



House of Commons  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri- Food

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AGRI • NUMBER 018 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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EVIDENCE

**Wednesday, May 5, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Larry Miller**



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•(1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC)):** I'm going to call our meeting to order.

This is one of those days, with my farming background, that I'd sooner be outside than in here, but anyway, it's what we have to do.

It's a pleasure today to have members here from Canadian 4-H Council, as part of our study right now on the future of agriculture and young farmers in general.

It's great to have you come here today, especially at short notice. I understand our two young ladies are in 4-H. I was involved in 4-H as my kids were growing up, so I know the importance of 4-H and what it means to development. So thanks again for being here.

Mr. Nowosad, I'll turn it over to you.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian 4-H Council):** Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak to all of you today about young farmers and the future of farming from the perspective of the 4-H program in Canada.

We've been given 10 minutes for our presentation, but for those of you who are former 4-H'ers and know the art of public speaking, once our 4-H members start talking it might be difficult to stop them talking. But we'll try to keep within the timelines.

I'd like to start off by introducing my colleagues who will be participating in today's presentation.

Ashley Knapton is a 4-H member from Almonte, Ontario. Her family's dairy farm started six years ago, and they milk 20 purebred Holstein cattle.

For those of you in the dairy industry, you might think we're stacking it up for the dairy industry, because we also have Gillian MacDougall here. She is a current 4-H member, vice-president of the Quebec 4-H Council. She is vice-chair of the Canadian 4-H Council youth advisory committee, and she is currently between studies at university and is helping out on her family dairy farm near Ormstown, Quebec. And before the questions come, they have Holstein and Jersey.

On Gillian's left is Ken Lancaster. He is the communications and marketing manager of the Canadian 4-H Council.

We were invited to do our presentation on Friday, so I've been polling colleagues from across the country. The thoughts we are

going to share with you have been compiled from feedback we've received from some of our stakeholders across the country. They include our 4-H members, 4-H leaders, 4-H sponsors, and they include friends of 4-H. It's a wide cross-section of who, in fact, we've gleaned some information from.

I'm going to turn it over now to Ken Lancaster, to talk about 4-H a little bit.

**Mr. Ken Lancaster (Communications and Marketing Manager, Canadian 4-H Council):** Thanks very much for having us here today, guys.

As one of Canada's premier youth leadership organizations, 4-H serves more than 26,000 members across Canada between the ages of 5 and 21. The 4-H program itself, as many of you might know, began in the late 1800s in the United States. In an effort to teach new and innovative farming practices, university extension agents looked to youth as the future for growth and development in the agricultural industry.

In Canada, the 4-H program began in 1913 in Roland, Manitoba, and it has since had more than two million Canadian youth take part in the program. For almost 100 years, the 4-H program has had a proud legacy of creating Canada's agricultural and non-agricultural leaders.

The Canadian 4-H Council, which we represent, began in 1933 to oversee 4-H in Canada. As a council, we've endeavoured to find out the importance of the 4-H program and how members benefit from their involvement.

In a recent study done about four years ago, we surveyed 4-H alumni and found out a number of really important findings, that 40% of all 4-H alumni currently work in an agriculture-related job; 82% of the alumni with a secondary school education, which was 22% of those surveyed, grow or produce agricultural products; overall, 31% of all 4-H alumni have a bachelor's degree or higher, versus 18% of the 2006 Canadian population; and 43% of 4-H alumni have had household incomes of \$50,000 to \$99,000, versus 32% of the 2006 Canadian population. Another 16% of those surveyed had household incomes of \$100,000 or more.

We're very proud of these statistics. It's clear that 4-H plays a critical role in developing these future leaders of agriculture.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Now I'm going to turn it over to Ashley. She's going to tell you a little bit about her 4-H background, as well as a little bit about her family's background in terms of entering agriculture.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton (Canadian 4-H Council):** As Mike said, my name is Ashley Knapton. I am currently in my first year studying agriculture at the University of Guelph. I've been a 4-H member for 11 years. I've done a wide variety of projects, everything from dairy to dairy judging as well as other stuff, like craft or rabbit club. I've been able to have countless opportunities to go to various leadership camps and educational seminars through 4-H, and it has helped me get my current job. I am currently working as an agronomy assistant. I work in the crop sector, scouting fields for weeds and crop populations.

My family entered the dairy industry just over six years ago. It took us 10 years to purchase our quota. Mom and Dad shipped cream back when they first got married, and then once the cream quota left they decided they wanted to ship cows. But because quota was so expensive, with the other start-up costs—retrofitting a barn, purchasing quality animals—they had to wait over 10 years. We finally got the money and we purchased 12 kilos of quota. We now have 16.5, and we'd like to expand to 20, but unfortunately, due to our current quota loans, we are unable.

It's been a long road—Mom and Dad are still working off the farm—but I think it's worth it.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** That's kind of an interesting comment from Ashley—I hadn't met her before this afternoon—that her parents didn't buy their quota till they were...how old, 38 or 39?

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Yes.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** So you'd consider them new farmers, which is kind of interesting.

I'm now going to turn it over to Gillian, who's going to tell you a bit about her family background. But also, as Gillian is a member of our youth advisory committee, she's going to talk to you a bit about reaching youth, and what youth—or generation Y, actually—is all about these days.

Over to you, Gillian.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall (Vice-president, Youth Advisory Committee, Canadian 4-H Council):** My name is Gillian. I grew up on a dairy farm. We have Jerseys in southwest Quebec. I'm from Ormstown. I am the fourth child out of five in my family, and only one of my siblings is going into agriculture. My little brother is still in high school, so he has a chance, but he probably won't. So there you go: we only have one person out of the five kids going into agriculture.

So I grew up on a dairy farm, and both my parents work on the farm. They're full-time farmers. I've chosen to not go into agriculture partly because of seeing my parents; it's a big commitment, a full-time job. My dad doesn't get weekends, doesn't get time off. He goes out to the barn at night to check the cows, different things like that. It's a full-time job. It's not something I want to do.

But last summer, and now this summer, I've been working at the Agriculture Museum just beside Dow's Lake. That has given me the great experience—something that I've brought from 4-H—to share agriculture with other people. So 4-H has given me all sorts of different ways to see agriculture that's not just the Jersey farm that my parents work on. It has given me all sorts of different things.

I grew up showing dairy calves, mostly Jerseys. I showed one Brown Swiss one summer. But I've also done square dancing, judging, public speaking, life skills, handicrafts—all sorts of stuff like that.

Provincially, 4-H has offered me many different options, including opportunities to go out and see different types of agriculture in my area and around Quebec. In Quebec, we have an “innovative ag” tour. It's held in different regions every year, and we go there to see different things. We see dairy farms, we see dairy farms with sheep, we see bull testation farms, we see alpacas. We get to see a lot of different things that you wouldn't normally see, and we also get to see how different people got into agriculture. So it really opens up your opportunities and kind of shows you the different things you can do.

With Quebec 4-H we have provincial rallies. There, all the 4-H projects get to come, whether you're an agriculture project or a life skills project. Again, all the members get introduced to all the different animals—horse, dairy, and so on. It's really nice, because coming from my area, it's a lot of dairy, but at the provincial rally every summer you get to see the beef, you get to see the horses, the rabbits, and everything.

We also have a senior member weekend, which is for members from 16 to 21. It's a weekend that's a bit special for the senior members, a bit of a thank you. We also try to get speakers in to talk about different things in agriculture, different opportunities, different jobs. We try not to just talk about going home and milking on your dairy farm. 4-H has really opened up opportunities for young people to see different types of farms.

There are national programs that I've been a part of or have seen. We have interprovincial youth exchanges. I was lucky enough to go to Saskatchewan and spend a week on a beef ranch, which took me into a different setting in agriculture. There's also the Garfield Weston U.K. exchange. My family hosted a delegate from the U.K., and we got to learn about how they farm, their different opportunities.

I'd like to quickly go over a presentation we did last year as the youth advisory committee. We were looking at 4-H and where the 4-H members are going. We're having some trouble retaining some of the older members. We want to keep them interested, and we're trying to see the difference between the people who are in 4-H and those who aren't and try to figure out why they're not in 4-H.

But most of these people...and it's the same with what we're looking at now for young farmers. You want the future of agriculture. Generally they're born between the 1980s and the turn of the millennium. This age group will be entering the agriculture industry in the next 10 years.

Now, a lot has changed for this generation—i.e., technology, the demographics of Canada, and an increase in environmental awareness and sustainability. One of the big things they're pushing is the “green-loving”, so you're talking about the ten-mile diet and recycling in schools. Organic is a really big thing now. You go to the grocery store and it always says “organic”. That's what a lot of people will go for if they don't understand the difference between organic and what's not organic.

We're communication obsessed. It's a really big thing. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, cellphone, or MSN, there's no shortage of ways we can connect to each other.

I know that Quebec 4-H has a lot of our activities on Facebook to say what's coming up and say what's happening, because we know that's where our members are. We try to get people in by putting pictures up, different things like that, because we know that a lot of young people use it.

