

1. Council Convenes - O Canada - Warden Keith Hunter called to order a meeting of Cumberland Municipal Council on Wednesday, January 17, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers of the E. D. Fullerton Municipal Building in Upper Nappan, NS. The national anthem was sung. Warden Hunter welcomed everyone present and wished them a happy and prosperous new year. The Warden referenced the priority list that has been set out by Council, and indicated that it will be a very busy year, indeed. (Councillor John Reid joined the meeting at this point)
2. Roll Call - The roll was called by the Executive Secretary, Constance Scott. All Councillors were in attendance.
3. Approval of Agenda (additions / deletions) - The agenda was approved with the following additions and deletions: 11.6 Organizational Chart, 16.1 Council meetings, 13.2 Department of Transportation . There were two deletions: #7, Public Hearings, and #5 Personnel Policy.

Introduction of New Staff Member - Mr. Ron Moore, Solid Waste and By-Law Enforcement Officer was introduced by his immediate supervisor, Peter Cottingham. Ron started work on January 2, and has been busy already. He was welcomed by the Warden and Council.

4. Approval of Minutes
 - 4.1 December 6, 2006 - The minutes of the December 6, 2006 Council meeting were approved as presented.
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
 - 5.1 Action List - December 6, 2006 - Council reviewed the list of actions resulting from the December 6, 2006 Council meeting. There were no questions.
6. Delegations and Presentations
 - 6.1 Accessible Community Transportation - A report from Sharon Murphy, a representative of the Accessible Community Transportation was included in the meeting package. A Committee has been formed locally, and is looking at providing accessible transportation in the Amherst area. Ms. Murphy requested that Council consider appointing a representative to the committee, which meets at 1:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month. Ms. Murphy expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with members of the Council to discuss this issue.

It was agreed that Council appoint Connie Scott to represent the Municipality of Cumberland on the Accessible Community Transportation Committee.

- 6.2 Federation of Agriculture- Lawrence Nason, Chief Executive Officer of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture was welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Nason gave a presentation to Council to explain the current circumstances of the agricultural industry and the position the industry has

taken with respect to public investment and involvement in agriculture.

The Federation's presentation is quite lengthy, and is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

It was moved by Councillor K. Langille, seconded by Councillor G. Read, that the Council support the initiatives put forth by the Federation of Agriculture regarding Cumberland County and Nova Scotian farmers.

MOTION CARRIED #07- 001

7. Public Hearings - There were no public hearings.

8. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received since the last session of Council:

Dave Gilmore, Collingwood Corner

1. Regarding solid waste management services in District 6. *Mr. Gilmore's concerns will be replied to in writing by the Clerk, and he will be advised of details with regard to the next municipal election.*

CIS Nova Scotia

1. Cathryn Steel, Communications Strategist, enclosing a copy of the first annual report. *For information, available for review.*

N.S. Transportation and Public Works

1. Roger Garby, P.Eng., Construction Manager, advising of the 2007/2008 cost sharing program for paving of local and subdivision streets.

NS Utility and Review Board

1. To advise that an extension (until March 16, 2007) to the Boundary review has been approved.

Celebrate Canada

1. Applications for funding of events have been put in Councillor's mailboxes.

National Flag of Canada Day

1. A sample proclamation was provided, and referred to the Warden (February 15)

9. Planning Issues

- 9.1 Planning Appeal - PID 23199845 - The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board advised that the Town of Parrsboro has appealed Council's decision to approve rezoning of property identified as Lot 81-1, PID 23199845 and

located on the west side of Highway Nol. 2, Cross Roads, to permit a service station. The UARB staff advised a hearing date will be set later.

Jim Coughlin, Planner, informed Council that on Monday, January 14, a letter was received from the Minister of Service Nova Scotia requesting the Municipality reverse the decision to permit operation of a service station. The Minister, along with the Minister of Environment expressed concern regarding this action, along with the capability of the DOE staff to enforce their own regulations. The Minister also stated there may be information that was not available when Council made their original decision, and his staff would provide every assistance with respect to further investigation.

Mr. Coughlin recommended to Council that the Municipality take the Minister up on his offer to locate and review this information, with a view to possibly a third alternative with respect to a reasonable alternative, such as a development agreement with specific conditions.

It was suggested that the Town of Parrsboro should purchase the property.

