Agriculture & the Risk of Conflict in the New Rural Community

by

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Maritime Pork Congress, Nov. 7-9, 2002. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
Recent Newspaper Headlines

Concern over increased livestock operations
Could Huron become toilet of Ontario?
(Huron Expositor August 6/97)

Proposed Dunnville sow operation undeterred
by persistent protesters
(Ontario Farmer July 9 2002)

Private Member’s Bill Tackles “mega” Hog
Farm Threats
(Ontario Farmer July 2, 2002)

Newsletter calls for action to clean up Lake Huron
(Exeter Times Advocate, Aug. 97)
• Grim Picture of Environmental Damage  
  (Huron Expositor August 6/97)

• Farmers present nutrient management strategy to rural municipalities  
  (Exeter Times Advocate, Feb. 18/98)

• Pork board launches p.r. effort aimed at neighbours  
  (Ontario Farmer April 9 2002)
Some unrelated ... but Actual Newspaper Headlines

- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
- Farmer Bill Dies in House
- Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Ax
- Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told
- Deer Kill 17,000
- Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
- Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
Group wants moratorium on intensive operations
Agriculture and the New Rural Community: Agenda

• Trends in Agriculture
• Changes in the Rural Community
• Characteristics of the New Rural Community
• Issues for Agriculture in the New Rural Community
  - Potential Conflict & Potential Risk
• Coping in the New Rural Community:
  - Strategies for Agriculture
Figure 1: Huron County in Southern Ontario
USDA’s Vision of Risk Management
(www.usda.gov)

• Production Risk: yields will be lower than desired due to weather or some other unpredictable event.

• Marketing Risk: prices will be lower than desired due to volatile market conditions.

• Financial Risk: returns from production will not be great enough to support a farm over time.

• Legal Risk: legal issues, such as interpretations of contract provisions and environmental obligations, will threaten the cash income of farms.

• Human Resource Risk: events affecting human resources, such as death, illness, or poor personnel management, will seriously disrupt an agricultural operation.
A New Risk: Agriculture and the Risk of Conflict in the New Rural Community

The need for appropriate risk management strategies
So…What are some of the characteristics of the “New Rural Community”?
Trends in Agriculture

- Increasing Size & Scale of Production
- Specialization
- Efficiencies of Production
Improvements in Energy Efficiency for Grain Corn Production in Ontario: 1975 vs. 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Production (million tonnes)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop Area (thousand hectares)</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Energy Use (million L. DFE*)</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency (L DFE per tonne)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Litres of Diesel Fuel Equivalent

- **Between 1951 and 1991 Corn yields increased from 3.4 to 6.9 tonnes / hectare (103% increase)**
Dairy Production (Ontario)*

Between 1951 and 1991:

• milk production increased by 2.9% with 849,000 fewer animals
• the number of dairy farmers dropped from 40,000 to 9,757 (2001-6414)
• the average herd size increased from 23 to 45 cows
• the land base required to support the 1951 dairy herd was 1,079,200 hectares vs. 505,800 hectares in 1991

Chicken Production (Ontario)

Between 1951 and 1991:

• Meat production increased from 45 to 299 M Kg.
• The land base required to produce chickens increased from 96,150 to 117,226 hectares
• Feed efficiency (Kg of feed/ Kg of chicken) improved from 6 to 1.85
• The amount of manure generated to produce 1 Kg of chicken dropped from 12.6 Kg to 3.88 Kg.
Pork Production (Ontario)

Between 1951 and 1991:

• Pork Production increased from 2.69 M to 3.93 M
• Feed efficiency (Kg feed/Kg lean pork) improved from 16.1 to 9.8
• the number of pork producers dropped from 93,564 to 8940
• the land base required to support pork production dropped from 727,000 hectares to 371,000
Trends in Agriculture

- Farming as Business
- International Market Place
Trends in Agriculture

- Vertical Integration
- Role of technology

Number of Biotechnology Companies in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Trends in Agriculture

**Farms with gross farm receipts greater than farm operating expenses (Canada)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts Category</th>
<th>1995 Number</th>
<th>1995 Percentage</th>
<th>2000 Number</th>
<th>2000 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$24,999</td>
<td>35,160</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>24,070</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$99,999</td>
<td>62,481</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>46,009</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$249,999</td>
<td>46,263</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>39,606</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>23,446</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>30,040</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All farms</td>
<td>167,350</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>139,725</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Change in the family farm**
- **Tenure**

*Trends in Agriculture*
Trends in Agriculture

• Environmental Liability
Trends in Agriculture

- Increasing Size and Scale of Production
- Specialization
- Efficiencies of Production
- Farming as Business
- International Market Place
- Vertical Integration
- Role of technology
- Change in the family farm
- Tenure
- Environmental Liability
Change in the Rural Community

• Change in Rural Demographics
  - rural, farm and non-farm development
• The Countryside As A Common Resource
• Environmental Awareness, Liability, Regulation and Politics
• An Evolving Agricultural Industry
• Normal Farming Practices
• Agriculture Versus Other Development
Agriculture in the New Rural Community

Agricultural, social and economic change has changed the way agriculture is viewed in the countryside. Some Characteristics:

• Altered (reduced) role for agriculture (globalization)
• Much greater diversity in the rural community
• Much greater diversity in agriculture
• Public space in the countryside
• Agriculture perceived as an industry
• Pervasiveness of urban influences
• Remember nearly 98% of Canada’s population is non-farm
Issues For Agriculture in the New Rural Community:
Potential Conflict & Potential Risk

- perceptual issues
- competition for land & inflated land values
- non-farm development and evolving rural landscape
Issues For Agriculture: Potential Conflict & Potential Risk

• loss of local political clout
• local planning policy that is not supportive of agriculture
• policy reflective of urban community (vision of rural)
Issues For Agriculture: Potential Conflict & Potential Risk

• paying for services not required by the farm community
• complaints re. “normal” farming practices
• traffic & safety concerns
• loss of flexibility
Issues For Agriculture:
Potential Conflict & Potential Risk

• heightened environmental concern (ex. water contamination)
• requirements to adopt specialized production practices
• difficulty expanding “industrial” agricultural facilities
Coping in the New Rural Community: Strategies for Agriculture

“strategies to avoid problems and strategies to manage issues”
Strategies for Agriculture

- acknowledge legitimate interests of non-farm community
- Promote a community based approach to environmental issues
- don’t shirk responsibility
- take advantage of opportunities that the rural/urban interface offers (B&B, Farm Vacations, etc.)
Strategies for Agriculture

- coordinate and co-operate with other commodity groups
- be vigilant - participate in the planning system (local & prov.)
- conflict resolution tools
Strategies for Agriculture

• be vigilant - monitor and identify environmental issues

• aggressively develop & implement approaches to environmental issues (i.e. BMP’s, NMP’s, Good Neighbour Policy etc.)

• anticipate loss of protection from terms such as “normal farm practices”
Strategies for Agriculture

- importance of education, communication and research
- work to ensure that local government (and the community) is aware of agriculture’s contribution to the local community
- work for an agriculture first land use policy
Questions