In terms of the current demographics, generally speaking, the people entering agriculture are people who have grown up on farms. They come from an agricultural background, so they're from the area; they have parents and family. That's a big part. The people entering agriculture are the people who came from it.

• (1535)

In terms of the demographics of those who are not entering agriculture, generally speaking they don't find agriculture to be a glamorous job. And in some ways it's not. You don't get weekends off, you have to get up to check the cows, and different things like that. They don't think they'll be able to make money, which is really important. They feel they don't understand enough about agriculture to become involved. And that is one of the really key roles of 4-H.

**The Chair:** Gillian, could just slow down a bit for the interpreters?

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** Sorry.

**The Chair:** No, that's okay.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** It doesn't matter if you're from a farm, a town, or the city; anyone can join 4-H and learn about agriculture. They can join a calf club or join any club. They can get the experience of agriculture and be introduced to it.

What we can do to encourage youth involvement in agriculture is get them in 4-H—it's very important—and also diverse job opportunities. If you can get different jobs available in the agriculture field for people, stuff that would be open to people who aren't just from farms, you'd get more people interested. You'd give these people experience as well.

Promoting the importance of agriculture is also important. Some people don't think about how important it is because they don't get their food straight from the farm. They go to the grocery store to get their food. So it's important to promote it as a lifestyle.

There are a couple of ways we can retain youth involvement in agriculture. Offer support to new and young farmers so they're not just people who are finishing their diplomas or degrees in agriculture; they're also people who are changing their lifestyles and their employment and becoming farmers.

Promoting agriculture as an area of academic study is also really important. You want to be able to give people the knowledge and tools to become successful farmers. You give people the chance to learn about new tools and different ways to become farmers, make money, and make it work. Otherwise people try and fail and quit, or they don't try at all because they don't know.

Promoting diversity of careers in agriculture, and particularly production, is also very important. You want to talk about different things. You want to talk about production—being there, raising livestock, raising crops, and things like that. It's also important to have a bit of diversity, such as research, and the different options, sales and so on, are also important.

• (1540)

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Whew! I'm tired just listening to you there, Gillian.

I'm going to close things out here by talking about two things. First, what can 4-H do to encourage young people to enter into agriculture as farmers, and second, what can the Government of Canada do to do the same thing? We have some suggestions for the committee today.

Currently 4-H is facing similar problems with agriculture in that rather than facing an acute shortage of young farmers, we're facing an acute loss of 4-H members. To that end, we've developed a number of programs that directly and indirectly support AAFC's business development objective of providing for enhanced participation by young or new entrants and first nations clients.

I'll give you a couple of examples. I don't know whether you want me to elaborate on them. I'll name some of the programs, and perhaps you can ask questions afterwards.

We have one called the RBC 4-H rural-urban youth outreach program. As the name states, we're reaching out into urban centres to teach people about agriculture.

In the summer of 2011, we're going to be introducing the business development opportunities on-farm mentorship program, which is a partnership with Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers, where young people interested in going into agriculture, agricultural production, will spend two weeks on the farms of some of the winners of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers to learn how it's done.

We currently have on our website a “Careers on the Grow” job board on which we're encouraging our stakeholders to advertise in terms of careers in agriculture.

For the last three years, we've been running an aboriginal 4-H program. We see urban centres, as well as the aboriginal youth community, as markets for 4-H.

In addition, one of the things we have identified that we need to do in terms of moving forward is to expand our partnerships with the Canadian deans of agriculture and veterinary medicine. In fact, I made a presentation to that group last week, and we're looking at partnering with them. The University of Guelph, for example, is piloting a project where there will be a university credit for becoming a 4-H leader.

As I said, we are partnering with Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers program, as well as with the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum.

We kind of see ourselves as the apprenticeship for young farmers, basically. We think our members will become Canada's outstanding young farmers or members of the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum.

I don't have to tell you about rural demographics these days. We see the growth of 4-H and the growth of agriculture in terms of reaching out into urban centres. That's a priority for us.

We would like to see ourselves develop a national strategy to partner with agriculture in the classroom. We see that as a critical element in respect to teaching kids about agriculture. As Gillian alluded to, we need to use means of communication for networking with youth. It's important that we're communicating with Twitter, Facebook, etc.

One of the things we see is that 4-H members like Ashley and Gillian will show cattle; they'll show a dairy cow for seven years of their 4-H program. By the time they get to be about 17 or 18 years of age, they've passed that stage. So what we need to do is develop programming for senior 4-H members that includes components of starting up a farm, writing a business plan, sharing different market ideas, or an "ask a professional" night that could cover technological advancements such as genomics or get into advancements in specific commodity production such as vegetable growing; beef production; sheep production; bioenergy production, in terms of hemp, corn, etc.; or transition, one market to another, or part time to full time. The key to this would be to include a major business component to all of these. We could have club weekend events, an intensive two- or three-day event with workshops, seminars, etc.

Now I'll just turn to some thoughts that we've shared with some of our colleagues across the country on what the Government of Canada can do to attract young people into primary production.

First of all, we think it would be a good idea to develop a new, crisp, clear vision for Canadian agriculture, focused on young people. Young people want, need, and respond to a vision that they can buy into and something that they believe can deliver the probability of a positive future. I think the greatest thing the Government of Canada can do is develop this vision and share it so that youth get behind it and grow with it.

● (1545)

We should be able to do that. Look at what Canadian agriculture has to offer: some of the highest-quality food products in the world; some of the sharpest, most committed producers in the world; world-class processors, although there are just not enough of them; a world-respected regulatory system; one of the most pristine natural environments in the world, with an abundance of fresh air and fresh water; and productive land that is the envy of the world.

Really, the focus needs to be on youth, because this is the generation that's going to be out in the field, if you will. I think the government needs to communicate this vision as well as implement support programs for beginning farmers using new social marketing technologies, but I won't beat that one to death. Government can promote the number of elements involved in agriculture beyond production and ensure that agricultural educational programming is in place for youth. The purpose of today's hearing is basically to talk about production; you have production, but there are other aspects of agriculture where you're going to need young people going into the business.

Government can continue to provide financial support for programs that focus on science, technology, and innovation in agriculture. That is a critical element. We can't be left behind in terms of science, technology, and innovation.

Government can seize upon the interest in locally grown food in all parts of Canada, especially in urban centres. I was reading the *Ottawa Citizen* today, and they're talking about people raising chickens in their backyards. There's an interest there. Vancouver, I believe, has the highest concentration of rooftop and empty-lot gardens in Canada right now. There's an opportunity for us to seize and for the Government of Canada to seize in educating young people about what a cool business agriculture is.

Government can research approaches and programs being used in other countries to encourage young people to enter farming and develop them as models for Canada. This was a suggestion made by one of my colleagues who was formerly with the Department of Agriculture. As an example, in New Zealand they have a popular production-sharing program in the dairy and livestock industry that is helping many young people to establish their own farms under the guidance of the current farm owners. This is just an example. There are probably other examples in other parts of the world.

You've been out west, and I think you heard from a number of young farmers and a number of groups what some of the issues are. They include addressing barriers to getting into agriculture, such as start-up costs and financing. One thing Ashley didn't tell you about her parents is that they got their quota six years ago and they're still working full time off the farm as well as running the farm. That's a significant commitment.

There's a lack of knowledge of the industry and the opportunities that exist. We can help you with that, in terms of creating awareness.

In terms of succession, government can review programs that perhaps don't go far enough in recognizing the needs of first-time entrants into agriculture. For example, the government guarantee for land purchases under the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act is limited to 15 years. In speaking with one of my colleagues about this, I've realized 15 years just might not be enough to cut it; perhaps it should be 25 years.

In conclusion, the Canadian agricultural industry is a vital component of the Canadian economy. The industry accounted for 8% of the total Canadian GDP in 2005. It provides one out of every eight jobs. It employs nearly 2.1 million people. The agriculture and agrifood system has been growing at an average rate of 2.4% per year over the past decade.

At the same time that the industry is experiencing this growth, there are also challenges appearing ahead. In particular, the agriculture industry needs to attract and retain a new generation of producers, and that's why we're here today. This is becoming more apparent, as the number of producers under the age of 35 is declining faster than in any other age range. In fact, from 2001 to 2006 the number of farm operators under the age of 35 decreased by 25% across Canada. That's not a good statistic.

To address that growing gap and the need for younger farm operators, the 4-H program in Canada can play a valuable and significant role. Young people interested in agriculture see it as a career with opportunity. They may be interested because their parents or grandparents were producers, but today's young farmer is a business person.

I won't ask those of you who are former 4-H members to say the pledge, but I'll refer to what the four Hs stand for: head, heart, health, and hands. Today's young farmers may enter the field with hearts and hands, but in their heads they need to feel there is a healthy future for them.

We have gone over our time, but thank you very much for the opportunity to make this presentation.

● (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

It's very obvious, Ashley and Gillian, that 4-H has helped both of you with your public speaking abilities. We appreciate your being here.