The Minister can request the Municipality to withdraw a planning decision, or he can over-ride our planning decision. Jim Coughlin suggested a meeting with all parties, to look for a third solution that would, hopefully, result in a positive outcome for all concerned.

10. Financial Reports/Issues

10.1 Recreation Grant Requests - **It was moved by Councillor J. Reid, seconded by Councillor E. Gilbert that the following recreation grants be approved, as recommended by the local area Councillor:**

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Chignecto Glooscap Snowmobile Association | Dist 9 | \$500 |
| Joggins River Hebert Recreation Commission - School sports teams | Dist. 9 | \$4000 |
| | Dist 8 | \$500 |
| | Dist 2 | \$500 |
| Encounters in Leadership - 2 RDHS Students (Stacey Glennie and Ashley Brown) | Dist 9 | \$50 |
| | Dist 9 | \$50 |
| Southampton Recreation Association | Dist 8 | \$1000 |

MOTION CARRIED #07-002

11. Operational Services Reports/Issues

11.1 Fire Protection Services - Dry Hydrant Policy - **It was moved by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor J. Reid that the Fire Protection Services - Dry Hydrant Policy be adopted as presented.**

MOTION CARRIED #07-003

- 11.2 Fire Protection Services - Registration Policy - It was moved by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor J. Reid that the Fire Protection Services - Registration Policy be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED #07-004

- 11.3 Rescue Vehicle Update - The Cumberland County Fire Fighters' Association report regarding rescue vehicles was submitted for information.
- 11.4 Fire Protection Services Coordinator Report - Provided for information.
- 11.5 Fire Protection Services Training Questionnaire - John Fredericks reported that there was considerable feedback on this questionnaire, from every department in the County. This information will be used to develop a training policy and plan for the fire service. Mr. Bugley indicated that staff will look into the specific instance that Councillor G. Langille referred to.
- 11.6 Classification System / Organizational Chart - It was moved by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor Redmond approve the classification system and organizational chart, and give the CAO the latitude to make the necessary adjustments and appointments.

MOTION CARRIED #07-005

12. Committee/Other Reports

- 12.1 UNSM - A report from the UNSM regarding Board Meeting outcomes from December 15, 2006 was included in the meeting package.
- 12.2 Council Committees - There was some discussion relative to the Council Committee listing as presented.

It was moved by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor G. Read that the North Tyndal Wellfield Committee be deleted from the Committee list.

MOTION CARRIED #07-006

It was moved by Councillor Reid seconded by Councillor Gilbert that Councillor John Kellegrew be appointed to the Occupational Health And Safety Committee.

MOTION CARRIED #07-007

It was moved by Councillor Gilbert, seconded by Councillor K. Langille that three Councillors be appointed to the Succession Planning Committee: Deputy Warden Merriam, Councillor J. Reid and Councillor J. Kellegrew.

MOTION CARRIED #07-008

It was agreed to delete the Entrance Development Committee from the list. Membership on the Fundy Shore Committee was reduced to G. Read and R.

Merriam.

- 12.3 CCRSB School Closure Report - A copy of the CCRSB's submission to the team that is doing a Review of the School Closure Process in Nova Scotia was sent.
- 12.4 Personnel Policy - The proposed new "Personnel Policy" was included in the meeting package. It was agreed that a separate meeting would be held next week to deal with this item.
- 12.5 Rural Caucus Meeting Minutes - Provided for information.

13. Old Business

- 13.1 Meeting Dates - After discussion, it was agreed that the Council would reserve the first and third Wednesdays of the months for Council or committee meetings.
- 13.2 CBC Radio Reception - *It was suggested that correspondence be sent to the CBC Radio to suggest that they might be able to rent tower space and install receivers on the new wireless/broadband towers that will be installed in the district three area.*
- 13.3 Department of Transportation - Recently the Department of Transportation announced a decision to add "rumble strips" to sections of NS highways.

It was moved by Councillor G. Langille, seconded by Councillor J. Kellegrew that correspondence be sent to the Minister of Transportation to advise that many people have lost their lives on Nova Scotia roads because of the lack of paved shoulders, and that the Government should ensure that three foot paved shoulders are built on Nova Scotia roads.

