting the Ausies this month as part of the Global Focus Tour. John has been successful in billeting them out in the Truro area. Wally is looking after the summer program in Manitoba. Thanks to you all for taking this on.

I want to thank Carolyn for her commitment to the newsletter. If you have items of interest please forward them to her, and thanks to those who have contributed.

Weather is always a large topic for discussion on PEI. The groundhog's prediction was true. We are still very much in winter, lots of snow, cold but not bitterly cold. Your comments and advice are always appreciated. If you are inclined to pray, your prayers are very much coveted as well. Let's carry on.



Barry

Fearless Leader in Winnipeg

South American Tour Opportunity - Argentina, Chile, & Peru

Dates: Mid January 2010 for 2 weeks

Brief Description: One great tour - three exciting countries! In Buenos Aires, Argentina, enjoy the European-style elegance and the vibrancy of a Latin American city. Visit the Mercado Concentrador de Hacienda, a huge market. Watch a spectacular presentation of the popular and sensuous Tango, and listen to unforgettable Pampas and Andean music. In the vast countryside, see the sprawling farmland, with plantations of soybeans, sunflowers and wheat. Stop in the friendly towns for a taste of the real Argentina. In Peru, visit Lima, Cuzco, Aguas Calientes, and tour the legendary Machu Picchu. Peru, one of the largest potato growing countries in the world will showcase large plantations of potatoes including sweet potatoes. Attend an informative presentation at the CIP-International Potato Center. In Chile, enjoy picturesque scenery along the pacific coast, the agricultural valleys with vineyards and crops. Visit Santiago, Viña Del Mar, Valparíso, Colchagua Valley, and Santa Cruz.

We will travel by air-conditioned buses and stay in 4 star hotels. The travel agent and a local interpreter will accompany us. We will congregate in Miami and travel as a group from there.

Who ? This trip is being offered to Nuffield people first and secondly to friends of Nuffield. If you are interested contact Jack Rigby jrigby@ciaccess.com