Ashley, the committee was at the University of Guelph on Monday; I think we even temporarily lost a couple of our members there, but we got them back.

We'll now turn it over to Mr. Easter for seven minutes.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Was that a couple of lost Conservatives, Mr. Chair?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** No, I'd say—

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Not a lost Liberal, I hope.

**The Chair:** Actually, the resident MP was one of them, so...

**Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** There's nothing better than to be lost in Guelph.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Listen, folks, thank you very much for coming and for your presentation.

I think if you polled quite a number of MPs around here, especially rural MPs, you would find that a lot of them were in the 4-

H. I was in the 4-H. You mentioned Jerseys; I was in the North Wiltshire Jersey 4-H Club.

I guess that's why I'm quiet and docile, on account of the Jerseys.

In any event, the programs that the 4-H does you do need to be congratulated on, everything from public speaking to 4-H shows. I'm not sure where the national speakers competition is at now, at the Canadian National Exhibition....

I've been there three or four times, but not lately. Is that still on?

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** We've actually partnered with Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture. Through AFC funding we're supporting them to do their public speaking competition at the Royal Winter Fair each year.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** That's a great program.

In any event, on this tour that the committee has been on, there certainly is a fairly strong concern about how we get young people in the industry. You mentioned some of them—all of you did—in your comments.

The other thing that is clearly showing through is that profitability is an absolute requirement. The current safety net programs are not working. We heard a lot of criticism of AgriStability.

What do you think has to be done at the federal level in terms of its support for 4-H itself and in terms of assisting people, not just young people?

Ashley, you mentioned your parents. They're not exactly young, but they're not exactly old either. Still, they are new people coming into the industry.

So what do you propose in that area to assist people to get into this industry?

The last point I would make, Mike, is to you. You mentioned education in the classroom informing both urban and rural Canadians. What do you propose in that area that the federal government can be doing to help in that area?

Those are my three questions.

● (1555)

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** In terms of the first question, Wayne, with respect to what the Government of Canada can do for the Canadian 4-H Council, the last contribution grant, which we signed in October, showed a 30% increase in funding. That was an excellent way to support our programs. I think it's important to maintain the continued support of the Government of Canada.

One thing we hadn't mentioned to you is that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is a founding member of the Canadian 4-H Council. We've been partners in that regard for a very long time.

I'm going to flip it over to Ashley and Gillian to talk a little about what you can do in terms of financing. But with respect to recruiting or creating more of an awareness for agriculture, especially in urban areas, my sense would be that the 4-H and Agriculture have mutual objectives. There's no doubt about that.

In partnership with the Government of Canada, we want to introduce new methods of communication with young people in the language they speak, which is electronically. If you go to fall fairs these days and look at the display booths for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Government of Canada, they're stationary. Kids aren't going to stop there and take a look. For the government website, once again this is not a negative reflection, but you certainly have to communicate on Twitter and Facebook, etc.

I'm going to talk a little about agriculture in the classroom. I'll then flip it over to Ken to talk to you about some of the stuff we're doing in terms of social media that we feel would in fact be of benefit for the Government of Canada in terms of tracking new people.

Specifically, I'd like to respond to your question, Wayne, with regard to agriculture in the classroom. Somehow, between us and the Government of Canada, we'd like to see some type of federal or national program for agriculture in the classroom. We know that education is a provincial jurisdiction right now. It's perhaps difficult to get into provincial jurisdictions. But you have to begin educating young people about agriculture when they're five, six, seven, and eight years of age. They're doing it very well in each province, but there's a need for some uniformity across the country.

As we grow in urban areas, one of the things we're looking at is after-school programming. I'll give you a good example of an after-school program in the States. It's a 4-H club in an urban centre in Syracuse, New York.

They went to the Culinary Institute of America and had them make up a salsa recipe. The kids grew the products that they could for the salsa. They then learned a little about marketing it. In turn, they ended up selling it at fall fairs. The demand outstripped the supply. It's an example of some kids who were sitting in downtown Syracuse and who didn't know the first thing about agriculture. What did they learn? They learned about growing, marketing, and retail.

I'm perhaps talking too much in answer to that question.

Ken, I'm going to flip it over to you in terms of social marketing. It'll give the gals a few minutes to think about how we can encourage financing.

**Mr. Ken Lancaster:** At the Canadian 4-H Council, we recognize that youth are communicating in different ways from the ways they did before. We've made a concerted effort to make sure that we're getting into those forums and helping to facilitate the provincial move towards those forums.

We have taken steps to develop new social networking tools. Our Facebook and Twitter pages are constantly active and constantly updated. I know these two girls are both fans of the page. It's one way that we're communicating with them.

We've also recognized that kids and youth are going online to find out information more than they ever have before. We've taken the Internet as an open field for us to go in and till the land, if you will. We've established a new website called "careersonthegrow.ca". The intention was to help promote the vast array of careers available in the agricultural industry, beyond production and including mechanical engineering, biochemical engineering, and even banking and insurance. We've also worked closely with other organizations to

ensure that their online activities are helping to reach the right demographics.

There's a recent campaign from the Canadian Association of Diploma in Agriculture Programs, CADAP. I believe it's the deans of agriculture. They started a campaign called "Ditch the Office". It's an online contest to encourage youth to create videos and short stories, enter some photos and photo contests, and win some prizes. It again promotes the array of careers available in agriculture and the array of areas of study that are available to them as they try to choose what they want to do next and where they would like to go in their careers.

Through these efforts, we're finding new ways to reach out to Canadian youth and provide new places for them to go to find out information that may or may not have been available or that may have been buried under other layers of information on the Internet.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Bellavance, go ahead, please, for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Thank you very much for your evidence. You must have several financial partners. You said you have had a partnership with Agriculture Canada for a number of years, even probably since the beginning of the 4-H clubs. I'd like to know what your situation is in 2010: what is your budget and what is the contribution of the Canadian government to this budget?

I am convinced that you also have other financial partners: could you tell us how they contribute? Tell us also if today your budget is sufficient. We have received explanations from Mr. Lancaster about all the new media, the growing importance of these information networks, etc. I imagine this entails costs. About your operations, I'd like to know if you succeed, with your budget, to fulfill the mandate that you have given yourself. Moreover, are you still looking for financial partners? How does this aspect go really?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** *Pardon pour mon pauvre français.* I used to say "*poivre*" *français*. I'll just speak in English.

We currently receive \$600,000 annually from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Our budget is approximately \$2.2 million a year. The balance of the money comes from memberships, and a significant amount comes from corporations. Just to give you some examples, all the chartered banks in Canada provide us funding. Farm Credit Canada is a significant partner with us, as are all the agriculture and agri-food companies—Syngenta, Bayer CropScience, John Deere, Kubota, etc.

Could we use more money? That's a great question. Thank you very much.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Yes, we could always use more money.



As to whether it's sufficient, we try to do more with less, at this point in time.

Ken, I'm not sure about social media in respect to whether there is a burden for us in terms of finances.

One thing I do believe is that if we're going to make a push into urban Canada...because I think that's where the future is. We're not going to forget what our past is—most of the MPs here are from rural Canada, where agriculture started, so we can't forget that—but the future is going to be in the urban areas.

Ken, I will let you respond with respect to funding for that.

**Mr. Ken Lancaster:** Again, from a budgetary perspective, social networking and social media haven't really made too big of a dent. We shouldn't downplay the importance of traditional means of communication as well. We still have a national magazine that reaches 26,000 members across Canada. Each one of the provincial 4-H agencies has its own means, its own newsletters or magazines as well.

We recognize that this is an important first step for us to reach out and give another means of providing that information for youth. I wouldn't downplay what we have traditionally done in terms of communication. This has added a little bit more to my desk and to my workload, but it is a necessary means of communicating.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** I completely agree with you about the need to use today, in this new era, all those new media. It is a better way to reach young people than the traditional way, this is very clear.

Mr. Nowosad, you were talking a while ago about a partnership with Canadian banks. I was not there when their representatives gave evidence before the committee; I was somewhere else with the Minister of Agriculture. We have received their evidence and they tell us that they are partners of the 4-H clubs.

Having said that, they made a statement I would like to share with you—I do not want to put you in a difficult position with your fund givers. They tell us that they are witnessing a renewal of interest for wards agriculture by the younger generations. I would like to agree but, through this study—and even before it started—we have heard many young people tell us that they had thought about going into farming like their parents but they had finally decided not to do it for all the reasons which come from the difficulties associated with agriculture today. Others told us that they took the decision and went at it. They told us about all the difficulties they faced when they decided to go into agriculture and agri-food. Some even told us that they didn't know how long they would be able to continue their career in this area they love very much.

Moreover, Mrs. McDougall told us earlier that you too, you had thought about what you really wanted to do. I find that a bit curious: we have those testimonies and the banks' representatives come tell us there is a renewal as far as what young people want to do. I think this is a small contradiction. I would like to have your comments on that.