MOTION CARRIED #07-009

- 13.4 FCM Conference - Councillors were asked to notify C. Scott as soon as possible regarding their attendance at the FCM Conference, in Calgary in June.

14. New Business

- 14.1 Media Coverage - Joggins Fossil Cliffs - Councillor John Kellegrew reported that before Christmas, a major announcement concerning \$9 million in funding for the Joggins Fossil Cliffs project was received. The event was well attended, and possibly the best 'good news' story in the last number of months. Unfortunately, the Amherst Daily News chose to print a negative story on the front page of the next day's paper "Coach Car Leaving Amherst". The 9 million dollar project received only a small story in the paper, and Councillor Kellegrew was quite upset about this.
- 14.2 2007 Volunteers - A list of time frames for the nominations for Volunteers was circulated. Councillors were asked to submit their nominations to Shelley Hoeg on the prescribed forms as soon as possible. Councillors were asked to contact community organizations, and advertisements will be placed with all of the local media.

- 14.3 2007 Priorities - A list of 2007 Priorities, along with achievements that were done by the Municipality of Cumberland in 2006 was circulated for information.
- 14.4 Boundary Review- The UARB will permit extension until March 16, 2007 of the Municipality's Boundary Review. Staff were asked to provide information for advertisement and information on the website as soon as possible.
- 14.5 CAPSO Report - There was some discussion regarding the CAPSO report, which provided information relative to the most recent meeting, where potential regional service delivery was discussed.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Merriam, seconded by Councillor Gilbert that the CAO and Warden be authorized to Pursue opportunities for regional service delivery at future CAPSO meetings.

MOTION CARRIED #07-010

It was agreed that staff would prepare a report with recommendations regarding Cumberland's priorities.

15. Information Items

- 15.1 Heritage Committee The Heritage Advisory Committee will meet next Wednesday at 10 a.m.
- 15.2 Nominations Committee - Will meet in the near future to review citizen appointments to committees of Council.
- 15.3 Wind Turbine Development - A copy of a news release regarding the Amherst Wind Energy Project was included in the meeting packages. The company (Acciona) has leased lands and applied for an environmental assessment. It needs to bid a new contract with Nova Scotia Power due to a number of factors, such as change in turbine prices.
- 15.4 Draft Legislation - In mailboxes for information.

16. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

17. God Save the Queen

Warden

Chief Administrative Officer

Recording Secretary

INTRODUCTION

[Introductory Remarks – establish credentials and purpose of presentation]

- Purpose: to explain the current circumstances of the agricultural industry and the position the industry has taken with respect to public investment and involvement in agriculture.

THE VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

The Nova Scotia Federation has a long and interesting history

In 1895, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture began representing the interests of Nova Scotia's agricultural community. Today its members account for well over 95% of all agricultural production in Nova Scotia. With an organizational structure that includes representation from 13 county and regional federations and 24 recognized agricultural commodity groups, the Federation brings together over 2,400 individual farm businesses representing all aspects of primary agriculture in the province.

Through its Council of Leaders, comprised of representative from 13 regional federations, 24 agricultural commodity groups women's and youth groups, the Federation brings farm leaders together from across the province to tackle policy issues that impact the competitive and sustainable nature of the industry and to play an active role in advancing the needs of Nova Scotia's agricultural community at the local, regional and national levels.

Throughout all its endeavors, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture maintains a constant approach. That approach is guided by a philosophy that requires: extensive research; strategic planning; creative solutions; efficient implementation; and, accountability.

OUR MISSION

The stated mission of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is:

To ensure a competitive and sustainable future for agriculture and a high quality of rural life in Nova Scotia

We believe that the way to enable a sustainable and competitive agricultural sector and ensure balanced development of the primary agricultural sector through farm businesses that are:

- **Economically viable,**
- **Ecologically sound, and**
- **Socially responsible.**

OUR INDUSTRY

During the past decade, even in the face of enormous set-backs and daunting challenges, primary agriculture has been a growing and dynamic sector of Nova Scotia's economy and the economic and social foundation for its rural communities.