I do not know where the banks see that. I know you do not have to answer on their behalf but I would like to know what you think of that statement. What do you say? With all the contacts you have with the young people in a lot of places, is it possible to say that?

• (1605)

[English]

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** I read *The Western Producer* today. There were two articles on your committee hearings across the country. One referenced specifically the banks, and quoted Bob Funk of Scotiabank and David Rinnard of the Bank of Montreal on how they see a bright future in terms of financial loans.

I'm not quite sure.... You're obviously talking to young farmers who are currently in the system in terms of their current financial situation. Perhaps they haven't been talking to those people. I can only reference one aspect. We have a program with the Royal Bank, with whom we've partnered in encouraging 4-H in urban centres.

Ashley, I don't know whether you want to talk to this.

When we were coming here today in the cab, we were talking about her parents and about financing. They're right in the middle of it right now, and we were talking about different banks.

Why don't you tell that story, about trying to find good rates?

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I asked my parents last night what they felt they would like to see. They're new farmers, so I wanted to know what they felt they needed. Mom said that they didn't want free money. They wanted sustainability in the industry. They wanted to be able to make money.

The thing that she really felt would make a huge difference was long-term low interest loans, especially for our quota loans. I don't know how much you guys know about supply management. It's a fantastic system, but it really causes a couple of hurdles. Supply management provides sustainability, but it cost us \$32,000 a kilo to buy in, and we bought 12 kilos. So you can imagine our loans; they're pretty high right now.

If we had longer-term loans with lower interest, Mom feels we'd be better off. That's what I see. She's starting now to shop around. Because of the recent economic situation, interest rates have come down a lot, and we're at a point where hopefully we can lock into a lower rate.

That will make a huge difference. It will probably allow us to expand a lot earlier.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'll now go to Mr. Atamanenko for seven minutes.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Thank you for taking time to come here on such short notice.

To follow up on what you were saying, Ashley, if there were some kind of provision for interest-free loans for young farmers, that probably could be a major step. Is that right?

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** It would be a huge step. That would make a huge difference, for sure. Interest is what's really getting us at this point, because we can only pay so much; we still have other bills to pay.

It would make a big difference, for sure.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** You were talking about all the great things that 4-H does. It's really admirable, and a great program; I have talked to other people in it. It's a great organization. You have all sorts of programs to get people involved, also from the urban setting. But the bottom line is that a lot of the people in your organization don't go into farming. They're not doing it because they can't make money.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Exactly.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** You know, we can talk about all the great education opportunities and all the courses and all the science and all the innovation, but if you go into business, you hope to be able to make some money.

I think that's what we're trying to get at here. How do we get at a future where we can get younger farmers coming into agriculture, so they can have some kind of a life producing good-quality food and making money? I think that's the crux of it.

We've talked about banks. Apart from that, what else can we do to attract and retain producers? How do we maintain our rural communities, many of which are dying off as a result of people moving out and other services being shut down?

You mentioned local initiatives. I recently did a tour across the country to get some feeling of what people were saying on the whole issue of food sovereignty and food security. I saw this tremendous amount of initiative for local produce and local farmers, but at the same time there are also obstacles. The distribution system is geared to the big players. If you produce potatoes in Sudbury, they have to go to Toronto before they wind up in the supermarkets in Sudbury.

Last week we heard of the devastating effect that NAFTA has had, in terms of dumping, on our apple producers in British Columbia. We see the supermarket monopoly and how they're limiting the amount of local produce. In B.C. there are meat inspection regulations, and here, that have often forced smaller people out of business.

So there are obstacles, and I'm wondering if you could comment and give us some ideas of how we can overcome some of those obstacles so that more young people can get into farming.

• (1610)

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** A lot of them are definitely hard to overcome, but making sure there's a market to guarantee farmers that they'll have income is key. Local is fantastic because that's what people are shifting towards. They are looking at how transportation issues are causing environmental damage, so local is key. At the same time, local is almost a niche market. It can give producers that edge, that extra amount of money they're going to make by not selling it to a wholesaler.

People will pay more for local. It has been proven at farmers markets and at farm gates. I know that lots of my neighbours put

their produce out on a wagon and encourage people to come. They're making more money that way because they reduce the middleman. Basically it is straight from the farmer to the consumer.

I think that's an interesting way to head. We should look into that. I think it provides a lot more security. We know exactly where our food is coming from. And we would be able to support ourselves, which I think would be key, instead of relying on other countries—in my opinion.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** I'd just like to say that with the quota system for milk we are protecting the farmers, so that if they have it they are going to be making money because they've bought into the quota system, whereas not everything has that. Some small farms, if they don't have the protection—they don't have the guarantee that they will be paid for what they're making—don't have the insurance, where the dairy farmers do. You are getting the guarantee that you will be getting paid for what you have bought in quota.

So it's a bit of an insurance plan where we know that those farmers will have some protection.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** It does come down to money, though. It seems to be boiling right back to dollars and cents. I talked to Ashley this morning—as I say, we'd never met before—and she was talking about going into production after she graduates from the University of Guelph. What's the first thing she has to do? Pay off her student loan.

So when you talk about interest-free loans, yes, that's probably not a bad way to go.

Ken, do you have anything else?

**Mr. Ken Lancaster:** Sure.

Ashley touched on it a bit too, that there are some niche markets that are out there. I think with some of the successful stories you hear about small farms, the farmers themselves have identified perhaps a product that doesn't have a local grower. I can think of a farm in B.C. I read about not too long ago that's growing wasabi and selling that in the local markets in Vancouver. Considering how far wasabi needs to be shipped at times, they've taken up a significant market share of that marketplace.

• (1615)

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** If I have a minute, I'd like to get your comments on this. It's sad to see, and we heard it last week and we're hearing it all the time, that there's all these farms and many large-scale farms where people need off-farm income to survive. The average percentage is something like 70%. Yet I met a young couple in northern Ontario who have an income from less than 100 acres of land and they don't need an off-farm income because they found those markets. They are actually farming organically.

You know, there's got to be a way of...and somehow people are doing it. I'm just wondering if you have any comments on that.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** I think one thing is to be able to teach youth that it is possible. Teaching them how to grow things organically is a big part of it. If you don't know what's out there, if you don't share what's working, you're not going to get any more of it. One important thing is to have the education. Whether it is through school or weekend courses, whatever it is, to be able to share the education and share the success stories I think would make a big difference.

**The Chair:** Do you have a comment, Ashley?

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I would just like to say that you need to share the success stories. A lot of people said we wouldn't be able to do it, and we did. You need to tell people that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Lemieux, seven minutes.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Let me say welcome, and thank you for your presentations.

Certainly in my riding 4-H is very present, and 4-H does good work. When I'm out at the local agricultural fairs, you see 4-H members and they are proud of their participation in the club.

It's also good to see you again.

Just for the knowledge of the committee, I had the pleasure of joining 4-H just about a year ago in P.E.I. for their annual general meeting and dinner that they were hosting, where they were recognizing young farmers as well. I had the pleasure of announcing roughly \$3 million for 4-H over four years.

The first question I wanted to ask is directed mostly at Mike or Ken.

What does this funding allow you to do? How does this funding help in your work with young farmers or wanting to cultivate young farmers?

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** A number of years ago the Department of Agriculture did one thing that was of significant benefit to us: they allowed us to utilize some of our funding for administration.

One of the things we're finding, Pierre, is that these days when we talk to corporate sponsors, they want to go into project funding. But they don't realize that you've got to provide support for the people who actually deliver the programs. So it's been quite beneficial for us to actually have a full-time staff in Ottawa.

One thing that I do believe...and I don't know how the heck you can do it from this committee, but there's quite a disparity across the country with the support that some provinces provide to the 4-H program in terms of providing staff. How the heck are you going to be able to deliver new programs into new areas if you've only got one staff? We've got provincial programs in New Brunswick with one staff member; in Quebec, one staff member; and in British Columbia, two staff members. Somehow there has to be some sort of arm-twisting, if that's possible, with provincial colleagues in the departments of agriculture.

What has the program allowed us to do in terms of the additional funding, though? It's allowed us to introduce new programs that

relate directly to production. For example, I spoke about the farm mentorship program. When Ashley was talking about sharing success stories, if you talk about Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers program, they are the success stories and they have very compelling examples of how, in fact, you can succeed. So we're able to offer that program.

One program we're going to be introducing through our funding is not directly related to production, so perhaps not pertinent to this committee, but it is one where we're looking at putting 4-H members in Canadian embassies and consulates around the world for internship programs. The whole idea is for them to learn about Canadian exports so that when they come back, and a lot of them are going to come back as young farmers, they know what's out there. That's allowed us to expand some of our programs specifically directed to the business development objectives.

If we had further money, Mr. Lemieux, we could probably do more work, especially in urban centres.

I'm sure you have a number of questions, but one group that we spoke about was aboriginal 4-H. That's a really tough nut to crack, but we're trying to partner right now with the National Association of Friendship Centres—urban—to introduce 4-H to them so that they in fact have exposure to agriculture.