- The farm gate value of food and fibre produced by Nova Scotia's farm businesses in 2005 approaches \$455 million.
- These farm gate sales support an Agri-food sector valued at \$2.3 billion.
- Our agricultural economy directly employs 8,040 Nova Scotians; another 13,200 Nova Scotians are employed in the Agri-food sector.
- Three of every 10 Nova Scotians depend in some way on the Agri-food sector for their employment.
- Each year, farm businesses in Nova Scotia purchase \$386 million worth of goods and services from other businesses in the community.
- Collectively, farmers in Nova Scotia have a \$1.6 billion capital investment in our economy and they continue to invest at a rate of \$60 million a year.
- The yearly investment in primary agriculture out paces all other resource sectors with the exception of gas and oil.
- Nova Scotia agriculture is a world leader in research and the production of carrots, wild blueberries, and fur and strawberry plants.

Among a long list of food and fibre produced annually on Nova Scotia's farms for domestic and export markets are:

- **46,000 beef cattle;**
- **188,000 hogs;**
- **70 million pounds of chicken;**
- **17 million dozen eggs;**
- **167,000 kiloliters of milk;**
- **37,000 gallons of maple syrup;**
- **2.1 million bushels of apples,**
- **58 million pounds of blueberries,**
- **430,000 fur pelts, and**
- **180 million pounds of fresh vegetables.**

This is all changing and changing quickly.

THE CHANGING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT FOR FARM BUSINESSES

I want to provide you with some idea of what is happening and why.

What is changing the face of agriculture,

- and what will eventually change the character of the communities in this municipality.

For a number of years now farm businesses in Nova Scotia have been in a period of exhilarated adaptation.

Adaptation to:

- **new market structures (consolidation of retail sector eg),**
- **regulatory régimes driven by shifting public values,**

- the pressures associated with increasing non-agricultural development,
- modern farm practices and agricultural technology propelled by a necessity for increased productivity, and,
- Most recently climatic change.

Throw into this mix of challenges

- animal disease issues such as BSE,
- Post Weaning Multi Systemic Wasting Syndrome and,
- the expensive precautionary measures that must be taken to protect from diseases such as Avian Flu.

An additional test for farmers has been a fundamental change in the approach to agricultural policy making.

Where once there was a provincial approach to agricultural policy, there is now a federal/provincial approach that has been driven, since 2000, by a federal/provincial agricultural policy framework.

You don't have to think very hard or long to realize that policies designed for red meat producers and grain growers in Western Canada, oil seed producers in Ontario or corn growers in Quebec don't always work that well for our diversified farms here in Nova Scotia.

Canada is a huge and diversified country whichever way you want to look at it – in terms of climate, resources, and markets. What works in one area does not always work in another – that is a fact.

The Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization Program (CAIS) is a prime example. CAIS is a safety net program designed to address acute farm income problems.

Our income problems here are chronic not acute. We starve to death slowly, not all at once.

Joint federal/provincial policy making is popular with provinces like Nova Scotia simply because the Government of Canada pays 60% of the cost of delivering federal/provincial programs and policies.

We have reached the point now where it seems that the Government of Nova Scotia won't spend one plug nickel on agriculture unless they can get three cents of it from Ottawa.

And I reiterate: Agricultural policy made in the national context is not always a good fit with the way our industry is organized here in Nova Scotia.

All of these challenges combined with a retrenchment or shift in the public investment in our industry that has taken place during the past ten years have severely hampered the ability of Nova Scotia's farmers to retain their competitive position while continuing to develop sustainable production systems.

Let me explain what I mean when I say there has been a 'retrenchment or shift' in the public investment in agriculture.

Governments will argue that they have invested millions in ad-hoc funding over the past 5 years. those expenditures have been focused almost entirely on farm income problems;

- low farm income is a symptom of the problem not the root cause of the problem. Little has been focused in that direction.

Today, farm business operators in Nova Scotia have reached a point where they are no longer capable, as individuals or collectively as an industry, of maintaining the level of investment required to meet the challenges that have been placed in their path.

In summary, without a renewed public commitment, Nova Scotia's primary agricultural sector will begin a period of decline that will negatively impact jobs, the economy and jeopardize the food security enjoyed by all Nova Scotians.

That decline has already begun.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Let's take a brief, but more specific look, at what is happening to Nova Scotia's farm businesses.

- **Net cash income** is declining while at the same time net farm expenses are increasing. Operating expenses are raising much faster than farm income

[Graph 1. comparing net operation expenses and net cash income. Graph 2. Receipts, operating expenses and realized net income]

- The **debt load** farmers have accumulated to try and stay in business. Nova Scotia farm businesses are sinking into debt faster than other Canadian farm businesses. Debt load in Nova Scotia has increased by 238% since 1995, the largest increase being in 2004/05 – 119%. In 1998 farm debt surpassed farm receipts for the first time and the gap has continued to grow. Credit is getting tight – lenders are reluctant to lend without security and in many cases assets are already pledged as security.

[Graph 3. showing increase in debt load and farm debt and receipts]

- **Increasing input costs** - Many farm inputs have increased dramatically over the past few years – energy costs, chemical and fertilizer costs, feed costs. Because our farm businesses tend to be smaller and dispersed across the province purchases of inputs cannot always be made at the best market price.

[Graph 4. showing increasing selected input costs]

- **Commodity production** - almost everything we produce now is a commodity not a product that is differentiated in some way that means the consumer will pay above the commodity price. What this means is that we are competing with the lowest cost producer in North America or in some cases the world. In most instances and for varying reasons we are not the low cost producer.
- **The high Canadian dollar** – U.S. producers, who already enjoy a considerable advantage because of the scale of their industry, lower transportation and energy costs and high government subsidies now have a currency advantage. A high Canadian dollar relative to the American dollar adds a price disadvantage to exported product.

- **Regulation** – Farmers are continually faced with regulation that is expensive to implement and manage. Governments continue to introduce higher standards for food safety and traceability as do retailers to ensure consumer acceptance, and farm businesses must continually meet higher food safety and environmental standards to access markets.
- **Labour shortages** – Farmers can no longer compete with social programs for seasonal and harvest labour and skilled labour is becoming increasingly scarce as young Nova Scotians move to more lucrative labour markets.
- **Lack of new farmers** - There always have been and will always be farms going out of business; however in a healthy agricultural economy there are young farmers who will move in to take their place. This is not happening anymore, young people are no longer willing, and in most cases, are not able to raise the capital to begin a new operation or assume control of an existing operation.
- **Consolidation of the retail sector** - Food retailing is now primarily limited to two retailers, with the threat of a third – Wall-Mart - whose centralized purchasing and distribution systems remove advantages for local producers. Farm businesses have to learn to adjust to the demands of retailers.

These are some of the issues that farm businesses are trying to adapt to.

These are some of the issues that are overwhelming farm businesses across the province, and as indicated previously farmers can no longer deal with issues themselves.

If we want an agricultural industry here in Nova Scotia there has to be a new approach to agricultural policy.

And that is the issue that farmers currently have with the government of Nova Scotia.

THE CURRENT DEBATE WITH GOVERNMENT

What is happening now?

On Tuesday January 9th (last week) 500 farm families and others who support a viable and sustainable agriculture industry met in Halifax to impress upon the province's political decision makers the immediate needs of the industry and to call for a new approach to agricultural policy making.

Our message was simple:

Farmers cannot continue to invest in rural Nova Scotia without a long term vision and commitment from their government.

As already noted unrelenting disaster, low commodity prices, changing market structures and changes in farm practice in response to food safety and environmental issues, the state of the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia has changed over the past few years.

Farmers across the province are at the stage where they need to receive some assurance of their ability to remain in business. They also need to receive some level of recognition for the investment they have already made in adapting to the economic realities and changing nature of agriculture in this province.

Government needs to continue to recognize and acknowledge the importance of our industry to the economy and to a sustainable rural environment.

Farmers in Nova Scotia have historically demonstrated that they are willing to take risks to stay in business; however, they can no longer take those risks alone. They need the assistance and confidence of government while they adjust to the new conditions that are shaping the agri-food industry.

Farmers in Nova Scotia need to have a long term commitment from their government that agriculture is a valued part of the future. It is the farmers of this province who make the investments and take the risks to provide the level of food security we currently have; however, they cannot do it alone.

The question we asked

If the Government of Nova Scotia does not intend to make the commitments necessary to sustain a viable agriculture industry they should admit it now. They should acknowledge that the farm sector will shrink and that this is acceptable to all Nova Scotians; at least then, farmers and the agribusiness community will know what to do. Do Nova Scotians want a sustainable primary agricultural sector?

We did not get an answer. What we get is a long lists of things that have been done

WHAT WE WANT IS A REAL COMMITMENT (CHILDREN)

WHAT STARTED THE CURRENT DEBATE?