We're looking at partnering with an investment firm that has bought a whole pile of land in Saskatchewan and wants to turn it over to aboriginals for farming.

• (1620)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** That's a great answer. Thank you.

Actually, just to follow up on one of your initiatives regarding the embassy, I think it's a great initiative. In "agri-services", I'd call them, it's good to have people who understand agriculture in different sectors of the economy. For a farmer to better understand how exports work, how exports will help him in what he or she might need to do to tailor their products to export, I think that's really good knowledge to have.

Also in our tour we were talking, for example, about bankers and the need to have bankers who understand agriculture, because it's different. The financial relationship with a farmer will be different from the financial relationship with a different type of business or a company.

This leads me to my next question. Do you as 4-H do any kind of work with what I would call "agri-related" services to give exposure to people, perhaps youth? For example, they don't want to farm and they go into banking, so maybe you help inform them about agriculture and about how they can bring that knowledge into banking or into accounting or into other areas that would actually help the agricultural sector without their directly being a farmer.

Do you provide any kind of a service like that, or has that entered any kind of discussions?

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** One opportunity that 4-H provides is “Career Mania”. That’s actually what it’s called. I haven’t been able to attend, but I believe it’s for senior members and it’s where you go and talk about different careers. You talk about how to get jobs, education, and then you talk about various jobs in agriculture and the different routes.

At the University of Guelph, they tell us that we’ll be able to get jobs, that agricultural students get jobs. As we go through, they do tell us more and more about the different jobs. Obviously some of us, including me, are just going to go home and farm, but they tell you about the other jobs in crops, genetic modification, research, anything. There’s definitely some work in showing you that you can get jobs elsewhere.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, and I think that’s really important. That’s a great service you’re providing.

There’s farming, and then there’s everything else that supports the farmer in farming.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Those other services need agricultural knowledge as well, I would say, and I can see you providing that to youth so that if they don’t choose farming, they choose something related to it.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Currently the granddaddy of our conferences—we run four national conferences—is the National 4-H Conference. It started out in 1933, when we put kids on the train in Halifax and Vancouver and they came to the Royal Winter Fair with their livestock. That was the first program we ever ran nationally, when they showed at the Royal Winter Fair.

It has morphed into an agricultural conference that talks about the agrifood sector. We bring people in to give a talk about the theory on one day. It will be a theme day—we have a theme day on production, a theme day on processing, a theme day on careers in agriculture, a theme day on marketing and retailing. We bring the experts in.

For example, for the marketing and retailing day we brought in the president of McDonald’s Canada to talk about marketing and retailing. Coincidentally, for the processing day we brought the conferees to Caravelle Foods, where they make McDonald’s hamburgers.

What did the kids learn at McDonald’s? They learned about food safety, about science, about processing, etc. That’s one example of something we are currently doing.

We were talking about financing. Quite frankly, if we had more money we’d expand that program beyond the 70 kids we bring in right now annually.

Hopefully that answers your question.

• (1625)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, that’s good.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lemieux.

Now we’ll move to Mr. Valeriote for five minutes.

**Mr. Francis Valeriote:** I want to thank the four of you for coming in today and speaking to us. We are just in the process of crossing Canada, as you know, and examining the farm and agricultural industry.

It was said by one of the witnesses that we wouldn’t be on this tour if we didn’t fear for the future of the farm industry in Canada. One said that if we don’t have a significant, meaningful restructuring of our farm programs, the decline we’re in will continue, to the extent that, frankly—and I fear this—rural Canada will become a ghost town.

We have to do something to reduce that trend. You’re part of that reversal, as far as I’m concerned, and I appreciate your enthusiasm. But without our help, as you said, you’re not going to survive. The numbers speak for themselves—the decline in the numbers in 4-H, the 65% exodus of those under 35 in the last 15 years—and we have to do something about it.

We’ve heard all of those things that are ailing farming. I’m hopeful that this committee and this government—and if not this one, the next—will be responsive to those.

I want to focus on two things.

One is that it’s become clear to me that we have to get involved in non-food agricultural products. If we are going to keep people in the rural areas, we’re going to have to have farms that are self-sustaining, that may not only generate food but will also produce those things that could be used for manufacturing. At the University of Guelph, the Guelph area being where I’m proudly from—and Ashley, I’m pleased to see you up here—we saw the making of plastics and things like that, and on farms we saw them using materials for non-food purposes. I want to know to what degree you are encouraging 4-H members to get involved in that kind of sustainable industry.

I also want to know this from you. We’re finding that there are a lot of young or new farmers who want to be involved but can’t find land, because either it’s too expensive or they don’t have parents who are going to “succession plan” in such a way that they’ll get it. Do you agree that we should have a program that aligns young or new farmers with non-related farmers who are about to exit the industry and that we should provide incentives—tax incentives or otherwise—to encourage that kind of transition?

Those are my two questions: alternative kinds of farming, in the sense of what you produce; and allowing new farmers to become involved.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** I’ll respond to the first question.

Ken and I attended a presentation by Jay Bradshaw from Syngenta last week, and he referred to science and technology in agriculture. It’s amazing what my ignorance of agriculture is. I didn’t know that they made snow tires out of walnuts these days. That’s a pretty interesting thing in terms of how to use different agricultural products for things that really aren’t food.

We had Don Floyd, who is the CEO of the 4-H program in the United States, meet with our board of directors last November. The 4-H program in the U.S. has committed, and I'm not sure what the timeframe is, to create one million new scientists in the United States. One of the things we're looking at doing is trying to introduce science and technology into the 4-H program with the express purpose of making people aware of exactly what the opportunities are.

One neat thing that Don Floyd told us about is that the day they launched this "one million new scientists" program, they had 4-H members across the U.S.A. making ethanol. That's unbelievable.

Wayne, I don't know whether you would have done that, back in the old dairy days.

That being said, one of the things we are looking at doing is talking to people in other areas of the industry. We've been in contact with people from crop protection. We were talking last week with the deans of agriculture and veterinary medicine across the country to create an agricultural science summit that would be a sort of launching pad for us to introduce science and technology to the 4-H members. When we talk about more funding, we see a significant amount of money coming from the private sector, but certainly we would support the Government of Canada's providing support in that way.

I don't know whether these guys want to answer that last question, but maybe I'll start off the discussion in that regard.

One thing I referenced in our presentation specifically was a comment from a young lady in her early twenties who was married a year ago. She is from Russell, Ontario. She and her husband just bought a farm in Renfrew. There was some difficulty with the financing, but what she talked specifically about was programs whereby you would do exactly the matching that you're talking about: match people who are going to be exiting the farm with people who want to be farmers and teach them how to do it and give them the opportunity to do it. I keep harping on the urban; there are probably a lot of young people who in fact could enter agriculture that way.

Ladies?

• (1630)

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** Even in my family, if all of us five kids had decided we wanted to go into the dairy industry, our farm is only 180 acres; there's not enough room for five people, if you bring spouses and children in. Right there, if we had all decided to go into agriculture, we would have needed somewhere to go, if we couldn't buy the land or something like that. We have lots of neighbours who either don't have children who are interested in agriculture or don't have children. So they're stopping. They're 70 years old, and their farm is shut down. Most of the farms on our road are closed down because no one wanted to take them over.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I can think of one example in my area specifically in which a kid from a non-agricultural family matched up with an older couple with no kids who had a dairy farm. Basically what they did was hire him on. He worked, and they taught him everything. Now he's set to take over the farm; it's written in. He's going to work on buying it out. Part of the wages went to paying

down the purchase, but he's going to buy the quota, he's going to buy cows, he's going to buy the land—which is really key. A lot of land around Almonte is close enough to Ottawa that we're losing a lot of land to development. It's going to get to the point that we won't be able to manage our own farm, because we're not going to be able to feed the cows.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Shipley for five minutes.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Thank you.

I also want to thank the witnesses for being here, and particularly for, as was mentioned before, your public speaking—obviously it's been a great part of what you've learned—and your broad knowledge. I also was part of the 4-H, so beware: you may end up in politics. But I did farm, all my life, and I think 4-H was a great foundation for it.

I have a couple of questions. Do you think that farming is a right, that individuals actually have a right to farm, or that it's like a business, which has to meet business plans and the obligations of any other business?

I'm asking either Gillian or Ashley, or both.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** I think it's a bit of both. It's a business that you have to be able to succeed in it. I grew up on a farm, and I might not have wanted to get up in the morning as a kid and milk cows—I still might be a little grumpy on Saturday mornings when my mom wants me to get up—but I think it was a privilege to grow up knowing where my food came from, knowing that eggs came from chickens and not trees, and different things like that.

So I think it has been a big privilege, but it's a huge business. My brother went to Macdonald College, did his diploma in farm management technology, and then went to McGill to do his degree in agricultural economics. So he has done a lot of schooling to make this business succeed, and I think it's a big thing.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I would absolutely agree; I totally think it's both. I would say that the most successful farmers you see treat it as both a business and a right. They look at the numbers side of things—the bottom line, making the money—but they also take into consideration stuff like animal welfare, the more personal stuff that business people wouldn't participate in.