Last summer and fall the Minister of agriculture met with most of the province's commodity groups to ask them about their needs and the issues they faced with respect to adapting to the conditions noted previously. This was done under the auspices of taking a single industry package to his government.

On December 1, 2006, the Minister announced the 'package' at the Federation's Annual General Meeting.

A \$9.7 million package.

Quote A "three-point plan designed to reward sound businesses planning and help debt reduction." "This investment is good for farmers, the agriculture industry and taxpayers," reported the Minister, "we must position our industry to become more competitive and sustainable." unquote

Part of that statement is bang on - "we must position our industry to become more competitive and sustainable."

That is exactly what farmers across the province are trying to do – position themselves to become more competitive.

That is where the help is needed.

An industry, in which farm families in some sectors are struggling to keep their homes, was not overly impressed with the announcement and took exception with the words "This investment is good for farmers," it does little to alleviate the current financial situation which many farm families face.

Even though the Government, in a recent government press release issued on said:

quote "It is time to make more strategic decisions" unquote;

There was nothing strategic about their December 1st announcement.

The programs announced did not get at the root of the problem and it is arguable if they even treat the symptoms. They were certainly came no where close to addressing the issues the industry communicated to the Minister during the previous six months.

Given the current state of their industry, I think farmers can be forgiven for being a bit skeptical with respect to the announcement.

- \$2 million to be paid out immediately based on 2003 CAIS margins. Divide that by the 1000+ farm businesses involved in the CAIS program in 2003. I would also note: 47 days later, I am not aware of anyone receiving a payment.
- \$1.5 million for a strategic investment fund to begin when the next provincial budget is passed. The problem here is that no one can say who it will benefit, how it will benefit them or exactly when,
- \$6.2 million to write-off loans that the province had previously made to red meat producers. While all the conditions attached to the write-offs have not been made clear, the conditions that have been suggested will be impossible in many cases to meet. Developing a business plan that shows profitability is a near impossibility given current conditions. Developing a business plan based on making changes to the farm structure – that kind of change takes additional investment, and that the issue isn't it, where will farms find new money when they can't pay their bills now. The third criteria develop an exit strategy – selling the farm is not an option for most.

Again, the loan write-offs will not be made available until after the next provincial budget is passed. A vague target, to say the least; particularly given the current political situation in Nova Scotia.

Here I would like to note something that always gets under my skin.

The loans involved, were provided over the past 2 years, and were announced as a benefit to farmers when they were implemented. The same \$6.2 million was announced again on December 1st 2006, and in all probability the same \$6.2 million will be announced again sometime in 2007.

So, John Q. Public sitting out there following what is going on can be forgiven for thinking that farmers have been the beneficiaries of \$18.6 million before they even have a red cent in their hands.

In summary, while there is a desperate need for immediate assistance in some areas, there is a need for a commitment from government to assist the industry in transitioning itself to current realities and strategic investment to ensure that we are in a position to continue to react as things change in the future.

Farmers need that commitment now so they can make the kinds of decisions that will have to be made by most farm businesses in the province in the near future.

If government is unwilling to make that commitment, farmers need to know and so do the communities that are dependent upon agriculture.

There is some serious planning that has to take place at the farm level if farmers are going to transition their businesses to a successful future.

There is some serious planning to do if agriculture is going to continue n decline both at the farm level and the community level.

(Kings County – Town of Berwick reference)

WHAT DOES THE DECLINE IN AGRICULTURE MEAN FOR THE COMMUNITY?

What does the decline in agriculture mean for the community?

I don't think that I have to spend a lot of time explaining that one to municipal leaders here in this community.

I think you are all well aware of the economic, social and environmental consequences of a decline in agriculture.

You will see:

A decline in economic activity

A decline in your tax base

A change in the demographic make up of your communities will take place as young people continue to move away to find work.

A decline in community aesthetics as fields grows up in bushes and fences and buildings fall into disrepair.

The accompanying decline in tourism.

Add to those more obvious impacts, the loss of food security that our industry provides and associated health implications.

The implications of a decline in agriculture are the subject of another address to Council, which the Federation would be pleased to do sometime in the future.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your interest and I would invite you to join the Municipality of the County of Kings in their efforts to support agriculture and prevent its decline.

Thank you