So, yes, I think it is a bit of both.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I often agree with my colleague across the way, but not always. We aren't doing the study because there is a fear that agriculture is going to collapse; we're doing the study to see how we can assist.

We do hear a lot of very positive things about people coming in. We also do hear large concerns, and they come from different individuals with different scopes, which means that as we go across the country it becomes clearly understandable why it is so difficult to get a national program as we have it struck now.

One concern that keeps coming up is the smaller number of farmers under 35. As you go through your communities, I wonder whether you see this happening. And why do you think it is happening? What we're hearing and seeing is that those who seem to be very successful at it have to have administrative ability within their business to move forward.

We have fewer numbers farming larger amounts of land and milking more cows, raising more chickens, more beef, or more pork, whatever it is, and yet, as Alex has explained, we have smaller farmers who have gone out for markets, and they can be successful in those—not every one; not every business is successful. I think what we are seeing in Canada is that there has to be a blend, and some of that blend occurs across the different parts of the country with different sorts of products, because of our geography.

One thing I wonder about when farmers are growing products—and we have seen some very large ones and some not so large ones—is getting access to capital.

You talked about that, Ashley, in terms of having loans, maybe interest-free loans.

One of the concerns we have right now is that interest will never be lower. Capitalizing sometimes by subsidizing will make capitalization a big concern by driving up land prices, driving up equipment prices sometimes, as we saw also with fertilizer, sometimes driving up rent prices.

Do you see getting access to credit as one of the keys, as young farmers, to why maybe you didn't get in, or are there some other social aspects that affect this?

We have three children. I farmed, enjoyed it, loved it, was successful at it, but they all chose their own careers. That's the way it is. Now there are five farms around our area that are run by one young farmer, and he is doing a great job. The capitalization, though, is an issue.

Do you see that as one of the major ones, getting credit?

• (1635)

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Yes, absolutely. That was the biggest hurdle for my parents in getting into the industry. They wanted to farm full time, but it was the 12 kilos at \$32,000 that just made it impossible for the longest time. It was just a series of factors that came together: BSE hit and the border closed, so cattle prices dropped; one of our start-up costs was greatly reduced. A neighbour of ours was getting out of the industry and wanted to empty his barn, so there, the equipment we needed was reduced.

It was almost lucky that those factors clicked and we were able to get in. Capital is a huge issue, in my opinion.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Your time has expired.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I think also Gillian has a comment.

**The Chair:** All right.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** I asked my dad what would be the easiest type of agriculture for someone to get into right off the bat if they had no connections or family. Every time he said, "Well, it

would probably take five years to save up enough money to get into it." Right off the bat you have that barrier.

**The Chair:** Ashley, you talked about 12 kilos of quota. I have a pretty good idea what it costs per kilo, but I think it would be good for you to share that dollar amount per kilo with the committee.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** At the time we purchased, the supply management system was under the old rules where it was a free market, so the prices were driven by supply and demand. I believe the first 10 we bought were \$32,500, and the next two were \$32,000.

**The Chair:** That's \$32,500 per kilo.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Yes.

That was probably not quite big enough for us to start up, to be absolutely honest. They figure you need about a kilo per cow. We would like to milk 20 and we only have 16. That's all we can really manage right now.

The quota system has changed, as you're aware. Now the prices are capped at \$25,000 per kilo. That is good and bad. It's good because prices are lower, but it's bad because everyone wants some and there's not enough.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** I wanted you to put that on the record, because those 12 kilos cost just under \$400,000. That really outlines the issue.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Yes. And then we had to buy the cows and the equipment. We've had to get four more kilos since then.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Ms. Bonsant has five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Thank you very much.

I don't know if I'm old or something like that but when I was young in my small municipality, I never learned farming at the 4-H club. That time, we used to do painting, etc. I am happy to see that women have changed everywhere. In my county, especially in Coaticook, there is an agriculture school that is called CRIFA. CRIFA teaches management, finances, for milk farms, as well as horticulture and environment. I realized over the years that there were more and more young women who were taking charge of the family farm.

I want to ask you a question. You are from Ontario, Mrs. Knapton.

You, Mrs. MacDougall, you are from Quebec.

We have set up a day care centre for young business women to help them. Do you think that, if there was a day care system everywhere, it would maybe help women to choose agriculture? I am asking you this question, because I have seen women carry their baby on their back to be able to work on the farm, because day care centres were too expensive. We have set up those early childhood centres to help the young women entrepreneurs. Do you think that might help the young women entrepreneur in agriculture, outside Quebec?

[English]

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I'm not 100% sure. From what my parents have told me, I spent a lot of time in the barn or in the cab of the tractor. They tell stories about me falling asleep in the hay as they were doing chores. For dairy farming in particular, a lot of the chores are in the morning or at night, so I'm not sure how feasible a day care system would be. It would depend on the number of kids and how much maintaining you needed. In Mom's case it made it harder, but she was still able to watch over my brothers and me, as well as cook the meals and work in the barn.

I think it would help, but I'm not sure if it's a priority.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** Like Ashley, I grew up on a dairy farm. Both my parents were at home full time. I know other people who work off the farm. They don't work for their own families, their own farms, so they can't take their kids to work. You can't take your son to the bank—different things like that.

Having a day care that's affordable and open to women, single parents, or anyone in agriculture would make a big difference. You could drop your kids off in the morning...especially if it worked at different times. Agriculture is not always nine-to-five. Having a day care system would probably be very beneficial outside of Quebec.

[Translation]

**Ms. France Bonsant:** There is another thing we have always asked for: when young people want the family farm and their parents give it to them, the young are always taxed on the capital gain. Right now it's \$750,000. When I went in Ontario, I realized that farms were worth much more than \$750,000.

To help the young, would you be in favour of raising this limit to at least \$1 million for the transfer between parents and kids? At \$1 million, it is still not a big farm, especially if you take the quota into account. As you say Mrs. Knapton, at \$30,000 a quota, you get to \$1 million pretty fast. Would you agree that this initiative might help some young people go into farming?

[English]

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** Absolutely, because another factor you need to consider in succession is that, for instance, in my case, Mom and Dad are going to give me the farm, but I'll have to buy out my brother. It's not fair for them to just give me all those assets immediately. I think something like that would be very beneficial for sure. I will be paying out to my brother as well.

So yes, absolutely.

[Translation]

**Ms. France Bonsant:** I have another brief question for Mr. Mike Nowosad.

You said earlier that in British Columbia, more and more people are growing things on roofs. There is a reason for that. Organic farming is becoming more and more important for people. There are a lot of food products that come from other countries and we do not know how they came here. We often find out that there is salmonella in baby carrots from California. People are a bit worried about the safety of imported products.

First, growing plants on roofs is consistent with biology; products are fresh and people are sure they will not pay too much. I would

suggest that you go more into biology. Having said that, do you think that if you go into organic products, it will be more expensive at the beginning, as far as selling your products?

• (1645)

[English]

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** I'm not familiar enough with organic farming to answer that question, although, once again, coming over in the taxi with Ashley and learning a little bit about her background—you can maybe help me out on this part, Ashley—there doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason in how you define “organic”. I think that's probably a difficulty.

And consumers in Canada are...I don't know. Consumers in Canada—boy, I don't want to have this on the record—aren't that smart when it comes to organic food. If you tell them it's organic, they'll buy the darn thing and they won't know where the heck it came from.

There needs to be some sort of—

[Translation]

**Ms. France Bonsant:** Labelling.

[English]

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Exactly.

Ashley?

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I don't agree with the organic system right now. I would not pay that extra premium for organic food, in my opinion, because I am aware that of the food that comes into the grocery store, 99% of it doesn't have pesticide residue on it. It's tightly regulated, but people don't realize that. People just think that conventional food automatically has pesticides on it, and that's not the case.

I think the shift really needs to be toward local food, because I think local food is the healthier food. It's going to be the freshest. You know exactly where it's coming from. That's what I think you need to worry about.

I think you need to educate people on the pesticide residue issue—basically that there is none. I mean, it has been proven that in terms of the health benefits between the two, there's not a big difference.

**The Chair:** That's it for the time, Madame Bonsant—

[Translation]

**Ms. France Bonsant:** Just a brief question, there is still time.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm going to be generous today, France.

[Translation]

**Ms. France Bonsant:** You're kind, Mr. Chairman.

As you say, we have to educate the urban population. If the urban population doesn't go to the rural population, why don't you do some theme days in schools? Why don't you go in the schools, if they don't come to you? I am sure that it will help them to bring—I am not talking about bringing the whole farm... Educate people, take them there. Instead of having only one class, you'll have the whole school.  
[English]

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** In Ontario and in British Columbia, they're using 4-H. You can earn a high school credit. If you take 4-H, you get a credit out of it, so there is some education that's taking place and it's certainly being recognized as a credit.

I agree totally with you in terms of agricultural education. I mentioned agriculture in the classroom; it has to be developed so that there's a unified national initiative for agriculture in the classroom.

One of the areas that we're looking at, in terms of urban, is after-school programming. This doesn't specifically answer your question in terms of education, but I will use the example of the partnership that we had with RBC in Kingston, Ontario, last year. The Boys and Girls Club was looking for programming opportunities and we were looking for new members. So the Boys and Girls Club, urban kids that don't know one thing about agriculture, did a foods project. It was a successful project, they are going to repeat it this year, and they're going to increase the numbers twofold.

So I agree.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

You can never say I never give you a little extra, France.

Okay, Mr. Richards, for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Bonsant, I have to tell you that knowing how stingy this chairman is with time, you may have wasted that one chance you were going to get. I was going to ask a question quite similar to what you just did, so you could have saved yourself.

Thank you all for being here—on short notice, I understand. We certainly appreciate that. It's always good to have young folks here to speak with us. I have to say that had I been your age speaking to a parliamentary committee, I would have been quite nervous. If you are, you certainly aren't showing it, so good job.

I have two questions. I'll ask the first one and then ask you to answer it as quickly as you are able to so that we can get to the second one and we don't have this guy cutting me off and pulling the hook on me.

The first question is this. I notice both of you talked about whether there's a future in farming for yourself. One of you seems to think that you're interested in being on the farm; the other one is not so sure about that and thinks probably not. In your 4-H groups at home, and in the association you've had provincially or nationally with other 4-H'ers, would you find that this would be fairly common, that about 50:50 are interested in being in farming? Is it less than that, more than that? What's been your experience?

• (1650)

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** I would say it's pretty split. It depends on the area and it depends on the person. I guess you could just say I'm

crazier to be wanting to farm. It's hard to say, but yes, there's absolutely a split.

It depends on other factors, too. It depends on if there are siblings. I know in my case, if James, my brother, had been interested, my parents would have made it as fair as possible. But that's not always the case. Some succession stories are pretty rough and they're not passing the farm on fairly. That's an issue in some cases, but I would say it's split.

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** I think another thing is that, education-wise, I found that the older I got in 4-H—I was already away doing post-secondary education—I was learning more about different types of agriculture, after I'd already made the choice not to go into agriculture. I learned about different things that weren't just dairy. So now I'm looking more at agri-tourism, working with the people, educating the public about agriculture.

Learning later on about different types...changed how I looked at it. If I'd learned that earlier, I might have had a different path in life.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** That actually might provide a fairly good lead-in to my next question. It's been talked about a bit today already, the idea of educating the public so that they understand about agriculture and about where their food comes from.

I represent an area in Alberta that's quite heavily into agriculture. I do have Banff National Park, so I have tourism, and I have some other areas as well, but agriculture is quite a heavy portion of what drives the economy in my riding. Yet we border Calgary on two sides of my riding and you could probably drive about 20 minutes off the closest farm in my riding and then be in downtown Calgary. Even though you're that close to the farm, you could probably walk down the street in downtown Calgary and ask people where their food comes from. And many of them, if you ask them, would say the grocery store, or they'd make some kind of a comment like that. They don't really understand what's involved in producing that food and growing that food and then getting it from the farm and the field, from the pen, from wherever, to the grocery store shelf. That's something that probably needs to change, obviously, and you've indicated yourselves that you think people need to have a better understanding of that.

I've had different suggestions on how that might be done. I'd be interested in hearing both of our young witnesses here today comment on this.

Also, I would be interested in your opinion and thoughts on that, Mr. Lancaster, as a communications and marketing person.



I'll just throw out one specific thing—and I'm certainly open to other ideas and I'd like to hear them. I had a suggestion made to me once that I thought was not a bad idea. I don't know how it would be structured and who would do something like this and who would set it up, but it was the idea of a marketing campaign, be it a TV commercial or whatever it might be, that shows a product on the grocery store shelf and then just flashes through the different points in production to show how it got there. I'd be curious on your thoughts and your opinions on that and whether you have other suggestions and ideas.

As I said, this is to the two young witnesses and Mr. Lancaster as well.

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** As we mentioned, the classroom would be one of the easiest ways, because then you're hitting as many kids as possible. As you just said, there's television, and there's using the new electronic means through Facebook, through Twitter, e-mail, that kind of thing.

The other thing that I've really experienced myself is this. Each year we take our 4-H projects to the SuperEx in downtown Ottawa. It's a bit of a hike, but it's a completely different group of kids you're seeing. In a lot of cases, I've had kids come up and ask me what the animals were. It blows my mind that they don't even know what a cow is.

That's a really easy way to educate kids. That's the whole point of those days—they're called the dairy days—when you bring in your dairy calves and show them. The announcer talks a bit about the industry.

I think that would be an interesting and hands-on kind of way to do it.

• (1655)

**Ms. Gillian MacDougall:** A bit outside of 4-H, I worked at the Agriculture Museum last summer and this year. I think that's a great way to get city kids to learn about it. It's in downtown Ottawa. It's so easy to bring the kids. We have maybe not all the different animals but the general basic animals. The kids get to go around and see. You get to talk about the chickens. You ask why we have these animals in the barn.

So it would be stuff like that, where the kids can go and see stuff. I know we can't put up a farm downtown in every city, but I think having that in Ottawa is a great bonus for everyone, for all the kids who live here.

**Mr. Ken Lancaster:** There are a couple of things we ourselves are working on. One of our main sponsors has graciously offered some advertising time at the Calgary Stampede this coming summer, and they're working on an advertisement right now showing the linkages between 4-H and where it leads to in terms of leadership. One of the commercials involves a young boy showing his steer at a competition and—flash—the next thing you know he has a motorcycle, because he sold his steer and bought the motorcycle. As far as 4-H is concerned, that's a way to get kids interested in the 4-H program and show them what it can give to them.

Certainly from a marketing perspective, we've talked about going into the schools. We've talked about the importance of going into the urban areas, and I think there is a thirst for knowledge there, to find

out more about production, to find out more about where food is coming from. We've talked about the “eat local” movement, and I have never seen kids not get excited the first time they see a cow. I remember making a presentation to a group of kids up in Sandy Hill last summer, and they were a little disappointed when I didn't have a trailer with horses and cows with me.

Bringing the farm to the city is something we really believe is a huge step in terms of promoting agriculture and how close it really is. You talk about Calgary, but Ottawa is the same way. Go twenty minutes and you're in the valley, surrounded by farms.

I think fundamentally the interest is there. It's just how to bring it to them. That's what we need to find out. It might involve closing off a couple of city blocks and setting up a farm for a day. That might be a fantastic way to encourage people to go out and learn more about agriculture and the role that they can play, and also about where their food is coming from.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Thank you very much. I appreciate your comments, and I appreciate the fact that you're working hard to try to educate the public about agriculture.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now move to Mr. Eyking for five minutes.

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I thank the witnesses for coming today. As a former 4-H leader, I know a lot about the program. In the last couple of weeks we've heard a lot from young people, potentially young farmers, about why they're not going into farming. It's mostly because, as many of you mentioned, of the high capital investment and low returns.

But let's assume that maybe we can get that turned around over the next few years. Ideally, if we have better programs maybe, or even some of the pricings... Maybe we should have a floor price for certain products, or maybe there should be a marketing board, as Alex said, for some of the tree fruits.

That being said, Mike, you mentioned the U.S. and how their 4-H group was reaching out to the non-farm young people. My fear is that in the next few years there will be so many young people not interested, it's going to be hard to bring them back. But that being said, there might be a lot of young people in urban or suburban areas who want to get into food production or farming.

Now, some of the tax laws we have here, specifically capital gains, are mostly geared to inter-family transfers. Do you think maybe—and you can allude a little bit to what is happening in the United States—we should be making it easier, besides the training, for these young people who are off the farm to get in there? You mentioned mentoring, but I mean more like providing help if they want to get into partnerships.

Should there be a kind of overall program where you'd have tax laws, maybe, or incentives, partnerships, mentoring? How do you see that going in? Could you also talk a little bit about what you were saying about what they're doing in the United States?

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** I certainly see merit in what you're describing in respect to the fact that somehow there has to be a connection made. We can go into urban centres and we can educate and teach young people more about agriculture. But that's just one point. The next step is to make that connection between how they're going to get out of downtown Toronto, downtown Quebec City, downtown Calgary and actually make it into agricultural production. So we definitely see that there has to be that connection made somehow.

I'm not sure how you do it, quite frankly. Certainly Agriculture Canada has a database of farmers, and as they're getting older... As one committee member mentioned, if he has three or four kids who aren't going into agriculture, where's the farm going to go? So perhaps a database could be developed to make that connection. As Ashley mentioned, there was the young fellow in her area who actually partnered with a family that was going to pass on their farm to that individual.

In terms of the U.S., I think some of the stuff they are doing really relates to partnering with different organizations in creating that education. When they did the science initiative, they partnered with a lot of companies, so there was money in the system to actually educate young people about agriculture and science. I think that's something we have to do.

One of the things about the program in the U.S., though, is that they really are, to a great extent, losing their rural roots, but right now the U.S. 4-H program is the largest youth-serving organization in the United States of America. It's hard to believe that the Scouts and Guides aren't bigger than 4-H. But 4-H is bigger.

Interestingly enough, when you were a 4-H member you probably did your club work...and I don't know whether it took place over the full course of a year, but in the U.S., the way they're counting their numbers is that it's almost anecdotal, where you're going to have a 4-H club that is going to be in a very specific timeframe, and it's a very short timeframe.

One of the problems that we and other youth organizations in Canada are experiencing is the shortage of 4-H leaders. I'll give you an example. When we realized that our numbers were going down by about 2% a year, we introduced a program called "Make your Escape!" to encourage young people to get into 4-H. This was all done through print, and a little bit of radio, advertising. In the space of less than a month, we had 5,000 hits on our website for kids in the greater Toronto area to go into 4-H. There were 5,000 hits, but guess how many youth we put into 4-H? Zero. There weren't any leaders for them in—

● (1700)

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** I don't want to cut you off, but I'd just like to follow up your thought about the Toronto area. Most of the immigrants we have coming into our country are from rural areas—

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Exactly.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** —in Pakistan and India. So they have a love for or a concept of farming. It seems that when they come to urban centres, I don't know if they see a wall up and can't see themselves farming or the opportunity is not there, but shouldn't 4-H play a bigger role in reaching out to the ethnic groups, to those young people or their children? I'm sure the parents would like to see their

children somehow involved with agricultural and food production, but it seems that they see a wall and can't do that as soon as they get into these urban centres. Shouldn't there be more of a bridging with these ethnic groups who are from agricultural backgrounds?

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Let me tell you my vision of 4-H in urban centres. We're moving forward pretty quickly on developing strategies for entrants to 4-H in urban centres, but my vision is to see the Canadian 4-H Council advertising for 4-H on our website, any which way you want to do it, in social media in Hindi and Mandarin and all sorts of languages, because I agree totally with you that there is a connection to be made.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** It's a good idea.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Following up on what Mark was saying, in a lot of the countries he was referring to, 75% or more of their disposable income—and that is the case in many developing countries—goes to purchase food. In Canada that figure is hovering around 10%, and it's shrunk from about 16% not that many years ago.

Do you think that's a factor in...? I guess compared to our wages here and what have you, when they're only spending 10% on the food, they say, "Why would I go out and farm when I come to Canada? I only have to spend 10% of my total disposable income on food."

Do you think that has any effect?

● (1705)

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** I think that might have some effect on it. I suspect that when immigrants come to urban centres, they basically stay in their own communities. That's a difficulty in terms of not really getting out into other traditional Canadian programs.

But yes, that definitely could be a factor.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now we move to Mr. McColeman for five minutes.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I too would like to underscore our thanks for having you here and giving us the knowledge you have.

I come from a riding which is all-mixed rural and which has a very large aboriginal population, so I'm interested in going down that line. In one initiative in our community—I'm wondering if you've seen anything similar to this where 4-H has been involved—we have an educator by the name of Jean Emmott. Her husband, Bill, is chair of the milk marketing board in Ontario. She runs a program called "Bite on Brant". She brings 800 students over the course of three days to the Burford Fairgrounds, where she has set up something that I would say is similar to a trade show: booths to show the students where their food comes from; how it's produced, to the point of having packaging there showing where all the ingredients in the pizza came from; and relating to the students this way.

It's been hugely successful over the years in educating urban children at a very young age. I'm wondering if 4-H has ever looked at that kind of model in terms of outreach education. Have you considered or done similar things?

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** I'm going to let Ken talk about the introduction of 4-H into schools.

Ken, do you want to talk about the back-to-school promotion programs we're working on with the provinces?

**Mr. Ken Lancaster:** Again, we've identified where youth are congregating. Generally speaking, it's in the schools, and I think we've seen opportunity there for the kids. This is a place of learning, but they love the hands-on element.

Mike mentioned agriculture in the classroom as an example. It's doing a national component where we can bring 4-H into those schools and work with the school boards to bring different elements there. For us, it's what the 4-H program is about, so it includes those agricultural components as well as what they can do and what they can get involved in.

The schools are looking more and more like a natural place for us to get involved.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Yes. I'd just pass that along as a model. I can certainly give you Jean's contact information. It has grown from a very small undertaking to a three-day event. The city of Brantford has a population of just under 100,000, so there are quite a number of elementary and high schools in our area.

Bite on Brant has expanded, and it's been huge in terms of educational outreach. Instead of going into the schools, they bring the urban students out not to the farm but a display. There's a dairy there. There are egg farmers. Every sector is represented, and it's real. The kids can see how their food begins and is processed and the end products; they can connect all the dots.

In that regard, I'd like to hear more about the "buy local" initiatives in terms of the things 4-H might have done or might be doing in the future. I think there is a huge opportunity in local markets on weekends. In our community's case we have a weekend market in the urban area, which runs Friday and Saturday. It's huge in our community, and people come.

Does 4-H ever get involved in promotion at those markets to talk to consumers and do the things you were talking about in terms of buy local?

•(1710)

**Ms. Ashley Knapton:** In my club specifically, we have gone into the farmers market. We went to the local school and different places like that where we were hitting a different demographic and educating them, not necessarily about the whole food system but even just 4-H, trying to get more kids out and get more kids involved. Since we go to a lot of fairs with our calves, one of the things our club is really big on is teaching us how to talk to city people. As Ken said, they like to be hands-on. One of the biggest questions we always get asked at the fairs is if it's all right to touch the calves. So we teach them how to bring them in and we talk to them about where their food is coming from. Our club is really trying to get outside the box.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Excellent.

The last point I'd like you to share with us is on the aboriginal community. In my case there is a 12,500 population on Six Nations of the Grand River. There is a huge potential to cultivate new farm operations and getting people into farming. Typically, these economies have not been robust on first nations territories. What are some of the initiatives through which you see an opportunity going forward?

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** In 2004 we did a survey of the aboriginal community. We surveyed 400 bands, individuals, chiefs, etc., and we asked whether they were interested in aboriginal 4-H. The response rate was 98% yes. It was very positive in that regard, so through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada funding we introduced a pilot program in six provinces. We were introducing 4-H to the aboriginal community. In 2008 the Saskatchewan 4-H Council experienced the only growth in 4-H across the country, and it was exclusively due to aboriginal 4-H programming.

There is a significant commitment right now from provincial governments, especially in the west, and certainly Nova Scotia is a province that is interested concerning aboriginal 4-H, but there are two problems. Of the two roadblocks we experienced in terms of aboriginal 4-H, number one is cost. Aboriginal 4-H members find it difficult to provide \$50 for an annual membership fee. I find that hard to believe, but it is a fact. The second thing is there is no history of volunteerism in the aboriginal community. As a result, there is a cost element with regard to needing dedicated staff. In each province through our program, we have had one or two dedicated staff working with 4-H members, training the young adults—there are a lot of young parents in the aboriginal community—and teaching them how to be volunteer leaders. That's going to be a generational thing.

We're currently in the process of trying to reintroduce the aboriginal program through federal funding, and that would be a partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. We are having some difficulties in that regard concerning sourcing the money. I really can't speak more to that, because right now it's in the hands of the department, but I know there is difficulty getting money out of INAC. That would be huge for us to continue the programming because there is a market for young people to really make an awful lot of things out of their lives. Certainly we have the youth organization contacts, Scouts, Guides, National Association of Friendship Centres. I would love to see a 4-H club in every friendship centre in urban centres in Canada because they have the infrastructure. They have the buildings etc., and there is an awful lot of opportunity there.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** I have just one quick comment, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Just a short point. I'm really generous today, so go ahead, Phil.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** I'm a visitor to the committee today, just filling in. My comment is to the extent that the committee continues to study this, I think there are huge opportunities in the area. I want to take your comments, Mike, and underscore those as areas where we can make a difference in aboriginal communities with the kind of programming you are talking about.

•(1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Phil.

With that, I want to thank all of you for coming here today again at such short notice. As I said earlier, a number of committee members have come up through 4-H and we know it to be a great organization. All the best to you in your future endeavours.

Thanks again for coming here. We will be doing a report, which we hope to get tabled in the House before Parliament breaks in June. Your testimony is going to be a good part of it.

Thank you again for being here.

**Mr. Mike Nowosad:** Thank you very much.

Just before you close the meeting, I would encourage the Government of Canada to take advantage of the 4-H program. We are a partner with the government through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

You need young people front row and centre in terms of the optimism that there is in agriculture. Please take advantage of us. We'd love to be more closely partnered with you.

Thank you for your indulgence in my one-minute speech.

**The Chair:** That's okay. Thanks again.

To the committee, we are going to adjourn. We will finish our cross-country travel, as you know, starting in Quebec on Monday and finishing up in P.E.I. on Thursday.

Our next meeting back here, because the 24th is a holiday Monday, will be on May 26.

The meeting is adjourned. We'll see most of the committee on Sunday or Monday.

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